

Providing a design researcher at Google
with **a more efficient method** of
recording and reviewing interviews



Sonocent case study

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*“In less than 10 minutes after each interview I am done analyzing. [Using Sonocent] is **such a time saver compared to the other methods of recording** that I have tried.”*



Kimberly Harvey is a design researcher in the user experience department at Google HQ. Her job involves meeting users and conducting interviews and observations. She knew she needed a recording solution that would enable her to quickly and efficiently return to key information and unfamiliar terminology, without having to fast-forward and rewind through hours of audio. The solution she found was Sonocent Audio Notetaker.

What follows is an interview conducted with Kimberly in October 2014, around a year after she adopted Sonocent as a key part of her working practice.

Sonocent: What challenges were you facing when you joined Google?

Kimberly H: “As the only researcher on the team in a completely new user environment, I had to ramp up on Google culture at the same time as conducting interviews in a new field. There were terms I didn’t understand, but the research couldn’t wait.

“When you are starting off as a researcher in any new community, you will likely encounter sets of unfamiliar terms and situations. You are at a disadvantage because you have to keep up with experts at the same time as learning the basics.

S: How did you come across Sonocent Audio Notetaker?



KH: “I wanted a way to record my interviews and meetings. I personally looked into many note-taking software tools but Sonocent stood out. I really liked how I could double my speed using keyboard shortcuts. It was so easy to insert section breaks whenever a user changed topics. If I missed a phrase or didn’t understand something, I could quickly highlight it and return to it later.

“The quick capture and annotation capability is so useful. As a researcher you will often find yourself trying to remember a specific phrase from someone you interviewed over two weeks ago. Audio Notetaker makes it easy to navigate quickly and precisely through the interview.”

*“I really liked how I could double my speed using keyboard shortcuts... If I missed a phrase or didn’t understand something, I could **quickly highlight it and return to it later.**”*



S: How do you use Audio Notetaker?

KH: “When I was starting to conduct discovery research, it felt like every little thing the our subjects said was important. So I would record absolutely everything, transcribe it, analyze it, and match it up with screen shots afterwards. Audio Notetaker was key in the beginning because it allowed me to keep my screenshots, analysis, and raw audio in one place. Now, I use it differently. I no longer need to transcribe everything. When I hear something I don't know, I can highlight the audio chunk and return to it later.

“What I like is that you have the flexibility to do both. If you want to transcribe every single word you can, and you can do it at your own pace. Audio Notetaker also makes transcription quick and easy.”



S: What were you using before Audio Notetaker?

KH: “In previous roles, I had used QuickTime with my laptop in front of me or a digital recorder. Using the digital recorder was so painful that I stopped very quickly.”

S: Is Audio Notetaker an effective interview tool?

KH: “It's very unobtrusive and that's good when you are working with people who are not used to being recorded or interviewed. I also like the image pane because this allows me to insert screenshots while the interviewee is talking. The other thing that is really useful is being able to export the text for my co-workers to see. If they want the notes from a particular interview I can get them quickly and easily.”

S: You mentioned a big project where you used Audio Notetaker?

KH: “Yes, we had to travel all around the world for a research project, and I wondered how I would capture all the international interviews and their new terminology. But, in the end, I decided to use Audio Notetaker and that was all I used.

“It was great because everybody that we were speaking to had really thick accents and with Audio Notetaker I could listen back, and slow the recording down to help me understand. At the end of the project, we had recorded and reviewed one-hour interviews with 89 participants, all with Audio Notetaker.”

*“Before discovering Audio Notetaker I was spending a lot more time reviewing long audio files to find interesting points and create UX insights. **Now I can review files in half the time** and only pay attention to key sections I have highlighted. Because the software is very visual, I can find exactly where something is by using the color highlighter and sectioning tools.”*

Kimberly Harvey, Design researcher, Google, California

S: What's the best thing about the software?

KH: “What sets Audio Notetaker apart is the visual aspect. Being able to see a recording in a series, with audio chunks and section breaks, makes it easy to locate the key information. Being able to organize and annotate a recording live is really important.”

S: Any final thoughts?

KH: “I just keep thinking, ‘Oh man, if I’d had this in college, life would have been so much easier’.”



How does Sonocent Audio Notetaker work?

1- Recorded or imported audio is visualised phrase-by-phrase as coloured chunks, which you can quickly navigate, edit and organise.

2- Colour highlight chunks instead of writing things down. Use colour to extract audio, images and text into new projects.

3- Add notes, summaries and transcriptions.

4- Import images, slides and PDF documents.

5- Export your project as text documents, music files or videos.



About Sonocent Audio Notetaker

Sonocent Audio Notetaker combines audio, color-highlighting, text, images, and presentation slides in a single workspace. By breaking up speech from audio recordings phrase-by-phrase, the software's visual interface for speech makes audio as easy to access and manipulate as text. It enables users to take comprehensive, meaningful records of interviews, notes, minutes, and more. Sonocent is already being used by over **75,000 people**.

How to find out more

For more information about Sonocent Audio Notetaker, email sales@sonocent.com or visit our website.

www.sonocent.com/en/the_software/audio_notetaker

