

# Transcribing Interviews and Focus Groups with Transcriber, Importing into NVivo and Initial Autocoding

## Do you need complete transcriptions?

- Summaries in Word or NVivo (with labelled proxy document) - partial transcription.
  - Useful first step - in field and for familiarisation with main points.
- Transcribe cassettes in full: foot-pedal control?
- Use Transcriber to tie your transcription to the sound files clause by clause.
  - Can export to NVivo or a webpage.

## Creating audio files

This presentation uses existing audio files, but for details of the practicalities of interviewing, creating audio files through to taking transcripts into qualitative data analysis software called Atlas-TI (an alternative to NVivo) consult Alan Stockdale's very good and comprehensive website:

<http://users.rcn.com/astockdale/audio/>

The site will be moving in the near future to:

<http://www.edc.org/CAEPP/resources/audio.asp>

## ***Audacity: free software to create audio files***

You could use purchased software, but to be able to create audio files and to improve their clarity you can use Audacity which is free.

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/beta.php?lang=en>

Should you want to create MP3s from the sound files you create you will need to download the LAME add-on:

<http://mitiok.free.fr/>

## Downloading and installing Transcriber

Transcriber is software which enables you to create your transcriptions while playing your sound files and following them on screen. It is free to download and use. For Windows 95/98/NT/2000/XP the latest easily installable version is 1.4.2. Ensure you select the **BINARY** version otherwise you'll have to install the components separately.

<http://www.etca.fr/CTA/gip/Projets/Transcriber/en/download142.html>

Full details of Transcriber are available at:

- Europe: <http://www.etca.fr/CTA/gip/Projets/Transcriber/> (a little more up-to-date)
- North America: <http://www ldc.upenn.edu/mirror/Transcriber/>

To install, double-click the Transcriber-1.4.2.exe file you've downloaded and follow the instructions.

## Downloading and Installing the NVivo Export file

You can download an NVivo Export file from <http://homepages.gold.ac.uk/duncan/>.

It is an adapted export file which works with Transcriber to enable you to produce plain text files from the transcriptions you create within Transcriber. You need to save it in

- C:\Program Files\DGA & LDC\Transcriber\converter

(or wherever you installed Transcriber) **before** starting Transcriber.

## Using Transcriber

Start Transcriber by double-clicking the desktop icon or from the start menu. You will be prompted to open a transcription or audio file - WAV, mp3 and other formats are supported. Choose an audio file and a window similar to *Figure 1* will appear.

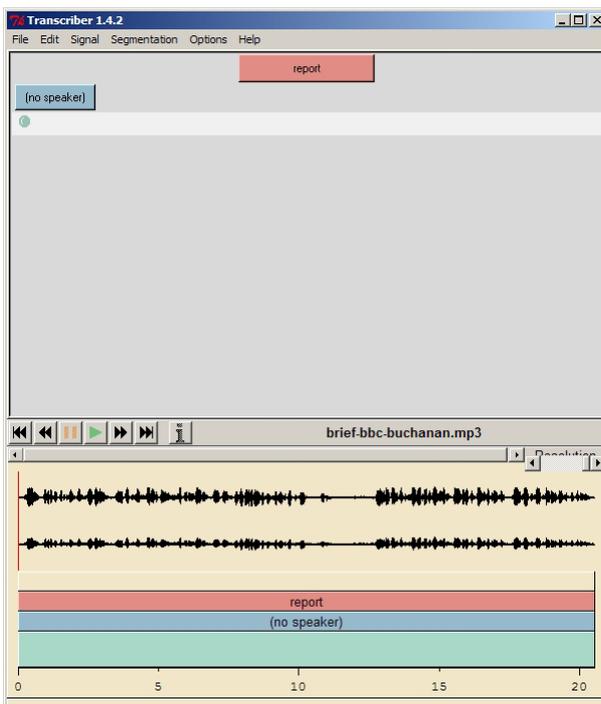


Figure 1 Transcriber with audio file open before transcription

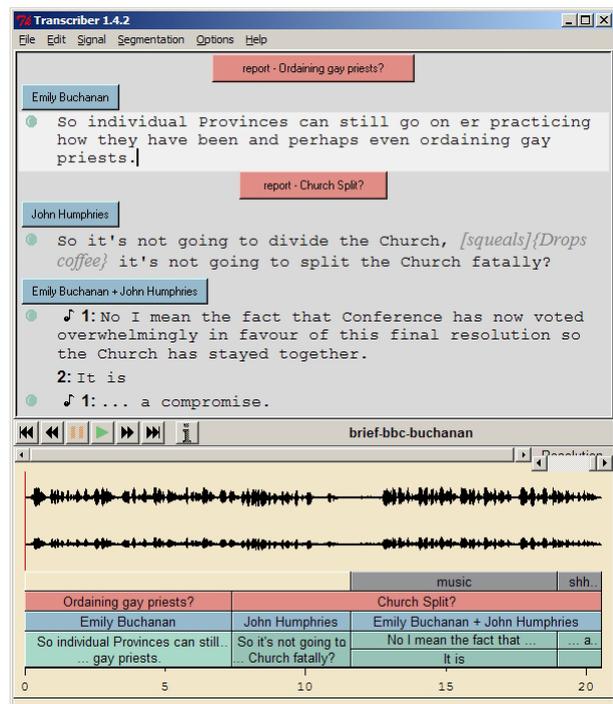


Figure 2 Transcriber with audio file fully transcribed

Click on the green arrow (play) button and you'll hear the audio file played.

## Segmenting

You can break the recording down into smaller bits (called 'segment breaks') to ease transcribing. Listen to the audio file and when there's a pause, press Enter and you'll create a break. This puts vertical lines in the area beneath the waveform and creates a new horizontal line above the waveform starting with a green disc.

## Transcribing

When you've finished segmenting, from the menu select Signal | Playback Mode | Loop on Segment - this enables you to replay each segment while you're transcribing it. Press Tab to stop and start it and the up and down arrows to move between segments.

As you play start typing what you hear - this appears above the waveform on the horizontal lines next to the green discs. This is your transcription!

When you've finished transcribing select Signal | Playback Mode | ..Continuous playback.

## Adding headings

To create a new speaker (the blue buttons): Segmentation | Create turn or Ctrl-T - and you can edit one by double-clicking on it.

Double clicking the rose coloured buttons in the centre lets you enter a section description, if useful.

When finished select File | Save.

## Exporting the transcriptions formatted to import into NVivo

You must ensure you have *NVivoTxt.tcl* saved in *C:\Program Files\DGA & LDC\Transcriber\converter* (or wherever you installed Transcriber) before starting Transcriber.

From the menu select File | Export | Export to NVivo Plain Text format.

This will create a plain text file with the same name as the audio file you are working on - except with a .txt ending.

## Importing into NVivo

In NVivo create a new document by importing this file - change the Files of type drop-down from RTF to Text files and select the file(s) for importing. Select the 'Read marked-up title and description paragraphs' option.

Let NVivo decide on the filename - it will be based on the transcription filename.

## Automatic Coding by Section in NVivo

### What is Section Coding?

You can use heading styles (or more simply 'headings') applied to paragraphs in your documents to automatically code the text in paragraphs following those headings (by automatically creating nodes based on the heading text). If you apply headings to the questions in a structured or semi-structured interview, to the names of participants or to descriptive headings in notes, the text underneath them can be coded with ease so that you can quickly get an overview of the shape of your data and be able to filter it by, for example, question or participant. Later on in your project you can combine these with other nodes and attributes for a really focused analysis of your data. They complement your analytic coding.

There are three stages in coding by section:

1. Create a document in NVivo with headings (using any of the methods including importing).
2. Create a Tree Node to act as the root (or 'parent') node for your automatically-created nodes.
3. Tell NVivo to automatically code your document.

### Understanding Headings and Sections

Documents in NVivo can be organised hierarchically using headings. There are nine levels of heading: Heading1 is the highest. Lower level headings are contained within (or 'nested in') higher level headings.

Text is arranged in paragraphs. Text (at least one, but possibly several paragraphs), which does not have a heading applied to it, counts in the section of the heading which immediately precedes it. Text before the first heading is treated as a separate section and is coded by section coding at the parent node.

Even though headings can be nested hierarchically, each section is discrete. This means that, in NVivo terms, a section consists of a heading and all the following text up until the next heading (at whatever level). Figure 3 shows how the coding of sections does not overlap in an NVivo document which has been section coded:

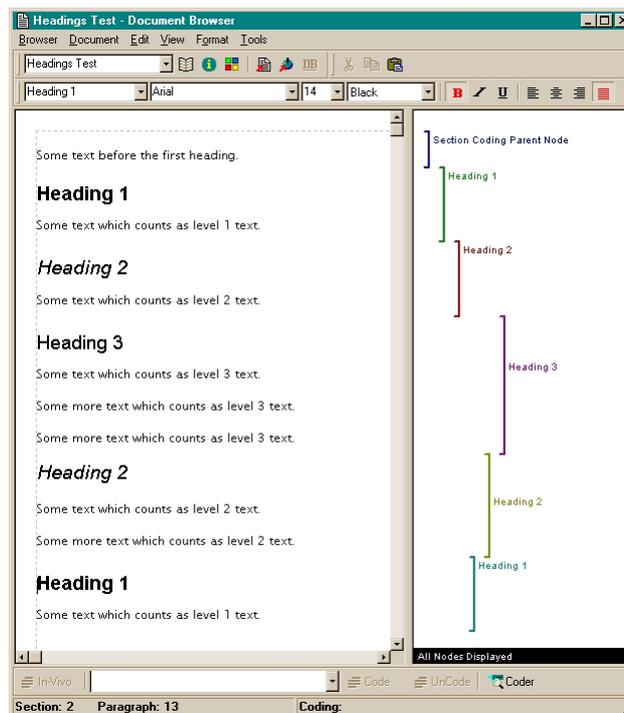


Figure 3: NVivo Document Section Coded by Title

The file exported from Transcriber has been 'marked up' by inserting 'tags' at the beginning of a new paragraph eg {H1}, {H2} etc to designate Heading 1 or 2. See the *Reference Guide* pp 180-181 or online help for further details.

You can see a document's structure outlined in the Document Explorer by selecting it in the left pane. You can expand the sections in the right pane by clicking on the plus sign. This is useful for checking how and what will be coded by section coding. It's also useful for getting quick access to parts of your documents. Highlighting a section title and then browsing will take you to that exact point.

## ***Two types of section coding***

There are two types of section coding available within NVivo. One uses the heading text and is known as coding by title. The other which is appropriate for structured data is known as coding by address. This guide looks only at the former. A full comparison is in a guide entitled 'NVivo Coding by Section' available on my website:

<http://homepages.gold.ac.uk/duncan/>

## **Creating a Parent Node**

You may already have a Tree Node, which you want to act as parent to contain all the section coding. However, since initial section coding is usually done with a blank parent node, you can create a new one very easily. There are two ways to do it before you begin, though you can also do it as part of the coding by section process.

### ***Using the Project Pad or Menu***

1. At the Project Pad click on **Create a Node [1.3: Make a Project Node]** or select **Nodes | Create Node** from the menu. The Create Node dialog will open with the Free tab selected.
2. Select the Tree tab.
3. Enter the title for the node which you are creating - and add a description. The only limitation on titles is that it cannot be the same as any sibling (ie with the same parent node). You can have similarly titled Tree Nodes under different parents. This could be confusing, so, if you must, do it with care and document what you are doing in your journal.

### ***Using the Node Explorer***

1. Highlight the point at which you wish to create a new Tree Node (most likely at the very top of the tree).
2. Select **Tools [1.3 Node] | Create Tree Node** from the menu or right-click and select **Create Tree Node**.
3. If you are at the top of the tree, a new node will be created called "Tree Node". You will probably want to change the name of this by clicking on the Properties button or right-clicking and selecting Properties and then filling in the dialog box as appropriate.
  - a. If you are not at the very top of the tree, you will then have to choose Child Node or Sibling Node - child would be most appropriate since you want the node to contain all the nodes created during section coding. The new node will be created as above and you will need to rename it.

Alternatively you can select **Tools | Create Node** from the Node Explorer menu bar or press **Ctrl+N**: this will bring up the Create Node dialog as described above.

## Section Coding

Once you have your documents in the right format and in NVivo, coding by section is straightforward. You can section code one, some or all of your documents.

### *Section Coding All or Some of Your Documents*

1. Open the Document Explorer.
2. Highlight the “All Documents” folder or a Set (see the *Reference Guide*, Chapter 8, pp 111-122 or the online help, for more information about Sets).
3. From the menu bar select **Set [1.3 Tools] | Code Documents by Section...** or right-click and select **Code Documents by Section...** These both bring up the Section Coder.
  - a. You have two options - choose 'Code sections by title'.
4. You then have to nominate the Parent Tree Node. You can either type it in or navigate to it by selecting the **Choose** button which brings up the Choose Node... dialog:
  - a. If you already have a node in mind (you may have created it above), simply navigate to it.
  - b. If you need to create one, you can do so by clicking on the **Create Node** button (the button with the lined star). This creates a Tree Node with a default name of Tree Node (n).
    - i. Click on the **Properties** button to change the name and add a description. Click **OK** when finished.
  - c. Whichever method you have used, the node will appear in the box at the bottom of the Choose Node dialog box. Click **OK**.
  - d. The node will now appear in the box labelled Parent Tree Node. Click **OK** and section coding will begin: a progress bar will appear until it is completed.

### *Section Coding Your Documents Singly*

This is not hugely different from doing it for more than one document at a time. The only differences are in stages 2 and 3 above:

- Highlight the document you wish to section code.
- From the menu bar select **Document | Code by Section...** or right-click and select **Code by Section...** These both bring up the Section Coder.

### *Coding Additional Documents*

In NVivo 1.3 and later versions you can section code several documents at once. In earlier versions you had to section code each one individually, so you are advised to update to at least the free 1.3 update (it has additional benefits too).

However you have done the initial section coding, you may create new documents later which you want to bring into the same coding scheme. The important factor is whether or not you use the same parent node as the root for your section coding. This will depend on your analytic aims, but note that if you do not want to use the same node, you will be creating a separate sub-tree with new nodes.

### *Coding at the Same Parent Tree Node by Title*

NVivo checks to see if the heading text corresponds to an existing node. If it does not, NVivo creates a new node and uses that to code the following paragraph(s). If it does, NVivo uses the existing node to code. The comparison check is based on spelling, but ignores case - so ensure that you spell names consistently.

### **Additional Ideas After Section Coding**

- You may want to move nodes for speakers/turn-takers to Case Nodes - since you can only use Tree Nodes when section coding. Right click and select **Cut**, then right-click to **Paste** into the Case Nodes.
- You may want to attach attributes and values to the nodes created to give another dimension to your searching later on.