VoicePower
The Speech Recognition People

Speech recognition case study…

A noticeable decline in workload at Ponteland Medical Group, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Site Profile:

- Seven doctors
- EMIS clinical system

Challenge

- Secretary resource depleting

Results

- A noticeable decline in workload

- Data are available to secretaries irrespective of location

- A fully digital workflow for referral letters

- Easy to use / customised features

Background

The introduction of speech recognition at Ponteland Medical Group has helped to relieve the strain on secretaries and led to a fully digitised workflow for referral letters. Nuance's speech recognition solution, implemented by local partner VoicePower, has impressed with its high performance and workflow tools.

Ponteland Medical Group is a General Practice with seven doctors in Newcastle upon Tyne. *"We originally employed three secretaries. When one of them left, the team had to decide whether or not to hire a new secretary,"* says IT and Information Manager Hilary Aldcroft.

They decided to try and get along with only two secretaries, but it quickly proved to be too much work and something had to be done. *"This was when we took a closer look at speech recognition,"* says Aldcroft.

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Better price and excellent reputation

Two providers were invited for a demonstration. One of them was VoicePower Ltd. Aldcroft: "A better price was one of the reasons we opted for VoicePower. But the excellent reputation of the software was also a factor." The software was ready for use in February 2010. "Four months later, we can say that we have indeed witnessed a noticeable decline in workload. The key is to find your own routine with the software, and this probably differs from organisation to organisation."

Finding your own routine

In Newcastle upon Tyne, the seven doctors write their referral letters at the end of each clinical session using Nuance's speech recognition system. "It is really easy for them," says Aldcroft. They only have to say "new patient letter" and the letter template comes up. For the document header, a patient number is needed. Then dictation can begin immediately. Once finished, the doctors save their documents in a letter folder on a shared drive so that they are accessible to the secretaries. "We have three of these folders to lend it some structure," says Aldcroft. One folder is for urgent letters, another for routine letters and a third for occupational health letters.

Optimised workflow

To facilitate document management, VoicePower has developed various macros that work alongside the Nuance solution to optimise workflows according to Ponteland Medical Group's specific needs. One macro is used to automatically save letters to the shared drive, for example. "Another macro shows the secretaries how many letters there are in each folder, so they can see straight away whether there are any new urgent letters." Aldcroft says this macro has been particularly helpful in garnering broad acceptance for speech recognition among the staff. Once a new letter appears in the shared folders, secretaries start working on the final referral document. "They merge the dictation with information from the clinical systems, for example medical history or current medication." After a final check by the doctors, the letter is then ready to be sent.

Ponteland Medical Group is a multi-site facility. Thanks to the shared drive, data from different facilities are available to secretaries wherever they are.

"We are using speech recognition at two out of three facilities at the moment. For the third facility, the network connection is not powerful enough. We are hoping that this will improve at some time in the future. If this is the case, we will certainly think about using speech recognition in the third facility as well."

Hilary Aldcroft
IT and Information Manager

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