

## DOM BOURNE

TAKE 1



# TWENTY YEARS OF TRANSCRIPTION

In 1998 Dom Bourne dropped out of university and started a business providing transcriptions to production companies. The company operated from his childhood bedroom and Dom hoped it would keep him in beer money for a year or two before he decided what he really wanted to do with his life.



Twenty years later and, this year, Take 1 celebrates two decades of service to the broadcast and video sectors - an achievement that Dom attributes to their ability to anticipate and accommodate change in the industry. And there have been plenty of changes to accommodate over the last two decades.

## Paper edits in the nineties

If you want to get an idea of what the world was like when Dom started Take 1 in 1998, all you need to know is that Google was launched in the same year. Back then video was shot on tape and the only way to log or view your footage after the shoot was to either book expensive playback machines by the hour or transfer your footage to VHS with burnt-in-time-code.

Take 1 offered an alternative - and more effective - way for production companies to prepare for edit. Instead of spending hours viewing VHS dubs of their shoot footage, producers sent these tapes to Take 1 where Dom's team would transcribe the time codes, dialogue and action onto paper. These transcriptions were then posted or biked back to Soho and used to prepare paper edits. The process took a few days to turn around, but the service was affordable, and it solved an industry pain-point at the time.

## Digital workflows in the noughties

In the nineties, tape-based workflows limited Take 1's client base - clients had to be located close enough to the business to either bike or post tapes and transcripts back and forth within limited production timeframes. But the move from analogue to digital workflows was about to revolutionise production workflows.

The first PC-based non-linear editing system was launched by Editing Machines Corp in 1980 and Avid released the first Media Composer system running on the Apple Macintosh platform soon after. In 1991 QuickTime was introduced and in 1995 Ikegami and Avid spearheaded tapeless video recording with the introduction of the Editcam. By the early 2000's tapeless acquisition and file-based workflows were widespread.

Digital workflows were a game-changer for Take 1 - turnaround times were halved, and the company's client-base was no longer limited by geography. In 2008 Dom boarded a plane to Los Angeles and, with Take 1's "we type while you sleep" proposition, landed a number of US reality shows such as Top Chef and Little Couple, many of which they continue working on to this day. >>

## >> Accessibility laws at the turn of the century

While expanding into the US market, Take 1 also diversified their service offering to help broadcasters meet new legislative responsibilities. The company started working with production and post companies to provide networks with post-production scripts, captions and subtitle information for broadcast.

Closed captions existed decades before Take 1 was formed. They were first demonstrated at the First National Conference on Television for the Hearing Impaired in Nashville, Tennessee in 1971. But it wasn't until 1990 that technology allowed - and legislation demanded - that closed captions and subtitles become widely adopted on both sides of the Atlantic.

Two key acts pertaining to closed captions were passed in the US in 1990. The first was The Television Decoder Circuitry Act which required all analog television receivers of a certain size to have the ability to display closed captioning, and the second was the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which required that public facilities provide access to subtitles on televisions, films or slide shows.

Similarly, in the UK the first piece of subtitling legislation is in The Broadcasting Act of 1990 which required public broadcasting stations to provide minimum amounts of subtitling for deaf and hard-of-hearing people. This Act was updated in the Communications Act of 2003 which made provision for sign language, subtitles and audio descriptions and introduced the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as the new industry regulator.

More recently, Take 1's services have been further expanded to help online content distributors comply with updated laws.

In 2010 the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act was passed in America to bring previous accessibility laws up to date with new technologies. Under the CVAA, content owners have to ensure that video programming that is closed captioned on TV is closed captioned when distributed via the Internet. In the UK, a campaign by Action on Hearing Loss prompted the amendment of the Digital Economy bill in 2017 and gave Ofcom the power to compel broadcasters to provide subtitles on video-on-demand content.

## Global content in the internet age

The recent explosion of video platforms has changed the production and delivery of video content forever. Increased bandwidth, the prevalence of video on social platforms and the introduction of OTT delivery have created a marketplace centred around global moments, and content distributors are under pressure to deliver original broadcasts and local versions simultaneously.

The Take 1 team was given an early glimpse into this global content distribution future in 2014 when the company was contracted as the sole transcription supplier to Discovery Communications LLC. Discovery's reversioning team used Take 1's transcriptions and systems to repurpose their content for distribution in multiple languages across the world in 2014 in the same way that Netflix does today. Take 1 has applied this experience to establish themselves as reliable localisation partners, providing everything from post-production and "as broadcast" scripts, to translations, subtitles, spotting lists and the myriad of reports needed for syndicated delivery.

## Preparing for the future

There's a lot of debate about the role of artificial intelligence and machine learning in the industry of the future, and there's little doubt that the way transcriptions are created will be affected by this technology over time, but Take 1 believes it's the data within these transcriptions that holds the key to making future workflows more efficient. This belief has prompted the company to develop Liberty - a system which converts transcriptions into XML metadata so that it can be repurposed into the various documents and reports needed throughout the global content production workflow - promoting the post-production script from a single purpose document into the blueprint for the entire localisation process.

Take 1 believes that Liberty can change the future of localisation by deriving data once and applying it throughout the value chain - which may sound like a lofty ideal until you consider the company's track record.

Here's to the next twenty years of transcription. ■

