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The Power of Spoken Audio

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NextUp's *TextAloud* a Vital Resource for Those with Aging Parents

Text to Speech Software Outperforms Expensive Alternatives for Visually Impaired

CLEMMONS, NC and JOLIET, IL -- **NextUp**'s *TextAloud* **(www.*TextAloud*.com)** software has made several headlines recently, thanks to its usefulness to the blind. Now, users with aging or visually impaired relatives are discovering its value as well. Easy to install even for PC novices, *TextAloud* is the perfect tool for those helping older relatives deal with an increasing loss of sight, enabling them to quickly, cheaply, and easily export e-mails, web pages, magazine articles, books and more, into spoken audio.

TextAloud most recently proved its usefulness to **Warren Scharbert** and his father, **Don Scharbert** of Joliet, Illinois. Don Scharbert is an active and knowledgeable longtime computer user with macular degeneration in one eye and a detached retina in the other. This leaves him with limited vision, and with screen magnifiers and other tools an increasingly necessary, frustrating part of life -- pages that might take seconds or minutes for sighted viewers, may take Don hours to read by magnifier. His son sought a better solution for him -- and found *TextAloud*, which not only integrated flawlessly with his father's existing PC programs, but quickly proved itself to be an invaluable support for Don's love of computing, bringing the web, e-mail, and more into spoken audio.

An award-winning program that converts text into spoken audio for listening on a PC or laptop, *TextAloud* can also save text to audio files for playback on portables like the iPod®, PocketPC®, and a wide range of other devices. Priced at just $29.95, *TextAloud* is simple for anyone with a PC, and has become popular for the visually impaired, who are increasingly turning to the program as their main source of Text to Speech.

As a computer user who enjoys everything from reading e-mail to surfing the web, despite the difficulties posed by his disability, Don Scharbert was delighted to discover *TextAloud.* Like many with visual disabilities, Don had tried and been disappointed by several other high-end programs, including one created to work as a magnifier and reader, which crashed his NetZero High-Speed and was incompatible with many of his PC's configurations. By contrast, *TextAloud* was able to integrate directly with *Internet Explorer*, and worked like a dream. This instantly simplified such tasks as surfing the 'Net, visiting his Church's website, and reading his e-mail.

"*TextAloud* has made the Internet enjoyable again," Don comments. "You just highlight the text and press Play -- can't get much simpler than that!" *TextAloud* also enables Don to read newsletters, online documents and PDFs with remarkable ease and quickness, even changing the voices depending on his mood. "Most of all, I'm so happy to be able to get my daily e-mails from friends and family again," he adds. "Before you spend lots of money on a text reader that promises the moon, try *TextAloud*, because it does what it says efficiently -- and without glitches." A free download trial of *TextAloud* is offered from the NextUp.com website (**www.NextUp.com**).

About *TextAloud*

TextAloud has been featured in *The New York Times, PC Magazine, Writer's Digest*, on CNN, 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, XP and Vista. NextUp.com offers *TextAloud* with optional premium voices, including numerous accents and languages, from **AT&T Natural Voices (TM), NeoSpeech (R), Nuance (R), Acapela (R)** and **Cepstral (R)** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via **http://www.NextUp.com**.

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 or vocal impairment, or learning disabilities.

In addition to *TextAloud*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. *NewsAloud*™ is a talking personal "news agent" that finds the stories users want, and then reads them aloud or to portable audio files. *WeatherAloud*™ is a weather application that lets users select and listen to personalized weather forecasts, while *StocksAloud*™ reads stock updates and related news headlines aloud for specific companies of interest. NextUp *Talker* is 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. Most recently, NextUp introduced a new text reader, *AbleReader*, available with the AT&T Natural Voices™ for use on Mac computers. Information on *AbleReader* is available at **http://www.AbleReader.com**.

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 publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via *Admitchell@Nextup.com*.

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