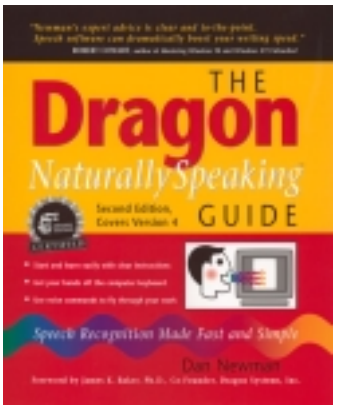

The Dragon NaturallySpeaking Guide

by Dan Newman

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"I used Dragon to draft *Write & Grow Rich.* It made the hardest part of book writing quick, easy, and fun. Newman's *Guide* gives the inside story on making this software work in the best way possible."

— Dan Poynter, author of *The Self-Publishing Manual* and *Write & Grow Rich*

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Delaware Valley Pediatric Associates, P.A.

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— Joan Lichterman, Founder
East Bay RSI Support Group, one of the first U.S. support groups for people with repetitive strain injuries

"The information in this book has been vital to making speech software productive in my practice. My transcription bills have gone down sixty percent!"

— Donald Goldmacher, M.D.
PsychComp Associates

THE Dragon *NaturallySpeaking*™ GUIDE

Speech Recognition Made Fast and Simple

Second Edition, for Dragon version 4

Dan Newman

Waveside Publishing
Berkeley, California

The Dragon NaturallySpeaking Guide: Speech Recognition Made Fast and Simple
Dan Newman

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Foreword

James K. Baker, Ph.D.
Co-Founder, Dragon Systems, Inc.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking represents a long-term goal and milestone in speech recognition technology. When I joined speech recognition research in the early 1970s, mainframe computers would take up to an hour to recognize a single sentence from a restricted set of possibilities. The tasks we worked on were simplistic by today's standards, and the techniques we used look as pitiful compared to today's technology as do the computers on which we worked.

We looked beyond these limitations, however, to a very ambitious goal: recognition of unrestricted, large vocabulary, natural, continuous speech. This inspiring goal was the long-term milestone for myself and other people who began working on speech recognition technology in that era. We knew that achieving this goal would take a long time, but we believed we'd eventually succeed. Today, Dragon NaturallySpeaking can type as fast as you can speak, and you can say practically anything on any topic, speaking naturally and continuously.

Although for some speech researchers Dragon Naturally-Speaking represents the successful completion of a long journey, in another sense it is only the first step in an even bigger journey. As the "Natural Speech Company™," Dragon Systems is committed to providing speech as a natural interface between people and the machines and appliances they use. We continue to invest heavily in research and development to shorten enrollment time, support a wider choice of microphones, and allow more natural speaking styles.

We have worked hard to make Dragon NaturallySpeaking simple and easy to use. However, today's technology still has limitations. We cannot do everything you see on *Star Trek*. (After all, we still have another 200 years of research to do before the 23rd century!) Dragon NaturallySpeaking is optimized to a particular task—creating written text by voice. Unlike the *Star Trek* computer, it does not try to understand casual conversational speech and execute appropriate commands embedded within the conversation. It requires a careful speaking style that is only natural in the context of purposefully dictating a written document. You, the user, must be aware that you are talking to a computer and know how to work around its limitations. If you are not already used to composing by dictation, you will need to learn a new style of writing. If you are used to dictation, you will need to learn how much more you can do with a speech recognition computer than with a passive recorder. In any case, being proficient will require education and practice.

The Dragon NaturallySpeaking Guide fills the need for education. It will help users, new and experienced alike, learn how to write by voice and achieve optimum accuracy. From his years as a vendor and trainer of our product, author Dan Newman has learned hundreds of tips and tricks that without a guide you could learn only through long experience.

Then there's practice. Dan emphasizes the need for practice to build proficiency. Even if you had a secretary who could type everything you said as fast as you could say it, you would need practice to get used to the change in writing style. The computer, of course, imposes additional restrictions, which this book will help you learn and overcome. *The Dragon NaturallySpeaking Guide* will help you get up and running quickly so you can start practicing right away—and use the computer more productively, efficiently, and healthfully.

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My expert editor, Kristin Barendsen, has my sincere thanks for her assistance at every stage of creating this book, from helping to develop the initial outline to making detailed edits in the final text. Kristin, a Dragon software user herself, maintains an informative Web site about editing at www.barenedit.com.

Speech recognition is a new frontier in computing, and using it successfully requires a pioneer attitude. My greatest thanks go to the many speech recognition users my staff and I have had the opportunity to work with and train over the past four years. Their ingenuity and determination has created a richer book for all of us to learn from and enjoy.

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