



The Toronto OS/2 User Group's News Letter

June, 1997 Vol. 3 / Iss. 3

Price: \$1.00

This Month: VoiceType Dictation
Reviewed...Shareware Disk Info
...June Agenda...**News from the
'Net** ...From the Warped Mind of
the Editor...Objects Made Easy
...And lots more good stuff.....

VoiceType Dictation: A Personal Opinion

By Jay Schwartz, TO/2 Member

recognition already.

I do not know exactly where to begin this piece, except to say that the reception of the VoiceType products has been extremely underwhelming. When I first saw the VoiceType Dictation product demonstrated running on OS/2 I was astounded. You could actually speak to your computer and it would understand you and transcribe your words. The product had another name then, but it was version 1 running on OS/2 Version 2.1. I was amazed that it cost only \$1500.

Now, in Warp, the latest version of VoiceType is included for FREE in every "specially marked box". And those boxes come in both full and upgrade sizes. And they include the "connect" stuff, and the "Windows 3.1" stuff, and the "Java" stuff, and even the BonusPak (yes, I do use it).

Somehow, the world at large, it seems, will not discover voice recognition for another few years when Bill Gates finally invents it. That is truly unfortunate for them since many of us have discovered the value of speech

Many OS/2 users are resisting the upgrade from Warp 3 to Warp 4. They have heard about problems. For me, however, the upgrade went very smoothly. (I never load Beta copies of OS/2 on my system.) In my case, I upgraded not to get the gaudy new colors, but rather to get my free copy of VoiceType. You may have seen this product demonstrated, but to really appreciate it, you need to live with it for a while.

As a short review let me remind you that VoiceType really consists of two different but integrated products. The first of these is voice navigation. Navigation is speaker independent and uses continuous speech. It can be used to navigate your desk-top -- launch applications, move windows around and select menu and button options. Although it is fun to play with, navigation is not really any faster or easier than using the mouse and I personally do not use voice for this purpose. The second part of VoiceType is its



dictation capability. This is where it earns its keep. Yes, there are some draw-backs. It does require training (approximately two hours) and you must learn to speak with a short pause

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VoiceType Dictation: A Personal Opinion

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between words. This pause may seem unnatural at first but you can get used to it quite easily. I find the change in breathing more difficult to accommodate than the pauses in speech. In fact, I can dictate approximately as fast as I can think of things to say. ("Um" and "ur" don't count.)

While I am not a terrible typist, I certainly cannot type at that rate. I find VoiceType to be quite remarkable in that it rarely makes a mistake. Whenever I see an incorrect word, usually it is because I have mispronounced it; mostly by running two words together. The program's vocabulary is surprisingly large and includes many computer acronyms and most Canadian place names. To use dictation you open a special window called appropriately enough, the Dictation Window. The Dictation Window shows all of your spoken words as text but also retains the spoken sound as well. You can follow the text on this screen if you wish. However, it is not necessary. You can talk on as you like and the recognition engine will catch up to you. You can click on any word and have it played back. At this point you have several correction options. The program displays a list of reasonable alternatives to choose from, but if it is still not there, you can type in the correct word. These corrections are remembered and used to amend your voice model. The more you use VoiceType Dictation, the better it gets at recognizing the way you speak. Finally, when you are finished dictating, you can transfer (or cut and paste) the complete text to any word processor or text editor. Naturally, there is no font information but the text is complete and ready for editing. Keep in mind that it is not necessary to run a spell check on the results of VoiceType. Although it may select an incorrect word, you can be sure the word it

chose is spelled correctly.

Up until now I have used the term "word" to mean the same as utterance. Really any utterance is a sound surrounded by short silences. It is possible to create macros which can substitute any text for any utterance. Generally you want to select an utterance which is meaningful to you yet still not a normal word. The way to do this is to string two or three words together. For example a sample macro that I use is "my-name" which produces the following result .

There are many macros already provided in VoiceType. They include such things as punctuation. Thus you can ask for "*.,-\$.!;&%". Macros can be as elaborate as you like.

For me the real down side is that I cannot use VoiceType to do C programming. For recognition to work and be useful your content needs to be in sentences and the number of words needs to outnumber the punctuation symbols. However, for the right use, it is wonderful. For example, the first draft of this review was dictated.

My only other complaint is that when I am dictating, I must turn down the radio. Maybe if I get headphones for the radio, I will be able to keep listening.

I should warn you that in addition to Warp 4 you do need a reasonably powerful computer. I have heard numbers ranging from Pentium 75 to Pentium 100 as minimum. You also need a sound card that OS/2 recognizes. In my case I had no sound card at all so I bought one specifically for VoiceType -- the cheapest Sound Blaster I could find. It cost a little over \$100. Was it worth it? Well, I was ready to spend the \$1500 on the original package, so it is as if I won \$1400

in the lottery.

To my mind, speech recognition is the next "killer app". It has the ability to turn ordinary people into computer users (to do useful work, not play games).

Oh, someone should tell Bill Gates to stop trying. VoiceType is already available for Win95. The main difference from the OS/2 version is that the Win95 folks have to pay to get it!

Jay Schwartz



***NEW* PKZIP for OS/2 on Hobbes**

PKZip v2.50 for OS/2

pkos2250.exe 309181 Jun 2 11:57

<http://www.hobbes.edu/pub/os2/util/archiver>

Get it while it's hot... -Derek Keoughan

Contacting TO/2

WWW: <http://www.to2.org>

BBS: Node 1: 416-422-4351
Node 2: 416- 422-4599

E- Mail: to2@to2.org

Mailing List: to2ug-l@to2.org

Meetings are the second Thursday of every month at:

IBM Canada
Main Auditorium
3600 Steeles Avenue East
Markham, Ontario

Meetings begin at 7:00pm

Objects made Easy!

Finally an EASY way to understand Objects and all the technologies surrounding them these days... Read on!

Welcome to Uncle Bruce's Cookie World. Because, you know, objects are kind of like cookies. And I know all of you little chippers love cookies.

To start off this weak metaphor, an object is like....what?

That's right, it's a cookie! And objects are encapsulated. Just like cookies, since you really don't know how many chocolate chips are in the cookies until you eat the whole thing. Stay with me; there really is a point to this bad analogy.

Now, if you want to make a lot of cookies that look just like each other, you use a cookie cutter. That's just like objects. We seldom ever want to make just one object of a type, so we build a class. The class just describes exactly what a cookie, er...object, will look like.

It describes each method (like a function), each property (like a variable), and the like. So, you might say, what's the point of all of this? Soon, dear reader, soon.

This Month's Agenda:

June 12, 1997 - General Meeting.
Topics: To be announced.
Latest News and Gossip

June 26, 1997 - Programmer's SIG
Topic: To be announced.

Now, let's take a bad analogy even further. Let's say that I've got a cookie cutter that makes round cookies. And my wife is a real video junkie, so she likes Pac Man. Well, I've got a couple of choices.

- I can just take the existing cookie cutter and modify it to look like Pac Man. Problem is, now I can't make round cookies for me since I just turned my round cutter into Pac Man. And I HATE Pac Man.

- I can create a completely new cookie cutter that looks just like Pac Man. Problem is, now I have dual maintenance. If I used the round cookie cutter as a template for Pac Man, well my Pac Man won't be too round either. And now, if I decide to make them rounder, I have to fix both of them. By the way, this is one of the problems in OLE. To make two similar parts, you don't really use inheritance. You use aggregation. Bottom line is that you can't inherit functionality, you replace it. And you end up with a lot of dual maintenance.

- I can take a simple V shaped cutter, and attach it to the round one!

Cool. Now, I can make Pac Man cookies, and remove the V to make round ones. Basically, I have two classes. One is the base class...the round one. One is just the DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE BASE CLASS AND THE CLASS THAT I WANT...in this case, a simple V. This is what we mean by programming by exception. Program the exceptions (the V), and inherit the rules (the circle). And now, the point. One of you chippers out there asked some hard questions...(not to mention any names, John.)

--What's a class library?

A class library is just a bunch of cookie cutters. Some of the classes may work together...like we may deliver both a circle and a V. Some will not work together at all...like a house. The bottom line is that class libraries are great, because the chef can make a bunch of cookie types without making new cookie cutters. Well, the programmer can create many different types of classes without having to code them from scratch. And if a class isn't perfect, the programmer can tinker with them through inheritance.

-- Well, then what's a framework?

Have you ever noticed that most ginger bread houses look alike, when you take away the frosting? Some people even sell ginger bread house "shells"...and you supply the personality through the frosting. This

Continued on Page 4...

Coming Soon:

July, 1997 - COMDEX is in town, and many vendors would like our time. Stay tuned for special arrangements.

August, 1997 - To be announced. Check out the TO/2 Web site at <http://www.to2.org>.

Future Topics -

NOTES/Domino

Visualage for Java

OS/2 Games Night

Come on out and be part of the best OS/2 User Group in Canada!

Objects Made Easy

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is exactly the approach that a framework takes. It solves a general problem, and let's you specialize it to your needs. Just like giving you a bland gingerbread house shell, and letting you embellish it through your own use of frosting...or INHERITANCE!

-- *So, Mr. smarty pants, what's the difference between the two?*

For you non-cookie technoweenies, try this one. A framework is like a VW-Bug. Remember all of the car kits that put ultra cool bodies on a VW-Bug? Well, the VW-bug was a pretty dull car, but it worked. And it could be personalized into something awesome to look at. In fact, some replaced the body, the frame, and the engine one step at a time.

They started with a VW Bug because it gave them a FRAMEWORK to start from.

A class library is like Auto Zone. You could probably build a car from scratch with parts from Auto-Zone. Your car could be infinitely more individualized than one of those stinkin' VW Bug kits. But you'll be working on yours four years after John is driving his around, if you started at the same time.

We need both. Frameworks when we need to solve a huge problem quickly...class libraries when I need a scroll bar or a hash table or a lot of flexibility.

-- *OK...enough fantasy land. What's OpenClass, and where do I get it?*

OpenClass is IBM's class library for C++. It is portable across Windows NT, Windows '95, OS/2, and AIX. (Windows through DAPI). It has visual classes like push buttons,

menus, scroll bars, windows, and the like. It also provides some miscellaneous services like memory management.

By the way, this is the role that MFC fills for Microsoft. It is an OBJECT ORIENTED class library, with inheritance, based on C++. It is coupled VERY TIGHTLY with Windows API's...OpenClass is more portable and more abstract.

-- *So what's OpenDoc?*

OpenDoc is an object oriented FRAMEWORK that does compound documents.

There's two parts to it. First is the container that you use to collect the various parts of the document. Second, are the COMPONENTS that you drop into the container. A bunch of components in a container is a compound document. OpenDoc also has object oriented FRAMEWORKS that let you build components and containers. Basically, we give you a generic component, and let you subclass it to add the stuff that makes it unique, but inherit the stuff that makes it OpenDoc for free. Ah, a framework! Something that solves a generic problem...ie an open doc component...and lets you specialize it to your own needs. The open doc container works the same way. We give you a generic one...you specialize it.

OLE is the same approach to the end user, but a different type of development. You code a bunch of your components and containers from scratch. You can plug in some functions that we've written for you.

It's like buying cookie dough in a neat roll (OpenDoc) versus building the dough from scratch with a very precise recipe that will blow up if you

deviate from it by as much as a milliliter, killing everyone in the room. But it makes great cookies. The pressure is squarely on the chefs.

OCX is MicroSoft's standard for building light weight components...like the push buttons on the palate of Visual Basic.

VBX was an earlier version of the OCX. VBX's work inside SmallTalk VisualAge, on Windows only.

(I'm not sure about OCX's).

OpenDoc parts will work with C++ VisualAge soon (ie 96) and with SmallTalk later (??).

Taligent is like the ultimate gingerbread castle...but you need a kitchen at least 10000 by 1000 to get it into your house, and an industrial strength oven to bake it. But man, is it awesome.

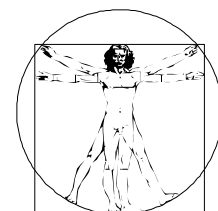
It can coexist with OpenClass and OpenDoc...there is no special cooperation yet.

SOM works seamlessly with Visual Age C++ (ie the C++ objects ARE SOM objects through a feature called direct to som). VisualAge SmallTalk can talk to som objects with a feature called wrapping.

We hope that SmallTalk will be direct-to-SOM SOME day...don't know when.

Author: Bruce Tate
Object Technology

"Objects in the mirror are larger than they appear."



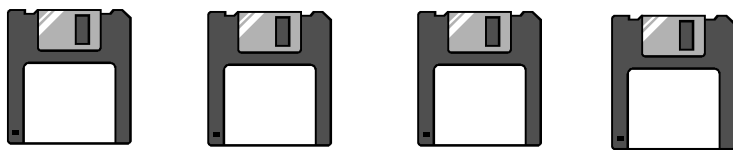
June/97 TO/2 Shareware Disk Readme

Disclaimer: *Nothing verified for anything. Your mileage may vary. You get what you pay for. Don't blame us if your system self destructs.*

bermuda.zip	Bermuda Triangle Ship Rescue Game: find hidden ships
boze.zip	Advice on how many beers to drink (for Martin)
eject100.zip	Removable drive eject/lock/unlock applet
farside.zip	Farside Icons
htljic.zip	Hercules, The Legendary Journey Icons
jshif161.zip	Keeps NumLock on for OS/2 and DOS sessions
ns_fix_p.zip	REXX script to fix Netscape GA "p" bug
tclock11.zip	Talking Clock
we020.zip	Workplace Shell Enhancer
wl.zip	Workstation Lock
wwait11.zip	Changes Wait Pointer to Warp Logo
wpos261.zip	WordPerfect for Windows WPS Integration tools (Warp 3 only)

Kevin Linfield Preferred e-mail: linfield@torfree.net

*** *Permission DENIED to add my name to ANY mailing list* ***



News from the 'Net

By Joe Johnson, Editor

Have you ever wanted to have notification of an update to a Web Page that you are following, but don't have time to go back and keep checking the page? Try the following Website:

<http://www.netmind.com/URL-minder/>

The URL-minder is a free, automatic Web-surfing robot that keeps track of changes to Web pages that are important to you. When the URL-minder detects changes in any of the Web pages you have registered, it sends you e-mail. You can register as many pages as you would like! The URL-minder: Your Own Personal Web Robot!

PMINEWS: A few months ago some of you saw a demo of PMINEWS, at one of the meetings. Well PMINEWS

has just been released and I can assure you it is a great NewsReader. It is available from Stardock, and from BMTMicro. For more information see the following sites:

www.southsoft.com
www.stardock.com
www.bmtmicro.com

POSTAL CODE LOOK UP: You can obtain any Canadian POSTAL CODE by going to the following WEB URL:

<http://www.mailposte.ca/english/pclookup/pclookup.html>

These are some of the things that you can do from this site:

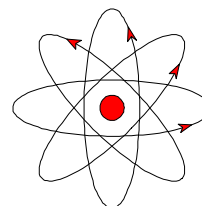
- *Look up Postal Codes for Street Addresses (Text Browser Version)
- *Look up Postal Codes for Rural Addresses & Post Office Boxes (Text Browser Version)
- *Look up Address Ranges for a given Postal Code (Text Browser Version)

Need to keep on top of the Java news? An interesting FAQ can be found at the following Website:

<http://www.teleport.com/~jcorigan/JavaFAQ.shtml>

IBM Home Computing Interactive can be found at the following Website:

<http://www.can.ibm.com/hc>



NeoN Graftix 3D for OS/2

For the production of three-dimensional video animations or the realization of your imagination for presentations, NeoN GRAFTIX 3D is the tool for the job. NeoN GRAFTIX 3D delivers a professional-quality 3D raytracing and animation kit.

NeoN takes advantage of the 32-bit OS/2 operating system, providing exceptional performance and guaranteeing that your creativity will never again be slowed or interrupted.

The resolution and size of rendered pictures is unlimited, allowing breathtaking picture quality. Any video format is available for animations. In all work areas you'll find filled z-buffer shading (and raytracing). Object bodies and animations can be previewed in real time. Morphing and deformation (warping) of bodies are also easily handled.

For the casual or hobbyist user, we offer NeoN GRAFTIX 3D Special Edition - the easiest and most inexpensive way to enter the world of 3D graphics and animation.

Acrobat Reader 3.0 for OS/2

Acrobat Reader 3.0 for OS/2 is now available. The following Press Release explains where to find the Reader.

For Immediate Release May 28, 1997
San Jose, Calif.

Adobe has shipped the Acrobat Reader 3.0 for OS/2. This product is currently available in seven language versions: English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and Swedish.

You can find the OS/2 reader (and other platform versions) by pointing your Web Browser to

<http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/readstep.html>

The non-English language versions will initially be available at

<http://www.adobe.com/prodindex/acrobat/alternate.html>

You may also retrieve Acrobat directly by ftp:

<ftp://ftp.adobe.com/pub/adobe/acrobatreader/os2/3.x/aro2?30.exe>

where ? indicates one of the following:

d = German
e = English
f = French
i = Italian
n = Dutch
s = Spanish
v = Swedish

NOTE: this product requires Warp and later versions of OS/2. For printing, Fixpak 26 or later is recommended for Warp 3.0.

The Acrobat Reader 3.0 for OS/2 includes key Acrobat features such as Internet browser integration, including ability to download Acrobat documents a page at a time from the Web and view them in the Netscape Navigator

browser. It also includes Acrobat forms, which enables users to easily read and fill out high quality Acrobat forms on the Web.

The OS/2 version of Acrobat reader also includes Workplace Shell integration features such as drag and drop printing, dragging files to the Reader to open, as well as customizable menu fonts. The OS/2 reader supports multiple independent reader windows, and can be launched locally or from the network via command-line.

The OS/2 Reader can be installed using CID (hands-off install) in an enterprise environment using a simple response file which is documented in the read.me file.

From the Warped Mind
of the Editor

By Joe Johnson, Editor

Welcome to the first edition of the Newsletter wholly put together by yours truly. It has been a lot of hard work to get the stuff together, as not too much came from you, the members. This is your Newsletter, so if you have some tips, product reviews, or other good OS/2 facts or rumours, let me know, and we'll try and publish them for the rest of the TO/2 User's Group to see.

I want to thank those who have contributed to this Newsletter. It is coming out late, but we are trying to move this up to being sent out a week before the meetings (hopefully). Enjoy!

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A monthly publication of the Toronto OS/2 User's Group

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