**2668 Lewisville-Clemmons Road
Clemmons, NC 27012**

Educator and Master's Student Chooses *TextAloud* to Read, Teach, and Present Thesis

Text to Speech software helps Elementary Education student Steven Service maximize reading time, improve writing skills, and even to achieve his Master's degree and thesis presentation

CLEMMONS, NC – **Steven Service** is a dedicated Marian University student and teacher pursuing a Master of Arts degree in Elementary Education in Indianapolis, Indiana. To help him achieve his goals, as well as to pass them along to the students he works with, he turns to *TextAloud*, the popular Text to Speech software from **NextUp.com**.

   As Steven discovered, *TextAloud* is the easy and affordable PC software that reads almost any computer text aloud for study or entertainment, in natural-sounding computer speech -- from e-mails and websites, to articles, PDFs, documents and more. *TextAloud* can read directly from the PC, or can also export text to spoken audio files for listening via iPod®, Kindle Fire®, iPhone®, tablet, MP3 player, or any number of popular portable devices.

   A talented instructor as well as a student pursuing his Master's degree in Education, Steven has taught direct instruction reading programs in Indianapolis for grades 3-6 and also worked on language development with young English Language Learners (ELLs). He has been interested in multisensory approaches to reading and is certified in Orton Gillingham multisensory reading instruction. In a unique position to explore *TextAloud* as both student and teacher, Steven increasingly realized *TextAloud* was an irreplaceable tool for helping students to improve their basic reading and comprehension skills.

   Steven first turned to *TextAloud*, however, simply because of his own love of reading. "In my studies at college, I realized there were more books to read than there was time in the day," he comments. "I was surprised to discover that when I made use of *TextAloud*, not only could I read

much faster, but my comprehension increased. Where I had formerly struggled to keep up with the reading demands for my course work, the use of Text to Speech allowed me to complete all the required reading with time to spare." The software soon had an effect on his general preparation level for classes at school, too. "There's a huge difference in the way you feel as a student when you enter the classroom having read every single book and article the teacher required," he adds. "You no longer hide behind the person sitting in front of you, and you always have a good answer to any question. Confidence is bliss!"

With a study concentration in Elementary Education, Steven is committed to the issue of children's literacy. He applied *TextAloud*'s abilities to compliment guided reading programs in order to increase learning potentials for ELLs and students of varied reading levels. "We are privileged to live in an age where literary barriers between books and those with reading disabilities are coming down," comments Steven. "Society is rapidly moving in the direction of digitizing books, which creates new possibilities for their presentation. Because some students need the assistance of vocalization in order to read efficiently, Text to Speech provides a solution enabling them to encounter fluent speech along with the experience of having the words decoded as they are read. This combination allows students to make comprehension gains while they are simultaneously improving four other key reading skills: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary and fluency." He adds, "*TextAloud* can also be used to challenge advanced readers, too."

Several key features of *TextAloud* soon became an integral part of Steven's entertainment, work and study routines, with help just a quick e-mail away thanks to NextUp.com's helpful technical support staff. "The technical support is outstanding," Steven emphasizes, "and a great deal of supportive information is conveniently available on the NextUp.com website." He found *TextAloud* easy to use and customize according to user preferences, and the program's ability to convert texts into audio files for listening soon became Steven's favorite feature. "Whether I am exercising, traveling or just relaxing at the park, I can always listen to the books I've converted into sound files and loaded onto my MP3 player using *TextAloud*."

Steven also uses the software for writing, with *TextAloud* becoming a regular and vital editing tool. As many other users have also discovered, "I catch more typos or grammatical errors when I listen to the vocalization of the text," he adds. His use of the software enabled him to consistently turn in writing projects that were error-free. "I could not have done as well without Text to Speech."

Steven also found the program's flexibility and customization invaluable as he progressed, resulting in tips he passed along to other educators and students. "As *TextAloud* enables you to change the speed of your voices, I recommend experimentation when it comes to your listening speed," he comments. "Visualization of the text, while hearing the auditory component, allows you to zip through reading material, a strategy I use especially when I am reviewing material I've read previously." Sometimes he will also reconfigure the text size, as he has found that he reads larger fonts faster. "However, when I'm editing, I slow everything down and reduce the size of the print so that I can review the context." When working with students (as he later demonstrated in his thesis presentation), Steven utilizes vibrant backgrounds and highly contrasting font colors, an approach that has proven its effectiveness to maximize visual interest.

When listening to his reading, Steven turns to the popular Mike and Crystal voices from AT&T Natural Voices™. He notes that Mike is his favorite voice "because of his almost human qualities." Before any trips or vacations, Steven now routinely uses *TextAloud* to create several MP3 files of books for listening on his travels, and "My wife tells friends that AT&T Mike is our family traveling companion for car trips!" For playback of MP3 files, Steven uses a Sony Walkman NWZ-S545, and he runs *TextAloud* on his laptop, an HP Compaq NC8430 running *Windows XP*®. "*TextAloud* has vastly improved my productivity in both reading and writing," he comments. "When I use the software, I read more, and get more out of what I've read. When my eyes need a break, I can just close them and relax while continuing to listen."

Steven became so profoundly convinced of the software's potential in elementary education, he conducted his culminating Master's research project using *TextAloud*! The vast impact Text to Speech can have improving students' reading comprehension is tangibly demonstrated in his

thesis: "The Impact of Text-to-Speech on Reading Comprehension Among High Ability 4th and 5th Grade Elementary Students." Steven not only used *TextAloud* to complete his action research and thesis project, but also used extensive video of *TextAloud* at work as part of his final research presentation at Marian University. "The sooner students become proficient readers, the quicker they can become independent learners," he observes. "My career goal is to become knowledgeable and skilled in the use of research based best practices as an elementary school teacher. Thanks to the innovations of the developers at NextUp, teachers have better, affordable tools to make learning more productive for their students."

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. *TextAloud* has become so popular as a supportive assistive technology in its own right with the learning and visually disabled, among others, that it recently achieved a da Vinci award® nomination in 2011.

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**.
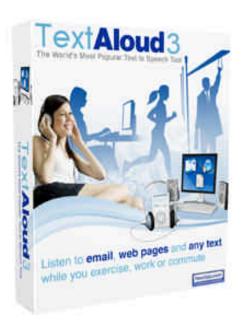
About NextUp.com

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*.

All companies and products referenced in this press release are the trademarks of their respective owners.

# # #

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 Teacher and Master's Student Steven Service can listen to anywhere.