

## Improving NaturallySpeaking Accuracy

If you are feeling that your NaturallySpeaking recognition accuracy is not as good as you expect, try to more precisely identify what types of things are not working. Think about the following:

- 1) Did NaturallySpeaking work fine and then either stop working suddenly and/or degrade OR did it never work well? The answer to this question can lead you to consider several issues (most discussed in this document below) such as:
  - a. Did the mic get damaged? Or, it is rare, but possible that a new mic is bad.  
See techniques discussed later in this document.
  - b. Did the NaturallySpeaking software installation get damaged/corrupted?  
You may need to either “repair” or “uninstall/reinstall” the NaturallySpeaking product, if there is a chance that one of the many NaturallySpeaking files is damaged. Before you try this step, try creating a new/second user file to see if the new user works just fine. If the new user works fine, then something is going on with your user file, so go to the next step.
  - c. Did your user file get corrupted? If NaturallySpeaking was working just fine for you before, your user file may be corrupt. To isolate this issue, create a new user as described in step 15 below. If your user file is corrupted, you may need to import a backed-up copy of your user file or “restore” the NaturallySpeaking internal back-up (unless you have disabled this feature) or create a new user file and try to move over vocabulary/commands from your old user file, if possible. (See our tech note about importing/exporting all/part of the user file – also on our web site.)

IF the problem is not one of the fundamental issues talked about above, it must be more of a usage/adaptation issue, so keep reading:

- 2) Does the software fail to recognize large words?  
Failure to recognize large words is less common because large words are phonetically more unique. So two questions related to this issue:
  - a. Should you be using a specialized vocabulary such as the Legal vocabulary or one of the 12 Medical vocabularies?  
If you are doing Medical or Legal dictation, your accuracy would be greatly improved by using the NaturallySpeaking Medical or Legal products.
  - b. Have you improved your vocabulary to recognize the specialized words, jargon, acronyms, etc. that you need to say.  
Specialized words, proper names, etc. may not initially be in the vocabulary and may need to be added. Once added, they should recognize just fine.  
You can add words one at a time, just by correcting them as they misrecognize the first time.  
And look below for the many ways that you can improve your vocabulary all at once, by taking advantage of existing sources you may have for vocabulary.
- 3) Does NaturallySpeaking fail to recognize small words when you do say them?  
Failure to recognize small words is more common because these small words sound more alike... Consider enunciating more, speaking in complete phrases and watching out for extraneous sounds caused by clearing your throat, etc. Each of these is discussed in more detail.
- 4) Does it type extra small words you don't feel that you said at all, indicating that the software is hearing extra sounds?  
These sounds could be you clearing your throat, saying bridging words (like “um” or “ah”), breathing too directly into the mic (if the mic element is in the wrong position --too close to your mouth), etc. (We are assuming that your problem is not the mic. A damaged mic can cause the same type of result.)

- 5) Have you listened to the dictation to see if there are any strange noises like microphone crackling? Select some text you have dictated and play it back -- either from under the "Sound" menu or by saying "Play That Back".
- 6) If you correct a word (using the NaturallySpeaking correction techniques) and then say it again, does the software get it right the next time?
- 7) Are you saying punctuation as you dictate?  
The default mode of the software is to expect the dictator to say punctuation. Without punctuation, recognition accuracy will be worse because NaturallySpeaking is trying to make things grammatically correct and will make assumptions based on the presence/absence of punctuation. There is a Natural Punctuation mode (described on pages 25 and 103 of the NaturallySpeaking V9 User Guide) you can read about and try, if you'd like, but if you are not in Natural Punctuation mode, say punctuation...
- 8) Do you dictate in complete phrases?  
Example: Do you say "Dear Bob colon new-paragraph" and not just "Deer"? Context helps NaturallySpeaking make a better recognition choice.
- 9) Do you enunciate well?  
Listening to yourself, as described in step 5 above, will help you hear yourself as the software hears you...
- 10) Any chance that the microphone has become damaged?  
How clear did the audio sound when you played it back as described in step 5 above? Any crackling or other obvious noise?
- 11) Is there a whole lot of background noise when you dictate?  
NaturallySpeaking can tolerate some background noise, but if it was whisper quiet when you trained the product and you like to dictate with the TV/radio on, you may want to re-train a little with the same background noise.
- 12) To follow on with the question in 6, is there any chance you are incorrectly correcting NaturallySpeaking? Because the makers of the product want NaturallySpeaking to adjust to anything, they make it very flexible. If you correct wrong, the product will learn incorrect info and get worse over time.

Example:

- a. You said: "Brenda **Gobbledygook** called today with a question about...." and NaturallySpeaking got Brenda's last name wrong.
- b. NaturallySpeaking typed "Brenda **probably do** called today with a question about...."
- c. Now, if you look carefully and remember what you were saying, you will notice that the words "probably do" is what NaturallySpeaking typed instead of "Gobbledygook", so you must select/correct "probably do".
- d. If you accidentally selected/corrected only the word "probably", you will wrongly teach NaturallySpeaking. It will start to think that the last syllable of "Gobbledygook" is not pronounced. And, remember, that correction not only helps the particular word(s) being corrected. Correction teaches the NaturallySpeaking product about the phonetics that are in the word(s) in general.

Read more about correction techniques in Chapter 5 in the NaturallySpeaking User Guide.

- 13) Did you run the step in the new user process, where NaturallySpeaking analyzes the contents of your My Documents folder (described on page 19 of the NaturallySpeaking V9 User Guide)?  
This process is good if the documents in your My Documents folder is typical of your work, but can be irrelevant or even detrimental if you have a whole lot of random (not applicable to your future dictation) stuff in this folder.
- 14) Consider trying to (or have anyone else) create a second user file with your mic on the same PC.  
This will test whether the problem is with your user file only.  
Skip the document analysis step described in 13 above. Then after just the new user 5-minute reading process, go straight to try to dictate and see what happens.

## Things to do to improve your NaturallySpeaking Accuracy

Have you done any of the built-in NaturallySpeaking techniques to improve recognition accuracy?

- a. The most obvious thing to improve recognition accuracy and have to correct less in the future is to “Perform additional training.  
Perform additional reading (aka “training”) by going to NaturallySpeaking > Tools > Accuracy Center > Perform Additional Training?

Note: Before performing additional reading/training, re-run the “Check your Audio Settings” routine to make sure that the software is still hearing you well through your microphone. Go to NaturallySpeaking > Tools > Accuracy Center > Check your Audio Settings.

- b. If your accuracy problems center around specialized words, jargon, etc., consider the “Improve your vocabulary” techniques shown under the Accuracy Center. Go to NaturallySpeaking > Tools > Accuracy Center.

## Things to do to accelerate your understanding and the effectiveness of this new product

- Go through the NaturallySpeaking tutorial, if you haven’t already (located under NaturallySpeaking > Help > Tutorial).
- Read the User Guide and Quick Reference Card that come with NaturallySpeaking. Also, read through the very extensive, in-product help (located under NaturallySpeaking > Help > Help Topics).
- You might also want to consider purchasing one of the available V9 training aids including a user workbook, a video training program or an advanced book talking about the command capabilities of NaturallySpeaking. Visit our web site ([NaturallySpeaking V9 Training Aids Page](#)) for a description of these training aids and/or contact us for more detail or to order.
- Consider contracting for training/customization assistance. Contact us for more detail.

## Visit our web site

By the way, our web site is continually being updated with more product information, as well as, technical support information (available from the NaturallySpeaking “Tech Support” link on our home page) available to our customers. Please plan on visiting our web site at [www.Image-Management.com](http://www.Image-Management.com).

## Send us your email address

Also, if you’ll send us an email with your email address, we’ll add you to our email distribution list, so you’ll receive information about new products, industry news, etc. If you didn’t receive the NaturallySpeaking V8 Update announcement by email, then we don’t have your email address. Remember, you can also email us your serial number and we’ll keep it on file for you. Email us at: [Speech@Image-Management.com](mailto:Speech@Image-Management.com).

## Thank you!

We appreciate your business and our relationship as your NaturallySpeaking provider. Feel free to call/email with any questions, to order products/services, or just to let us know how you are doing!