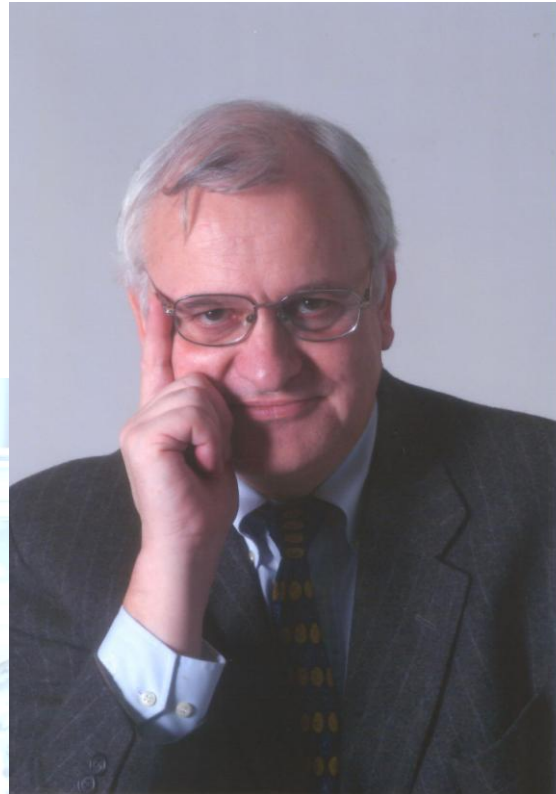


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## **ITMatters**

In this regular column Charles Zealey of ITSolve covers all aspects of business and personal computing. If you have a question about IT matters, email it to Charles on [itmatters@itsolve.co.uk](mailto:itmatters@itsolve.co.uk)



### **TALK TO ME!**

Do you talk to your computer? And no, I don't just mean in anger or frustration when you utter meaningful threats that possibly include physical violence. No, I mean talking to it instead of typing or using a mouse.

The technology to let you do this has been around for well over ten years. Many of us who tried it a while back found it hard to use. But things are much, much better these days. Speech recognition software has moved forward to the point where many users now find it an indispensable part of their computer set-up.

### **TWO FINGER TYPIST?**

If you can talk faster than you can type, or if your job entails a lot of typing, you might well find that using speech recognition software can really boost productivity. Many lawyers and doctors find that speech recognition software linked with their existing applications makes their busy lives considerably easier. And once the text is entered it can be edited in the same way as any other document on the computer.

As well as entering text, voice commands can be used to start, control and stop applications, move windows around the screen, control email packages and so on. All with just a few well chosen words. Best be careful what you say.

### **IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY**

But productivity is just one reason why you might be interested in speech recognition software. For people with disabilities, or for those with poor spelling or who suffer from RSI, there are other significant benefits that do not relate purely to improved productivity.

However, allow me to offer a word of warning before you rush out and buy the latest speech recognition package. Despite the claims, it still takes a while to become fully productive. It will take practice to get up to speed, and considerable effort including actually reading the manual. If you are serious about it, you might consider training from a specialist. It won't necessarily be cheap but it might save you money in the long run as you will make those productivity gains more quickly.

## **WHISPER SWEET NOTHINGS**

So next time you are tempted to shout rudely at your computer, just pause and think how much better it would be if you could talk to it nicely and get it to do what you really want.

*Charles Zealey is a consultant working with business professionals helping them to improve their organisation's productivity and effectiveness with the use of Information Technology. Typically a return on investment can be achieved with 6-12 months. To access help sheets go to [www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/](http://www.itsolve.co.uk/HelpSheets/). For a free half-hour consultation on business IT issues phone 01635 869863 or email [lisa@itsolve.co.uk](mailto:lisa@itsolve.co.uk).*

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