

Senior Counsel gets Personal about Dragon.

Challenge

- Save time and money
- Identify a tool that transcribes documents
- Increase productivity

Solution

- Deployed Dragon

Results

- Productivity levels soared
- Saved considerable time and money
- Easy to use and intuitive
- Ergonomic solution

Busy senior counsel and author, Mark Robinson SC, is Sydney based and today practices in administrative law and general law. From the onset of his legal career in 1993, Mark found that time was always in short supply. However, the cost and time involved in employing a typist or a personal assistant as he embarked on his career was then prohibitive, and so he decided to search for a productivity tool that could help him save time and money. His quest led him to Nuance's Dragon, which had just had its inaugural launch. Since then, Mark and Dragon have been inseparable.

“Dragon voice recognition software is easy, comfortable and entirely natural. It has long allowed flowing dictation to be a reality in the legal profession, and I believe it is simply critical software for Australian lawyers and an absolute must-have for any barrister.”

Mark Robinson, Senior Counsel
Maurice Byers Chambers

‘At the time, it was financially difficult for a young barrister just starting out to employ a typist. The workload was considerable and it involved copious amounts of writing and typing but it fluctuated. To keep costs in check I decided to look around and see if there was anything I could find on the technology front to help me produce documents quickly. The initial results were somewhat disappointing because the technology primarily centered on dictaphones. I was just about to give up my search when I came across Nuance’s Dragon.

‘The software had just been released and it promised to undertake the typing for you as you spoke to your computer. At the time, this was quite revolutionary and although not entirely convinced, I thought I’d give it a run and bought the software. Today, I would have to say this is still the best software investment I have ever made,’ explained Mark Robinson SC of Maurice Byers Chambers in Sydney.

Nuance Dragon NaturallySpeaking, or Dragon as it is more commonly known, brings voice recognition to the PC and allows individuals to simply talk to create content and command a computer. It eliminates the need for typing and delivers up to 99 percent recognition

accuracy. By using Dragon’s powerful voice recognition software individuals can interact with and command their PC as well as manage their emails, navigate the Web and create reports and notes simply by speaking.

According to Mark, the Dragon software released in 1993 was ‘clunky but useful’ as it helped him save time, improve his productivity and it was far cheaper and easier than engaging a typist. ‘In 1993 most computers were DOS based and sound cards had to be installed. My word processor was then WordPerfect 5.1 and I had a 20 MB hard drive installed on the computer to ensure speed and memory were operating at the most optimum levels possible. The Dragon software was not overly friendly and it initially took some getting used to as it was unlike any software I had used before. However, I persisted because I could see that its accuracy levels improved in time and I found Dragon could type almost as fast as I could speak. Within about three months of first trying Dragon, my productivity levels soared,’ recalls Mark.

He uses Dragon to draw or settle memoranda of advice, pleadings and written submissions for filing in court, as well as for his day-to-day correspondence. ‘Once I had mastered the software I found that Dragon was typing as

fast as I could think. I was able to write my documents quickly and accurately and this was saving me several hours a day, which is a considerable amount of time,' said Mark.

Apart from helping him save on time and effort, Dragon also helped Mark save on costs. 'Thanks to Dragon I have never needed to engage a typist or a personal assistant and this has allowed me to save a significant amount of money over the past 23 years,' he explained.

Since 1993, Dragon has evolved considerably. According to Mark, the software today is no longer 'clunky' and it is incredibly fast and highly accurate. In addition, he believes the software does not require a new user to train. 'The latest version of Dragon is literally productive straight out of the box. It is intuitive and user friendly, and a new user can simply plug in and start working,' said Mark.

As well as for creating and transcribing various legal documents, Mark now uses Dragon to "write" his presentations, speeches and lecture notes. He also uses it to compose his emails, search the Internet and generally command his computer. What's more, with the

legal supplement available for Dragon, Mark explained that a matter needs only to be "touched" once, making the user remarkably efficient and productive. 'The legal supplement provides correct capitalisation, has no difficulty understanding legal jargon and is extremely accurate. It spells the name of courts, judges and legal terms with the utmost accuracy. You don't have to teach it anything. You just focus on the content, create the document, sign it and send, and it's done,' he said.

Plus, an unforeseen but very welcomed benefit is that he does not have to tolerate sore hands, neck and shoulders. 'When I do occasionally type a document, my hands start to get very sore and my neck and shoulders often stiffen after a couple of hours of typing. If I use Dragon, I avoid this problem entirely, feel fine and I am far more productive and relaxed. Dragon is a big bonus for my health,' he explained.

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