



Animal Intelligence Software, Inc.
3505 NW Anderson Hill Road, suite 204
Silverdale, Washington 98383
(360) 692-7736 FAX (360) 692-2629

Voice Recognition and Animal Intelligence

Overview

Voice recognition software is a viable alternative to typing and is gaining in popularity as the technology improves. This document covers the basics of voice recognition software and how it relates to Animal Intelligence (AI).

How it Works

The most popular voice recognition applications are Dragon Naturally Speaking and IBM Via Voice. Both run in the background on the Windows® operating system. A headset, included in the package, is used to dictate to the application. The voice recognition software interprets all sounds picked up by the headset and attempts to translate them into the keystrokes. In other words, voice recognition software provides you with an alternative to typing.

Since the software produces “keystrokes”, it is no different than using your keyboard. The software is able to emulate any keyboard command and can, to some extent, take the place of the mouse or trackpad.

We are often asked if Animal Intelligence supports voice recognition. It does, simply because it is a Windows® application. Just as AI “supports” the use of a keyboard and mouse, it also supports voice recognition.

In summary, voice recognition is not a feature of a particular application. You must purchase separate voice recognition software that is installed separately. It should work with any Windows® application.

Advantages

Doctors with poor typing skills may benefit from this technology. Once the software has been “taught” to understand your voice, you can sometimes dictate as fast as 90 words per minute. This may save a considerable amount of time and reduce spelling mistakes. Voice recognition software tends to do an excellent job of translating medical terminology.

This technology is most popular as an alternative to direct dictation.

Disadvantages

You may find voice recognition cumbersome, and even tedious. This is especially true at the beginning. After installing the software, you will need to spend at least two interrupted hours “training” the software to understand your voice. Once this initial session is complete, you should be able to dictate at a reasonable speed.

The software “learns” more about you during each dictation session. Sometimes it may misinterpret what you said. These mistakes must be corrected. If they are ignored, the application will begin to “misbehave” and its level of accuracy will drop. Depending on the application, you may spend a great deal of time correcting its errors. This significantly impacts your overall dictation speed.

Voice recognition software must be installed on each computer. This can be expensive.

Each doctor must train the software individually. You need to select your personal user file before starting to dictate. If many people are using voice recognition, this can be irritating.

You should perform dictation in a relatively quiet environment. The software will pick up everything you say unless you specifically tell it to ignore your speech. This makes it impractical to use in situations where interruptions are common, such as the exam room or treatment area.

The greatest disadvantage is that it basically bypasses the macro capabilities of AI. The whole purpose of macros is to significantly decrease typing. Although it is possible to use voice recognition in conjunction with the Macro Interpreter, it is, in a sense, defeating the purpose.

Recommendations

Voice recognition technology is very impressive and can be extremely useful in certain situations. We feel that the macro language within AI goes a long way to reduce typing. In most cases, voice recognition is not going to make a doctor more efficient.

The best use of voice recognition is for doctors who prefer dictating entire reports at one sitting. If they are willing to use a single computer for all dictation, and will take the time to initially “train” the voice recognition software, it may be a viable alternative to typing.