

iCap FAQs for Transcribers

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Getting Started

What kind of internet connection do I need to use iCap?

Any broadband internet connection (cable, DSL, or other home or office services) should be sufficient. Use with a 56k (or slower!) modem is not recommended.

Regardless of your connection speed, we do not recommend using iCap on a wireless internet connection. Wireless connections often have frequent packet disruptions that will negatively affect the quality of your iCap audio feed.

What information will I need to connect to an encoder and do an iCap test?

You will need an iCap username and password to log into the server, and an Access Code that will connect you to a caption encoder. You will also need to confirm with the owner of the remote encoder you will be connecting to that the encoder is connected to iCap and has a valid audio signal passing through it for you to hear.

Can I listen to an encoder on iCap without disturbing the live captioning?

Yes. With iCap, multiple simultaneous users can listen to an encoder's audio feed and monitor the captions without changing the captions or blocking other users out. Nothing you do affects the live captioning until you press the "Start" button in the center of the iCap window. Then you will see the Status window change from "Connected" to "On-Air". You must be On-Air to enter caption data, and only one user can be On-Air at a time in an Access Code.

Can I share an iCap username?

You shouldn't, because only one user can be logged in at a time with a specific username. If another person uses your name and password to log in to iCap at the same time as you are logged in, the system cannot always tell the two users apart and your data can be lost or mishandled.

Setup

What are my options for connecting my captioning software package to the iCap client?

There are three basic options for getting the caption data you are writing from your software package to the iCap client. You can select from these options by clicking Tools | Options from the iCap software's top toolbar. You will also need to create a matching configuration profile in your captioning software package - this process can vary somewhat depending on what package you use.

1. TCP/Telnet socket (now recommended for most users): The captioning software sends data to iCap through a TCP/IP port on the local machine. In your captioning software, set the connect address to "127.0.0.1" or "localhost", and set the port to "9740". This feature exists in iCap software versions 2.3.2 and up.
2. Software Serial Port: The captioning software sends data to iCap through a "virtual" serial port. This looks to your captioning software like an external COM port. You can use any COM port number as the virtual port so long as the port does NOT correspond to an actual physical COM port on your computer, and so long as iCap and the captioning software package both are set to use the same port. Settings like baud rate, parity, and start and stop bits can be ignored.
3. Hardware Serial Port: This means you will use an actual external serial port and a **nullmodem cable** to send the data from your captioning software to iCap. Use this option if you will be using iCap and your captioning software package on two different computers. You must set the iCap COM port to the name of the serial port you will be connecting the cable to, and iCap and the captioning software must be given the same settings for baud rate, parity, and start and stop bits.

Is it important whether I start up iCap or my captioning software package first?

It often is. When you are using TCP/IP Socket or Software Serial Port input modes, you need to start iCap up to begin listening on those ports before you try to connect with your caption writing software.

When you are ready to begin entering live captioning, you should always press "Start" in iCap first (you should see the "On Air" indicator in your status window), then begin your writing procedure in the captioning software package.

When you are finished entering live captioning, you should enter a "blank-and-pass" or "return to upstream" command in your captioning software package, and then press 'Stop' in iCap.

How can I test that iCap "sees" the data from my captioning software package?

In the iCap software top toolbar, click Tools | Test Serial Port. A small window will pop up. This window will show all the data that iCap receives from your captioning software according to your current connection settings (TCP/IP Socket, Software Serial, or Hardware Serial). Then, try to write some test messages in your caption software. You should see these messages appear in the Test Serial Port window as a mix of letters with some blacked-out control characters. If you do see this, then you should expect no problems when you try to write your data to the encoder. You will need to close the test window before you start writing to the encoder.

If you see nothing in the test window, or if you see data that you suspect does not match what you are writing (remember it is normal to see control codes mixed with your text!), you should check your settings in both iCap and the caption writing software.

How do I configure the BCS software package to work with iCap, using the software serial port?

You will need to configure a "Direct Connect" profile in BCS. "Direct Connect" enables you to select a serial port for communication instead of a modem. These instructions refer specifically to BCS v8.01, but the configuration procedures are similar for other versions. BCS is a plug-in for the Case Catalyst stenography software, so both applications are involved in the configuration.

To connect to iCap from BCS v8.01:

- 1) Launch iCap first, before launching Case Catalyst. Then launch Case Catalyst.
- 2) In the BCS software create a Direct Connect profile to the COM port in use by iCap - the default is COM2. Select "EEG Compatible" as the encoder type. Baud rate and other communication settings are unimportant.
- 3) Save the profile with a name such as ""EEG iCap".
- 4) Start the BCS session. At this point you will NOT be communicating through the serial port. You must complete the next step before communication is established. You can verify this by viewing the BCS status window. It will say "Not Connected".
- 5) In Case Catalyst go to the "Setup" menu and select "Connection". In the Connection dialog you should see the "EEG iCap" profile that was previously configured. Select "EEG iCap", then click the "Dial" button. At this point BCS should be capable of communicating with iCap. Make sure that the BCS status window displays "Connected".

Using iCap - Tips & Tricks

How do I look at the iCap monitoring window while using my caption writing software at the same time?

In our experience, most users prefer to see the iCap window along with the caption writing software, even when the caption writing software takes up the entire screen. You can do this by going to the iCap top toolbar and selecting "Window | Always On Top". This will cause the iCap window to float on top of your caption software window, even when you click on the caption writing window.

How do I enter second-language (CC3 / HD Service 2) captioning?

To enter second-language captioning, you will need to use a second-language Access Code provided by your administrator. This Access Code will be different than the one you would use to connect to the same encoder to enter primary-language (CC1 / HD Service 1) captioning.

Once you enter the second-language Access Code, no further setup needs to be done in iCap. In your captioning software package, you will need to enter second-language or CC3 mode, the same way you would do if dialing in through a second modem. This ensures that your captioning software will send the correct encoder commands.

Some networks put second-language captioning on CC2 instead of CC3. If you know that your program will be captioned on CC2, you can follow the usual procedure, except to monitor your captions, after entering your Access Code, use the iCap top toolbar and select Language | CC2.

How do I perform a timed switchover with another captioner?

With iCap it is possible to perform an almost split-second switchover between captioners when necessary. The first captioner captions as normal. When it is almost time for the second captioner to begin, she (the second captioner) should enter the provided Access Code. Then, she can set the Timer on the middle-right of the iCap window to a small lead-in time - this should be the amount of time that it will take the second captioner to begin listening and get ready to type; for example, try 15 seconds. After setting the timer to 15, press "Start". The timer will begin counting down in seconds. When the timer reaches 0, the second captioner will replace the first captioner On-Air. So, the second captioner can begin writing while the timer is still counting down, and when the timer goes to zero, the live captioning will switch instantaneously from the first captioner's writing to the second captioner's.

However, in many situations, using the timer is not necessary. If the second captioner simply presses "Start", with no timer, and then begins writing, her data will override the first captioner's data as soon as "Start" is pressed, and so the switchover delay should be a few seconds at most until she can switch from iCap to her writing software and begin captioning.

The first captioner will hear a tone from iCap, and will see that his Status window no longer says "On Air", once the second captioner has started writing.

Problems Using the PC client

The captions I am writing are not getting through to the encoder or the Test Serial Port window.

If you are having a problem getting the captions through to a live encoder, you should try writing to the Test Serial Port window (see the question in the previous section) and see if that works. If you try this test and do not see any data in the Test Serial port window, then writing data to the encoder will not work either - this means that you have a connection problem between your caption writing software and the iCap software.

Check the settings in iCap under "Tools | Options", and also check that the settings in your caption software package match.

If you are sure the settings match and you are still not seeing data in the Test Serial Port window, please try restarting the two programs. When you restart the programs, try opening iCap BEFORE you open the caption writing software. This is important if you are using the Socket/Direct-Connect or Software Serial Port options, since iCap must begin listening before the caption writing software begins sending data.

When I type in my Access Code, I see "Access Not Found" in the Status window.

This simply means that the iCap server does not know of an Access Code by the name you typed in. Check your typing for errors and remember that the Access Code is case-sensitive. If you typed the correct Access Code, you may need to contact your Administrator to find out why the server can't find the Access Code you have.

If you have a password to access the iCap Administrative site, you can make sure the Access Code exists by going to the Access Code tab in your company's account. If the Access Code does not exist, you can either create it (if you own the encoder, or the encoder has been set up to give you permission to create your own Access Codes), or contact the encoder administrator to get an Access Code set up.

When I connect to my Access Code, I don't hear any audio. The Status window says, "Check encoder" and the bar labeled "Audio Signal" at the bottom is entirely gray.

This often means that the encoder that this Access Code connects you to is not online. You should contact the encoder's administrator and ask them to check the status of the encoder - it may be either offline, or it may not be connected to a valid audio or video source.

If you have a password to access the iCap Administrative site, you can confirm whether or not the encoder is online by going to the Access Code page and seeing if the name of the encoder appears in red in the display.

If you have never used iCap before from your current location, it is possible that you are being blocked by a firewall - ask your network administrator. iCap audio uses UDP, which is sometimes blocked on certain networks. The UDP port for iCap is 6900, and the traffic is initiated in the outbound direction.

Occasionally iCap data can also be blocked by the firewall or anti-virus software on your own computer. You may want to test by turning off your firewall and anti-virus temporarily and seeing if this helps (remember to turn it back on when you're done!). If it works only with the firewall or anti-virus software turned off, you should be able to use iCap with the anti-virus software on by adding iCap to the anti-virus software's Exceptions or Safe-List.

When I enter my Access Code, I can't hear any audio, even though the Audio Signal bar is blue.

If the Audio Signal bar is blue, that means you do have a successful audio connection to the remote encoder. You should check that your speakers or headphones are plugged in correctly and turned up loud enough for you to hear.

It is also possible that the remote encoder has an audio signal that is silent or has very low volume. You should ask the encoder administrator to check the Peak Level indicator on the front panel of the encoder.

I receive a message "Could not connect to server" when I try to start iCap.

This means that the iCap program cannot connect to the remote servers. Check your internet connection using another program like a Web browser to see if you can get online.

If you can get on the internet with a Web browser but cannot connect to iCap, and you have never used iCap before from this location, it is possible that your local network has firewall or proxy system that is preventing you from reaching an iCap server. Check with your network administrator - iCap makes outbound connections to its remote servers on TCP port 9736.

I receive a message "Username and password rejected" when I try to start iCap.

Double-check your username and password, and please remember that all fields are case sensitive. Make sure Caps-Lock is off when you enter your password. If you still can't log in, please contact your iCap administrator to check if you have the right login data.

The iCap window opens and says, "cannot create serial port".

In some versions starting with 2.2.0, the iCap installer opens a DOS window that registers the software serial port (Eltima) DLL. This DOS window stays open for a long time with no output before it completes running. You **MUST** leave this window on your screen until it closes by itself to properly install the iCap software serial port module.

If you return to the installer and click "repair", you should be able to try again and no longer have this problem.

This should be fixed in future versions of the iCap installer.

I'm writing captions but I don't see them in the monitor window.

This can happen for several reasons. One possible reason is that your captioning software is not connected to iCap properly- please refer to the section on using the Test Serial Port feature to solve this problem. If you are not able to see your data in the Test Serial Port window, then you will not be able to see it in the monitor window either, and it will not go to the remote encoder. You will need to press "Stop" to stop captioning On-Air before you can use the Test Serial Port window.

Another reason this may be happening is if you have not pressed the "Start" button to become the On-Air captioner. Check if your Status window says "On-Air". If it does not, press the "Start" button and then try again.

If you pressed the "Start" button but your Status window no longer says "On-Air", check your chat messages. It is possible that another user has pre-empted you as the live captioner. If you believe this was an error, you can press the "Start" button again to take control back or send a chat message asking why the other captioner has signed on.