**Amp Your Writing Energy With Speech-to-Text Apps**

**Get back hours of productivity each week with a technology you may already have**

Are you a manager who is struggling to craft a presentation that will resonate with an audience of peers or employees? Are you a writer who is struggling to meet their daily word count? How much time do you spend crafting the perfect paragraph, going back over what you just wrote and re-editing it?

So many of us struggle to create a well-constructed written piece, only to find that while it is technically perfect, it is flat, uninteresting, and lacking passion. Worse, it may be devoid of the analysis and self-reflection that helps the piece stand apart in a world ruled by content.

Even skilled writers struggle with this issue.

## **Speech-to-Text Software is Available To You Right Now**

You can easily write an email or send a text using your voice, simply by hitting a microphone icon on your smartphone or tablet.

Why not compose your best work using a voice recognition app?

Jason Womack, author of “[Your Best Just Got Better](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B006V87AWQ/ref%3Ddp-kindle-redirect?_encoding=UTF8&btkr=1),” produces 100 words per minute using speech-to-text compared to 60 wpm using a keyboard. “The important piece here is to be consistent. The iterative improvements that will happen not only in how you use speech recognition, but when and how often you use it will really make a difference in your productivity,” he said.

## **Make Speech-to-Text Work for You**

I’ve found the methods below really help when using speech-to-text software.

**Sit in a quiet area** — The less background noise and conversation going on, the more accurate that speech to text will be.

**Use a headset** — Using a headset with microphone helps isolate the speaker’s voice so the dictation software can pick it up better.

**Use built-in instructions to save time** — Learn the specific commands that you can use with speech to text software to do things like shift to the next line, set punctuation and more.

**Speak like a robot at first** — Our regional accents and voices can be tough for speech to text programs to figure out. So, when you first start using the software, try speaking like a robot — use clear enunciation with as little inflection as possible.

**Use tutorials to train yourself AND the software** — Dictation apps need to learn the way that you speak so that they better recognize what you’re saying. You need to learn some of their unique commands to make the experience flow better. To do this, complete the tutorials that come as part of the software (if there are any). These help you memorize basic commands — while at the same time, the app is being trained to recognize your speech pattern. Include this step when you first start using a speech-to-text app, and the accuracy rate will be much higher.

**Add unrecognized words to the software’s dictionary** — If you know you will use a specific word often that is not found in the speech to text software’s dictionary, add it in when you review the document that the app created.

**Use a placeholder word for difficult-to-recognize words** — Even the best STT software has trouble recognizing some words, even if you add them to the dictionary. This may be because the word and its pronunciation are different (try an Irish name like Saoirse and watch the fun begin). In that case, substitute a word that’s not too common but easy to pronounce in its place (like “Fox” or “Oscar”). Later, when editing, use Find and Replace to find the placeholder word and replace it with the actual word.

**Edit, edit, edit** — Once you’ve finished your speech-to-text session, closely proofread and correct the text. No speech to text software is 100% accurate. A great strategy is to have your app read it back to you! You’ll hear any mistakes!

**Spend quality time with your software** — Becoming comfortable with speech to text software takes a little time, especially if you are a dedicated touch typist. Use your software for 5 to 10 consecutive days.

## Here are a few options for speech to text software:

**Dragon Naturally Speaking** — The software that I use to write many of my books. As with any premium software, it does cost money. However, there are dictation apps available for many devices, as the rest of this list shows.

**Otter.ai** — This may be the best free speech-to-text app out there, and it’s available on desktop or as a mobile app. Users get 600 minutes per month (10 hours) to work with; an upgrade to a paid monthly plan nets you 6,000 minutes per month (100 hours). Text output can be edited within the app, and it quickly learns to recognize your speech patterns. It can also differentiate between different speakers, making it great for interviews or meetings.

**Apple Enhanced Dictation** — Those using iPhones or running Mac OSX 10.9 or later can [enable](https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT210539)Enhanced Dictation in their system preferences. This allows users to dictate for an unlimited amount of time.

Android OS — Smartphones and tablets running on the Android operating system (that’s almost any smartphone not made by Apple) have speech-to-text available in some of its onboard apps, or you can [install the Gboard](https://support.google.com/gboard/answer/2781851?co=GENIE.Platform%3DAndroid&hl=en) app.

**Windows Speech Recognition** — In [Windows 10](https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/use-voice-recognition-in-windows-10-83ff75bd-63eb-0b6c-18d4-6fae94050571), simply type “Windows Speech Recognition” into the “Type here to search” bar on the lower left toolbar, then enable and set up the app. In XP and Windows 7, click the “Start” icon and select All Programs — Accessories — Ease of Access — Windows Speech Recognition and activate. Then open a program, browser or app to start dictating.

**Google Docs Voice Typing** — Writers using Google’s Chrome browser can access a [speech-to-text feature](https://support.google.com/docs/answer/4492226?hl=en) within Google Docs. Open up the Chrome browser, log into a Google account, and select “Docs” from the options grid in the top right. Open a new document and then click “Tools” in the document’s toolbar, scroll down and enable Voice Typing. Remember, this only works in the Chrome web browser; in Firefox or Edge, you can see the feature in the Tools drop-down, but it will not be enabled.

**Make A Speech-to-Text Commitment**

Commit to using speech-to-text software every day for one to two weeks. At first, the app may not work very well, especially if a tutorial wasn’t part of the startup process. And, it can feel weird to speak your thoughts.

Prevent frustration by dictating low-priority writing like to-do lists or personal memos — you won’t be as upset with errors on documents no one else will see.

Once you’ve gotten used to using your voice to compose the initial drafts of your work, you will be amazed at how much your productivity jumps!

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