Selecting the right AI tools for witness preparation

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In the rapidly evolving legal technology landscape, AI tools are revolutionizing almost all aspects of legal practice, including witness preparation.

This article examines four prominent voice-to-text AI platforms — Plaud NotePin, a new AI-powered recording device scheduled for release this November, SpeakAI, Notiv and Supernormal and evaluates their potential benefits and limitations for attorneys doing witness preparation.

If you are still using sticky notes, laptops or a yellow legal pad for witness preparation, AI could change those habits.

In the high stakes of trial, practical and effective witness preparation can significantly influence the outcome of a case. AI platforms like Plaud, Supernormal, SpeakAI, and Notiv offer invaluable voice-to-text tools that streamline the statement for easy management.

Each platform has unique features and benefits making them suitable for witness preparation and other trial work.

Plaud and Notiv offer the most relevant features for witness prep with their automatic transcription and note-taking capabilities. However, Notiv's accuracy and search functions are more limited.

SpeakAI provides some unique AI-driven analysis features, but comes at a higher price point and with more of a learning curve and is not exclusively designed for legal applications.

Supernormal, while a powerful email tool, lacks an easy-to-use witness prep-specific functionality. Using it requires more manual work to capture and organize notes.

Ease of adoption, Plaud and Notiv are the most straightforward, while Superhuman and SpeakAI require more upfront learning. Plaud and Notiv provide meeting summaries, enabling attorneys to focus on key points discussed during preparation sessions, which can be referenced later.

On cost, Notiv is the most affordable at $19 a month, followed by Plaud. Supernormal and SpeakAI are pricier options.

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Of course, the best fit for you depends on your specific needs and those of your legal team. Hopefully, this analysis gives a starting framework for comparing some of the key tools in this space.

The insights and summaries generated by these platforms can help witnesses understand the key points they need to address, making them feel more secure and less anxious.

Plaud NotePin

Plaud NotePin, the newest of AI recording systems, is scheduled for release this month. It is a flash drive-sized GPT-4o powered AI voice recorder which combines OpenAI technology to greatly enhance the process of converting natural speech to text.

Perhaps its best and most distinguishing feature is its small size and wearability as a memory device. Plaud uses two tiny microphones that pick up audio pretty well. Although it has a noise-cancellation feature, it is best to use Plaud in a quiet, non-chaotic environment.

Putting the devices to work

Here's a look at how AI devices can enhance witness preparation.

At least two separate preparatory meetings are scheduled with the witness.

First meeting: The attorney develops a series of stimulus questions and asks the witness to discuss each point in detail. The goal of this first meeting is to have the witness free-associate and tell their unrehearsed story. The series of prompts, provided by the attorney, directs the witness to discuss the following topics, e.g. case facts, causation, physical conditions and damages—all without attorney critique. This meeting lasts about one hour. Very little is done to "prepare" the witness and it's basically a stress-free recording session.

The attorney's primary goal in this process is to learn the witness's account of the facts and events in response to your main topical areas. The witness, at this meeting, only gives a narrative in response to specific questions which sheds valuable insight into how well the witness will testify. The stimulus questions to guide the witness, as developed by the attorney, should address, "who," "what," "where," "when," and "why" questions.

Second meeting: Sometime later, the witness is again present for a second meeting, which lasts around two hours. The attorney joins the witness and they discuss their thoughts from the first meeting. After a few minutes of review, the witness is given a transcript of their previous statement to review as the attorney temporarily leaves the room. A few minutes later, the attorney re-enters the room and discusses the AI transcript with them. Next, let them see the AI report with its suggestions regarding proposed word changes so that they become more impactful.

A helpful visual

A feature that can be used in witness preparation is a word cloud that can be utilized as part of the feedback process. A word cloud is a method to visualize how a person uses language.

By employing a word cloud, a witness's words are quickly analyzed and organized by apps such as GPT-4o into a visually appealing and informative display, making it easier to understand the witness's speech patterns.

Words are arranged in a cloud-like shape, with each word representing its importance in the text with the most frequently used words shown in large font. The words appearing in the word cloud can be used to reveal any problematic speech patterns and possible case themes, topics and new keywords to use.

Benefits

There are many reasons to incorporate the use of AI as part of your witness preparation practice. First, it minimizes the witness's fear and stress, primarily because of the objective and non-threatening critique of their statement by both AI and attorney.

Second, it allows a witness to also discuss any exhibit or a photo while being recorded. Third, due to its simplicity, it can easily be used by anyone. Fourth, AI can also draft a number of questions used for cross-examination purposes with the witness. A fifth reason is that AI can also be used to analyze expert testimony. Ultimately, a significant time and cost savings will result.

As the legal profession continues to evolve with technological advancements, the thoughtful integration of AI tools in witness preparation has the potential to significantly enhance future testimony by providing objective analysis.

AI results can help attorneys prepare their clients to deliver more compelling and persuasive testimony. As AI continues to evolve we can expect to see even more innovative tools and techniques that will continue to revolutionize trial practice.•

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