

Slaying Your Email Inbox with Dragon NaturallySpeaking & Dragon® Medical Practice Edition

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Managing email is perhaps one of the most time-consuming activities dealt with on a day-to-day basis.

While **medical practitioners** in the past have done their best to avoid spending a disproportionate time on email, electronic communication has become more and more demanding of late in both their personal and professional lives.



Those working in a **law office** conduct most of their business by email for the sake of convenience as well as efficiency. Once upon a time assistants were tasked to scribe emails on behalf of a lawyer who dictated into a recorder. The increasing requirement of using email has made this impossible, leaving the lawyer to respond and craft email throughout the day themselves.

No matter how many emails are written and responded to, the inbox continues to expand under the weight of this seemingly never-ending electronic onslaught. The result is often replies without sufficient substance, or no replies whatsoever until the matter becomes critical. And of course, it is all too easy to simply let spam accumulate in the inbox, "to be deleted later". Everyone always has the best of intentions with respect to email management, but the reality is that staying on top of email takes time and dedication.

However, Dragon NaturallySpeaking and Dragon® Medical Practice Edition can make email management much less time-consuming and with less effort than traditional mouse and keyboard input.

Using the Appropriate Edition of Dragon Speech Recognition Software

Lawyers and professionals would best be served by using Dragon NaturallySpeaking Professional. Dragon NaturallySpeaking Legal's vocabulary is designed specifically for American practices, and is not necessary for Canadian lawyers.

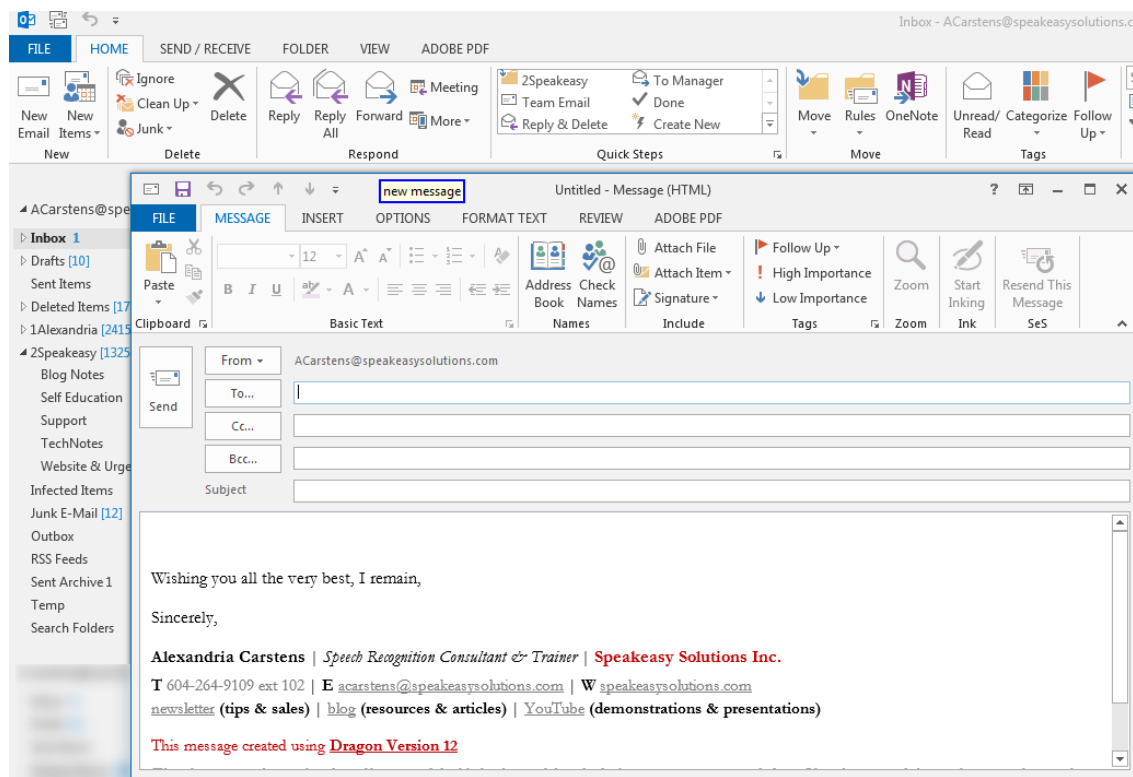
Physicians and other medical practitioners should use Dragon® Medical Practice Edition. In addition to nearly 100 medical vocabularies, Dragon® Medical Practice Edition includes a nonmedical vocabulary which is absolutely essential for use with email. Using a medical

vocabulary for nonmedical dictation, such as email, will only result in frustration due to the diminished accuracy. To understand more about using the correct vocabulary, please view this article: [The Importance of Dragon NaturallySpeaking and Dragon Medical's Vocabulary \(what is it?\)](#).

In order to take advantage of the advice below, Dragon NaturallySpeaking Professional, Dragon NaturallySpeaking Legal, or Dragon® Medical Practice Edition are the only editions that **allow for elaborate custom command creation**. Creating custom commands significantly increases productivity by diminishing the time it takes to perform repetitious or multistep tasks.

Use Dragon's Built-In Voice Commands

Unless you are extremely quick with the mouse, using Dragon to click on buttons and perform certain functions within Microsoft Outlook (and some web-based email applications) is considerably faster.



Acquaint yourself with the commands to create new email messages, reply to messages, add an attachment, and even send messages.

Learn the voice command equivalent for using keyboard shortcut keys (i.e. cursor key movements, and so forth). With this under your belt you will be able to manoeuvre or work through email messages very quickly. Additionally, learn the voice commands to select multiple email messages simultaneously and delete them or apply other actions such as moving en masse to another folder.

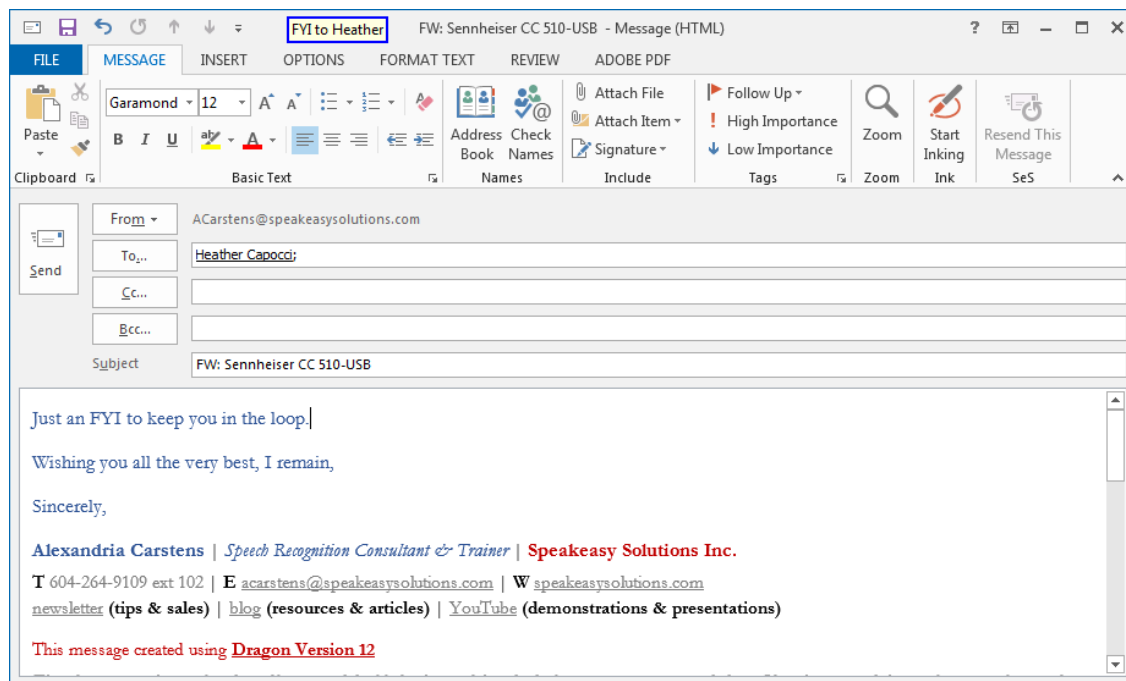
Please note that Dragon has built in email commands so that you can say “send email to (name)”. Unfortunately, this subset of commands is dependent on Microsoft Outlook having been installed and configured with defaults, and that the individual’s name cited is actually in your contact database as such. It is far easier, and more reliable, to create custom commands to initiate a new message to a specific individual.

Keep a cheat sheet handy, or write your most used commands on a sticky note that you will fix to your monitor.

Create Custom Voice Commands

While Dragon has built-in voice commands for various functions, only one command may be issued at a time. Therefore, if you have a multistep scenario, it would be far quicker to make your own custom voice command to perform the same result. In other words, if you have to issue more than one Dragon voice command in a row, create your own custom voice command to perform the same function.

I recommend scrutinizing everything that you do within Microsoft Outlook or your email application, and then consider what are the most time-consuming aspects. If you have to keystroke or click more than several times (my personal limit is 3), consider making a Dragon command to perform the same function.



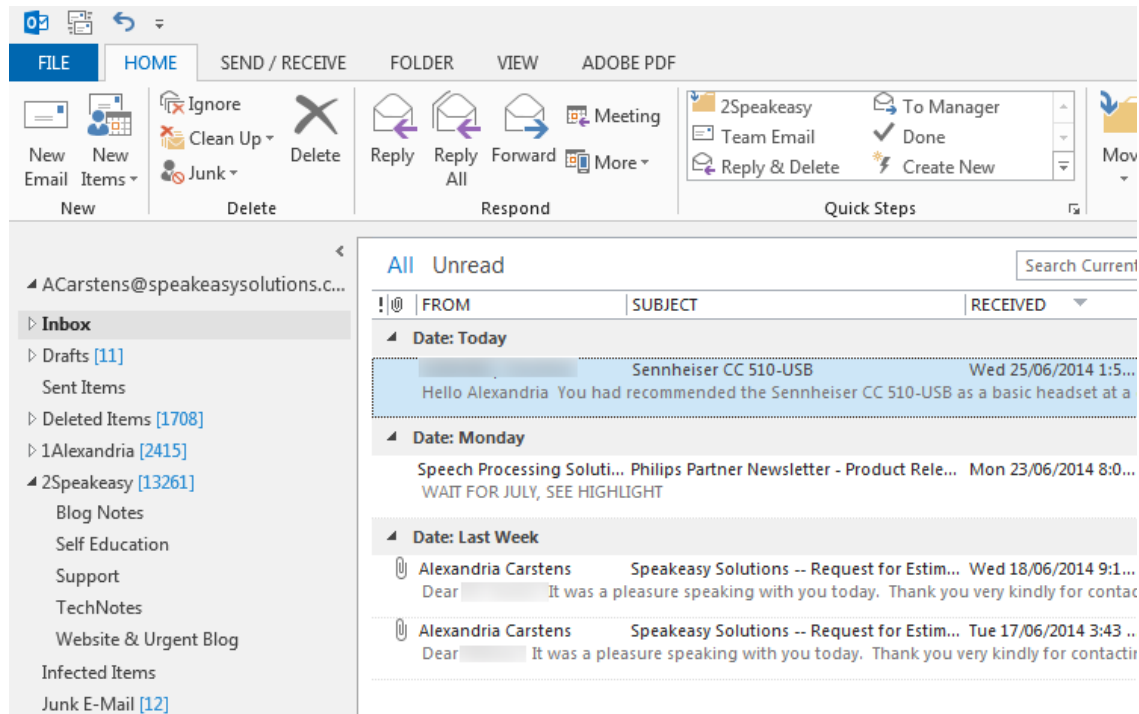
Consider making the following custom voice commands:

- Initiating a new message to a specific individual, and settling the cursor in the subject field.

- Initiating a message forward to a specific individual, leaving the cursor in the body field.
- Initiating a message forward to a specific individual and typing “for your information” in the body, followed by sending the actual message.
- CCing a specific individual, and then returning the cursor into the body of the message.
- Moving a message from one folder (usually the inbox) to another folder.
- Going to a specific folder (usually an organizational folder of some sort).
- Attaching a specific file.
- Initiating an attachment from a specific folder or directory.
- Initiating a find for a specific series of keywords.
- Flagging an email as junk and blocking the sender.
- Inserting standard/repetitious phrasing.
- Resending a message.
- Utilizing a specific signature.
- If you use message templates, creating a new message based on a template.

Email Workflow Tips

Actively managing your email is not only important to your vocation, but also your personal disposition. When your email inbox contains the barest minimum of email messages, managing email does not seem as burdensome. Everyone may have different limits, and my own personal limit is about 20 messages. I try to maintain no more than 20 messages in my inbox at any given time (not including the mass influx after opening my email application). Try to keep only truly important messages in your inbox, that require attention within a few days.



Set aside a specific amount of time each day to actively “deal” with your email (i.e once per hour, or once every several hours). While there will always be those messages that require your immediate response, outside of that, take the time to systematically address each one. Start from the top down or the bottom up, sorting by date.

If a message can be deleted, or is spam, use the appropriate command to deal with it and get it out of your inbox.

If the message is non-urgent but contains information that you should review at some point in the near future, create a folder (perhaps name it “to read”), and then use a command to move the message into that folder.

If a message can be delegated or forwarded for someone else’s attention, do so immediately. Following that, move the message into an archive folder.

If a message does not require an immediate response, or you need to follow an email up in approximately one week, create a folder that you review once per week, and move messages into that folder. Don’t forget to mark out a time to contend with this folder on a regular/weekly basis.

Once you have responded to a message, immediately file the message as is appropriate (i.e. delete, or move to an archive folder of sorts).

If you amass a considerable number of email requiring one response or another, stay a little late, come in early, or on the weekend. A well groomed email inbox does much for one’s mental disposition.

Additional Dragon Dictation Tips

When using speech recognition like Dragon NaturallySpeaking or Dragon® Medical Practice Edition, there is the tendency to dictate much longer replies than is really necessary. There is a fine line between too little information and too much. The sooner you find that middle ground, the more value you will add to your email, and also be able to dictate more email messages.

Don't forget to correct Dragon's errors. Don't put up with inaccuracies or formatting issues (such as capitalization) as they will persist until you actively deal with them. Sooner rather than later is the key.

Just before you send an email, it's a good idea to proofread the message. While Dragon can be near 100% accurate, we don't always speak perfectly, and you may have introduced a new word to Dragon and need to make a correction before sending.

Dragon Help within Canada

If you are within Canada and require assistance with creating custom commands, or utilizing the workflow methods outlined above, please do not hesitate to [contact Speakeasy Solutions](#). We have been providing [remote support and training services](#) across Canada for over 12 years. The majority of our clients are [medical](#) and [legal practitioners](#), but anyone who spends more than a few hours a day at the computer can certainly benefit from streamlining their workflow with the advanced features within Dragon NaturallySpeaking.

If Dragon is not performing at close to 100% accuracy, or as efficiently as you require, [we can help](#).