

Erika Lin:
THE PERFECT RESEARCH ASSISTANT

Academic life typically involves heavy research. Collecting background material to write journal articles and books can be a tedious process, especially when you're faced with a large stack of publications. "There's something rote about typing a passage out of a book," acknowledges Erika Lin, Assistant Professor of English at George Mason University.

"There has to be a better way," Lin remembers thinking on a midsummer night in 2008, when faced with yet another pile of references checked out from the library. That's when she recalled a high school class assignment from two decades earlier: students were tasked with inventing future technology, so Lin dreamed up a world where speech recognition software was available for the Mac. "I still remember the poster I drew demonstrating how it worked," she says. "Now, fast-forward 20 years, and the future is here!"

***"Devise, wit; write, pen; for I am
for whole volumes in folio."***
– Don Armado, *Love's Labour's Lost*

After securing a copy of MacSpeech Dictate, Professor Lin was ready to begin dictating background material and notes onto her Mac as part of research for an upcoming book. *Shakespeare and the Materiality of Performance* focuses on audience response to theatrical performances in the Bard's era. "They had different conventions than we have today," she explains, "and we tend to project our modern assumptions on those performances. I'm doing the research to analyze their culture and understand those conventions."

Lin marvels at "the speed and accuracy with which MacSpeech Dictate types obscure words such as 'commensality' and 'historiography.' Nerd that I am, I was also thrilled to discover that it capitalizes 'Protestant Reformation' automatically." She uses a Firefox plug-in called Zotero, developed by her colleagues at George Mason, to scrape research citations into a bibliographic

database. MacSpeech Dictate also lends a helping hand in controlling applications and wrangling text.

Lin estimates that MacSpeech Dictate gives her a 25-30% time savings over typing. As a side benefit, she sees the software as "preventative care" against potential future wrist or arm injuries from too much typing. "I haven't had problems," she says, "but I have friends who suffer from carpal tunnel syndrome, and I know how painful it can be."



"Not a mouse stirring." – Francisco, *Hamlet*

MacSpeech Dictate's productivity benefits also come into play when Professor Lin critiques students' papers in Microsoft Word. She uses voice commands for Text Macros that help standardize the review process for student essays. "Certain things in their work come up over and over again," she says, "so I've created macros with blocks of text that I can automatically insert."

Sometimes Lin uses MacSpeech Dictate to write and reply to e-mail, but no matter what kind of application she has open on her Mac, it is sometimes her cats who demand that she start multitasking. "When they sit on my lap, it becomes impossible to type," she laughs. "So then my headset goes on and I can keep working with MacSpeech Dictate while petting my cats with two hands."

"Whereof what's past is prologue..." – Antonio, *The Tempest*

Considering the many benefits of MacSpeech Dictate, Professor Erika Lin has realized that she's living the culmination of what she envisioned many years ago. She spent hours back then poring over Time Magazine's glossy insert heralding the arrival of the Macintosh and imagining speech recognition in everyday life. "I dreamed it when I was 16, and now it's here," she enthuses. "I couldn't be more thrilled."

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This success story provides an overview of the user's experience with MacSpeech Dictate. As a result of the acquisition of MacSpeech, Inc. by Nuance Communications, Inc. in 2010, the MacSpeech Dictate product was renamed Dragon Dictate for Mac.