

## Customizing Dragon NaturallySpeaking – Creating Your Own Custom Commands.

By John Ingram

In previous articles I've discussed customizing vocabulary in order to increase accuracy. The other side of Dragon lies within customizing commands. Verbal command and control of your computer can increase productivity because we can customize Dragon NaturallySpeaking to perform various tasks, actions, and workflows such as opening other programs or documents, and performing other mouse/keyboard intensive actions or routines. There are some basics to understand about creating custom commands with Dragon NaturallySpeaking (way too many to discuss in the confines of this short article.)

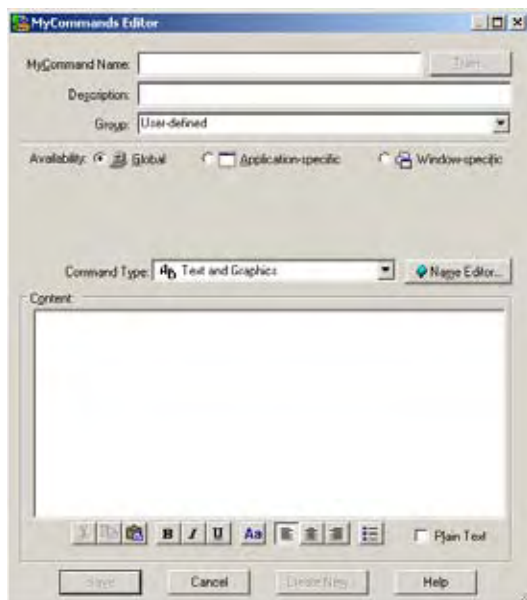
Many times the hardest part about creating commands with Dragon NaturallySpeaking is to understand what you ultimately want the computer to do. For example, ask yourself some questions: Do I want to have a large block of text appear on the screen when I say a command? Do I want Dragon to perform a series of keystrokes or mouse clicks and or move from a particular part of an application to another part? It helps to understand what you want Dragon to do for you, because Dragon NaturallySpeaking can do it, and all it takes is a little work!

The gateway into all macro creation with Dragon NaturallySpeaking is the MyCommands Editor. There are now four different types of macros using the MyCommands Editor: 1.) Text and Graphics – and Variable Text and Graphics; 2.) Macro Recorder; 3.) Step-By-Step; 4.) Advanced Scripting. Each type of macro has its merits. They allow users to find a comfort level for their own particular skills and needs. In other words, you don't have to be a Visual Basic programmer, although Advanced Scripting will make one out of you! You might find you're simply comfortable with making text macros. Other Dragon users might find the macro recorder works well for them, because they're used to recording macros in their favorite word processors.

The first step in creating any macro using Dragon NaturallySpeaking is to understand The MyCommands Editor interface. First you want to give the macro you are creating a name, maybe a short description, a location where you can find it (in case you need to edit it), the availability (means if you can use this macro anywhere, a specific application, or even a specific window within an application), and last, but not least, the actual macro you want Dragon NaturallySpeaking to perform.

The MyCommands Editor is accessed from the Dragon bar, or can be called verbally by saying "Add New Command."

### a. The 'MyCommands Editor'



○ | The gateway into all macro creation with Dragon NaturallySpeaking is the MyCommands Editor.

○ | Each type of macro has its merits, as well as they allow users to find a comfort level for their own particular skills and needs.

○ | Just as in text and graphics macros, you give the command name, a description, a group, and a specific type of availability.

○ | The documentation and help for this subject is well covered inside of Dragon, as well as, there are several books and many websites covering the gammut of this powerful tool.

#### 1. Text and Graphics:

This type of macro is the simplest to create, and gets a lot of mileage. The idea is simple enough. If someone needs to consistently have the same piece of text printed over and over again, then the text and graphics macro can paste text with the best of them! This type of macro is capable of having various types of fonts, and the ability to paste a particular graphic as part of the macro as well. Many times this type of macro is left "global" so that this text and graphics macro can be used in various situations throughout a user's workflow, or overall dictation needs. A variation on this type of macro includes the ability to add variables which means users can make one macro to do the job of many single macros. Check out Dragon's documentation about adding variables in the text and graphics macro, and you may be able to make better, more flexible macros to fit your situation.

#### 2. Macro Recorder:

This type of Dragon macro should be very familiar to anyone who is made macros using Microsoft Word, or WordPerfect. Just as in text and graphics macros, you give the command name, a description, a group, and a specific type of availability. That's where the similarities end. From here, the user simply clicks the record button and performs the actions using their mouse and keyboard that they want Dragon to record for later use. The key word here is simplicity. The macro recorder makes it very simple to record a complex series of events on your computer for later use. Try it, and you'll see what I mean.

#### 3. Step-By-Step:

Step by step macros allow users some of the freedoms of making random recordings (like the macro recorder-sort of...) and at the same time allow for commands that have and require structure (such as opening a particular application, or specific set of keystrokes in a sequence.) Think about it, you might want to turn Dragon's microphone off, open a specific application, type some sort of predefined text into the application, press some other keystrokes to perform another type of action in this application, then turn Dragon's microphone back on. The possibilities of using this type of macro are endless. Experimentation with step by step macros is a good way to get started!

#### 4. Advanced Scripting:

Here is where Dragon users can create fully object-oriented programming tasks. Advanced Scripting can assist with fully automating documents for navigation and dictation, create fillable dialog boxes to interact with data, and even work with specific cells inside of spreadsheets; and these are just some examples! Advanced Scripting is a fully-VBA (Visual Basic for Applications) compliant development environment. The documentation and help for this subject is well covered inside of Dragon, as well as, there are several books and many websites covering the gammut of this powerful tool. If you feel the need to get your 'Geek' on with Dragon NaturallySpeaking, then this is the macro for you! The macro horsepower of Dragon is completely at your verbal command with Advanced Scripting macros.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking has so much latitude and capability when it comes to creating commands. The range and types of command macros users can create is virtually unlimited. If you can invest a little time into making commands, you can mold Dragon into an even more powerful productivity tool than what it already is out of the box! With the various base-types of macros, anyone can find the right combination and type to suit their daily use needs with Dragon. Try it, and you'll see the difference as you get more productivity out of your copy. I use Dragon NaturallySpeaking every day to get my work done, why aren't you?

John Ingram  
Sales Engineer – Productivity Applications Division  
Nuance Communications

