

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – SEPTEMBER 20, 2005

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Writers Find a 21st Century Muse in *TextAloud*

Text-to-Speech software marks the latest trend for proofreading and character development

CLEMMONS, NC – As members of an often solitary and difficult profession, most writers have probably wished for a writing partner on call – someone able to read their own words back to them, to test for style and syntax. Luckily, NextUp’s ***TextAloud*** is the next best thing – an award-winning Text-to-Speech program that does the job easily, affordably, and with surprising flexibility. *TextAloud* converts text into spoken audio for listening on a PC, and can also save to MP3/Windows Media files for the added option of easy playback on-the-go, from iPod to car and beyond. Thanks to an easy and streamlined program interface, along with a wide array of premium voices, writers are turning to Text-to-Speech programs like *TextAloud* in ever-increasing numbers, as the final vital step in creating their prose.

“Having long appreciated Word Processing as a truly transformative technology, writers today continue to seek out new software applications that can prove especially helpful to them,” comments **Rick Ellis**, President of NextUp.com. “It’s therefore very gratifying to hear from so many writers who find that a quick listen to their compositions with *TextAloud* is now an essential part of their writing process.”

Praise from Writers who use *TextAloud*

Tom Hannon

“Everything I write gets the run-through with *TextAloud* now,” comments fiction writer Tom Hannon. “It is as important as running a spell-check.” It’s not uncommon, when proofreading from a screen or printed page, to miss sentence fragments or improper word choices. However, “with *TextAloud*, you can hear when something doesn’t sound right,” he adds. “It’s so easy to use. It is the greatest writing tool since the word processor.”

Kathryn Caskie

“I use *TextAloud* every day when I am writing,” comments multi-published fiction author Kathryn Caskie, whose latest book, *A Lady’s Guide to Rakes*, was released on September 1, 2005 for Warner Books. “In fact, when I was recently out of town and didn’t have access to my favorite voice ‘Audrey,’ I wasn’t nearly as productive.”

Caskie finds the program valuable not only for its ambiance (listening to British-accented voice ‘Audrey’ helps her to get into the feel of the English characters in her historical romance in progress), but also for its value as a proofreading tool. “Most writers read their work aloud to themselves in order to make sure the dialogue sounds natural, as well as to catch typos and to ensure that their prose flows. However, by time many authors get to this point, they’ve likely read any given passage several times. So, too often, we read what ‘*should*’ be on that page, not necessarily what actually appears. With *TextAloud*, I can just sit back with a cup of coffee and listen to my book read back to me. I follow along on the computer screen and correct any typos, and will also pause instantly if a particular line of dialogue doesn’t sing.”

She even uses *TextAloud* to save her chapters in MP3 format, loading them onto her iPod for later listening at her convenience, whether in the car or at a child’s soccer game. “I’ve used *TextAloud* for two published books so far,” she comments. “I love the program, and rave about it to all of my author friends.”

Sherryl King-Wilds

Book Reviewer and fantasy novelist Sherryl King-Wilds values *TextAloud*’s usefulness when editing her novels, as well as in writing her book reviews, and has high praise for the program’s edit function in particular. “The ability to highlight a certain section of text and hear it without having to listen to endless blocks of ‘wordage’ gives me flexibility and saves me much-needed time,” she says.

In her fiction writing, as well as her book reviews and articles for the webzine *Fantasy Novel Review*, the program alerts King-Wilds to awkward language – or worse, “the horrible typo,” and

allows her to correct such mistakes instantly. “I can fix things then and there,” she comments, “without having to worry so much about my editor's flowing red-ink pen.” For her, *TextAloud* has proven to be “a time saver, an editor, a partner – even a preservationist of sanity” when deadlines approached.

TextAloud's Benefits for Writers:

- A highly affordable and effective TTS program available for free demo and tryout via the web (www.NextUp.com)
- “Reads aloud” with a wide selection of surprisingly natural, enjoyable, and very human-sounding premium voices (gone are the days of the "robotic-sounding" TTS programs). Users can even choose accents and languages from a diverse assortment of world regions.
- Gives the writer the ability to hear his or her own writing aloud, to test for flow and rhythm
- Helps the user catch spelling or word usage errors -- mistakes that may sneak past if simply relying on visual proofing or a spell-check
- Effortlessly converts text to speech in MP3 format for playback in iPods, Pocket PCs, PDA's and other portable devices for listening “on the go”
- Assists fiction writers by giving them the chance to hear their own works aloud, listening for style, rhythm, and flow
- Fiction writers can assign different voices to help with character development.
- Assists journalists or nonfiction writers in taking note of facts to check or leads to follow up on
- Ultimately, the use of *TextAloud* or other TTS programs will help the writer to streamline workflow and increase productivity

About *TextAloud*

TextAloud is a full-featured Text-to-Speech tool offering direct support for Word, PDF and HTML formats, as well as advanced pronunciation tools, an Internet Explorer Plug-In for easy listening of favorite web pages – and more.

Hailed by critics and users alike, *TextAloud* is priced at just \$29.95, and is compatible with systems using Windows[®] 98, NT, 2000 and XP. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via <http://www.NextUp.com>. NextUp.com also offers *TextAloud* with optional premium voices from **AT&T Natural Voices[™]**, **NeoSpeech^â** and **Cepstral[®]** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include English with U.S., U.K., and Indian accents, as well as Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text-to-Speech software for consumers, business customers, educators, and those with visual impairment or learning disabilities. In addition to *TextAloud*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software including talking personal “news agent” *NewsAloud[™]*, *WeatherAloud[™]* (a weather application that lets users select and listen to personalized weather forecasts), and stock updates and related news headlines read aloud thanks to *StocksAloud[™]*. Most recently, NextUp released *NextUp Talker 1.0*, an easy and affordable program that allows people who have lost their voices to use the latest in high-quality computer voices to communicate with others.

Note to Editors:

Evaluation copies of *TextAloud* are currently available upon request. To receive a review copy, or for more information on NextUp.com or *TextAloud*, please contact **Rick Ellis** at rdellis@nextup.com. Meanwhile, for images, logos, box shots, or other information or artwork on *TextAloud*, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or admitchell@nextup.com.

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