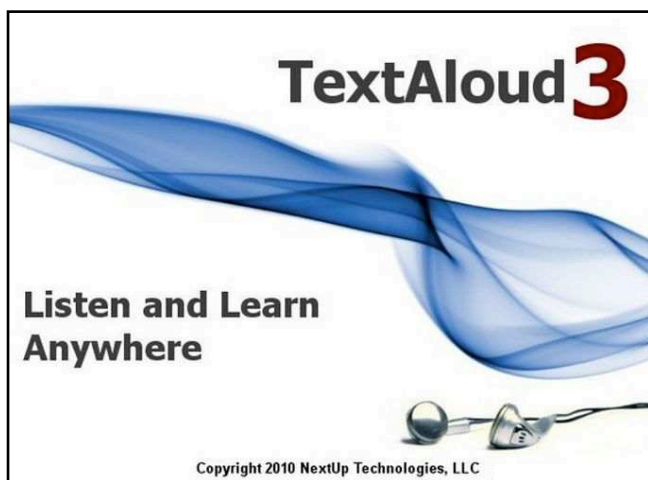# TextAloud 3 by NextUp.com

TextAloud 3 by NextUp Technologies is a Text to Speech application which runs on Windows. It converts text from documents, webpages, PDF files and so on into speech. You can either listen to text as it is read out to you, or you can create audio files so that you can listen to it later, on any device that plays the audio file you have created, such as an iPod or other MP3 player.

At the time of writing, TextAloud 3 costs $29.95 for the standard download. This is around £24 for UK buyers, which is very reasonable.

The product is very simple to install and use, as you would hope, and has an abundance of useful features. The main interface shows articles (which is text that you have either typed, copied or opened from another file or source) in separate tabbed pages, much like a modern web browser.



Articles can be read aloud to you from beginning to end, or from wherever you place your cursor. Alternatively, you can export it to an audio file in either MP3 or WMA formats. If your computer supports other audio files, you should be able to export to these too, though the two defaults should be sufficient for most people.

You can create an article in a number of convenient ways. Firstly, you can type an article from scratch. This is useful if you want to check what you have written by having it read back to you. For example, if you are writing an assignment for school or college, then writing it as an article is the quickest way. Once you have proofread your text by hearing it back, you can then just copy and paste the whole text into, let's say, a Word document so that you can submit it to your tutor.

Another way to create an article is by copying and pasting some text from somewhere else. Maybe you're reading a PDF file that you've been sent. From the PDF you can select some or all of the text and paste it into an article, using

TextAloud's clipboard monitor which notices when you've copied something. Once the text is in an article, you can have it read out to you or saved as audio for later; the choice is yours.

An even faster way to create an article is to simply drag and drop a file from your file explorer directly into TextAloud. This is quite smart and very convenient. File formats supported for this include, Word, PDF, Open Office, Word Perfect, Rich Text Format, HTML and XML, for the techies out there.

If you don't want to create an article and you are reading a Word document, you can use the plug-in to have the text read back to you right there in the document. Likewise, you can do this in Outlook, Internet Explorer and Chrome & Firefox web browsers.

Now let's discuss voices. The voice that is used to read back to you is the default Windows voice that you have set on your computer. If you have more voices to choose from already, then changing voice is very straight-forward. If you want to have another voice, you can buy more from NextUp, if you so desire.

From a usability perspective, you can change the look and feel of the article interface using the Skins options and you can also change the typeface, font colour and article background colour to make sure that you feel as comfortable as possible while reading and writing articles. For people with visual stress, this will be of great comfort.

In summary, TextAloud 3 is a well rounded, competent and very approachable product that pretty much does what is says with little fuss. At an affordable price and with a multitude of additional facilities, such as pronunciation editor, step through proof-reading, English dictionary lookup, spell checker and article archiving, it's hard to find faults.

For more information, please go to the NextUp website at NextUp.com.