

Jeff Potter:

DRAGON GIVES AN OFFICER MORE TIME TO SERVE THE PUBLIC

We're all well-versed in the basic duties of a typical police officer: patrolling the streets and watching for suspicious activity; investigating reports of disturbances; responding to 911 calls; apprehending bad guys; and similar activities. Many of us may not realize, though, the amount of paperwork that comes with the job.

"I write reports all day long, every day, but I'm not a typist," explains officer Jeff Potter of the Cottonwood, Utah police department. "For example, when I respond to a 911 call reporting a crime, I arrive at the scene and take down all the available information.

I take the case as far as I can, and if it's too in-depth, I pass it to detectives." When he's done, he has to turn all that information, including eyewitness interviews, into a report.

Potter's report creation tasks involve browser-based software from Spillman Technologies, Inc., and a typical in-depth report requires filling in about 100 fields, some of which need narrative-style entries. For Potter, that meant laborious hunt-and-peck typing until early 2010, when a friend suggested he try Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

"This is the coolest thing ever," Potter recalls thinking after he installed Dragon on the laptop he keeps in his squad car. Now when he sits in his vehicle and creates a report, he simply speaks the information and finishes the job in half the time it used to take.

Potter points out: "Dragon not only increases my productivity by letting me finish reports faster, it increases the number of calls I can respond to, which means I can be in service longer and have more availability when dispatch contacts me."

Getting Reports Right

He also uses Dragon with Microsoft Outlook for responding to work e-mails and with Microsoft Word for creating his reports' narrative sections, in which he explains the nature of the incident and how it was handled. "Police reports are stories, so speaking the narrative helps it sound more natural,"

Potter says. "The Spillman software isn't very good with grammar and spellchecking, so I dictate the narrative into Word, where it gets checked for those things, and then copy and paste it into the web browser field."

In addition, Potter uses Dragon for the instant messages that he and his fellow officers trade all day. "I can respond while I'm driving, so I don't have to take my eyes off the road to look at my laptop," he notes. He adds that it also comes in handy for getting

work done while handling mundane tasks like traffic control, which involves parking his cruiser and watching passing vehicles for speeders and reckless drivers.

Potter sums up his experience: "Dragon has freed me to concentrate on finding bad guys and being more proactive in my community."

