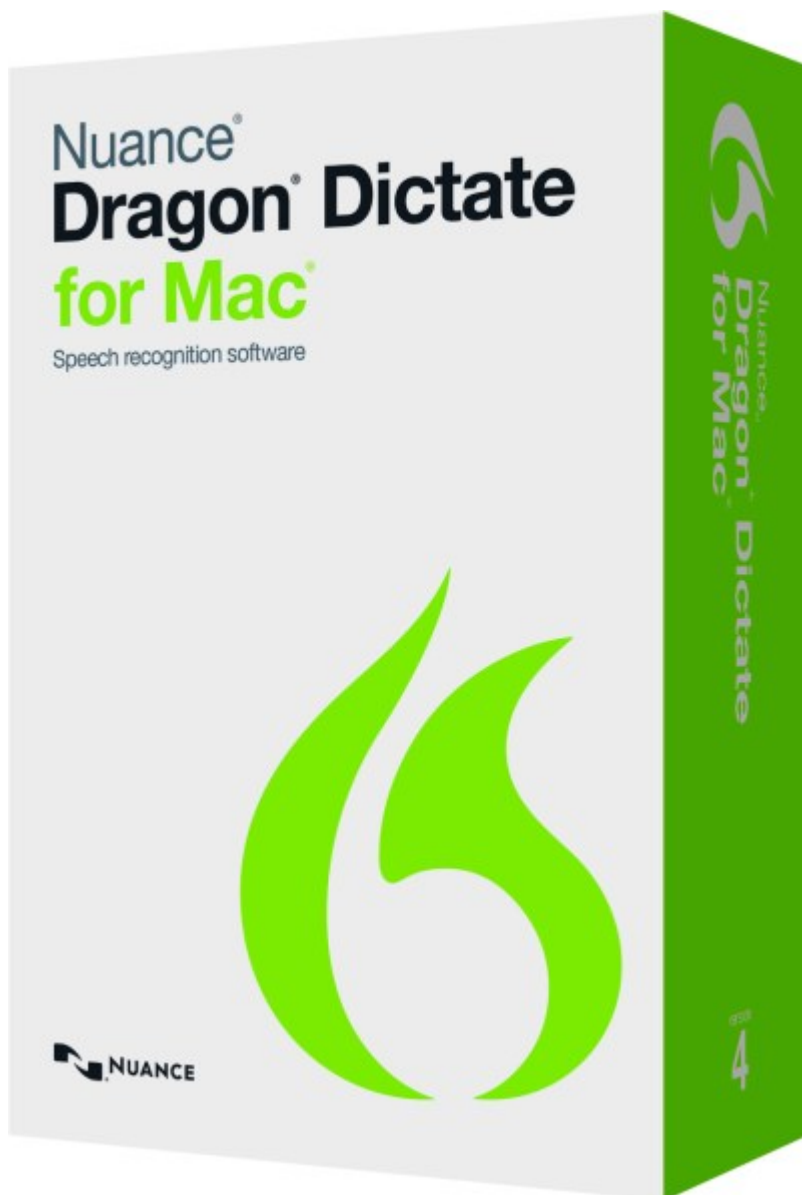




The benefits of Dragon Dictate

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As a journalist, I have to do a lot of writing as you might expect, and in this line of work I also find myself interviewing people on a regular basis. But transcribing lengthy interviews for use in the particular feature or



book I might be writing can take hours. So of course I'm always on the look out for tech to help me speed up the process.



Foreword by Norbert Singer

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FROM THE AUTHOR

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My field of work is obviously in motoring and motor sport, and so one of the only ways to make my work stand out is to interview folk who, in one way or another, were involved with the car I'm writing about. If it's a for a book, then I might interview several people, including engineers, designers, racing drivers, owners and so on, and so I can sometimes end up transcribing multiple interviews for just one project.

When my interview workload reached a peak some time back, I looked around the market for some software to help with this task, and after a bit of research I came across [Dragon Dictate](#). A call to the good folk at [Nuance](#) who manufacture this product resulted in the acquisition of their latest version of the Mac software (v 3.0.4).

The kit includes a CD and headphones with a mouthpiece that swivels down should you need it. So, after downloading the digital file containing said interview, you call up the file and can hear it through the earpiece. You then speak the interview back into the microphone and it appears on the screen as written text. Simples... Right? Well not quite, because you should go through a speech test first so that the software can get used to your voice, and once it has created a profile for you, you're ready to roll.

There is the facility to train the software to recognise certain words that are specific to your industry or type of work, so the learning process is on-going. This feature is also helpful for training the software to recognise your voice, as everyone pronounces words differently. So



this is really helpful.

Sometimes the software does what it thinks is right, but this means the words typed out are completely different from what I speak into the microphone. This can be really frustrating, especially when it happens time and time again. The only solution then is to switch the software off, restart it and carry on. This often sorts out the problem. The mic can also pick up other sounds in the office, as it's quite sensitive, but on balance it is really helpful.

Overall the reduction in typing time for a long interview is pretty impressive. Physically typing it out, especially if it's a long interview, might take a whole day, but the software helps cut this down to just a few hours. Having said that, I'm not the speediest typist in the world, so others might find there's not much difference. Though every little helps, right?

However, I'm not one for sitting still for too long, so I do break the process up every so often. The more you use the software, the speedier you'll probably become. But that reduction in time is enough for me, as I can do some transcribing for an hour say, change to another task for a while, and then return to transcribing again.

This software has really transformed my task of interviewing and transcribing, so long may the Dragon Dictate software keep working for me!

Written by: Glen Smale

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