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***TextAloud* Chosen by Wisconsin Cooperative Educational Service Agency**

School District Selects Text to Speech Program to Assist Students

CLEMMONS, NC – Wisconsin's **CESA 5** (Cooperative Educational Service Agency 5, <http://www.cesa5.k12.wi.us>) is the latest among a long list of U.S. schools and districts nationwide to choose NextUp's ***TextAloud*** to help its students listen and learn. Located in South Central Wisconsin, CESA 5 encompasses major portions of Adams, Columbia, Juneau, Marquette, Portage, Sauk, Waushara and Wood Counties, as well as portions of Waupaca, Green Lake, Dane and Dodge. The agency encompasses 12 counties within Wisconsin and serves thirty-five school districts representing approximately 50,000 students – thousands of whom have discovered *TextAloud* to help make learning easier than ever.

TextAloud is an award-winning Text to Speech program from NextUp.com that converts text into spoken audio for listening on a PC, or for easy export to audio files for playback on portable media players such as the iPod (R) and more. With its elegantly simple program interface and wide assortment of premium voices, more educators every day are turning to *TextAloud* to help students learn.

Program Support Teacher **JoEllen Waddell** of CESA 5 is a perfect example. Six years ago, Waddell wanted to encourage the teachers she worked with to increase the use of assistive technology for students with disabilities. So she conducted an extensive search for a solution which had to meet two important criteria: it had to be easy for teachers, professionals and students to use, and it had to be cost-effective, within the financial reach of most school districts. She soon found NextUp's simple and inexpensive software program *TextAloud*, which fit both criteria and has since become the cornerstone of her assistive technology programs at CESA 5.

"*TextAloud* is definitely the 'on-the-go' program for students with disabilities," comments Waddell. "Most programs sold to districts with 'screen readers' are stationary, found only on specific computers in the Special Ed room, where children many times do not get to spend enough time for quality reading or study." However, *TextAloud*'s flexibility turns text into an easy to export sound file for listening anywhere, whether on a laptop, portable music player, or home PC. "With so many of our kids having iPods and iTunes, their ability to download and organize such information is truly child's play," adds Waddell. "Now they can listen to chapters, review daily notes, and review for tests on their own time and in their own preferred study environments." To encourage access in as many environments as possible, the agency also gives parents information on how to get *TextAloud* for their own computers, as well.

CESA 5 also uses *TextAloud* for students in its vision program, who are able to listen to assigned chapters while on the bus. Waddell notes: "Time that used to be just 'lost' for a blind student can now be put to use." CESA 5 purchased *TextAloud* with optional premium voices from AT&T Natural Voices (TM) and also NeoSpeech (R).

"The active support of students and educators has always been one of our main goals as software creators," says **Rick Ellis**, President of NextUp.com. "We're so pleased when agencies such as Wisconsin's CESA 5 choose our program to help students, whether visually or learning-disabled, or simply to assist students in making the most of their study time."

Waddell even uses *TextAloud* herself, in her own commutes: "As a Program Support Teacher, I log about 30K miles per year traveling between my rural districts in central Wisconsin," she comments. "I have stacks of research I should be reading -- important information for my job -- and little time to sit at my desk and study. However, thanks to *TextAloud*, I can scan any important information and then listen to it during my travels." She also has high praise for NextUp's technical support staff. "They're wonderful -- kind and understanding, and professional in the face of even my most knuckleheaded questions."

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 (R) 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 (TM)**, **NeoSpeech (R)**, **Nuance (R)** and **Cepstral (R)** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include US English, UK English, Indian Accent English, Scottish Accent English, French, Canadian French, Latin American Spanish, Castilian (European) Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Korean, Japanese, German, Italian, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, and Arabic.

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.

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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