“A higher percentage of people with disabilities want to go into the arts, compared to the rest of the population,” observes Don Whittecar, founder of The Emergent Institute (TEI) and an accomplished photographer and painter in his own right. He started TEI in 2006, funding the organization with money made from securing grants to assist disabled artists.

TEI’s mission statement says, in part, that its purpose is “to provide resources for special needs artists, enabling them to attain self-sufficiency through their chosen educational, vocational, and entrepreneurial ventures within the Visual and Performing Arts.”

As part of that goal, Whittecar started looking for a way to help disabled artists use Adobe Photoshop and other computer software. He discovered MacSpeech Dictate (now Dragon Dictate for Mac) in 2008, and he soon realized that it could be beneficial to his own work too. He notes: “I have two graduate degrees, but I never learned to type, so MacSpeech Dictate has opened up new opportunities for me. It is an amazing help with writing of any kind, considering that I did two master theses by hand and had typists type them.”

MacSpeech Dictate then became a key part of his grant writing: “I can put my thoughts down immediately, so they don’t fly away. It allows me to be spontaneous with recording ideas and possibilities. When I tell people about the software, I always say: ‘Now you can write the way you speak.’”

That conversational style, notes Whittecar, also comes in handy when writing and replying to emails. In addition, he relies on MacSpeech Dictate while navigating the Internet, creating spreadsheets, and more. “There’s so much capability with MacSpeech Dictate, it amazes me”, he says.
“There’s so much capability with MacSpeech Dictate, it amazes me.”

Don Whittecar

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