

Utilities 4 Dragon

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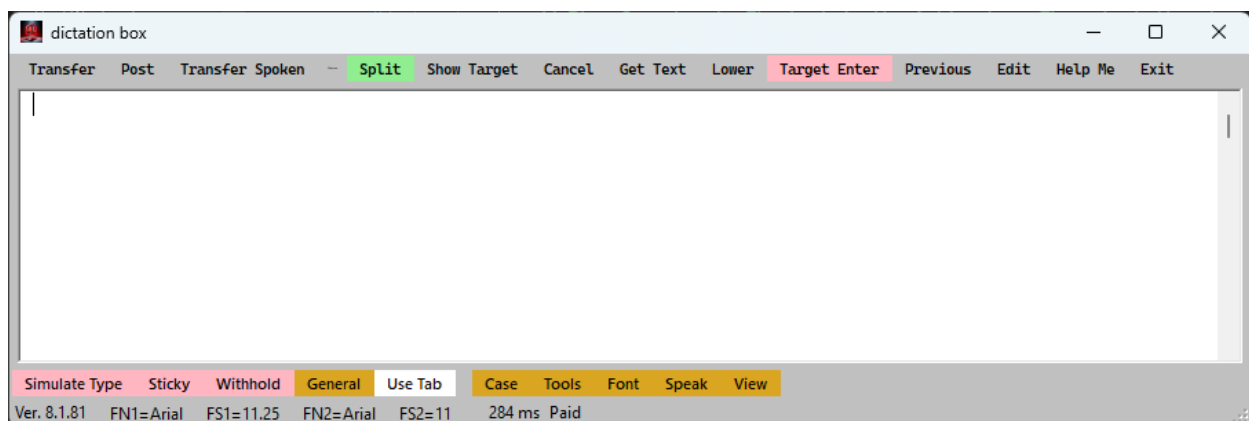
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Dictation box - version 8.82+

What is this “**dictation box**”? This provides a quick way to dictate text to any application, whether speech-friendly or unfriendly. You can use all the Dragon commands and features in any text. It also means you can “say” the *menu label* to sleep on execute the given menu functionality. “**Dictation Box**” allows several options to handle and transfer the text into a secondary document.

The secondary document is often, but not limited to, non-Dragon speech-friendly applications. This secondary document is the **last active window** application you used when you call up the dictation box (**except for sticky mode**, potentially). So, it can be any window application that takes text; it can be something like Notepad, Thunderbird, Word, a website, or anything really. The application also includes a transfer option called “Simulate Type” (see the configuration menu). This option is useful with applications that do not allow normal windows pasting. For example, password fields typically do not allow you to paste a password, but you can use “Simulate Type” (SendKeys) because it emulates keyboard input.



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Why use this tool?

Note: This program is designed for as much “hands-free” use as possible. Other applications will have additional keyboard shortcut options, etc., that typically require the use of hands. Therefore, they are not included in this version.

Working with Dragon can be frustrating. Even with a speech-friendly tool, it is easy to make various mistakes. It is easy to close a document by mistake and potentially lose what you have dictated. The worst thing I have encountered is prematurely sending emails with Outlook. Something may sound like the word “**send**,” even caused by a noise in the house.

This tool has two fail-safes by design.

1. The contents of the last transfer are kept in your clipboard. So, you can easily go to your target application and paste it directly into it. Or if desired, open the dictation box again and paste it back into that to continue working on it. This can be overridden in the configure menu with the option “keep previous clipboard.” Sometimes, you may want to keep the contents of the clipboard active once you leave this application.
2. An automatic backup of transferred text goes into a file called “<your documents folder>\U4D_data\Dictation Box\Dictation Box Backup.txt” – the text is pre-pended to the start of that file. You can easily recall this file by saying “**Previous**.” This will open the file into your default text editor.

Last Active Window defined

“target window,” “target application,” or “last active window” are often used synonymously in this documentation; what do we mean? You may have many windows open at any given time. Windows maintains an order of which window is currently **active**. A window was active before the dictation box was opened or activated. You may have simply clicked on it, anywhere in the window is enough to make it active. You will usually click on a specific control or insertion point within that window (the address bar on a browser, a password field, another text box, the main edit area in Notepad, and so forth.) We also provide a separate tool called “focus” where you can activate any window by saying “focus <any part of its title>”

We are usually referring to the “**dictation box**,” in this case, as the active window. The window that you want to send text to will be your **last active window, or target window**.

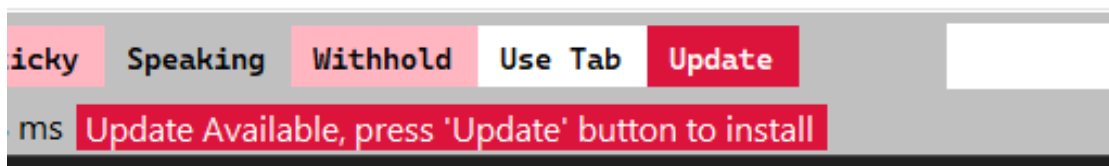
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Caveat

The tool is NOT a full-featured word processor or text editor. It contains many features that are primarily menu-driven. The tool allows you to manipulate formatted text. You can **embolden**, *italicize*, underline, ~~strikethrough~~, and change the font type and size of the text.

The “**dictation box**” does not create files to store the text (exception: log file). It is purely a means to insert text into another document. You use the Transfer (closes the program when used) or Post (the program stays open for your next dictation) commands to do additional transfers.

Program updates



One of the significant improvements of this version is the automatic notification of a new available version. If you see these items in red at the bottom of the dictation box, you simply need to press the update button to download the new update. This will also automatically start the install script for you.

If you're using a **trial version** of this application, you should always see this notice until you decide to buy a license. Other than that, a trial version includes everything **available for 30 days**.

If you are using either a paid or a trial version, these messages will go away once you either have a full license or you update to the latest version.

Please note: When the menu options are green, that means it is selected. When they are light pink, that means it is not selected.

Let us start to define what the commands do:

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TRANSFER (alt-f)

It moves all the text from the text box, placing it in the “last active window,” and then **minimizes** the “**dictation box**.” If any text is highlighted in the dictation box, then only that text gets transferred, the box will remain open.

POST (alt-p)

It moves all the text from the text box, placing it in the “last active window,” but it keeps the “**dictation box**” **open**. If any text is highlighted in the dictation box, then only that text gets transferred, the box will remain open.

TRANSFER SPOKEN

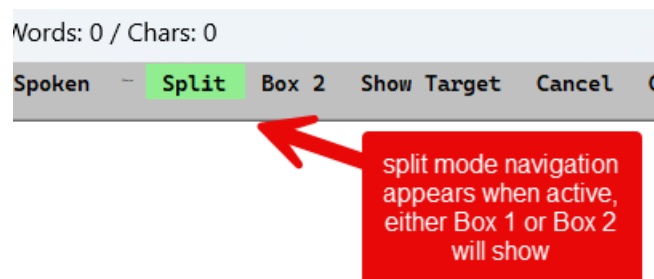
The program will read you the text found in the dictation box, then you would say “**Confirm**” to move all the text from the text box, placing it in the “last active window,” and then close the program. If you are unhappy with what you hear, say “Speech” followed by “Cancel Transfer Spoken” and correct anything in the box and repeat the process.

MINIMIZE (a hidden item)

This **minimizes** the window (the dictation box), but it leaves any text entered in the box so that you can resume what you are doing later. Just say “**DB**” to bring the window back up.

SPLIT

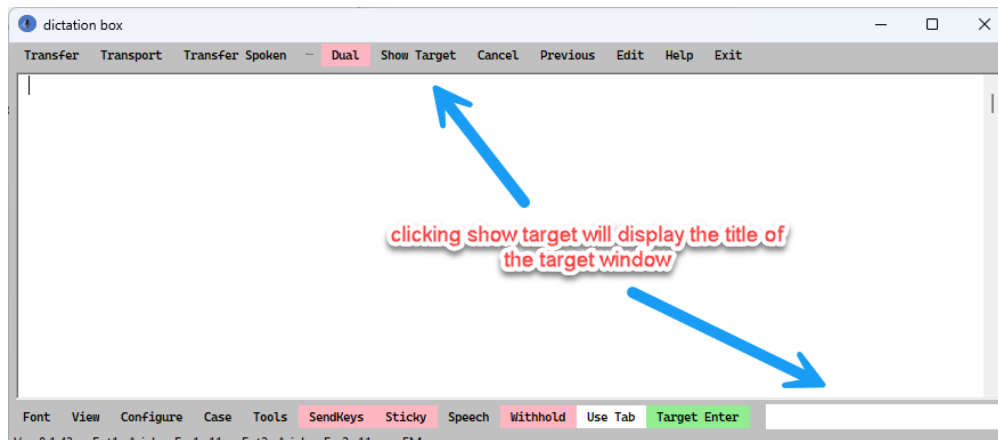
Gives you two text boxes with full functionality in each. This is convenient when you get interrupted, amongst other reasons. You can easily keep what you are working on, and then dictate into the other text box.



SHOW TARGET

Sometimes, it is convenient to know what the last active window is. This will determine that window and place its title in the text box on the lower right.

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If you use the sticky option, the target window will also be displayed in the box at the bottom right.

CANCEL (alt-l)

This **minimizes** the window. Any text you have entered is removed from the text box. However, if you accidentally close the box, it is still in your clipboard. You can then paste it normally into your target application or back into the dictation box if desired.

Get Text (alt-t)

It gets the text from the “last active window” and pastes it into the “dictation box.” If you do not touch the last active window at this point, you can make your changes in the “dictation box” and then transfer the text back, which will overwrite the selected text from the last active window.

Of course, you may not necessarily want to replace the original text, so if you click anywhere else on the last active window or even on a third window and then click back on the dictation box, you transfer the text from the “**dictation box**” to the new location.

Lower

If you want all of your text to be in lowercase, enable this option.

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Target Enter

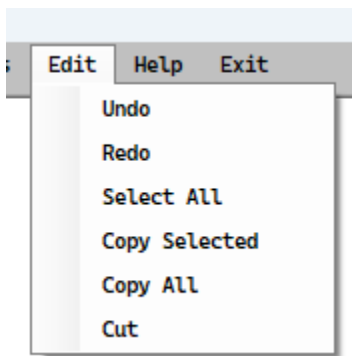
Enabling this option allows you to add a carriage return or “enter key” automatically at the end of the transfer. This is excellent for posting on social media, etc.

PREVIOUS

Opens the file that stores your previous dictations in your default text editor. You can then edit that file to retrieve any recent dictations or remove any section you would like. Remember, any confidential dictations will be available in this file.

EDIT

In case you do not want to use the Dragon commands for some reason.



EXIT

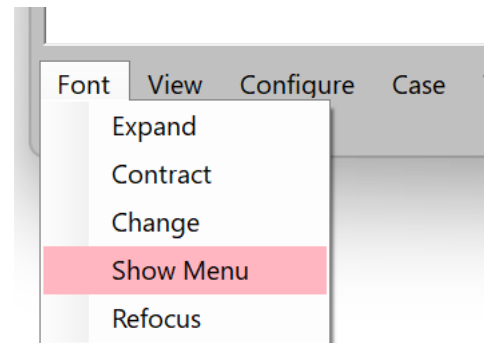
Exit will completely close the program unless you have the “minimize on exit” option enabled in the configure menu. By default, this option is enabled. It takes a slightly longer time to open the program from scratch, but when minimized, it opens a little bit quicker.

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BOTTOM MENU CHOICES

These menus all have drop-down menu items.

Refocus is shown on all these menus to cancel the menu choice and **return the focus to the text box**.



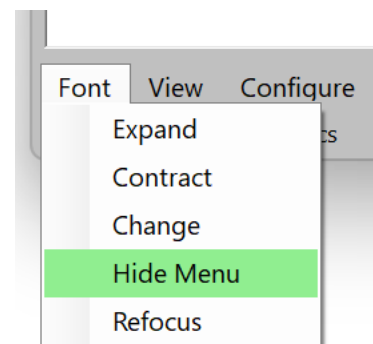
Font

With the cursor at the beginning of the text box, all subsequent text will use the “font” choice.

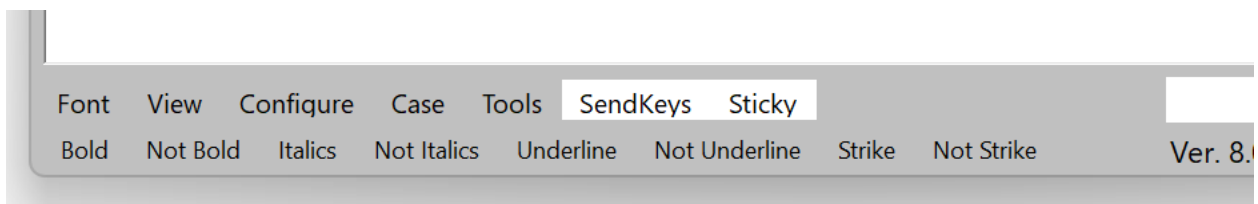
Expand – Increase the font size by three.

Contract – decreases the font size by three.

Change opens a separate window with some additional capabilities (changing font size and font type, for example). If you have chosen custom colors in the configure option under colors, then the coloring options will be shown in that font window. See the custom fonts section below.



Show Menu provides the additional menu bar, as shown here. Open those commands to enable them. Hide Menu will hide that menu to create less

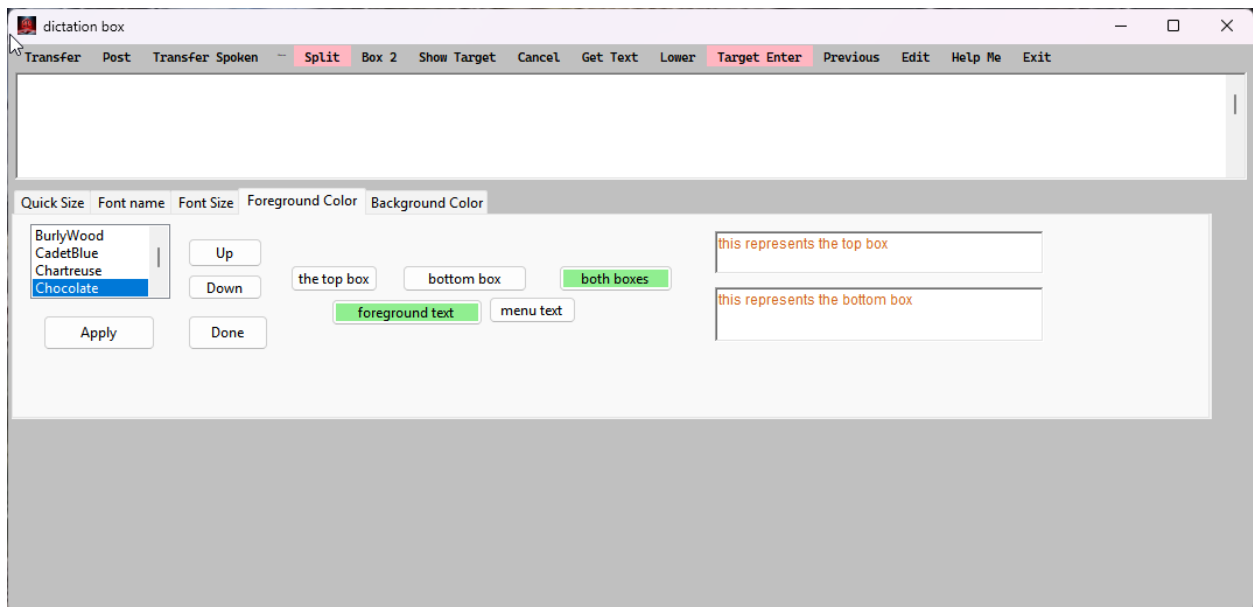


clutter if you do not use it often.

To use these options, either highlight a word or block using the standard Dragon commands, and that block will have the option applied when you dictate the command “<format option>” (Bold, italics, Underline, or Strike). Alternatively, with the cursor at position zero (top left corner of the text box), the option will be applied to everything from that point forward as you enter new text. If the cursor is located anywhere else when you initially command it will apply the formatting option from that point forward until you say **“Not <format option>.”**

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Custom Fonts

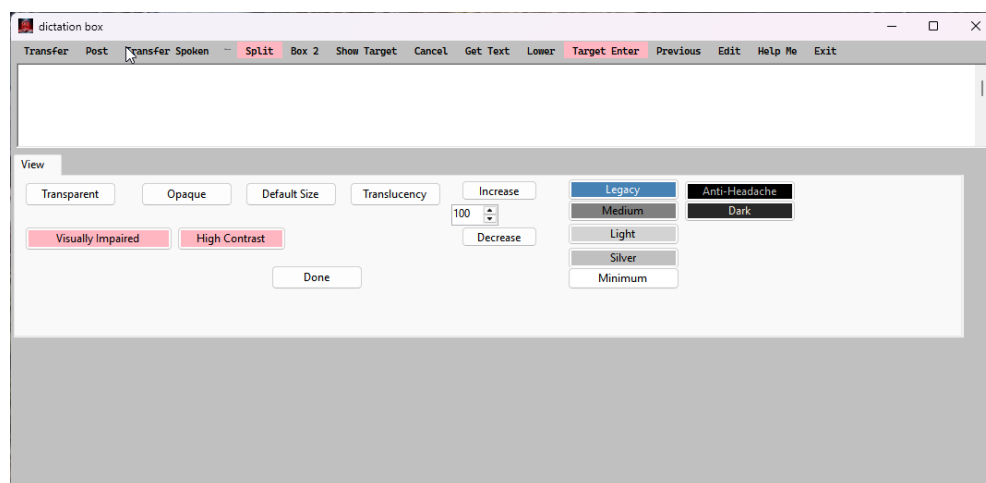


Customizing your fonts is now easy, you can change either the dictated text fonts and/or your menus, creating easy-to-read text that you completely control.

This will allow you to change the font for either the text or the menu items on the main display.

When you are done, remember to save your custom settings to a configuration file. See the Configure menu description.

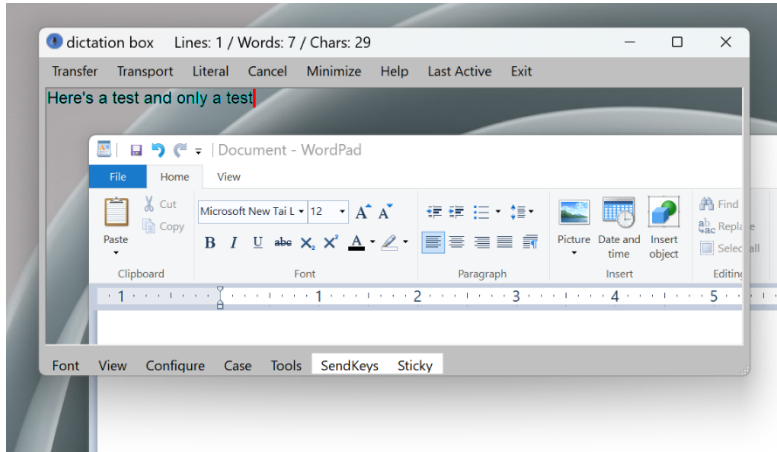
View



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Transparent

This option places the “**dictation box**” into a transparent mode where you can see through the “**dictation box**” to the window below it. To make the window opaque, say “**Opaque**” with the view menu open.



Opaque

This undoes both the transparent and the translucency options. Makes everything fully visible. This will return the “**dictation box**” to its normal 100% opacity level for normal viewing.

Default Size

Resizes the program to the default size.

Translucency

This can be used to set the opacity level of the “**dictation box**.” This will allow you to see windows underneath the “**dictation box**.” This is different than the transparent view. This gives you various degrees of opacity. Again, saying “**opaque**” returns the opacity level back to normal. The numbers shown represent the percentage of opaqueness. In other words, as the numbers decrease, the visibility of the dictation box decreases.

Visually Impaired

This increases the size of the box to a maximum window. It increases the font size of both the text and the menus. Past versions with the window into a regular maximized mode, which increases code complexity. Decreasing the size of the code increases speed and increases supportability.

High Contrast

This changes the menus and text box colors to improve the visibility of the box.

Configure

is shown below in its own section.

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Case

This is particularly true with the following commands: if you select a text block, the commands only work on that block. If nothing is selected, then the commands are applied to all text in the box

Uppercase

This will convert any selected text to uppercase; if no text is selected, everything in the text box will be converted.

Lowercase

This will convert any selected text to lowercase; if no text is selected, everything in the text box will be converted.

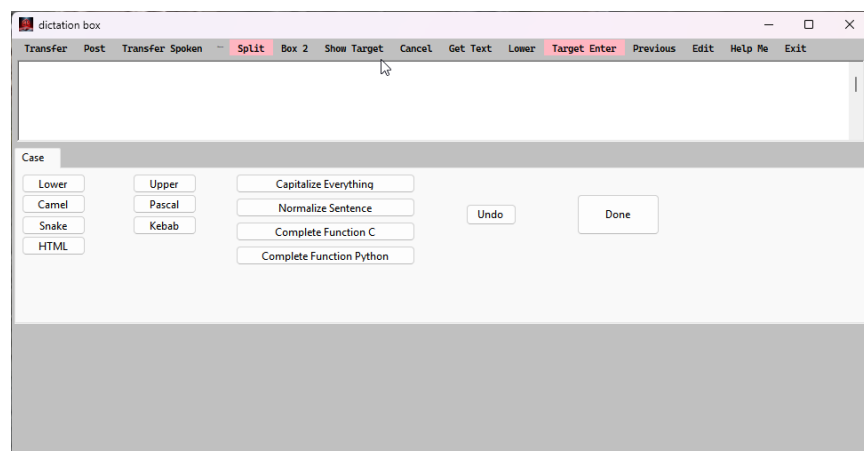
Capitalize Everything

Capitalizes all the words in the box, or just those selected.

Normalized Sentence

Place all the sentences selected with the first letter of the first word in the capitalized sentence. The remaining parts of the sentences are lowercase.

The following five commands are only available when you configure the tool for **“programming options”** by selecting that option in the **configure menu**. Otherwise, these menu items are hidden.



camelCase

Converts the selected text to camel case. For example, “This is a test” is converted to → thisIsATest

Pascalcase

converts the selected text to Pascal. For example, “This is a test” is converted to → ThisIsATest

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Snake case

Replace the spaces in the selected text with underscores. For example, "This is a test" becomes "This_is98"

Kebab

Replace the spaces in the selected text with hyphens. For example, "This is a test" becomes "This-is-a-test."

HTML

Does an "HTML pretty" reformat an HTML snippet into an HTML-looking format?

Complete Function C

when you create a function name using one of the above programming option cases, the convenience function will then append the parentheses and curly braces as found in the C# source code.

Complete Function Python

convenience function, for when you create a function name using one of above programming option cases, will then append the parentheses and colon and indent the next line down with the requisite four spaces.

Tools

Copy Only

This will copy the last active applications text and graphics, depending upon the application type. If there is something already highlighted, it will only grab that section. The tool then places it in your clipboard, so that you can paste it somewhere else, and/or continue to work with the text in the dictation box. Remember, when you transfer/transport the text, the contents also go into your clipboard.

Compress

Remove all the extra spaces and compresses the lines, so that the result is one continuous string with only a space between each word.

Concatenate

Remove all the spaces and compresses any lines so that the result is one continuous string without spaces between any word in the block.

To Notepad

Put a copy of the text into a new instance of Notepad.

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Password

if the text box is empty, a new password will be generated. It is based on the 15-character minimum length. If there is currently text in the text box, the password strength of that string will be analyzed and reported in the bottom status strip.

Simulate Type

This is another **toggle** option. When your text cannot be "Pasted" into your target application, this option emulates it being typed and usually successfully allows the text to be entered into that stubborn window/application. Some websites block anything from being pasted, so this should help with that situation, particularly with security-related controls (password fields).

The "**dictation box**" normally uses the standard Windows paste function when transferring text to the target application. This is faster than transferring using the SendKeys function. However, there are times when some applications will not accept pasted text. In this case, try transferring with "**simulate type.**" Sending your text with this function, each character is sent individually at a speed dictated by a speed setting in configure menu.

The transfer speed is controlled by a configuration setting under "**Configure/ Speed SendKeys**"

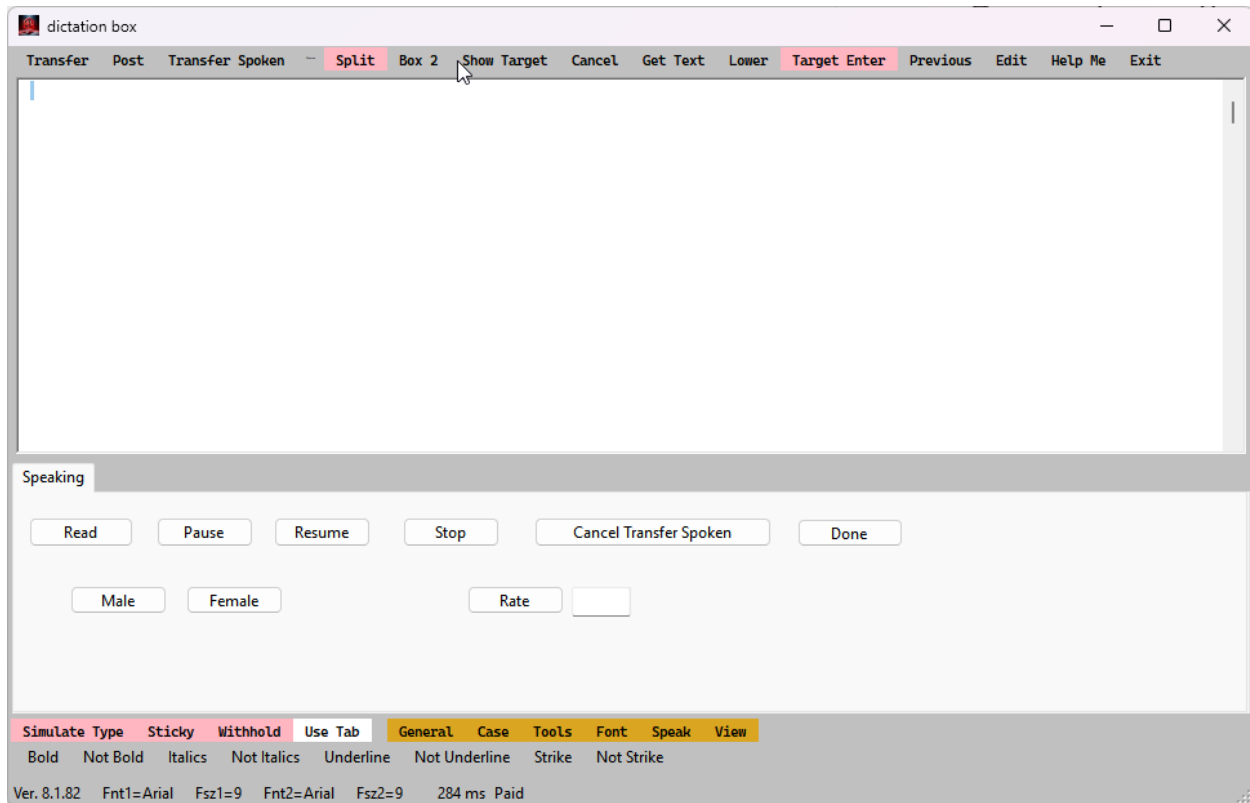
You must **be careful when dictating long strings** with this option. Occasionally, unpredictable actions occur when converting text using this paste method. For example in a social media posting where an enter key actually causes the post to be activated. The same is true with certain Windows in Microsoft teams.

Sticky

This makes the active window the target window when you open this box until either that window no longer exists or you turn the sticky option off. When it is highlighted in green, this option is on. If the target window is closed, your text will just return to this dictation box until you either turn this option off or choose another target by toggling this option.

Speaking

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This can read any highlighted text, or when no exit is highlighted, everything in the active text box will be read. The only way to interrupt the text while it is reading is to use the mouse because Dragon is turned off during these functions. When the reading is complete, Dragon is automatically turned back on.

A convenience menu choice will appear while the text is being read. It will appear where you see **withhold**.

Withhold

When this button is green (Selected) it will withhold the extra space that is automatically added at the end of the transferred text. This is useful for transferring passwords. It might also be useful when you are inserting a dictation that is completing another word. It is a toggle menu item. It will appear light pink when not selected.

Use Tab or Use Escape

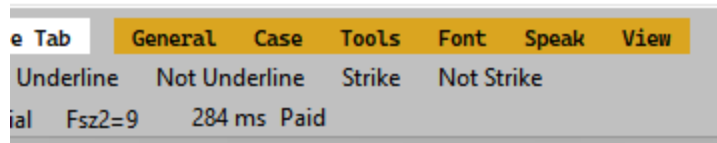
There are certain targets that must use the traditional "Alt Tab" to position the cursor at the target text box. So, if you transfer your text to your target and nothing appears, open the dictation box again and paste your text back into the box. Then toggle this menu item. When the "Alt-Tab" is selected, the menu choice will read "Use Escape" and vice versa.

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Usually, this item should read "Use Tab". The windows will do a lot less blinking when the escape mode is enabled. Again, using the escape sequence is selected when it says "use tabs", and vice versa and vice versa

Configuration Settings

The menu items in gold are all considered configuration items.



Most of these items have already been discussed. Here are the options found in the General menu area.

General

Reset

Resetting the **"dictation box"** restores all the options to their default values. It returns the window to the center of the screen. It will also resize the **"dictation box"** window to its original size. The program will close, and restart automatically.

Split

The various numbers refer to the percentage of the open text box on the top. For example, 25 refers to opening the top window to one-quarter of the height of the two text boxes that will be opened.

Vertical will toggle the split to be vertically aligned when the box is in the default horizontal mode. Calling it again when the menu item is green will cause the box to be horizontally oriented.

Minimize on Exit

When this choice is selected, instead of closing the box completely, the box is minimized. On my system the box takes two seconds to open from scratch. From the minimized state it takes less than one second. If you use the box often, I recommend selecting this option. You will see the icon in your taskbar. You can close the window completely by clicking on the red X icon in the top right corner of the box.

Always Lowercase

When set, ALL text is forced into lowercase.

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Keep Previous Clipboard

When set, the text in your clipboard will be restored to the clipboard upon exiting/minimizing the “**dictation box**.” You will want to keep this unselected. With this NOT selected and you accidentally close the “**dictation box**,” whatever you entered in the “**dictation box**” will still be available in the clipboard to paste manually into a target application.

Important caveat: When using "keep the previous clipboard," if the transfer fails, the original clipboard contents will be restored upon completion. At that point, your options to get what was just transcribed might be in the Windows 10/11 history option, IF enabled. Then, you can either use our Clipboard Viewer or go directly to the clipboard history tool. You can also get the text from the automatically backed-up text file in the documents folder, as described earlier using the “Previous” menu item.

Programming options

Primarily targeted to programmers, allows for a few additional case options. Camel, Pascal, etc.

Enable Tab

Allow you to use the tab character when entering text. By default, it is off, because some programs allow you to use the tab character to navigate from field to field.

Save Configuration

saves a copy of all your current configuration settings. When you use the cache manager program you can delete the configuration file because sometimes it can get corrupted, and this will usually allow the program to restart normally. However, you would lose all your settings. By saving the settings when you are happy with the way the box looks, you can override any current settings by loading the configuration file again.

Load Configuration

See the above description for “**Save**” configuration. This command simply loads the file and will **restart the program** automatically to incorporate any changes.

Type Copy

When set, we will use the Windows control-C and control-V commands. This is a slower method. However, you may occasionally want to use it for certain graphics transfers. It does not help with webpage transfers and grabbing the graphics from an HTML page now. So, I would keep this option off (showing in pink).

Speed delays

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SendKeys

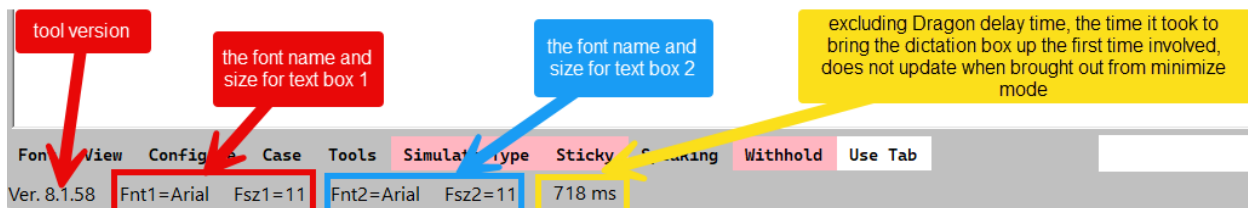
The number of milliseconds between each character is being transferred. These are shown as the five buttons (Speed 10 through 250).

Target

The number of milliseconds delay before trying to acquire a target window. Shown as Target Delay 300 through 1500.

Paste

The number of milliseconds delay before trying to paste to a target window. Shown as Pasting Delay 50 through 1200.



The Status Bar

The above illustration shows the various items described in the picture in the status bar.

Troubleshooting

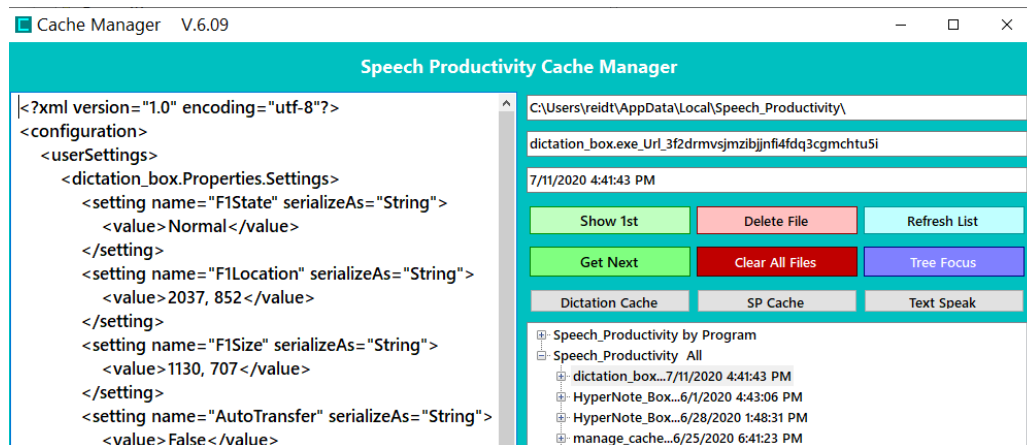
We have tried to deal with all potential issues, occasionally you might find an error. Please report any suspected issues. In addition, there may be a couple of things you can do to restart without any further issues.

1. The tool is remembering many “states” and configuration settings. There are commonly three methods to restart the program from scratch. We have a command called “**Kill Dictation Box.**” This will completely shut down the current instance of the tool that is

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running. Then try running the tool again – this will take care of most issues that we have seen.

2. The second tool is on the configuration page—“Reset Dictation Box.” Method one above is the preferred way to handle a clear problem because it does not reset all your configuration settings. This option resets all the configuration choices to the default setting. After you run this option, you must ensure that all settings are set to how you desire.
3. The third method here is like option two. A configuration file is embedded in your user directory structure primarily set by the Windows operating system for you. We have a Tool Called “**Cache Manager**.” This tool gives you direct access to all the U4D product configuration files for all the tools that save configuration data. Occasionally, there are times when those files can be corrected. This tool will allow you to view those files. More importantly, you can easily delete the file. While the tool allows you to remove all of configuration files, you only want to remove the file for the program that you are having problems with. In this case, that file is called “**dictation box...**” You can have multiple versions of this file depending upon how you run the program. More likely, you should only have the one configuration file for this program. When you run this tool, the first button that you would dictate is “**Show 1st** “. Make sure the “dictation box...” line is highlighted, then “**Delete File** “. Unless this file is still locked by a running process that you are not seeing, this will remove the file. The worst-case scenario would be that you must reboot the machine to make sure no processes associated with the dictation box are running. Then run this tool again. This will give you the equivalent of option two above – upon running the box again, you must reset your configuration items to your desired settings.

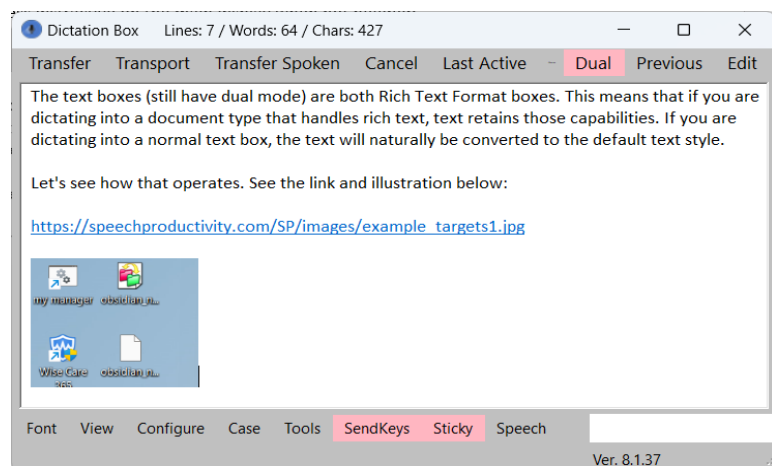


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New dictation box 8.X - A quick introduction of several changes since SP 7

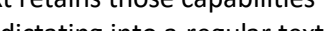
- It's significantly altered from the SP 7 Pro version yet as powerful. Aside from several bug fixes. This version is streamlined after taking out underutilized components. The new version has been completely rewritten. Subsequently, the process is faster and more stable.
- Unfortunately, Nuance (current author of Dragon) and Microsoft (Owner of Nuance) are not talking to each other very well. Or, Microsoft does not care about maintaining Dragon because it's trying to implement everything in its Windows 11 Voice Access feature set. Anyway, the previous drop-down menu structure fails when attempting to use the necessary .net libraries that are newer than version 7. Microsoft is dropping support of the libraries earlier than .net 8. So, I had to develop a new scheme to display the massive numbers of submenu items that were originally incorporated in the version 8 renditions. As of DB 8.1.82, the old submenu structures have been completely modified. This is not ideal. Please report any issues to me, and I will be actively updating the program.
- Grammarly compatible.
- Mac/Parallels compatible.
- Easily handle websites that don't allow traditional pasting. Almost always, the "SendKeys" process works. So, having the option right there in the forefront to toggle on and off is excellent.
- There is a new option to "withhold" the last space character from being generated. That is typically for password fields.
- The new option "previous" opens directly the file holding the previous dictations that you may want to review or pull text from. That file is now ordered with the latest dictation at the top of the file.
- We used to use the alt-escape sequence in our transfers. That doesn't work well with some applications with the latest changes in Windows 11. The alt-tab option often generates a "flash" on the screen. However, that seems to be the best/only choice for some applications now.

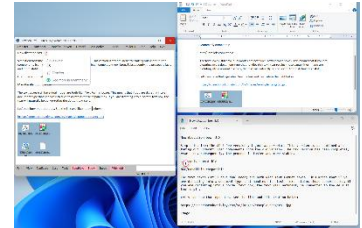
Alternatively, other applications require the alt escape technique. A new menu option can toggle that choice. Easily choose which option works best for you. Using the "use escape" character works best for most target applications. If it doesn't work, click the "use tab" option. You can easily paste a failed transfer back to



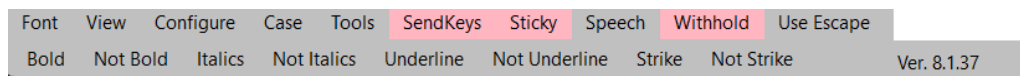
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the dictation box and try again or paste it directly into your target application.

- The text boxes (still have dual mode) are Rich Text Format boxes. Text retains those capabilities if you are dictating into a document that handles rich text. If you are dictating into a regular text box, the text will naturally be converted to the default text style.
 - Let's see how that operates. See the link and illustration here:
 - https://utilities4d.com/u4d/images/example_targets1.jpg
- 



- Font - show a new "font" menu to **easily change** the regular *font choices* without going to a drop-down menu. Showing this menu is optional.
- Other new features as well.



You still have a more traditional but speech-friendly dialogue to select the font style and size for the text box or the box menus. Hiding this menu field is less distractive on the main display when not needed: Speaking of the drop-down font menu, when you select “Font,” then “change,” you can change the two boxes independently or the same. You can change font type, size, and color. With nothing typed in the box, you change the characteristics for this and future sessions. Changing a word or string is temporary. Many options/corrections were made in this module.

- Found in the configuration list of options.
 - ✓ Enable whether to use a tab character to give you your indentation, “**use tab.**”
 - ✓ If you are a programmer, “**programmer options**” expands the number of “**case**” options available.
 - ✓ You can adjust a couple of the delays involved in the pasting process if you happen to have some issues with the speed of your machine, typically. The defaults should work just fine for you