

## The Emergent Institute Now Offering Speech Recognition Training

*One-on-One training for MacSpeech Dictate first of many to be offered.*

For several years, The Emergent Institute ( TEI ), a non-profit organization, has been dedicated to helping artists with disabilities achieve self-sufficiency. They have done this by helping individuals further their education, find employment, and by helping them locate the resources needed to start a business of their own. Last fall, Macintosh software developer MacSpeech approached The Emergent Institute's founder, Don Whittecar, himself an Artist with disabilities, with a unique opportunity: would TEI be interested in providing One-on-One training for Mac Speeches flagship suite of products: MacSpeech Dictate, Medical, Legal and International?

"At first, I wasn't sure how offering training on speech recognition software would fit with our mission," said Don. "But the more I thought about it, the more I liked the idea. What better way to fulfill our mission than to employ those with disabilities to teach others how to use an enabling technology?" To get started, Don sought the services of Patrick Henebry, a former MacSpeech employee who is now out on his own as a software consultant. Patrick is intimately familiar with speech recognition software for both Macintosh and Windows. Due to his own disability he depends on programs like MacSpeech Dictate or Dragon NaturallySpeaking to help control his computer and to communicate with others through email or chat programs. "Patrick is uniquely suited for helping us get our training program off the ground," said Don. "And we will be looking to employ more trainers as we grow."

Don also has ambitious visions for the future. The Emergent Institute is offering training not only on MacSpeech Dictate, but for Dragon Naturally Speaking and Windows Speech Recognition as well. Eventually he would like to offer group training via "webinars" — seminars conducted through a web site — where multiple people can attend the same session, like a class offered over the Internet. Don realized many people have the same issues when it comes to speech recognition: how to position the microphone, why you should speak your punctuation, how to train the software to best recognize your voice, etc. These are more general topics he feels could be offered to multiple people at once, who can then opt to continue with One-on-One training if they would like. By offering the webinars, more people can be trained at once, and the cost per individual is less than the cost of a One-on-One session.

The fact training will be offered to both the disabled and able-bodied is also a departure for The Emergent Institute, who has thus far focused exclusively on providing opportunities to the disabled. According to Don, when it comes to speech recognition, the things an individual needs to know at the outset can be very similar, regardless of whether the person is disabled or not, or if they are a housewife, a doctor, lawyer, or anyone else. "The basics are still the basics," he says, "and when a person has that covered, our staff will be happy to address any individual needs in a One-on-One session."

The Emergent Institute's One-on-One training starts at \$69.95 for one 50 minute session. However, APSE members are entitled to a 15% discount. Individuals can also purchase five sessions in a bundle for an additional discounted price. A schedule and pricing for webinars has not been determined at this time. Additionally, The Emergent Institute has also been authorized as a reseller for MacSpeech's voice recognition products and is offering the same 15% discount to APSE members who purchase any of the MacSpeech Dictate family of programs. More information is available on The Emergent Institute's web site at (<http://www.theemergentinstitute.org/apsetraining.html>) or by phone at 1-888-712-7044 and 406-777-1800.