

Is Speech Recognition Software a Viable Option for your Office?

In the past year speech recognition software has come a long way. This is mostly due to the increased processing speed of the Pentium IIIs which allows the software to perform the complex computations required. At this time the speech software product with the greatest accuracy is Dragon *NaturallySpeaking* Professional 6.0, probably the best known product on the market today. The accuracy of this product, when used with a processor that has 450 megahertz or greater, is impressive. Dictating at speeds of approximately 100 to 150 words per minute, you can expect on the average 0 to 4 errors in accuracy. When you add the use of macros controlled by voice commands, it is possible to improve the user's productivity.

What will ensure the successful implementation of speech recognition software?

- Adequate System Requirements
- Adequate Training
- Dictation Style
- Proper Creation of Voice Profile
- Motivation

What are the benefits?

- Reduction in computer related injuries
- Reduction in Worker's Compensation Costs
- Increase in Productivity (especially for slow typists)
- Voice enabling macros to individualize software to the user's needs

Who are the best candidates for speech recognition software?

- Anyone who has Repetitive Stress Injury (RSI) or pain when working at the computer
- Typists who have not memorized the keyboard
- Computer users who rely on macros
- Anyone who currently dictates to a dictation device (with the digital recorder, the wave file can be downloaded and transcribed directly).
- Anyone who is eager and interested in computing by voice

What computer tasks work best with speech recognition software?

- Document creation
- Creating or responding to e-mail
- Inputting text
- Editing text documents

What computer tasks don't work well with speech recognition software?

- Desktop publishing

- Graphic or design work
- Any mouse intensive tasks
- Some database intensive tasks

What are the costs and limitations?

- In order to achieve the increase in productivity desired, the user must account for the time it takes to learn to talk to the computer instead of using their hands.
- Speech software ranges in price. The most successful products tend to be more expensive. Specialized vocabularies, i.e. legal or medical, can be helpful but are more costly. As with most technologies, you get what you pay for.
- It is best to have a speech software specialist evaluate your office system to determine the viability of implementing speech software and to make adequate training recommendations.
- Short-cutting the initial cost of implementation can lead to poorly trained users who quickly become frustrated and abandon the software.