

An introduction to Dragon Naturally Speaking Speech Recognition Software

Dionne Morrison
VoiceX Communications

Does speech recognition work?

Quite simply – Yes! If Dragon is used in the correct way and with the correct equipment – it is **extremely accurate** and successful.

Please note that speech recognition is **not suitable** for transcribing meetings, interviews or conferences. Speech recognition at the moment is only capable of “single author” use.

Speech recognition has significantly evolved over the last few years. In particular, the Dragon V9 has undergone a radical change in how it converts speech to text.

As the name suggests, Dragon NaturallySpeaking now takes a sample of your natural speech pattern and from this is able to “pre-empt” how you are going to pronounce most words. Because Dragon uses **your individual** voice model, accents no longer prove to be a difficulty.

Dragon also periodically scans your documents, incoming and outgoing emails etc learning the general context you dictate and adding words, names and phrases etc to your vocabulary.

Dragon Speech recognition is a **learning program**. The more often you use and correct it – the more accurate it becomes.

What is the best recording device to use with speech recognition – Headset, Microphone or Digital Recorder?

Choosing the correct recording device for your individual requirements is imperative for producing an accurate result from any speech recognition program.

There certainly are a wide range of digital recording devices; ranging from hand held microphones, portable Dictaphones / dictation recorders, note takers (Voice Tracers) and of course headsets.

Pretty much any device that can record and submit sound in the correct format (basically a standard .wav file) is able to work with Dragon.

The correct recording hardware (input device) for you, will depend upon your preference, working environment and style of recording.

For the typical legal and medical professional, I look at it this way;

The recording device is usually for recording letters, reports etc. Most authors prefer the recorder to be a portable device so that the dictation can be performed in any location.

Look at the hardware as the “backbone” of the system with speech recognition being an additional component. It is more effective to use a more basic version of Dragon (such as DNS Preferred) with a high quality device (such as the

Philips 9600) then a cheap recorder or headset with the Professional version of the software. It would be like putting cheap tyres on a high performance car.

Portable Recorders / Digital Dictation Machines

It is from my experience that most professionals require the recorder to be **easy to use** and prefer the use of a **slide control** on the recorder. This allows them to **record and pause** single handily, allowing you to be free to peruse documents, PC etc.

A recorder with **editing capabilities** is usually a **MUST!** This meaning that the recorder allows you to record, rewind back - over the recording - and re-records – in **exactly the same way you would do with a traditional tape** recorder. Insert recording is also a valuable tool.

Please note that most digital note takers / Voice Tracers DO NOT have these facilities. These are usually marketed to uni students who are merely taking lecture notes etc.

No matter what brand, I strongly recommend looking a DICTATION range. Machines that fall in to this range have editing capabilities and mimic the tradition style of dictation (such a tape dictation).

Many professional dictation recorders – such as the Philips 9600 or Olympus DS4000 – also have the ability to connect directly to the PC and record straight on to your PC's hard drive. You can also dictate direct to Dragon (not recommended – see below) and navigate your computer in the same way you would with a headset.

Obviously each recorder model varies in accessories included, features and functionality, security / encryption levels, style of use (push button vs slide control), quality of unit (plastic vs metal).

We have a lot of success with the Philips 9600 Digital Pocket Memo and highly recommend this option. The other machine we recommend is the Olympus DS4000 Digital Voice Recorder. The new Philips 9500 is also an excellent option.

The Philips 9600 is a fully featured, professional quality unit. It has a full metal casing machine with simple to use slide control operation. The software that is packaged with the Philips 9600 is the Philips SpeechExec Pro Dictate software.

This software allows **full, auto download of dictations** (either to local or network locations). Files also can be emailed or sent via FTP directly from the software (fully encrypted if required). Most importantly, the software has an integrated **“Submit to Speech Recognition”** button to Dragon, so you can **send your recordings direct to Dragon** - without the need to manually convert, export then import the files. **This is a “one touch” button within the Philips Professional software.**

The Philips 9600 also features removable / expandable memory (SD card) and includes docking station, rechargeable batteries (NiMH) and power supply. The unit can be run from either batteries or power. The rechargeable batteries can be charged direct from the USB or mains power. The recorder can also be used as a USB microphone – allow you to dictate directly into Dragon or to navigate your PC. It can also be used as a USB speaker.

The Philips 9600 also features a high quality, noise cancelling microphone and can be switched to “Conference” mode for conference recording (pick up approx between 6-10 participants). However, meetings can not be transcribe by Dragon and must be sent to a secretary for dictation.

In many cases, authors dictate on the recorder, download and **send the recording to their secretary.** It is then the secretary (using a professional, digital transcription system such as the **Philips 7277 Digital Transcription Kit**) submits the

PERTH OFFICE

Suite 8, Office 9
567 Newcastle Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005
Tel: 08 9328 8971
Fax: 08 9328 7420

1300 551 778

www.voicex.com.au
info@voicex.com.au

ABN: 98 728 171 911

MELBOURNE OFFICE

Level 27, Rialto Tower South
525 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9593 9233
Fax: 03 9593 9255

recording to Dragon and when typed, the secretary then makes any necessary corrections or formatting changes. Dragon will continue to increase the accuracy of the authors voice file.

Less work & PC interactivity for the author and less typing for the secretary!!!

PC Headset / Microphones

There are also a wide range of headsets available. A basic “**starter**” headset (that connects to your PC via the sound card) is included with the Dragon. This is **NOT recommended** as it connects directly to the sound card of the PC and **DOES NOT** produce a digital quality sound.

We recommend using a **high quality USB, digitally enhanced** microphone / headset such as the Plantronics DSP400 or Plantronics CS-60USB Wireless.

A headset is a great option if you wish to “navigate” your PC and work “hands free”.

One of the negative issues that we find with authors dictating their letters directly to the PC is that they become too pre-occupied with *what* is being typed – rather than what they should be dictating next. They tend to slow down their speech, or over pronounce words – and worse still – shout at the PC (as if Dragon has a hearing problem!!). This then alters their natural voice pattern and produces even more inaccuracies.

SpeechMikes & PC Microphones

Philips has a range of SpeechMikes. These mimic the old “desktop recorders” and have all the same features and functionality of a professional dictation recorder – without being portable. The recorder connects to the PC via the USB and can be used with or without the Philips SpeechExec Pro Dictate software. A SpeechMike can be used to dictate and navigate directly to Dragon, or dictate directly to a sound file and then submit for speech recognition (in the same way you would for the Philips 9600).

The Philips SpeechMike range includes models with integrated track ball mouse, barcode readers, and push button or slide control options.

Philips SpeechMikes are a great option for firms that require all the functionality of a traditional dictation system – without having portability.

There is also a great range of high quality PC microphones. The new **RevoLabs xTag Wireless USB Microphone** is also a great option.

View our complete range of **DIGITAL DICTAPHONE RECORDERS, PC MICROPHONES, SPEECHMIKES AND PC HEADSETS** on our web site at

www.voicex.com.au

Please contact our staff, on **1300 551 778** to discuss what option would be right for you and your firm.

VoiceX supplies all states of Australia & New Zealand

On Site & Remote Support and User Training is also available for all digital dictation systems and speech recognition products.

PERTH OFFICE

Suite 8, Office 9
567 Newcastle Street
WEST PERTH WA 6005
Tel: 08 9328 8971
Fax: 08 9328 7420

1300 551 778

www.voicex.com.au
info@voicex.com.au

ABN: 98 728 171 911

MELBOURNE OFFICE

Level 27, Rialto Tower South
525 Collins Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Tel: 03 9593 9233
Fax: 03 9593 9255