

Dragon Dictation Software

I am thinking about purchasing Dragon software, and I'm looking for input. Here are my questions:

I see the "legal" version runs \$800, while others are much more affordable. Do you have the legal version? Is it worth it?

I am a true solo and I draft my own documents. I am a fast typist. How much editing to you have to do after dictating? How much of a time saver is it really?

Will I need a special microphone? Any other add-ons I should consider?

Can I use my portable voice recorder and upload the mp3 to dragon later? That would really save me some time.

Thanks!

I use the mos recent pro version and it is sufficient. You can train the software to recognize all legal terms.

Spend the money for a good microphone. If you use a laptop, you need a usb sound card.

There are forums discussing voice recognition where the better microphones are discussed. There are both Nuance and non-nuance forums.

Regards,

Richard Schmitt, Maryland

I use the preferred version (I think that's what it's still called) daily. I like the software and use it often but I'm not a fast typist. It translates my dictation quite well, even with my M'ssippi drawl, but I do try to speak more deliberately when dictating. You can probably find The preferred version for \$99 on sale (reg \$199).

Winky Glover., Mississippi

SoloSez Popular Threads, May 2013

On the subject of headsets for Dragon -- the one that came with the software was worse than useless. I ended up with this one from Andrea Electronics: <http://tinyurl.com/ckrzl9k>. It works VERY well, and is well-worth the investment if you're going to use Dragon on a regular basis.

Scott I. Barer, California

I have the Home version and I love it. Use it on the laptop with the integrated sound card already in laptops and regular microphone headphones.

Erin Schmidt, Ohio

I use the "Preferred" version; I'm at version 9.5. It works well, and gets better with learning. You have to coach yourself when you do the editing/cleanup, to do it with Dragon "watching" so it will learn from its mistakes. I have not yet grown accustomed to using it as much as I could; I feel "self-conscious" when dictating, and I'm a pretty fast typist.

I use a Logitech USB microphone, and it works great.

I have tried a bit with my voice recorder (Olympus, don't have the model number handy), and it works, but you basically have to train it as a different speaker because the sound quality is different enough that it'll diminish the performance for direct dictation if you don't. (That may not be true if you use a real high-end DVR; this one was about \$100 from Radio Shack, and doubles as a 5GB thumb drive.)

One approach I have tried - and it works pretty well - if I make audio notes or dictate while driving, I'll play that back in my ear with the ear bud, and re-dictate them into the microphone on the computer. It's just as fast, and allows me to make minor edits and adjustments for the "um" factor and such, improve my diction, and cut out the road noise.

Richard J. Rutledge, Jr., North Carolina

SoloSez Popular Threads, May 2013

I would NOT spend \$800 on Dragon; hell, I wouldn't even spend \$790!

Here's what/how I use Dragon: When I come out of court, I dictate my "Here's what happened in court today and here's what you need to" letter in to my phone or DS-5000. (Usually, it's my Tape-a-Talk app on my phone.) Then I put it into Dragon, it "magically" appears, I edit it, copy and paste into letter, email, etc., and I am done.

I rarely use it for straight dictation because I didn't learn to dictate with all those "new line" "capitalize" commands in the middle of my thoughts. (My first secretary had an English degreeI got spoiled!)

I wouldn't pay anymore than \$99 for Dragon for I do with it.

TYG, NYK.
Jimmy Mac

James M. McMullan, Alabama

Some of us are old enough that dictating, rather than firing up the word processor, was the only way.

One day, I was doing a bunch of dictation in the morning, then an afternoon court thing. The court thing got a bit tense, at some point I said "But Your Honor comma" Everyone laughed, it went better after that.

James S. Tyre, California

You are not a lawyer. You're Batman.

Joseph Dang, California

Jimbo,

I always picture your first office looking like something off of "Mad Men".
Were three-martini lunches taboo, yet?

Curious,
Judge Mac

James M. McMullan

SoloSez Popular Threads, May 2013

Not Mad Men, but all my offices have been completely unique.

In a former life, I was a professional photographer. Some of my stuff is, or at the time was, moderately famous.[1] But whether famous or just stuff I liked, I always filled my offices with my own work (and never a diploma in sight). I wouldn't say anything unless asked, but many interesting conversations ensued if someone did ask.

[1] In 1971 (?), before national telecasts of so many college football games were common, it was widely assumed that the Heisman Trophy would come down to Pat Sullivan of Auburn or Ed Marinaro of Cornell. In his final game, Marinaro was stopped completely cold, a picture of mine was the proverbial thousand words, and it got published all over the place. Many say it was why Sullivan beat out Marinaro for the Heisman. Because, of course, you're such a die-hard Auburn fan <ahem>, figured you'd appreciate that one.

James S. Tyre

Sounds like the consensus is not to pay more than 200 for the software, and spend a little extra on headphones and possibly an external soundcard.

Great tips as always - Thanks!

Marshall D. Chriswell, Pennsylvania

Maybe it's a generational thing, but I've never seen the practicality of dictation. To me, the mechanism for preparing an oral presentation is practiced oral recitation, while the mechanism for preparing a written presentation is a keyboard. I suppose the ability to record thoughts while driving could be useful, though.

Tony LaCroix, Missouri

I dictate very, very rarely. Maybe a couple of times a year, when I am just averse to the keyboard. I can type out something just as fast as I can dictate it and I can edit as I go. But I think it is a generational thing, as I never worked in an office without a computer for every lawyer. I also rarely use my staff for the same reason.

Brian J. Hughes, Massachusetts

SoloSez Popular Threads, May 2013

I used to think that too, but the dictation is great for when I have to go from one document to another, shuffle papers etc. Now if I am just sitting down to type flat out, yeah I can do it faster.

SO I review documents on one computer and dictate to my laptop. It cut down the time it takes me to outline a case in half. No more switching programs or handwriting out notes and that is without using a lot of the functionality of the program.

And I am quite impressed that it does pick up on how to properly spell neural foraminal narrowing, even if I can't say it correctly 95% of the time LOL

Erin M. Schmidt

Many years ago, I reviewed it for a magazine, so I got the software for free. Nice little perk.

I thought dictating was awkward, too, but I practiced at it. One thing I loved it for, and this thread reminded me I'm an idiot for not hauling it out again: When you're deeply involved in something, I loved not having to pat around on the desk to find the rolled-away pen, or interrupt my reading to start typing more on the filenote. I'd just talk about the file, such as, "The April 23, 2010, filenote says Wife went to Husband's apartment to pick up the kids. They weren't ho me, she waited 45 minutes in the lobby. When they finally showed up, he was tipsy. Denied it, but she could smell alcohol on him and the kids' coats stunk up the car with cigarette smoke. Dad was under court order not to go into bars or consume alcohol when the kids were with him." Then, when I came across repeat offenses, I could simply say, "July 4, 2010, another alcohol-related incident with Dad's visitation. See April 23, 2010." Even easier was to title the incidents, ALCOHOL April 23, 2010 . . . Simple word search collects them all, cut and paste into the "drug/alcohol problems" section, the "parenting problems" section, when I was showing child's best interest. I had the basic version. I don't know why I would need an \$800 version.

Bottom line: It's got a good beat. I can dance to it. Yeah, I'd buy it.

CJ Stevens, Montana

SoloSez Popular Threads, May 2013

Ditto on the comment not to spend more than \$100. on the software. I've had a few problems with crashes, and I had to re-install the software. It also uses a lot of system resources, so you may need to add memory to your computer. That's a cinch to do, and the return on investment for additional memory is excellent.

I've been through a lot of microphones and the one I love is the Ligitech 800 wireless. It's available many places, including Staples. It is both bluetooth and wireless. I switch between my phone and my computer when I use the microphone.

One thing that was not mentioned was the sound environment when using Dragon. Even if you have a noise cancelling microphone, background noises are going to significantly affect the performance of the software. Best of luck.

Bob Gasparro, Pennsylvania

I use Dragon Naturally Speaking version 10. I have the basic version, bought a couple of years ago. I didn't get the legal version at the time because I wanted to try it out to see if I would use it, and figured I could upgrade later if I needed to. I haven't needed to.

I use it for time entries into my accounting software (PCLaw), and for notes in my case management software (Time Matters). It is also very useful when I am doing research - I can be looking at a case and dictating notes into a research document. I also use it for preparing documents in MSWord - briefs, applications, deeds, etc., and for longer emails.

I am a very fast typist, but also learned to dictate (using a dictating machine) when I was with a law firm. I find dictating a pretty efficient way to go, although it is necessary to proofread. Dragon has the ability to train, so you can use that with words that you use a lot but may not be in common usage.

The microphone / headset I got with Dragon didn't work - I went and bought a Plantronics mike/headset at Best Buy that works fine - it plugs into the USB port rather than using the dedicated mike/headset ports.

I don't know about using the portable voice recorder - I haven't done that.

Bottom line - I don't use Dragon for everything, but I use it for a lot of things and it has made things easier for me. I'd recommend giving it a try.

Caroline Edwards, Pennsylvania
