

This newsletter is published under the responsibility of the Board of the International Federation for Information Processing - Intersteno - and sent to all e-mail addresses of persons participating in the work of the members of Intersteno known to the Board. Contributions to the newsletter can be sent using the form on the web site www.intersteno.org. Publication will take place at the discretion of the Board.

VII edition of the Internet contest 2009

Following the decisions taken during the Council meeting in Tychy, the VII edition of this contest will take place from **14th April till 15th May 2009**.

The age categories are the same of the last one. The following improvements to the rules have been adopted:

- children (up to 12 years) - minimum speed 180 characters per minute, 1 % maximum of faults.
- seniors (older than 20 years) - minimum speed 240 characters per minute, maximum 0,50 % of faults.

Regulations for the world-wide competitions in Beijing

The updated version in English is available at www.intersteno.org. German and French versions will be released in the coming months.

Texts of the last competitions in Prague

Nearly all texts as well as the digital recordings for speech capturing and real-time have been available since September 2007 at www.intersteno.org - Competition - competition texts.

They have been downloaded about 800 times and teachers are using them for training and test exercises. The word processing competition text has been found very useful in ICT education.

Competition organisation

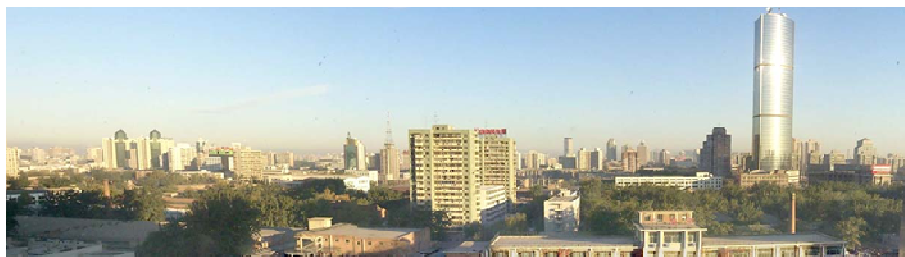
Choosing, preparing, translating texts for competition is a huge amount of work done on a voluntary basis by several persons. For each kind of competition Jury leader takes care of these aspects, under the coordination of the Jury President.

For steno-speech capturing competition as well as real-time, digital files must be correctly prepared in order to assure fair conditions for all competitors.

After the competitions, the evaluation and preparation of classification lists are also needed.

You can read the report prepared by **MR JARI NITTUINPERÄ** about this process and his advice for the Jury members and helpers at www.intersteno.org - Competition - SC competitions organisation.

Beijing here we come...



The 47th Intersteno congress is coming faster than we think and it is time to investigate how we can travel in a good and economical way from Europe to China. We are interested in all possible offers. A good approach could be to travel in groups from some cities throughout Europe.

Our colleague **OLIVIER LEVRAU** has investigated the situation and has obtained an offer for travel + hotel within a budget of **1000 euro** made by Sinja Travel in 's Hertogenbosch (The Netherlands).

Here is some information.

Flight

Departure is on Thursday morning 13th August at 09.10 h from Brussels with arrival on Friday early morning in Beijing (01.20 h).

Return is on Sunday 23rd August in the early morning 01.50 h with arrival in Brussels at 06.10 h.

Flight	Date	From	To	Departure	Arrival
HU 492	13-08-2009	Brussels	Beijing	09.10 h	01.20+1 d
HU491	23-08-2009	Beijing	Brussels	01.50 h	06.10 h

The flight company is Hainan Airlines, which we have already used in June this year on a flight to Beijing.

Hotel

Prices vary depending on the choice of the hotel,. The above-mentioned prices are per person and based on occupation in a double bedroom. The supplement for a single room is about € 275,00 in the Chong-wen-men hotel. Prices include:

- Flight Brussels-Beijing and Beijing-Brussels
- Transfer to hotel with English-speaking guide
- Hotel, bed and breakfast (based on double room occupation)

Chongwenmen hotel *** Euro 990,00

Centrally situated at Chongwen-gate, close to Beijing Railway station. 10 minutes to Tiananmen square. Underground station within walking distance. Air conditioned. Renovated in 2006. About 300 rooms.

Lake View Hotel **** Euro 1120,00

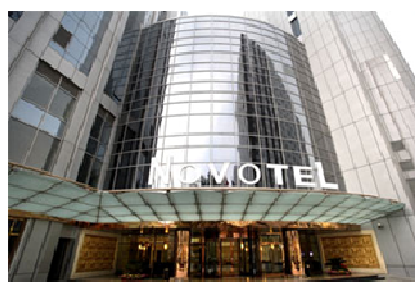
New hotel located on the side of Weiming Lake in Peking University. Closest to the congress venue.

Novotel Beijing West Zhongguancun **** Euro 930,00

New and modern hotel in Haidian-district. 5 km to Beijing University (bus 114 or 307). Subway to city center (30-40 minutes to Tiananmen square)



Chongwenmen Hotel



Novotel Beijing West Zhongguancun



Beijing University area and Novotel Beijing West



Lake View Hotel in Beijing University area

The offer is based on the following conditions:

- minimum 20 participating persons staying in the same hotel.
- of course this offer is based on the prices of November 2008 and prices can (slightly) change.

We are now discussing the choice of the hotel with a view to making a final proposal. For people participating at all congress activities the Lake View Hotel is the closest (and the most expensive). Novotel West Zhongguancun could be a good/cheaper alternative. For participants in the competitions and those more interested in tourist/cultural subjects, staying more in the centre (Chongwenmen) is probably better. My personal choice would be Novotel West at **930 euro** in double room occupation.

People who want to take advantage of this offer and coming from other European countries have to take into account the following extra costs:

- transport to Brussels and back home (car, train, flight...)
- one night stay in Brussels before the early departure.

We are looking at other proposals from other countries and maybe from the organization committee (package flight + hotel). Please inform us about your offers. You can find a German offer with post congress tour on www.intersteno.de.

In the next days also on www.intersteno.it you will find a proposals of the Italian Group of Intersteno.

Danny Devriendt ■

The IPRS meeting in The Hague was a success



The IPRS group on The Binnenhof. In the background the old building of the House of Representatives.

The special IPRS meeting arranged by Mr Cees van Beurden, took place from August 20 - 22 in The Hague and was attended by 22 reporters from abroad. They came from Iceland, the UK (Westminster, Northern Ireland and Wales), Canada, the USA, Italy (Sicily), Germany, Poland, Ireland, Austria and Korea. Moreover nine reporters from The Netherlands as well as Mr. Danny Devriendt, Ms. Georgette Sante (Intersteno) and Ms. Joke Bakker (Interinfo) participated.

They met each other for the first time during the get-together on Wednesday August 20 in the hotel Corona. Very soon they were no longer strangers to each other but became enthusiastic friends. They appreciated very much the initiative to have a special IPRS meeting in between the Intersteno congresses and at the end of the meeting expressed the wish to have more special IPRS meetings in the future, not only to be able to discuss professional items but to have social contacts.

On Thursday August 21 the group visited the Dutch Parliament, located on "The Binnenhof" very near the hotel Corona. In the morning the participants took part in a guided tour through the Senate. Then they went to the other side of The Binnenhof for a guided tour through the House of Representatives followed by a video presentation about the tasks and working methods of this House and a very luxurious and festive lunch offered by the House. The whole afternoon was dedicated to a discussion

between the participants about several items regarding the profession. Everyone appreciated this lively discussion that was live subtitled by a Dutch reporter using the Dutch steno machine Veyboard. What he typed on his machine was projected on a large screen, so that everyone could read the typed text. In America this is a common procedure nowadays, but it was the first time that it had been demonstrated in the Dutch Parliament. In the evening there was a chic dinner in the hotel Corona in a great atmosphere

On Friday the group visited the "Panorama Mesdag", one of the few remaining panoramas in the world, a impressive round painting 140 metres long and 14 metres high, giving an impression of the seaside resort Scheveningen at the end of the 19th century. After a quick lunch the group went to the Peace Palace, where a very interesting explanation was given about the work of the International Court of Justice and the International Court of Arbitrage, followed by a tour through the magnificent building. After a short visit to the seaside, the real one this time, the group went to the house of Cees van Beurden, who had organised this meeting, for drinks and snacks. This reception offered a further opportunity to continue personal contacts and was very much appreciated. In the evening there was a farewell dinner in a famous Indonesian restaurant. For many of the participants it was the first time that they had enjoyed the taste of real Indonesian food.

All participants left The Hague with good feelings and expressed their wish to continue such gatherings and the work of IPRS. The new regulation for IPRS was adopted unanimously. Several colleagues were willing to take part in a committee for IPRS. The proposal to create a forum for IPRS was welcomed. The Board of Intersteno is now studying how this can be put into practice.

The Chinese competitions in Harbin, 11 and 12 October 2008



About 170 competitors participated in the Chinese stenotype competitions on Saturday 11 and Sunday 12 October 2008. They were students and teachers of Chinese stenotype schools and of a police college. The competitions took place in the computer classrooms of a school for vocational education in Harbin, a city in the north-east of China.

The programme for these two days included some 20 different competitions, among them six Intersteno ones. The competitors were divided into speed groups, in accordance with the speed they could reach on their stenotype machines. There were three different speed groups: 140 to 180, 180 to 220 and 220 to 260 Chinese characters per minute (Ccpm) respectively. One Chinese character equals one syllable in the spoken language. I was informed that the difficulty of the competitions was the same for each speed group.

In almost all the competitions the competitors used their stenotype machines. These machines contain software to produce Chinese characters as well as alphabetic letters, have batteries and can easily be stowed away in a shoulder bag. The stenotype machines were used without a tripod or stand - the competitors simply placed them on their knees.

The computer classroom I was in had 52 computers and monitors that were lined up on two long tables, 13 on each side of a table with normal chairs in front of them. The competitors sat down on these chairs and connected their stenotype machine through a USB cable with the computer before them. All the speed dictations were digitally recorded beforehand; the two loudspeakers in the classroom (one in front and one at the back) made them sound loud and clear.

The computers were part of a local area network and at the end of each competition the competitors had to save their work to a file that was indicated on the blackboard. This file was then copied to a memory stick that was used for the computerised marking and grading. I understood that a special computer program compared the transcriptions of the competitors with the original text of the assignment or dictation, counted the mistakes and thus allotted the competitors their place on the list of final results. In Harbin these lists were not distributed, anyway not in my presence, and so I could not have a look at them. Only the people directing the award-giving ceremony had a list that mentioned (for the different speed groups) at least the names of the numbers one to three of each competition.

The Intersteno competitions in Harbin

The following is based upon my observations in the computer classroom where the competitions for the highest speed group took place.



The competition lasted 30 minutes. Every competitor received a text of 15.5 pages to be transcribed (copied) with the stenotype machine. Each page of this text contained about 600 Chinese characters. One of the best competitors succeeded in transcribing almost the whole text. This means that his average speed was about 300 Ccpm.

I was afterwards informed that the software used for the computerised process of marking and grading produces a list with items such as: the total amount of characters a competitor has recorded, the amount of correct characters and the accuracy percentage. This is not quite comparable with the corresponding Intersteno list, but it does answer the needs of these Chinese competitions.

Text correction with PC

This competition lasted much longer than the 10 minutes foreseen in article 14 of the Intersteno rules. No use was made of the computer keyboard; the competitors solely used their stenotype machines. They exclusively worked with a text on their computer screens (retrieved from a file); there was no separate correction sheet. I was told that the competitors had to find themselves the parts of the text that were wrong and then to make the necessary corrections.

The process of marking and grading was done automatically by computer.

Professional word processing

The working time for this competition was about 1 hour. Here only the computer keyboard was used. The competitors received a sheet of paper on which 15 tasks were specified. These tasks related to a black-and-white text (on the computer screen) that had to be retrieved from a file. It was my impression that the 15 tasks only concerned the layout of this text (including the manipulation of a table or schedule, and the use of background colours) and that no illustrations had to be inserted.

The process of marking and grading was done manually.

Speech capturing

The time schedule of the highest speed group foresaw 45 minutes for this competition. I was informed that the dictation was in accordance with column I of the table in art. 16 of the Intersteno rules. This dictation therefore reached a much higher speed than the upper limit of the highest speed group itself. It appeared that none of the competitors was able to follow the dictation until the very end. The short transcription time may be explained by the fact that during the dictation the competitors already produced (with their stenotype machines) a perfectly readable transcription on their computer screens so they could start with the corrections immediately after the dictation. It was my impression that to this end they only used their original transcriptions into Chinese characters and no other kind of stenographic output.



Although the computer was used for the process of marking and grading, the distinction between different kinds of errors had to be done manually.

There was also a pen-shorthand competition in another classroom, for which half an hour had been reserved. Unfortunately, I was not able to attend that competition.

Multilingual competition

This Intersteno competition was not represented among the many competitions in Harbin. The only foreign language (for Chinese people) in the competition programme was English. Knowledge of the English language was necessary for the real-time translation competition.

Real-time speech capturing

The dictation of this competition lasted about 15 minutes. I was told that the highest speed of the dictation was nevertheless in accordance with column I (of the table in art. 18). As far as I could ascertain this, all the participants were steno typing until the end of the dictation and did not correct their transcriptions as is compulsory for this kind of competition.

Correspondence and minute taking

For this competition 40 minutes were available. In the dictation text I could distinguish the letter and also the text to be summarised (with a heading and subheadings). Watching the competitors at work I could see on their monitors some enumerations, which showed me that they were working on a summary. I was informed that the marking and grading of the summary was done manually.

The other Chinese competitions in Harbin

Besides the competitions mentioned above, there were approximately 12 other stenotype competitions on the agenda in Harbin, among them some interesting ones for Intersteno:

- extreme limit text production: to transcribe (copy) as fast as possible one page of text; this allowed competitors to reach a speed of more than 500 Ccpm;
- court reporting: to transcribe part of an Chinese spoken hearing or court session, with questions and answers;
- text production for teams: teams of 4 persons compete with each other during 20 minutes; of each team one member at a time transcribes (copies) a text during 5 minutes, after which his successor takes over from the point he reached in the competition text;
- memory speech capturing: competitors first listened to a dictation of 5 seconds and then had 20 seconds to stenotype from their memory that little piece of dictation; this procedure was repeated several times during the competition;
- the steno typing of non-Chinese characters: this competition showed that the Chinese stenotype machine can perfectly well produce the letters of our alphabet, figures and all the other signs on the qwerty keyboard;
- speech capturing with the eyes covered: the competitors had to transcribe a dictation while blindfolded;
- speech capturing of a sports broadcast: competitors had to capture the words of an enthusiastic sports reporter that were frequently interrupted by cheers accompanying the match;
- real-time translation English-Chinese: the competitors listened to an English dictation and simultaneously translated this dictation, on their stenotype machines, into Chinese characters.



Walking speech capturing: the competitors had their stenotype machines in a harness before them and were steno typing a dictation while walking around; this competition took place in the auditorium of the school.

Afterwards I have received the texts, assignments and dictations (on CD) of several competitions.

I think that these were very well organised competitions. Their great number, the inventiveness of their character and the relatively short time each one lasted, made these very attractive competitions for young people. The digitally recorded dictations and the computerised marking and grading of most of the transcriptions (thus reducing the need for assistants) certainly made it feasible to offer such a broad range of competitions. About three to four hours after the last competition on Sunday (at two p.m.) the award-giving ceremony could start. The short speech in English I was invited to deliver during this ceremony was subtitled in Chinese characters, on a screen, by a young stenotype teacher who also participated in the real-time translation competition!

Jan den Holder ■

WHAT'S NEW

The info herewith is based upon reliable information gathered from various sources, but it is not intended as an advertising of products, services or producers.

A new tool - the Digital pen



By the courtesy of **ADRIAN KELLY**, a professional reporter based in Melbourne (Australia) we have received information that a new digital pen has been launched on the market.

Those who had the opportunity to be at the Intersteno Congress in Rome will recall the presentation of the Anoto paper technology coupled with a digital pen and the demo of sending the recorded data via Internet. Now a new step ahead has been made: the digital pen incorporates a digital audio recorder which capture the words of the speaker, and this recording is synchronised with the written signs.

Adrian Kelly comments: *"In fact, I can see this pen perhaps creating a renaissance in shorthand. Now, it is advertised as useful for those who write longhand, of course, but the beauty with being able to do shorthand*

is the fact you are able to use your notes as the main pivot point for what you might wish to type up, and the pen can act as a very useful aid in this regard. But to be able to use shorthand as the main tool means that this digital pen and the shorthand complement each other very well.

Although I use the voice writing method for verbatim transcripts, I also do professional minutes of meetings and in a lot of cases use my Pitman's shorthand. Now, I have found this pen invaluable for this purpose. For instance, I did a job last month that went for a week for a government department who were requiring, after a day's hearing, the minutes the next morning to check. It was a very complex matter, but that pen came in very handy if I had any doubt about my shorthand notes etc. I just clicked on the shorthand outlines and it played back for me the room audio and was extremely audible! You can even slow it down, speed it up. A VERY handy device."

The pen is available with 1 or 2GB of memory, allowing about 100/200 hours of recording, Playback is audible via the built in loud speaker or traditional headset can be connected.

The full list of the features and a list of software applications for transferring data from the pen to your computer, is available at www.livescribe.com.

You can also contact **MR. ADRIAN KELLY** - voice@transcriptsplus.com.au - for any additional info or quotations.

Many thanks to Peter Walker for the revision of these texts.

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