What is Voice Recognition, or Speech-to-Text?
Speech-to-Text, often called voice recognition, allows a user to assume command control of a computer and/or to enter text by dictating. Command control includes things like opening and saving files or reformatting text by speaking. Entering text through dictation allows a user to speak full sentences or even paragraphs and have the program “listen” and transcribe.

What are some of the benefits of Speech-to-Text?
- Ability to use the computer independently despite limited dexterity
- Reduction in eye strain – ability to look away from computer screen while composing
- Giving options to those who express themselves better by talking
- Letting people stand up and move away from the computer while dictating
- Time management – ex. composing into a digital recorder then letting software transcribe

Operating System Options
The Mac Operating System as well as Windows Vista and Windows 7 incorporate voice recognition as a mainstream option. This means that without buying extra software, many users are able to dictate papers and emails, even surf the web, all by voice.

In Windows, voice recognition is found in the Ease of Access Center.

Dragon is software that is made to work well with a variety of applications including all of the Microsoft office suite. It can also be used with portable devices. It has excellent recognition capabilities.

This program allows for playback of recorded dictation as well as an extensive vocabulary that can be further trained for specific terminology. Different versions range in price.

Tips for using Speech-to-Text?
- Speak clearly and naturally
- Don’t slow down or pause between words
- Use a quality microphone that is comfortable and properly adjusted
- Keep background noise to a minimum
- Create different training profiles for environments with different background noise levels
- Be willing to perform additional training to improve results
- Use keyboard and mouse as needed, especially at the beginning

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