



*2004 Portable Customer
Survey Results*

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NextUp Customer Surveys – Taking the Pulse of the Portable User Market

As vital contributors to our products and their constant evolution and improvement, the customers at NextUp provide our most important feedback. With their insightful and intelligent input, and their often helpful suggestions on improvements, our customers are the source of NextUp's strength -- and its commitment to service.

We are always actively searching for new ways to improve our products, our customer service, and the flexibility of our text-to-speech tool *TextAloud 2.0*. While *TextAloud* has been well known as a valuable tool for PC users, increasing data from our customers began to show us that a large percentage of our customers were also using the program in conjunction with their portable devices. This has enabled them to "listen" to everything from eBooks, to study material, to work notes, websites, e-mails or articles – on the go, and from the convenience of their iPods, Rios, iRivers, and other popular portable devices!

With this in mind, NextUp recently conducted a series of online surveys with our *TextAloud* customers who use portable devices in order to gather feedback on their use of *TextAloud* with their portables, and to discover ways in which we could continue to make the product more useful and accessible to this exciting and rapidly growing marketplace. Read on!

Praise for *TextAloud* from Portable Device Users

I use *TextAloud* for tech-related articles off the web -- I simply select the text I want and then create an MP3 file for my iPod.

I download lessons and listen while I work -- I'm a much better audio learner, and my understanding of my lessons has increased dramatically.

I find that I am well informed on any topic I use *TextAloud* to "read." It's one of the most groundbreaking and significant programs I own -- it keeps me company and teaches me on my long drives.

I actually signed up for *TextAloud* in grad school -- we had a class that required reading many articles off the web every day. So I would basically grab the articles off the web, use *TextAloud* to rip them to MP3, and listen to them on the commute to class every other day. It was great -- I actually recommended it to a coworker for the same purpose, and he bought the software too, and really liked the application.

Whenever I come across an article I may not have time to read, I put it into *TextAloud*. I also use Internet book archives to create my own audio books.

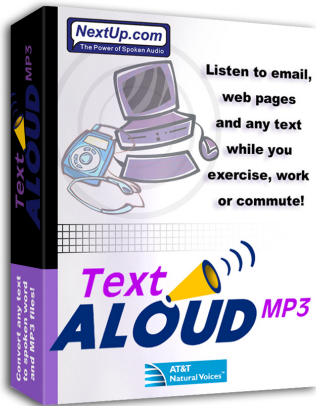
The best text-to-speech I have found, and I've been researching/testing for years.

I use it for my study notes pre-read. I convert the text (from PDFs) via MS Word (to add pauses etc) to a text script. TA then currently splits the one big "script" into sections which I then use the batch converter to convert to audio. I use Winamp to play the text on my laptop, and also dub the current week to minidisc to play in the car, etc.

I've found that when you're driving on the highway, and are sleepy, that listening to an audiobook is much more effective than music to stay awake. Because I drive a lot, I do this often. It's a great program -- the best I've ever bought.

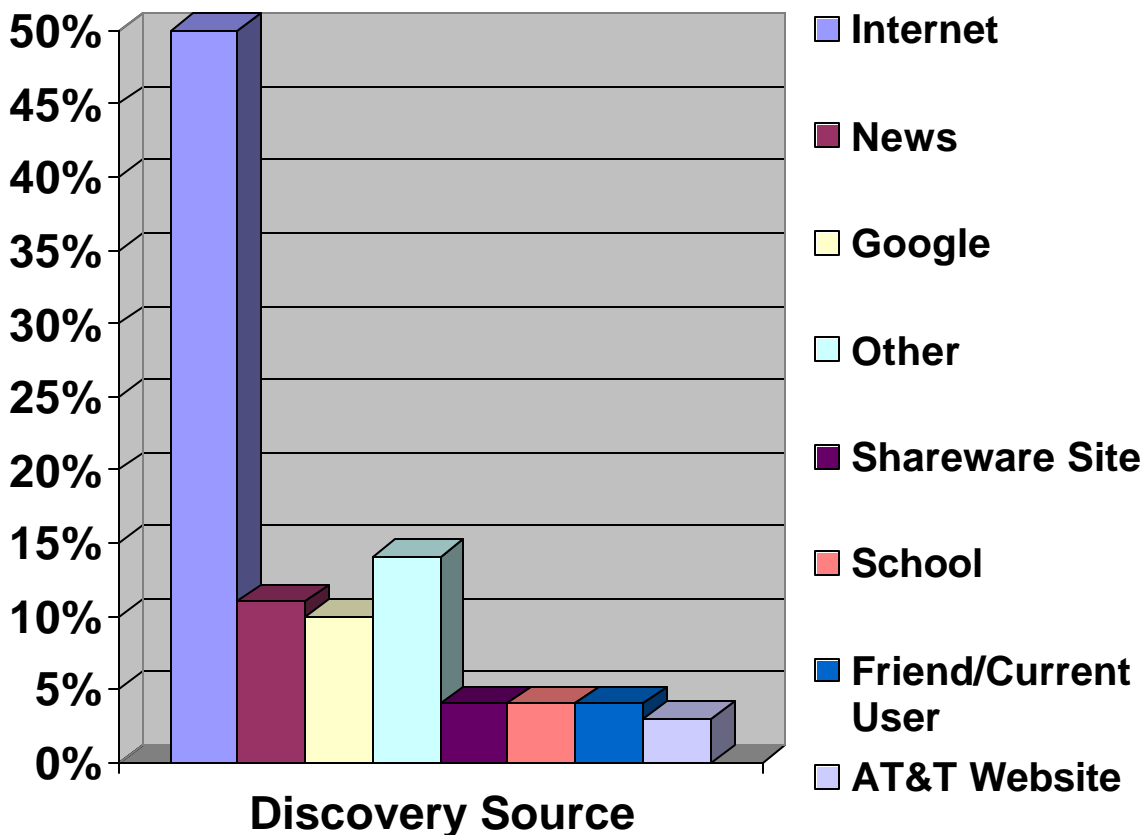
I use it to listen to eBooks, English, French and German books for language learning. I gradually learn pronunciation of spoken words and study at the same time. I find *TextAloud* to be an excellent program to use.

TextAloud 2004 Survey Results



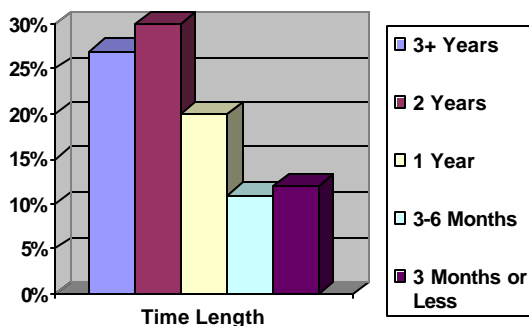
From a survey base of approximately 150 *TextAloud* customers, following are their answers to our questions about *TextAloud*, its use with Portable Devices, their portable brand preferences, uses, and much more:

1. Where did you hear about *TextAloud*?



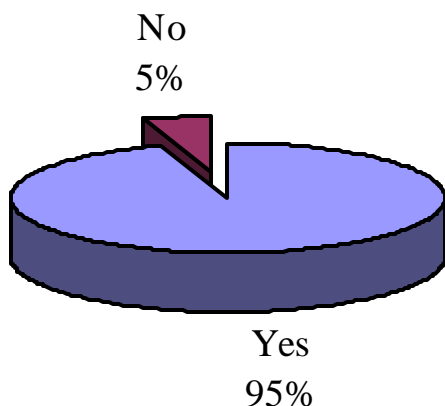
As the chart on this page aptly demonstrates, the Internet is an overwhelming favorite resource for customers seeking more information about text-to-speech products.

2. How long have you been using *TextAloud*?



Most respondents using *TextAloud* for portable use are longtime users. More than 75% of respondents have used *TextAloud* for a year or longer – with over 50% our faithful customers for at least two years.

3. Were you aware initially that *TextAloud* was capable of saving text to audio files?



Most users – an overwhelming 95 percent of respondents – were already aware of the text-to-audio capabilities that set *TextAloud* apart!

It's great for all the newsletters I get by e-mail. Also, as a lawyer, if I get a contract or other document that requires a complete but only cursory inspection, *TextAloud* can be great for that.

I get news articles from Spanish newspapers and then convert them to speech with *TextAloud*. I also convert technical articles and using your pronunciation editor I have been able to study a lot of technical articles about web services, new technology, etc. As soon as your *TextAloud* 2.0 was released, I got the latest version and was very pleased with the newly added features. Thanks for making my iPod a great learning tool!

I create study documents that I listen to, as well as question and answer sessions for helping me to recall information. It's an excellent way to study, either on my MP3 player or in the car using an MP3 converter.

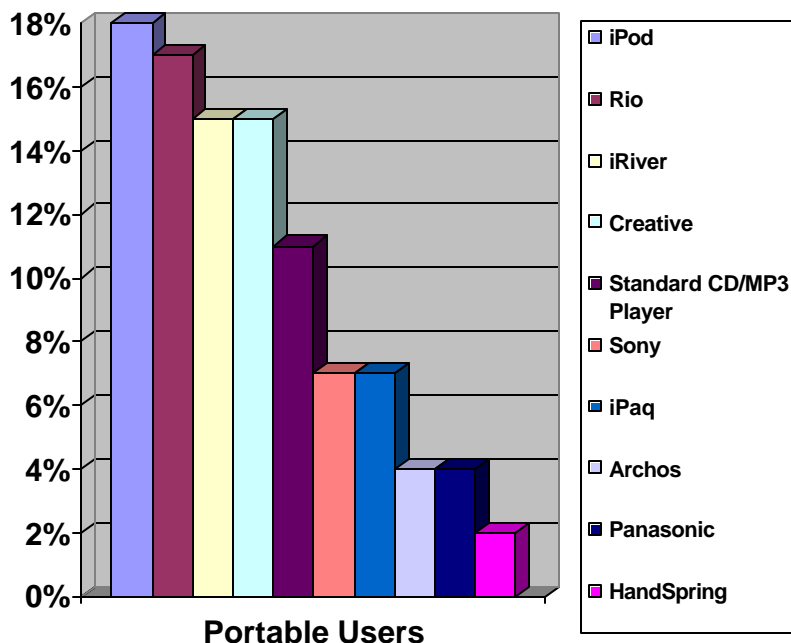
TextAloud is a killer program. In my area, the radio is drive. *TextAloud* combined with my MP3 player gives me options -- which is what the PC is all about!

I'm a graduate student in an online degree program. For each unit, the professor posts lectures online. I convert these lectures to text, and then listen to them during my commute. I have a one-hour daily commute to work so I can study each week-long unit's notes during my ride.

TextAloud is a great timesaver, allows me to listen to course material or classic books from the Gutenberg press, even the writings of Sir Winston Churchill or Ben Franklin to enrich my life. I can do all this while driving to work or working out in the gym -- to date I have listened to more than 10,000 pages of documents, along with writing more than 27 graduate papers thanks to *TextAloud*. *TextAloud* has enabled me to maintain some semblance of normality in my very busy life. Great product!

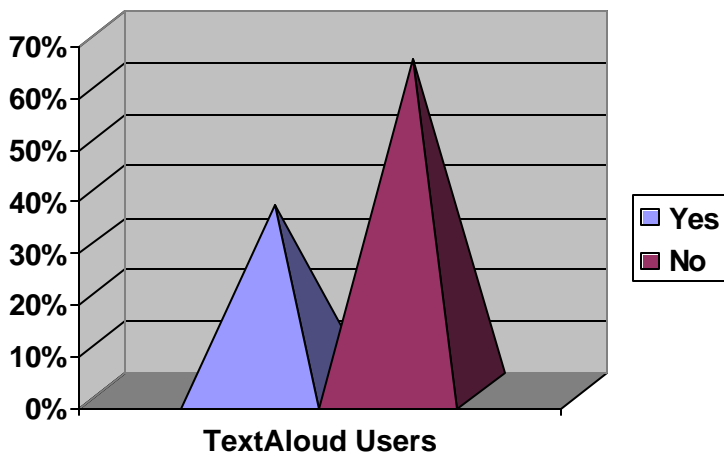
My work can be very repetitive. Listening to text read by *TextAloud*, however, keeps my brain active and keeps me from boredom. I listen to essays and writings from the Internet by people that I find interesting.

4. What brand of portable audio device do you use?



With iPod in a slight lead, a rich array of portable brands help *TextAloud* users get the job done.

5. Did you originally purchase your portable device primarily for music use?



MP3 players and iPods are all the rage these days. Yet perhaps one of the most surprising results of the survey was the fact that most *TextAloud* users – nearly 70 percent – purchased their portables solely for text use!

An outstanding product. I listen to transcripts of speeches and interviews that I've downloaded .

I like to listen to various information from the Net on my MP3 player, or my own documents in Word that I'll want to edit.

Sometimes I don't want a female voice on my voicemail recordings, for safety reasons. *TextAloud* allows me to leave natural-sounding male voicemail greetings as a safety alternative.

I can't imagine how *TextAloud* could be any better! I'd been searching for a good text-to-speech application for over 5 years. Your combination of software and voice technology surpasses anything I could have imagined. Thanks so much for all your hard work -- it's appreciated.

I use *TextAloud* to listen to eBooks for fun as well as journal articles. Some things come from Questia.com research site, media outlets, scans I do myself.

I get eBooks from school. Using *TextAloud* allows me to "read" books while doing other things instead of just sitting at the computer to do so.

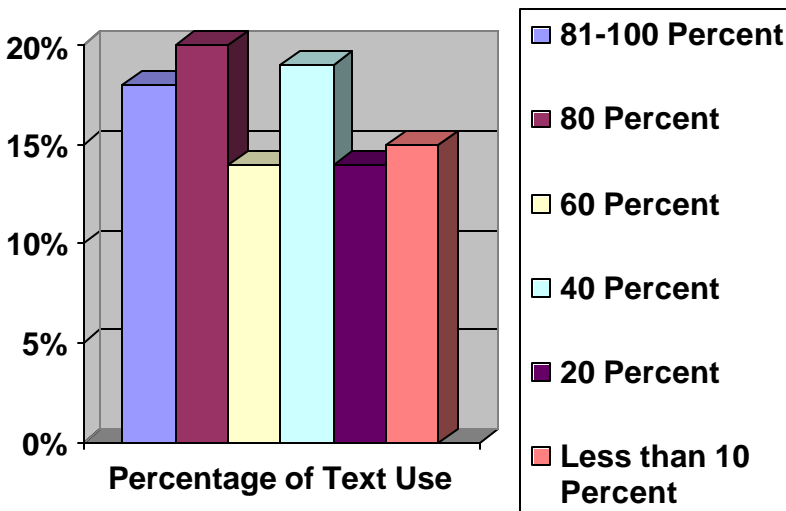
I listen to books from the Gutenberg website, split them into pieces of 15 kb apiece, then convert each to an MP3 for listening on my portable. I can then enjoy a story in the car while commuting -- the amount of books I have read this way in the last year, and without effort, is unbelievable.

I listen to textbooks, journal articles, work-related docs. I really like the way it performs on PDFs.

I use *TextAloud* to listen to text mostly on the bicycle or public transportation, or sometimes will burn text files to CD for listening in my car.

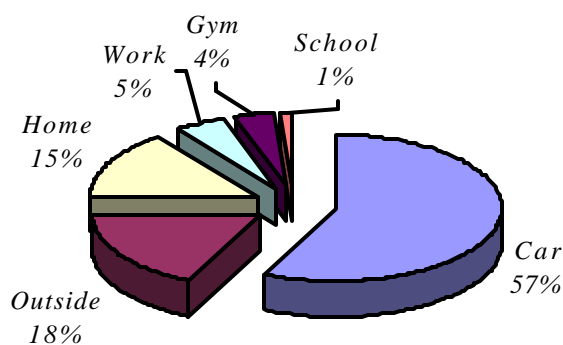
I used *TextAloud* throughout my final year at University to obtain my law degree. I am now studying for my bar. There's a lot of reading required when studying Law, and *TextAloud* makes it possible for a dyslexic like me to keep up. I am a mature student (40), and when I left school nobody thought I could secure the lowest qualifications. PC's were the first major step in making my achievements possible -- and *TextAloud* was the second!

6. What percentage of your portable device use is listening to text?



The results? Surprising. More than 65% of all portable users who responded to our survey use their MP3 players for significant listening to text-to-speech documents – and nearly 20% of them do so 81 to 100% of the time! The results are clear: MP3 players aren't just for music anymore.

7. Where do you most often listen to text on your portable device?



Those portable *TextAloud* users really love their cars! Survey results to left clearly show that today's portable users are always seeking to maximize their time, to listen to their text while they drive, work out, or go for a run.

I live in Quebec, and speaking French all the time, I knew this software could help me a lot to learn English. So I use *TextAloud* to listen to any kind of text, English or French, when I go to sleep.

I drive a lot, so I use *TextAloud* to listen to online periodicals, technical material, news science stuff, and jokes while in my car. *TextAloud* allows me to make productive use of my driving time. I am vastly more well-informed than I was before I started using TA - I am able to learn and to consume so much more information than ever before. Thank you for your wonderful product! I tell lots of people about *TextAloud*.

I work full-time while going to grad school. This means I put in a fair amount of time commuting, but I have relatively little time for actually sitting and reading my assignments. *TextAloud* allows me to transfer my readings into MP3 files and do my "reading" while I drive!

I'm interested in reading old classic books that are in the public domain. I convert them to *TextAloud* files and transfer to my iPod for listening while I walk, shop, drive, or relax. It's the most important piece of software that I use. Great program!

I listen to texts on my one-hour bus commute each day.

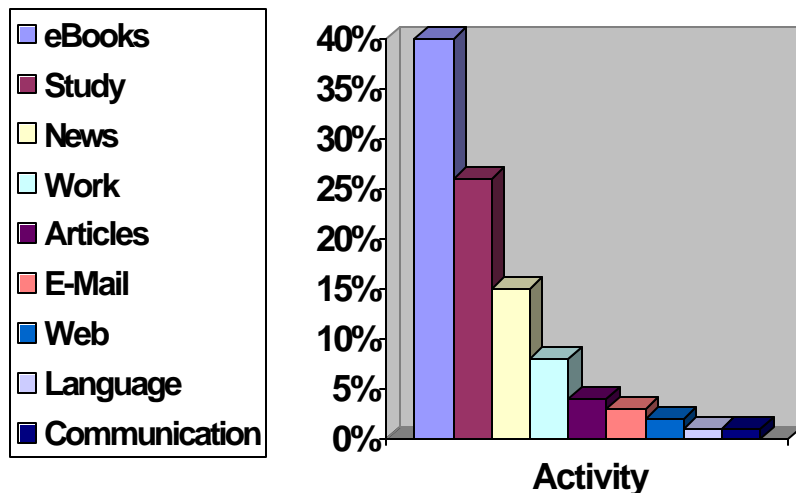
I create eBooks from etext from Project Gutenberg and other sites. I listen to a lot of ancient Roman history and fiction, science fiction, and works of Tolkien or mystery novels.

I cut and paste articles from the web relating to my studies and save them as audio files for use in my car and at home. I use it or driving directions as well, at times.

When I have a backlog of reading, I use *TextAloud* to save it as MP3 files and transfer those files to my iPod.

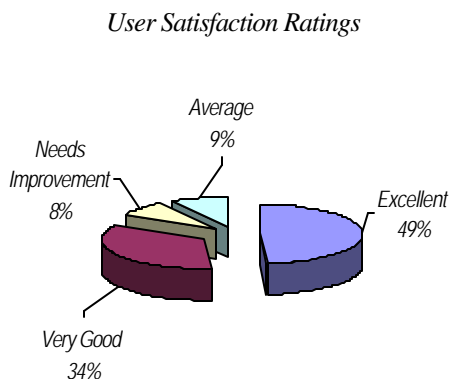
I have a reading disability, and *TextAloud* has helped me to get through Junior college and into UC Sacramento. I use *TextAloud* every day to scan my books and to turn them into audio files that I can listen to on the bus or anywhere I need to study. I am sure glad you guys are out there, and that your program was affordable, because most are so expensive. I never could have made it without *TextAloud* -- thank you!

8. What is your most important use of text-to-speech on your portable device?



eBooks, study, and news proved to be the most popular activities, with *TextAloud* increasing information retention and providing a unique way to ‘read’ for enjoyment’s sake.

9. How would you rate *TextAloud*?



The results speak loud and clear: More than 83% of portable respondents found *TextAloud* to be a Very Good or Excellent Product – with only 8 percent finding for ‘Needs Improvement.’ And NextUp is listening – always working on additional tools, functions and improvements to the software to make it even better.

I'm a law student and have used *TextAloud* to listen to cases and other legal materials while I drive.

I take a lot of advanced social dance classes and write up notes following the class on PC. Thanks to *TextAloud* I can convert these to MP3 and listen to them while I drive to each next week's class. It gives me a tremendous advantage in remembering patterns and techniques and greatly enhances the learning process. The numerous voices can distinguish changes in classes as I drive, and minimizes the need for interaction with the portable device.

My new Rio is excellent for listening to audio books, and features like bookmarks and the ability to pickup exactly where you stopped listening are two features that make it much better for listening to lengthy text or MP3 books. Now I don't have to split the book into chapters and fast forward to where I left off, as I had to do with my two previous players.

I first learned computer programming in the 1980s by listening to cassette versions of manuals I'd read or recorded. The education continues with *TextAloud* and Natural Voices, which now replace my cassette and voice. I slow the speed way down when I listen, too, to ensure that I can multitask my listening or other activity effectively.

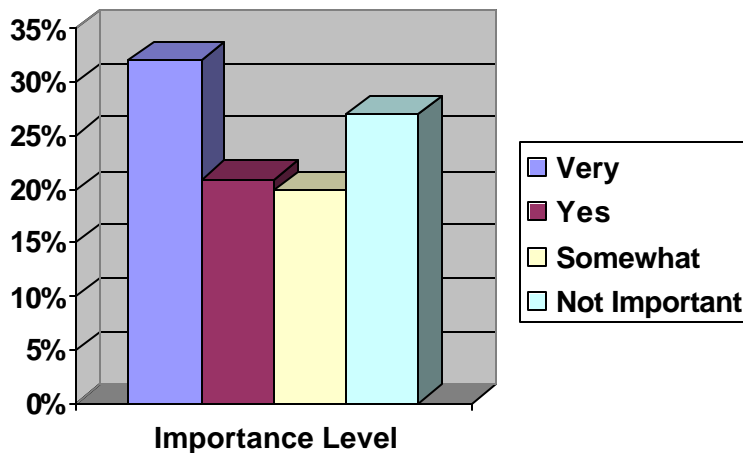
I'm not a great reader, and use *TextAloud* in reviewing the deliverables at work. I also use it to play my eBooks and it helps me in my writing. Sometimes hearing it read aloud can help me to identify problems in the writing that I would not have seen otherwise.

I listen to a lot of different news clips, from CNN's daily briefings to CNET to Google news bulletins on many different topics.

Being able to quickly clip and write the voices to a chip is very important, and is one of the main reasons I purchased *TextAloud*.

I scan mostly nonfiction books using FineReader Pro. I save the scans and documents in Word format, and change the chapters into MP3 files using *TextAloud*. I then have a great audio experience thanks to *TextAloud*!

10. Is having a variety of Text to Speech Voices important to you?



The chart above shows that portable *TextAloud* users certainly find access to a variety of text to speech voices to be important. And for good reason! A pleasing voice can immeasurably enhance the listening experience. Luckily, *TextAloud* offers access to a wide range of vocal styles and choices.

11. What are your Favorite Text to Speech Voices?

More than 73% of our survey respondents were wild about **AT&T Natural Voices**, while 18% were dedicated fans of the voices provided by **NeoSpeech**.

5% of users, meanwhile, enjoyed the voice options provided by **Microsoft**, while 4% chose other voice options.

I have many more hours to listen while walking, driving and doing things around the house than I have time to sit and read. I therefore use *TextAloud* instead -- and also save on eye strain! I have almost stopped listening to the radio -- why listen to the troubles of the world when I can be reading a book I missed in my youth?

Listening to eBooks, web pages, e-mails and other downloaded text off-line I listen primarily to audio books and then many things I get from the internet -- radio programs, news, interviews, and articles, then listen to them using *TextAloud*.

I use *TextAloud* for books and short stories I get off the web. I love audio books, yet there are many great books that are not available in audiobook form. Using *TextAloud* I can find a text version and listen to it on my MP3 player.

I record news articles from tech sources, mostly news.com, then burn them to disc and listen while I travel. I'll also occasionally copy stories to my tungsten T3. My goal is to use *TextAloud* to make use of my down-time while I'm driving.

I typically convert web-based books to voice in order to hear stories on my drives. Good product.

I use it in conjunction with news articles from various websites and scanning--OCR, etc. Just an outstanding program. I consider it to be my most important computer application. Thanks for the great product and great support!

I'm listening to articles and presentations from Christian theology schools. Public domain books have also been a favorite. The *TextAloud* program has been a great joy -- anytime I'm working alone or just have some alone time, I'm listening.

I use *TextAloud* for NewsGroup messages, eBooks (both technical and literature -- mainly Sci-Fi), e-mail, some text documents, and manuals.

2004 Survey Conclusions

The 2004 *TextAloud* Portable Customer Survey offered some surprising results – and clearly spotlighted the exciting potential offered by the portable Text-to-Speech user market.

It also enabled us at NextUp to make sure we're providing the best possible service, support and software tools to teach, entertain, or simply to enrich the listening experiences of our customers.

We're listening, too. And we're already using the survey's results as we look to how we can enhance or improve our next products, releases, and updates.

Stay tuned!

About this Survey:

- Conducted by NextUp – The Power of Spoken Audio
- Results received between November 15 and December 2, 2004
- The survey was conducted online
- All numbers were rounded to nearest whole number.

2004 Survey Comments: Even More TextAloud Raves and Reviews

Praise for *TextAloud* from Users in the Workplace

I have a professor who frequently e-mails articles or appropriate quotes to his classes, most often enclosed within the text of the e-mails themselves. Now I can relax and listen to these e-mailed articles or discussions using *TextAloud* 2.0 in conjunction with my iPod -- and I can do so without having to do so with a laptop in my lap. Also, using *TextAloud* 2.0 in conjunction with my iPod means that I can now listen to text anywhere I go, at work, play, on walks, or while I'm relaxing -- without even having a laptop in tow.

I have a 1-hour commute each way, which takes a big chunk out of my day. I use my iPod in combination with *TextAloud* and Audible.com to make good use of that time. I listen to technical documents & reports, which I get from the web and email, that I don't have time to read at work. I also listen to stock market reports to help me keep up with and choose new investments. And I listen to email newsletters that I receive, for which *TextAloud* is indispensable. *TextAloud* is great, and I've recommended it to several friends who also have long commutes.

I have far less time for reading since I moved to an area where I drive to work instead of taking the train. To recapture that time, I convert all my software journals to MP3 using *TextAloud* and listen in the car or while working out. I download a chapter then can listen to it easily.

I am using *TextAloud* to study for a Project Management Certification. I take the PDF version of the book, save as TXT, and edit so that it is understandable, removing images, changing bullets to numbers, adding pauses, etc.

I'm a corporate trainer, and use *TextAloud* for e-mail and training -- it really helps me absorb info -- and there's no eye strain! By the time I am ready to give a presentation to the class, I know the source material backwards and forwards.

Praise for *TextAloud* from Users with Visual Impairments or Speaking Disabilities

I have macular degeneration and get around OK but I am for most practical purposes, blind. I use TA to prepare audio books for people who can no longer see. I also use TA to listen to my e-mail and to read scanned letters.

Kids are usually sensitive to voices from computers -- they don't like those computer-sounding voices and it's the one thing that will stop them from listening. So voices are very important when dealing with kids with disabilities, and you guys rock! As for myself, mostly I listen to chapters of books or stuff I don't have time to read. Thanks to *TextAloud* for being part of this very important work -- helping kids with disabilities bypass their disabilities and become functioning students.

I am visually impaired, so this is the only way I can read while I travel to and from work.

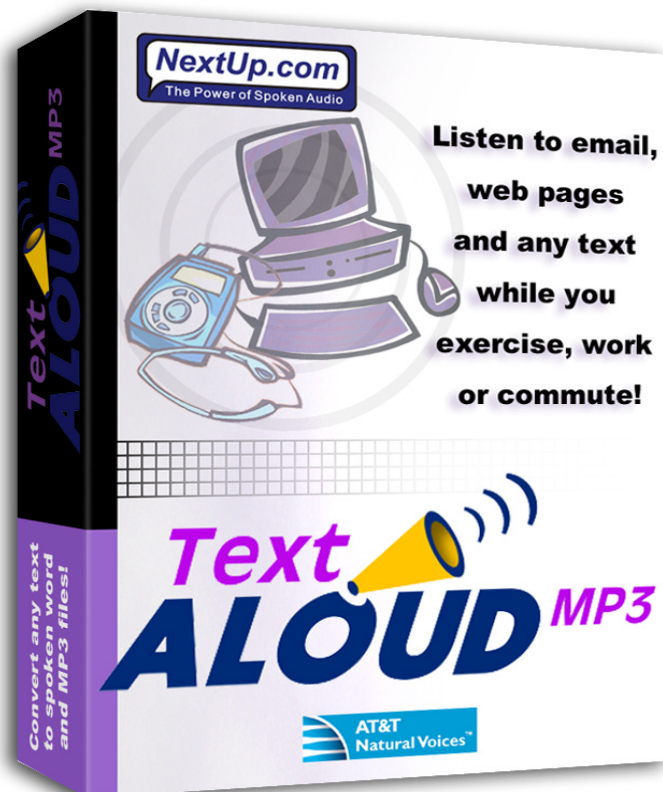
I don't use it to listen, but in factto speak, by typing in material and then pressing "speak."

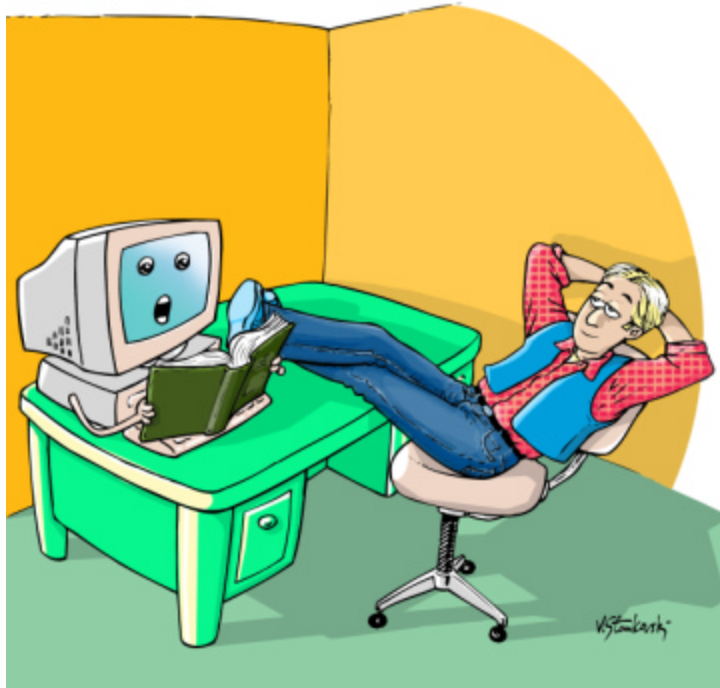
I have an eye disease, so listening to books is my first choice. I most often scan my books into the computer and then read them aloud. I am also a writer and listen to all of my research using *TextAloud*.

I have low vision and use a CCTV to read. On the computer I use ZoomText to magnify the display. However, lengthy texts strain my eyes -- I prefer to listen to it instead. I originally purchased *TextAloud* to turn eBooks into audio books, as well as articles for the University.

I use *TextAloud* to listen to newspapers that I subscribe to online. This has also proved to be a true gift to someone else I know whose sight is severely impaired, and who cannot read anymore.

TextAloud Helps students with learning disabilities use the audio format to listen to their textbooks while reading them.





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