



Digital Dictation is a great technology reinvented for the 21st century

Remember when you first learned how to type? It may have been on a typewriter or computer but the basic Qwerty keyboard is still familiar today. For many executives, speaking into a dictating machine is a familiar business task. However the dictation industry has changed dramatically in the last few years.

The process of converting the spoken word into a digital format has been around since the late seventies. Hospital radiology departments were among the first to embrace this technology. Staff physicians were able to listen to dictated reports over the telephone prior to transcription, thus speeding up the delivery of patient care. Right from the start the benefits were clear to the early adopters of digital dictation and transcription.

Over the next thirty years digital dictation enabled the physicians recorded voice dictation to be sent as a digital file to medical transcription staff. Sophisticated interfaces to hospital information systems and text programs created a seamless process of dictation, text creation and electronic signature. Clearly the medical market was enjoying a technology that catered to the specific needs of physicians and medical transcriptionists.

Jump ahead to the present day and you will witness a similar transition that's taking place in law offices, insurance companies and Corporate America.

Picture an attorney speaking into a small handheld digital recorder. When the attorney is finished dictating he or she simply places the recorder in a small USB connected stand and the digitized compressed dictation file uploads directly to the support staff for transcription. Playback of audio is accomplished by software loaded on the secretaries PC along with a USB foot pedal and USB headset connected to the PC.



Now an attorney or executive can dictate virtually anywhere and securely send the digital recording back to support staff for immediate processing. Dataworxs is an example of an exceptional software developer that makes this entire process extremely simple and secure. Their Personal Companion software program is designed to move audio from a digital handheld recorder and securely send it anywhere in the world using a data network or the Internet. The attorney simply hears “download complete” and is notified the file has been sent! Dataworxs can utilize encryption and secure socket TCP/IP connectivity for sensitive dictation security.

With the ubiquitous Blackberry or iPhone devices the author may find an alternative means of dictating. A free dictation application for Blackberry may be downloaded by following this link, <http://www.dataworxs.com/bb/index.php>. You can choose to install this program over the air, or via device manager, and yes, the program really is free to download and use.

Dataworxs has also produced a fully functional non-proprietary player program designed to recognize virtually any audio recording you attempt to transcribe. All wave files, DSS recordings from Olympus or Philips, VoIP phone mail recordings, as well as .amr files from Blackberry are supported. This program can also allow you to migrate into a database driven workflow program should your firm or organization include a large number of potential authors.

Workflow programs are designed with a user interface to help you control, manage and route all of the audio files that will be created and sent by your authors. Dataworxs' Audioworxs program is database driven and runs on any non-proprietary server or virtual server such as VMware. This program will allow for the creation of user profiles, user groups and provide a "window" into the management of the dictation/transcription process. The upgrade from a client based player to a server oriented workflow player is simple and inexpensive.

However the real benefit from an integrated workflow program may be the added integration of Back end speech recognition software. That same attorney with the Blackberry device, dictating after hours from a hotel, simply presses the spacebar on the Blackberry when finished recording.

The Dataworxs workflow program receives the dictation via secure email, (you will not be required to have BES server) and processes the dictation via the speech recognition software. Within minutes, the text of the dictation is emailed back to the attorney, all without any support staff intervention.

There are many observed benefits of digital dictation utilizing the Dataworxs program.

- Ease of use for the attorney or author, without changing their practice patterns
- Eliminate the sending of dictation cassettes through the mail or courier
- Share transcription resources across the enterprise
- Case management and/or document management integration
- Eliminate cassette and disposable battery purchases and their recurring costs
- Eliminate down time from tangled or broken cassette tape
- Web enabled management access, perfect for control of multiple offices
- Recordings such as depositions can be saved as wave files and burned to a CD or client folder for on demand listen access
- Transcribe voice mail recordings without re-recording onto cassette
- Excellent digital sound quality for the legal secretary or typist
- Digital workflow programs set the necessary foundation for "back-end" speech to text integration, also offered through Dataworxs



Philips' new Bluetooth Wireless Speechmic

End users had the following to say about Digital Dictation and Dataworxs software.

“Our attorney’s appreciate the mobility digital dictation provides. An attorney can dictate off site and securely send their dictation to our support staff for immediate processing”

-Ralph Traficanti, Querrey and Harrow Ltd.

“The transition to digital from analog cassette was well accepted. The legal secretaries appreciated the digital sound as well as being able to view the lengths of dictation and attorney’s comments before transcribing”

-Bob Dickinson, Jenner Block Ltd.

Most cassette manufacturers of analog dictation machines have discontinued the production of these devices. This has created a need for many organizations to look at technology alternatives such as digital dictation to replace their aging cassette systems. Be sure to engage a knowledgeable vendor who can assist you in the investigation phase and deployment of this technology. It is important to involve your IT staff as well, as this is now an application layered over your data network. A successful installation will have your attorney’s and support staff thanking you for a wonderful move into a familiar albeit new technology.

About the author-

Ken Kloss has represented and deployed a variety of digital dictation, speech recognition and software based recording applications in multiple vertical markets since 1980. He has been a featured speaker at regional and national technology forums. Ken is President of DictationProducts.com and may be contacted at Ken@dictationproducts.com