Australian Consultant Helps Clients Listen and Learn with *TextAloud*

Text to Speech software helps Senior Vocational Consultant expand beyond readers for the blind and to assist in the training process for clients and jobseekers

CLEMMONS, NC – As a successful Senior Vocational Consultant who is also legally blind, **Ross Miller** relies on technology to help him maintain his many work commitments, so the Sydney, Australia resident sought more sophisticated options for listening to his reading beyond traditional software for the blind. He soon discovered a solution in the Text to Speech software **TextAloud**, from NextUp.com, and quickly began using the software to help clients, as well.

TextAloud reads aloud almost any PC text, from e-mails and websites, to articles, PDFs, documents and more, and in natural-sounding computer speech. *TextAloud* can read directly from the PC, or can also export that text to spoken audio files that can be listened to via iPod®, iPhone®, MP3 player, or a wide range of other portable devices.

In his work as a counselor and specialist, Ross assesses and supports people post-injury or illness, to help them find new jobs or training opportunities. In managing cases one-on-one and via group sessions, Ross trains clients on computer and Internet use, and when he looked for a more sophisticated option for listening to onscreen text, *TextAloud* met the challenge. "I am legally blind, with no useful vision for print reading or computer use," explains Ross. "So I do a lot of text reading primarily using *JAWS for Windows*® on my computer. Then I found *TextAloud*, and as a person who reads a lot of material, I could see a whole new area opening up, and realized that some of my client group could also benefit, as well."

TextAloud allowed Ross the ability to be mobile and active, without feeling tied to a computer. "I would normally have had to just listen to things in *JAWS*®, which is fine, but being able to listen on the train, in a taxi, at home without having to fire up the notebook is just magic."

Ross found several aspects of the software particularly useful or valuable to him in overcoming his disability. *TextAloud* integrates seamlessly into many other software packages, allowing Ross to use *JAWS* and *Office* applications in various combinations as well to meet his professional needs and requirements. "The developers also improve *TextAloud* with every new release, making it more efficient and usable every time. I have no problem moving from version to version, knowing that it provides true value for my financial and time investment." On a personal level, "It also means I don't have to totally rely on audio books for my personal reading list."

TextAloud has also enabled Ross to support some of his clients with reading challenges whenever they have to work with or access official documents, training materials or information pamphlets. "Audio files of important documents can be handed to the clients, most of whom have computers, on a USB memory stick. They can then listen to the files almost instantly," comments Ross. "This means that I know that my client group is getting the important information they need, and that they are not relying on family members or spouses to read things to them."

Ross continues to enjoy the software's assets, using *TextAloud* on a Lenovo Netbook while listening to his files on a Nokia C5 Smart Phone. Among *TextAloud*'s many features, the convenience of its file splitting capabilities is a favorite of Ross's. "Using the file splitter conversion process on books or other larger documents allows for easy breakdown of very large files into shorter, easy-to-manage items," he explains. He also likes the punctuation 'pause' options for a more naturalistic listening experience. He also maximizes *TextAloud*'s ability to include different voices in single documents: "This works especially well for listening to FAQ pamphlets," he adds, "with the Question in one voice, and the Answer in another."

For Ross, ultimately, the best feature of *TextAloud* is its universal usability. "With almost no training other than a run-through of the very clear menu options, I was able to start using it in minutes," he comments. "The ability to hotkey a new article, cut and paste text and just convert to an audio file, or even to listen with no extra configurations, is really superb." He also praises the program's Menu and Help systems: "You don't have to have a technology degree in order to make alterations or adjust voices and speeds. They meet the needs of the average user with flexibility

and ease of operation." He most enjoys the Nuance RealSpeak™ voices including Tom, Mike, Lee and Karen. "With good speech adjustment, pause adjustment and speed, the listening experience is very, very good. I can actually concentrate on the information rather than any other aspect of the process. I get a variety of speech types, capacity to alter output, and the ability to speed up bulk reading, as well as to relax with some great voices when reading collective news articles or technology documents."

The ability to make his own choices on what to read, without having to rely on others in libraries or audio production houses, has been an important one for Ross. "At a professional and personal level, *TextAloud* helps me balance my time in front of the computer, and enriches my life away from it. If I am using my computer 9 hours a day and my portable device for 3 hours a day, then *TextAloud* makes this a much more pleasant and practical process. And it's great to be able to share vital information with others in easy-to-understand, quality speech. It's been a very positive experience!"

About *TextAloud*

With more personalization options than ever before, **TextAloud** is the highly useful PC program for students, scientists, writers, business users, 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* even works seamlessly with iTunes®, for easy synchronizing with iPod®, iPhone®, or other iTunes®-compatible portable audio players, and unlike often prohibitively priced gadgets or eReaders, *TextAloud* doesn't require special hardware of any kind.

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.

Follow the latest news at **http://www.Facebook.com/*TextAloud***, discover helpful video tutorials at NextUp.com's YouTube Video Channel (**http://www.youtube.com/user/NextUpcom**), or try the program today, via a fast, safe and secure preview and purchase at **http://www.NextUp.com**.

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*

TextAloud is the highly useful PC program that turns text into natural-sounding speech, for listening on the computer, or exported to sound files that users like Vocational Consultant Ross Miller can listen to anywhere.

TextAloud was recently honored with a nomination by the 2011 da Vinci Awards® in the Communication/Educational Aids award category.