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Atlanta Writer Overcomes Dyslexia Using *TextAloud*

NextUp.com's leading Text to Speech software helps one user find better assistive support options for reading and study

CLEMMONS, NC – Writing can be a grueling occupation, but Atlanta writer **Eddie Snipes** has a greater challenge than most: dyslexia. As a successful writer and blogger (<http://www.eddiesnipes.com>) with readers all over the world, Snipes has overcome his disability using NextUp.com's ***TextAloud*** software to catch the errors caused by dyslexia -- before they reach the world.

“I'm a writer. Not just a writer, but a *dyslexic* writer,” Eddie comments. “That’s a wonderful combination!” He discovered the PC software years ago when he began to notice embarrassing mistakes creeping into his published work on a regular basis – mistakes his spell-checker did not catch. “However, since I started using *TextAloud*, my typing mistakes have become an endangered breed.” Before, when proofreading his work visually, Eddie had been unable to catch most of his mistakes. “I discovered that my mind fills in the missing pieces as I read,” he adds. “Knowing what I *meant* to say made it almost impossible to identify my mistakes.”

With *TextAloud*, however, this was no longer an issue. Eddie chose *TextAloud* after testing out three or four programs, and then began to use it regularly in everyday life, for e-mails and web surfing, and most of all, for writing and proofing. “Hearing the word spoken takes proofreading to a new level,” says Eddie. “For articles, I can quickly identify and fix mistakes that I once overlooked. My writing now looks much more professional when I present it.” He also found that the program provided invaluable help to his full-length manuscripts as well. “For chapter edits, I listen as I proofread,” he comments. “Once my edits are done, I use *TextAloud* to convert my entire manuscript to audio, and then listen from beginning to end while driving or relaxing. This has helped me to identify inconsistencies in the 'big picture', and to find holes in my story that I would not have discovered without hearing the manuscript in its entirety.”

TextAloud also creates audio files for use on most popular mobile devices and MP3 players, including iPods® and iPhones®. Eddie does most of his listening on his Creative Labs Zen MP3 player, while his phone also supports MP3. He has many favorite tools and features when it comes to the software, and he most values the highlighting, or ‘text following’ feature for the way it allows him to circumvent his tendency to transpose words or use homophones (similar-sounding yet completely different words) in his content by viewing while he listens. “The strange thing about dyslexia is that when more than one sense is engaged, I can catch those errors, and confused words come to light.”

For reviewing and proofing his longer works, Eddie simply outputs to audio file then listens as he drives or relaxes. “Editing visually may help you find errors within a chapter or article, but it's hard to get the big picture view,” he comments. “When a larger project is near completion, for this reason, I convert the entire manuscript to audio and listen to it from beginning to end. Many times, I have discovered mistakes I would never have identified on my own. Forgotten explanations, plot holes, mix-ups, changes that I missed elsewhere in the manuscript – these all show up when listening to the entire work on audio.”

The writer also enjoys the fact that he can create and work with multiple articles, which is easy to do thanks to *TextAloud*'s intuitive tabbed article menu. *TextAloud* can then run a batch job to create separate audio files for each article, “Or, if I choose, I can dump them into one file,” he adds. “Plus, it supports most major audio formats I use, so it can create the audio file that best suits my needs.” Eddie also uses *TextAloud* to improve his reading comprehension, and uses the program's handy automatic reading option so that *TextAloud* begins reading as soon as he copies text to his clipboard. “I set *TextAloud* to read my text only if the text is more than 100 characters,” he adds. “This keeps the program from reading when I'm just moving words around or copying small blocks of text.”

Eddie also makes constant use of the program's optional Premium Voices, and recommends them to others using the software. "The natural sound of the voice engines is a must for anyone planning to listen to a lot of text. Many of the Premium Voices make you actually forget it's a computer reading, like the Nuance RealSpeak™ 'Tom' voice. In addition, *TextAloud*'s pronunciation editor makes it easy to adjust the words that don't sound natural or are mispronounced," he adds. "When I hear a word that doesn't sound right, I pause the reading, right-click on the word, adjust the way it's read, and continue on. Over time, the speech engine keeps getting sharper and the listening experience even better."

With a large readership worldwide, the presidency of his local writer's guild, as well as professional membership in several organizations for writers, Eddie continues to find success as a writer, and his novel *I Called Him Dancer* will be published on April 12, 2011. He is proud of the fact that people are often surprised by his dyslexia, "and *TextAloud* is a large part of why," he explains. "It takes what could be a disability, and pushes it out of the reader's sight. *TextAloud* has made me a better writer."

About *TextAloud*

With a completely new interface including more personalization options than ever before, ***TextAloud*** is the latest update to *TextAloud*, the highly useful PC program for students, scientists, writers, business people, students and people from all walks of life. *TextAloud* enables anyone to experience their reading by listening, and 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. System requirements include almost any version of Windows® (from 98 to Me, NT, 2000, XP or Vista), as well as a minimum of 64 MB of RAM, 10 MB of disk space, and a sound card. *TextAloud* can even be listened to on TV, using TiVo's® Home Media Option, and works seamlessly with iTunes®, for

easy synchronizing with iPod[®], iPhone[®], or other iTunes[®]-compatible portable audio players. Best of all, unlike prohibitively priced gadgets or eReaders, *TextAloud* doesn't require special hardware of any kind. Become a fan at <http://www.Facebook.com/TextAloud>, or try the program today, via a fast, safe and secure preview and purchase at <http://www.NextUp.com>.

NextUp.com also offers *TextAloud* with optional Premium Voices from **Nuance RealSpeak™**, **AT&T Natural Voices™**, **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, Basque, Catalan, Cantonese Chinese, Mandarin Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Faroese, Finnish, French, Canadian French, German, Greek, Hindi, Icelandic, Irish, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Polish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Castilian (European) Spanish, Latin American Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Swedish, Taiwanese, 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 enables people who have lost their voices to use the latest in high-quality computer voices to communicate aloud with others.

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

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Photos and Captions, *TextAloud*



Atlanta writer Eddie Snipes has successfully utilized TextAloud to help him catch the errors caused by his dyslexia.