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TextAloud Helps Professionals Succeed, Despite Dyslexia *Popular Text to Speech Program is Effective Tool for Overcoming Reading Disorders*

CLEMMONS, NC – Dyslexia is a reading disability suffered by millions of all ages, professions, and walks of life. Recent statistics indicate that as many as one in nine schoolchildren suffers from dyslexia or a related learning disorder. Characterized by problems with reading, writing, and spelling, this makes it especially challenging for those afflicted to read, learn or retain information. However, Text to Speech (TTS) tools like *TextAloud* from **NextUp Technologies** (<http://www.Nextup.com>) can allow many dyslexics to bypass the visual components of dyslexia by instead listening to their reading aloud via computer, iPod, or other portable audio device. The program is priced starting at just \$29.95 and allows anyone with a PC to simply and affordably export text from books, websites, and other documents into natural, truly human-sounding speech.

Many individuals who overcome dyslexia on a daily basis to succeed in high-stress careers have done so by directly utilizing *TextAloud* as a powerful tool for both reading and comprehension:

Shannon (Bay Area Lawyer)

Shannon is a successful Bay Area lawyer who is also dyslexic. “I have a visual short-term memory deficit,” she comments, “so I can spend hours trying to read the same thing over and over again, while this way *TextAloud* gives me the continuity I need for good comprehension much more quickly.” She adds, “I often take cases home because of the volume, tidy up the DOC files, and then save them to audio files that I can listen to on my iPod while looking over the cases visually at the same time.”

She also uses *TextAloud* to read the opposing side's briefs and memoranda. "I'll get a 50-page lawsuit, scan it in, OCR it, and put in on my iPod." She also uses the program to proof her own briefs by ear, listening to the drafts to make sure they properly respond to the opposition.

"If I put in the time to use *TextAloud* even on handwritten or faxed documents (which can be more time-consuming due to OCR), it's still worth it, as I know I'm going to understand what I read," Shannon comments. "It makes me a lot more sure of myself when it comes to writing my responses, and talking to a judge (or my superiors). *TextAloud* itself is very useful for my type of learning disability – for someone with visual problems, but great listening skills."

For others with dyslexia using *TextAloud*, Shannon recommends that they take the time to use the program's useful pronunciation editor, for fine-tuning pronunciations to the user's own individual specifications (especially useful for vocations involving complex or unusual words). She also recommends using *TextAloud* in conjunction with iTunes, as the program offers the option of viewing the text as 'lyrics.' "It's a great place to put the text in so you can refer to it if you need to while you listen," she adds, choosing Crystal from AT&T Natural Voices™ as her Premium Voice of choice.

Overall, *TextAloud* has enabled Shannon to succeed in a highly demanding career despite her dyslexia. "I really, really, really couldn't function in my current setting without *TextAloud*," she says. "I'd read aloud to myself, use a crazy amount of highlighters, maybe record myself or whatever, and still not be as successful." Thanks to *TextAloud*, Shannon's dyslexia is a nuisance, not an impediment to her success. "You can be dyslexic and a good lawyer," she adds, "thanks to *TextAloud*."

Sal (Wisconsin Electrical Engineer)

Sal is another successful professional -- an Electrical Engineer in Appleton, Wisconsin -- who successfully overcomes his dyslexia every day thanks to *TextAloud*, and who has also used the program to pursue his goals in graduate studies, as well.

Sal first discovered *TextAloud* when taking graduate classes online via the University of Phoenix. "My apprehension with starting an online course was due to the fact that it was heavily dependent on reading," he comments. "A great majority of the information in the UOP (University Of Phoenix) system is electronic text documentation. My Dyslexia limits the amount of information I can read and comprehend while still maintaining an effective time schedule." But then came *TextAloud*. "*TextAloud* allows me to copy and paste text from an electronic document and listen to what is written," he adds. "I can also increase the reading speed so that I can listen to written information faster. I've adapted to listening more than visual reading, and my rate of audio processing and comprehension is much better."

As he started writing papers for his MBA courses, Sal found it increasingly useful to have *TextAloud* read his paper out loud so he could hear poorly written areas of the paper as well as misspelled or incorrect words. "Another aspect of my dyslexia is my spelling," he comments. "I depend heavily on the spell checker, but it does not assure you that your choice is the correct word, only that it is *spelled* correctly. Listening to my paper read aloud quickly highlighted these problems." He soon began to use the program on a routine basis, and thanks to *TextAloud* has completed eight of his fifteen chosen online graduate courses.

"To me, the most useful part of the software is how easy it is to highlight and copy information to the clipboard, then have *TextAloud* automatically start reading," says Sal. In addition to listening to online articles, he also uses the program to listen to e-mails and class discussion threads.

For Sal, a natural-sounding voice and intonation are crucial for comprehension and here *TextAloud* really delivers (he chooses NeoSpeech for his favorite Premium voices). Another advantage to *TextAloud*, and to simulated reading in general over an audiobook for Sal, is the fact that speeding up the rate of reading does not increase the vocal pitch.

Most of all, Sal points out that *TextAloud* offers those with dyslexia an added advantage when it comes to the Internet. While the Internet offers a wealth of content, information, and opportunity for communication, it can be an especially frustrating and stressful experience for those suffering from dyslexia. "The ever-expanding Internet has created an additional gap between those that can read well and those that cannot," Sal comments. "*TextAloud* helps to close that gap."

About *TextAloud*

Highly useful for students, scientists, writers, business people, students and people from all walks of life -- *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 from \$29.95, and is compatible with systems using Windows® 98, NT, 2000, XP and Vista. 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®, Nuance®, Acapela® and Cepstral® for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include U.S. English, U.K. English, Indian Accent English, Scottish Accent English, Arabic, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, Canadian French, German, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Castilian (European) Spanish, Latin American Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text to Speech software for consumers, professionals, businesses, 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. 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.

Evaluation copies of *TextAloud* are available upon request. For more information on NextUp.com or *TextAloud*, or for other case studies involving users ranging from students, to entrepreneurs, firefighters, doctors, lawyers, truck drivers, musicians, and more, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via Admitchell@Nextup.com.

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