

## **EPISODE 60: TALKING THE TALK – WITH DRAGON DICTATION EXPERT SCOTT BAKER**

Voiceover: Two writers, one just starting out; the other, a bestseller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James: Hello. Welcome to The Self Publishing Formula podcast. Yes, it's James Blatch and Mark Dawson with you for another installment of the fascinating insight into the world of indie publishing, the value-packed podcast, that's what we like to think, right, Mark? We are value-packed?

Mark: We are value-packed, absolutely, and for the something.

James: We are absolutely for something. That thing is value. Okay. Good. We've got a good excerpt today because it's something that a lot of us have thought about and I have recently tried. I'm starting to get into them. I know that you're quite interested in it as well.

It's to do with productivity, but also can solve a lot of issues in your life particularly physical ailments that do strike writers. It's after all the ultimate sedentary occupation.

We're going to look at dictation. There's one major product on the market that seems to dominate the space, which is called Dragon. It comes in various guises.

There's an English guy who has emerged as a bit of an expert in this area called Scott. He's got a book, an ebook, on the subject. He has very, very kindly put together a brilliant Dragon cheat sheet for us. If you're interested in trying this out, give it a go.

You can download the Dragon cheat sheet at [selfpublishingformula.com/download60](https://selfpublishingformula.com/download60), download 6-0, two digits.

Have you tried the dictation before, Mark?

Mark: Not with Dragon. I have used my phone occasionally and answer emails if I'm just wandering around or answer emails with dictation. That's getting more and more accurate. Apple is pretty good at that these days. We can use a reasonably accurately; saves all the time automatically. I've never actually used it to write.

James: Is that via Siri?

Mark: I don't know if it's the same technology. You basically hit the microphone and instead of typing, you can speak. It's getting better and better.

James: There are a few authors in our community who use Dragon a lot. I have a bit of correspondence with someone who came and did one of our one-on-one interviews in London. She took to it quite quickly, so I was quite encouraged reading about her experiences with Dragon.

Let's face it, we worry a lot about our productivity, about our word count by getting the job, the basic job, which sometimes is a pleasure. It was difficult to know. If there's a way of making it an easier process of getting what's in your mind onto the page, I think we're all for it.

Let's go to this interview with Scott Baker. I tell you he's from the UK. He's made understanding Dragon and being an enthusiast for it, but also a realist what about what it can, what it can't do. Let's listen to Scott.

Scott: I'm Scott Baker. I wrote a book called [The Writer's Guide to Training Your Dragon](#), which is basically a guide to ... It's specifically aimed at

writers, a guide to getting Dragon to be as accurate as possible and to blow up your word count and your writing workflow.

James: You all know from the podcast, I'm writing my first book at the moment. I'm looking at different ways of increasing productivity but actually I have just purchased Dragon. I read up your advice and notes on the Mac version so I have bought the PC version.

Scott: Good.

**James: I'm writing on Paradox because I took your advice for that very reason.**

Scott: Excellent.

James: There's a Bluetooth headset that came with it, which I'm not wholly familiar with. Everyone is going to be different on this, and sometimes it is purely about productivity, in part because I get very little time to write at the moment, maybe six hours a week. I need to make the most of that.

I found in the past when I wrote scripts for the BBC for instance, I walked about. I would leave my desk. I would wander around the room coming up with the script, so I sit down and then type it out, and I thought, "Maybe I'll write better being able to stand up and think and imagine the conversations and so on." That's what I'm excited about getting into for Dragon.

Scott: Yeah.

James: Other people will purely be looking at the stories of word counts going exponentially up.

**Before we get into too much the technical detail, let's hear from you as a sort of Dragon guru of the main advantages of why people should be thinking about switching to dictation.**

Scott: You've mentioned the word count side effects. I think if like yourself, you're restricted in the time you've got to actually write, Dragon is fantastic because obviously it completely blows up the word count you can achieve in a very short space of time.

With something like transcription, which I'm sure we'll mention later, you can do it pretty much anywhere. It's another level again of productivity. One of the main reasons that I first got into it was because of injury. I regard Dragon is an insurance policy now against RSI and whatever else. I mean the horror stories I know of people who had horrific RSI and wrist problems who have had operations. They've been unable to even open the door for months at a time all because of sitting, hammering away at the keyboard.

A good three years ago, I almost thought RSI would get me on, and it didn't. It was actually sitting at a desk all day, being sedentary was the problem. My posture did me, and then I ended up with herniated discs in my back.

I was someone who had to earn a living from writing. I was a freelance writer at the time. I suddenly found that I couldn't write. I literally could not sit at a desk and type. I couldn't hold a keyboard in the air and do that. It was ridiculous. I had to find a way of continuing to earn a living basically. It wasn't just about work anymore. It was literally about keeping the lights on. What happened was luckily before I had this injury, I'd actually started using Dragon pretty seriously just to get my productivity up because a lot of the articles I was writing, I've never been a fast typist. I was always up against deadlines.

I started looking into Dragon anyway to hit those deadlines. Luckily I'd already trained Dragon. I'd already got it to a point where it was really

accurate, and then of course I have this injury. From there on, it just transformed everything.

I suddenly realize that this isn't just about productivity, this is also about looking after yourself as a writer and recognizing that the tools you have as a writer, your physical tools, your hands, your fingers, your back, all of these things can be absolutely done in by such a sedentary activity as writing itself. It became an insurance policy.

I got really addicted to the delving as deep as possible into how to get this thing crazy accurate and the rest is history.

That's where I come from with Dragon and that's where I think even if someone is a really fast typist, I hear a lot of people say I can type 120 words a minute, that's great, but what happens when you can't, what happens when fate plays it sound and bang, you suddenly can't write, you can't earning a living. That's what happened to me. I think it's useful to just have it in your arsenal just like anything else.

James: That's a great argument for why it's useful to have it there. There are writers I've been speaking to a couple online as I've starting to make my choices about the software and so on, who are purely switching over to it because they write a lot, and they want to explore doing in a better way. It's definitely something everyone can try.

The transition from writing into keyboard to dictation is not a straightforward one. I can tell you just from my early forays, it feels strange, it feels weird.

**I'm not going to be looking at super high productivity word count in the next couple of weeks. It's going to take longer.**

Scott: Right. It will come. I think it comes surprisingly quickly, but you have to commit.

You really have to commit to it. That is the key. You have to not view it as something you have to do, and you have to not view it as something that's a pain to do. You have to just go I'm going to do this, and I'm gonna do it for all the right reasons, and that could be productivity, that could be injury, it could be both, it could be prevention of injury, whatever.

I think it's a bit like buying a new keyboard. There are people out there who absolutely swear buy mechanical keyboards, these big, clacky things. I hate them. I can't stand it. I actually got nostalgic about them recently. I thought I'll get myself one.

You could literally hear it outside the house when I was typing on it. It was one of these old IBM-type ones. I thought, "That's got to go back." I know people who swear by them.

All of these tools are subjective. I think you have to just decide to use it as a tool, bring it into your life. Accept Dragon into your life and roll with it. I think the first way of doing that is to just get used to dictation itself. Never mind how accurate it is initially. Never mind all of these things. Is my equipment set up right? Just get used to the actual act of dictating.

One of the ways to do that is to just use one of these, use your smartphone as much as you can. Dictate into that, dictate your texts, dictate emails, do web searches. You quickly get used to speaking to a machine. It's strange how quickly that becomes second nature. It's just about unlocking that. No one who's a writer and has lost the ability or will lose the ability to tell stories because we're dictating it instead of typing it. I think we got to get over that notion that a keyboard is the only way we can perform writing because it's ridiculous.

Once upon a time, people used to use quills and ink and write that way. I've got used to it obviously. I couldn't live without it now. I can't type now. I just

can't do it. I'm too slow. I'm too slow typing. I find it unproductive, so I dictate pretty much everything now.

I think what you find is that will happen to you in time especially if you're still a person who does maybe struggle a little bit with the typing speed. You'll find it just blows up your word count.

It happens very quickly, but you have to commit to it, and you have to use it as much as you can across as many different mediums as you can with Dragon being the time where you just knuckle down and write and just do word count as opposed to everything else.

That's not to say you shouldn't use it on your computer for everything else as well. You should also dictate again your blog post, your forum posts, your Facebook posts, emails, everything, just use it all the time, and you'll very quickly find that you're off and running in no time and you suddenly can't live without it.

James: Let's talk about the choices people make when they move into this area, when they try this out. Actually, the first thing I found is it's quite confusing Dragon have quite a number of different products and for the uninitiated. I did find the Facebook group ... I don't know if it's your Facebook.

### **There's a Dragon Facebook group.**

Scott: [Dragon Riders](#). It's not mine.

James: I find that very helpful; you're a key voice in that group. I find that very useful to try and navigate my way through. In fact, I took your direct advice in the end, as I said earlier, in making my product choice. It was a bit confusing.

I don't think this software can really help themselves when they give you eight choices of how to buy the same product.

Scott: No.

James: It often just puts people off. I supposed the major choice is how is it going to get from voice to keyboard? There's one option, which is this little Bluetooth headset you see taxi drivers wearing them. You can talk independently into a little recorder and then download it afterwards. You can use your smartphone for that to record onto it. There's another cheaper headset, I think, book headsets are a way of doing it.

Scott: Correct.

**James: The answer to this is it's up to you as an individual. Any of these, the right thing to be looking at or the wrong thing to be looking at.**

Scott: It's bewildering. Isn't it? It's bewildering. It doesn't help, like you say, there are so many versions of the actual software. To break it down in really simple terms for the majority of people, okay, firstly, the software. There are two versions that should be on everyone's radar, one is **Dragon Naturally Speaking Premium version 13**. That is the current consumer version. It's actually three years old, but it's the current consumer version of the software.

James: I better make sure I bought that one.

Scott: No. Don't say it's the wrong one. That looks right.

James: Is that right?

Scott: Premium, yeah, that's it. That's the one.

James: Okay, thank goodness.



Scott: It's that one. You've got the on there with the Bluetooth headset. There are certain versions of it which come with headsets and whatever. You're going to hate me with a passion here, but I wouldn't buy any of those personally.

James: Thanks.

Scott: Don't worry, you've still done the right thing, you still got the right software. I would just buy the software as is and then pick whatever headset you need because a lot of the headsets that Nuance provide are actually pretty poor. They're actually not very good quality.

I'm not sure about that Bluetooth one you've got. Some of the wired headsets that come in the box are dreadful.

The other version of the software is actually **Dragon Professional Individual version 15**. There was a 14, but it was basically the same as 13. Just forget it ever existed.

All Dragon Professional Individual 15 does is it brings in a new engine called the Deep Learning Recognition Engine. Is it any better than 13? I'm yet to be convinced. It's substantially more expensive.

James: Hmm. I got it \$249 to something like that.

Scott: I'll say now it's pretty expensive.

James: Maybe it's one liner.

Scott: You can probably pick up that version on its own for about £70 or £80.

James: Without the Bluetooth headset.

Scott: Without the headset.

James: I think that's a lot of thing. I'm trying to remember how much, I saw so many prices. Like you said, even you're an expert and you're trying to work out, is it worth it?

**I stood no chance really looking at something that's £350 and £99, which one I should buy.**

Scott: Yeah, it's crazy. That version of the software, version premium 13 for PC, for Windows is about £80-ish. It even goes for around the same amount in dollars. It's about \$80.

Now, Dragon Professional Individual, the new version is about £300. Is it worth the difference? Probably I would say no, I would say for most people, no.

The other version of the software is **Dragon for the Mac**, which is currently on version 6. It's a bit of a disaster. It's a baggy mess. I recommend like yourself, if you're using a Mac, to just run the PC version of the software using Parallels or Boot Camp.

When it comes to microphones, it's down to personal preference. I'm using a bit like your podcast microphone there. Is that an audio technical, something you've got there?

**James: It's actually a Rode NT-USB.**

Scott: That's what I'm using. We're both using the same mic right now. Something like that is going to give you a fantastic recognition. It's just a great quality mic.

You're looking for something that ideally is used by musicians, vocalists, anything that provides really clean quality audio and the Rode NT-USB, the

audio technical, AT 2020, I think it's called USB, the Blue Yeti. These are all really good mics for £99, \$100-is mark. The quality is crazy for the price, a fantastic quality.

James: Yeah.

Scott: That is if you want desktop mic. Obviously, not everybody wants to be sat at a desktop, some people want headset, as you say. Again, there are terrible headsets. There are decent headsets.

If you stick to something by Andrea Electronics or Plantronics, they're usually fine. The one constant in all of this is to always go for USB wired, so wired USB headsets or wired USB desktop mics. I personally don't recommend Bluetooth on the whole because the quality just isn't there. The recognition stops as a result.

What you tend to find, there are a few and that when you've got mic be okay because it's actually ... It comes with the package, but there are a few Bluetooth headsets which work okay, work well, but you have to use the dongle that's included with them. They just won't give you the same level of recognition if you just use the built-in Bluetooth on your PC or Mac. That's the quick guide. Basically, there's toll free versions of the software that worry about, everything else can be discarded, and then it just comes out on a personal preference. For the most part, USB wired is the way to go.

**James: On a slightly related note, does anybody want to buy a USB barely used headset particularly if you're taxi driver?**

Scott: Don't give up on it.

James: I hate wearing it. It's disconnected several times using it, but I haven't used the dongle. I've connected directly to the ... I didn't see the point of using the dongle. Now you mention that, maybe it does need the

dongle. Actually, this is on a boom. This is an angle boom. Actually goes quite a long ... Sitting quite a long way back from the desk now.

Scott: Yeah.

James: I'll go with this actually. It's all I can stand up and move back a little bit. I don't want to be too far away from the Mac because what you end up doing, certainly, from my early experiences is off the passage with dictating, going having a little tweak of what's actually come out and then doing an exception. It's not like a wannabe in the other room walking about. Yeah, okay. That's good. Any way, enough about me. That gives other people overview.

Scott: On that point, I actually agree. I think to be to walking around and flat, your arms and get into it is a good thing. There are alternatives. The number one alternative is transcription, which will mention in a bit, I'm sure. The other solution is to just have a really long USB cable and just plug that into your computer and just walk around the room with it connected to the laptop or whatever.

Don't get me wrong. Bluetooth come work well. There are wireless mics, which can work well. On the whole, you don't tend to get the same level of quality to price as you would with wired. I just find there are certain configurations, certainly with Bluetooth where it just doesn't work well at all.

James: Okay. Good. I've also made some of the right choices, I'm quite pleased to see.

Let's move on to the transcription. You said just start to use it in more than one setting and get used to the idea of it. Can you cast your mind back to the early days.

Writing is an unusual thing anyway, writing fiction in particular. You're sat at your keyboard, I use brain affirming things, trying to focus myself in that

area. Your mind goes to where you're writing and all the rest of it and you start to write the words down. It feels at the beginning fundamentally different, saying stuff out loud.

**I need to somehow make that transition work, make it work for me.  
What are your tips for that?**

Scott: I think the number one thing I would recommend is just to not look at the screen. Do not look at the screen when you're doing it because it completely gets in the way of the act of writing. You start to get into the act of editing as you go.

That for me is just the first thing that's going to wreck your flow, if you like. I think very often, when we write, like you said, even just at the keyboard, you tend to get into a flow state, you tend to get into a mold wherever words are just coming out for your fingers. That's it. The key is to transition that to instead of it coming out your fingers, it needs to come out of your mouth.

You need to get into that flow state but using dictation instead of typing. I think for me, the way to do that is to just sit back in the chair, close my eyes and just start talking. Dragon doesn't care about the moments of silence. It doesn't recognize anything. When you're doing that, it just knows you being silent. It's okay to be quiet. It's okay to think, it's okay to pause.

The key, I think, is to get those eyes off your screen because if you just sit there, I mentioned the desktop microphones ... If you just sit there at a desktop, looking at the screen as it's recognizing it, you see a mistake and straight away, you want to correct that mistake, get you out of that flow. So I don't do that. I tend to just dictate away. That could be with a long USB cable on my microphone or it could be with a wireless headset or whatever.

Like you, sometimes I walk around and flail my arms about especially if I'm doing stuff like dialogue. I find that really useful then. I get into the

dialogue of my characters a bit more. All of these are fine, but get out of the habit of looking at the screen basically.

I just let it do its thing in the background. Then when I'm done, when I'm ready for a break, I'll go and sit down. I'll just scan it. Then I'll do a quick, a super quick editing pass where I just correct any mistakes because you have to do that for Dragon in order for Dragon to get better, you have to do that.

James: Okay.

Scott: I leave it until after I finish writing.

**James: I hadn't realized that Dragon pays attention to when you go back and correct the mistakes.**

Scott: Yeah.

James: That's the part of its learning, right? I supposed that makes sense.

Scott: It's the biggest problem actually, the biggest issue I think people have especially on the Mac version. There's many issues with the Mac version of the software.

James: You hate the Mac version.

Scott: I think everybody hates the Mac version who's ever used it. I'm actually sitting and talking to you right now on a MacBook Pro. I'm a Mac user. I'm a PC user as well. There's just no comparison between the two pieces of software.

The Mac version is just too unstable. It has serious issues. It has serious functionality problems that don't exist basically on the PC version. There's a lot more you can do with the PC version to get it crazy accurate. You can

drill right down into vocabulary and all sorts of things, the way you say things, that way your certain character names, all of these sort of things. You can't do that with the Mac version. At least, you can't do it effectively. The biggest issue is if you did get into a flow state and you have a big long page for the text, the Mac version struggles to go back further up the text and correct them. The PC version has no issue with that at all. Even if you're a Mac user, everybody is better off using the PC version.

James: Yeah. There are tutorials. You're talking about going back and correcting. When you first load up the software, it takes you through a basic tutorial and sets some exercises for you. For instance, correcting a word and how you do that and go back.

That's something I think you probably and I need to play with a bit to become familiar with it. Another way of using it, I suppose for a start, because I'm writing on Scrivener on Mac, my workflow I intended to do is to have a word document, which is on the Dropbox folder. It's on the same machine because I'm running Parallel, so I can easily get to it from Scrivener. It's to dictate into that word document and then copy and paste it into Scrivener.

**The interesting thing I've learned from this interview already is I should be correcting within that word document as part of the Dragon session before I copy and paste it because otherwise I stop Dragon learning how I talk.**

Scott: Yeah. The biggest issue is if you are using the Mac version incidentally, I don't recommend you dictate directly into anything other than TextEdit, the built-in text editor with the Mac OS10.

James: Right, yeah.

Scott: Everything else is just a disaster. It's all to do with something called full-text control. Dragon needs to know where the cursor is on the screen. It

frequently just doesn't. It frequently just gets lost. The cursor goes on walkabout or it will suddenly insert words here there weren't any. It's a disaster.

To keep things simple, and I recommend this on the PC as well really, to keep things simple, dictate straight into TextEdit on the Mac or straight into notepad on the PC. If you are using the PC version in Parallels on the Mac, then again you're going to be dictating straight into notepad on the PC and then copy and paste it into Scrivener, Word, whatever your processor of choice is. That keeps things really lean and really simple for Dragon. It's quite a resource intensive program anyway.

What you want to do, as you mentioned there, is you want to, while it's still in Notepad or still in TextEdit, you want to make corrections with your voice.

The last thing you should ever do is type over something. Don't use the keyboard. Don't touch the keyboard when you dictate in. A big mistake because Dragon learn nothing then. You have to tell it "This is wrong, you got that wrong. This is what I wanted you to say."

If, for example, it gets a word wrong, you would say correct a word or phrase. It will drop down a list of what it thinks the correction should be. Then if it's number four on the list, you just say choose four. It corrects it. Every time you do that, Dragon registers it in what's called your profile. Okay. It makes those changes. It tweaks the algorithm, and it gets crazy accurate. You have to remember to correct it.

There are certain things not to worry about, things like when it gets there and they are wrong or be ... Forget it. It's just going to get words on that all the time. When it fundamentally gets certain words or phrases wrong, just correct it with your voice every time. It will learn from it. It will get more and more accurate over time.



One of the things I do say in the book, and you mentioned there that the brief training exercise, one of the things the program will keep doing is pesting you to read its training texts that are built in. I recommend you don't do that all.

I think that's just a crazy idea because Dragon, it doesn't just learn how you talk, it doesn't just learn your speaking style, it actually learns your writing style as well. Why would you dictate something written by Lewis Carroll because you didn't write it? What happens is you tweak in your profile to be accurate, leaves stuff that other people have written. That makes no sense. What you need to do, go old school, get a piece of paper and print out 2,000 words or whatever of something you've written, dictate that to Dragon. This is the first thing you should do when you first set it up early, dictate 2,000 words to Dragon and then make the corrections, correct what it got wrong.

Save the profile, do it again within different 2,000 words, make the corrections, save the profile and you're done. You're going to have really high accuracy, almost out of the gate.

Then as long as you make corrections, as you dictate in the future, it will just keep getting better and better, and you'll get to a point where it's literally one or two words in every hundred, 98%, 99% accuracy.

You've got to have the whole package. You've got to have the good mic, you've got to have the patience to stick with it, you've got to have everything in place for that to work.

James: Yeah, that's a great tip.

**Also, I just think that exercise gets you used to using the correction method, which does take a little bit of getting used to it.**

Scott: Yeah, it even gets used to hearing your words being spoken out loud. You actually are starting to take something you've written and dictate it at a very basic level. You're starting to go down that path. I think it's one of the things you should do almost immediately.

James: You mentioned transcription a couple of times. **I supposed that's the ultimate way of wandering around and dictating away from your desk including in your car or on your bike or wherever.**

Scott: Absolutely.

James: There are different ways of doing this. Again, you can't buy an expensive box with a bluetooth headset.

Scott: Of course.

James: Or you can download an app on your phone. I should think that probably would work as well, they're very high quality-

Scott: They would.

James: Mics on this.

Scott: Yeah.

**James: Just talk us through the transcription, how that works.**

Scott: Transcription is the nuclear weapon for a rise of dictation really because it's the ability to just write anywhere anytime, like you say in the car, going for a walk, sit and waiting for your kid to come out of school, whatever it is, you can take a spare five minutes, a spare 10 minutes, whatever it is and dictate.

It's one of those things where when you first do it and you feed the audio file into Dragon and you see the words magically appear on screen, that's fantastic. It's one of those things we think this is just crazy how it can do this. Then you see the word count and then you see the amount of words that you've dictated just sitting in the car or doing the washing up or do whatever, mowing the lawn. While you've been doing something else, you've just spat out 1,500 words or 2,000 words or whatever.

That's where, for me, Dragon or dictation in general, gets really addictive because you suddenly go, "Holy cow, I don't need to take my laptop with me, I don't need to have a big microphone with me." I can just use a little voice recorder.

For me, it's the holy grail of dictation. It really is. It's the thing that tips most people I think over the edge when they realize they can do that and get ridiculously productive pretty much anywhere.

I know of people who are working full-time jobs and they'll go off into their car doing their lunch break and just do 20 minutes of dictation into a voice recorder. They come home that night, put it into the computer, and bang, there's 3,000 words. It's crazy. It's a fantastic facility.

It's only in Dragon Premium and Dragon Professionals. You mention all the different versions. If you bought Dragon Home, you're out of luck, it doesn't have it.

It's in Dragon for Mac, although it's very, very limited in Dragon for Mac. The problem with it in Dragon for Mac is you can't correct it, so it spits out words into of its text file or word document and then you just stuck with whatever it spits out. You can't correct in any way and have it learned. In the PC version, you can. It will continue to learn. Your transcription profile should get just as accurate as your dictation profile. That's it. It's just a fantastic add-on to sitting at a desk, speaking into a microphone.

The other thing you can do with these little voice recorders, they don't have to be expensive. You mentioned, the Zoom, the Zoom H1, is that what you've got there?

James: I've got a couple ... I'm using the 6 to record this.

Scott: I think that the Zoom is about ... I think it's about £100, something like that. You can pick up a pretty much any recorder.

James: This a cheap one, but this is H5.

Scott: Right.

**James: These are used for professional podcast recordings, so there are probably beyond what you need for.**

Scott: All you need is mono record. That's it because Dragon wants mono. It doesn't have about stereo. Anything by Sony or Olympus will do. I think there's one thing called the Sony PX. That's really inexpensive. It's under \$50, £50, whatever. The quality is fantastic.

In my book, I actually have a list, I don't have it near to me, of the settings you should put into that recorder or similar recorders. As long as you do that and set it up like that, bang, that's it, your accuracy will be pretty fantastic as long as you then correct it as well afterwards.

**James: I was just going to ask you about the correction. It's a similar process so far. You'd go off, record into this, dump in 1,500 words.**

Scott: Yeah.

James: As if I've just spoken them.

Scott: Yes, it's exactly the same-

James: And at that point, I could then go say, "Correct and go back to"?

Scott: Yes.

James: Okay.

Scott: On the PC version, only in the PC version. In the Mac version, can't do it.

In the PC version, it will spit the words out into something called DragonPad, which is like its own built-in text editor. You can either right-click on a word or phrase and make the correction or what I recommended that really just does best, once it's spat out the text and it's all on your screen, switch back to your microphone, switch back to your dictation profile and just use your voice to correct, so you just say correct that, correct that word, that phrase, whatever and then choose whichever options it gives you.

If it doesn't give you the correct word or phrase for a mistake, then you can say spell that and you can then manually type what it should have been and then click train. It will ask you to say it. Again every time, you do that, it will record it.

Kobo is another one. For me, it always gets Smashwords as two separate words and Kobo was COBOL, the program.

James: Yeah.

Scott: It always does it. When it does that, I just say, "Correct COBOL." It doesn't know what Kobo is, but obviously, it's a company. What I do is I say, "Spell that." I spell it with a capital K because it's a company. I want it to remember that as well. Then I press TRAIN and I say Kobo.

It depends on the version of the software. Sometimes it asks you to do it three times, you say Kobo, Kobo, Kobo in three different intonations, but that's it. It's got it.

In the future every time you do that or you say that word, it will get it or should.

Smashwords is another one. It will always then spit out the correct company name with a capital S and the two words together. That's what you do. You do with transcription and with dictation, and you end up with a complete system that's as accurate across the board.

**James: Let's talk about accents. You're off in the Northeast of England, as you don't have a particularly strong accent.**

Scott: No.

James: I've got friends who come from not too far way from you who do have a strong accent.

Scott: Oh, yes.

James: Of course, even you might struggle to understand.

Scott: All the time. A guy came to fix the satellite dish in our house once, and I couldn't understand a single word he said. I felt terrible because I felt how do I sustain a conversation with this guy because I don't know what he's saying to me.

**James: How do people with stronger accents and the US can vary quite a lot with a southern drawl, the clipped nasally up in the Northeast.**

Is Dragon okay at learning this or do you find that some accents people really struggle with?

Scott: Some more than others. I'm actually not from the Northeast, although I live up here and I lived up here once since my 20s. I'm originally from just outside Cardiff. I've got a real mishmash of an accent. Dragon manages. It copes.

But what I think it does best is just a standardized, if you can call it that, North American accent. It seems to do just really well with a standard North American accent.

If you do have a Southern drawl or like a really strong regional accent, that's where the training comes in. That's where you get your piece of paper, you do 2,000 words of your own work. You correct it, you save it, you do it again. You might need to do it three, four times, maybe more than most people. It will get you. It will figure out this is what he's saying, but it just might take a little bit much training.

There's actually a guy on YouTube with a really, really strong Appalachian accent. It picks up everything he says, absolutely everything because he's trained it so well. It doesn't get much stronger than that.

There's another guy, I was listening to a guy with a South African accent and South African isn't even within the options when you set up your profile. It gives you the option for say, a British standard accent, on Australian accent, Asian, all of these different accents. South African wasn't even one of them, and he has it working perfectly as well.

I think it just comes down to the training. As long as you have again a good microphone and you train it properly, you should be fine.

The single biggest problem for most people is using a really lousy microphone.

I know so many people that put the software on and go, "I plugged my microphone in, and it's rubbish." How much was your microphone? "£5 pounds." "That's why. It's garbage in equals garbage out."

You have to view this as an investment in your writing business, much like Facebook ads or cover design or whatever. This is an investment in your writing business, so the computer has to be reasonable, the microphone has to be really good, and you then have to commit and train it and go for it. You'll reap the benefit.

That's the biggest problem I find with people is they have to put a microphone and they just don't commit to it. They try for two minutes and say, "It's rubbish. I'm quicker typing." They go back to typing.

It's about that mindset. It's about just commit into it and saying "I'm going to do this and I'm going to view what I'm buying not as a burden but as an investment." As long as you do all of that, you'll be up and running.

James: Scott, it's been brilliant talking to you. What's absolutely brilliant is you have done us a fantastic PDF cheat sheet on introduction to Dragon. We're going to give the link away.

### **Just talk us though the cheat sheet, what you prepared for us.**

Scott: Yes. It's a little bit of everything. It really reiterates what we've said.

Firstly, commit into this. There are a few microphone tips on there. Everything from which ones to choose to which style to choose, desktop headset, but also USB wireless, whatever. It's a bit on there. I've also put in quite a few useful commands. As long as you have these commands within Dragon, you're good to go. You don't need to learn everything it can do.

For writers, most of the time I think we just want to get a really good, a really clean first draft on. My belief is get it as accurate as possible from the



outset, know a few commands and concentrate on the writing. The cheat sheet gets you through that as quickly as possible, where there are as few steps as possible.

James: That's great. If you're watching on YouTube, you can click the link. I think in that corner up there is where there's going to be a little card that will come up and you click that, it will take you to the page where you can download, Scott's brilliant cheat sheets.

Scott: Commit, commit.

James: Honestly, just like everything in my life, I won't be one of those people who gave up and then you quiz them, it turns out they hardly tried. I will robustly get to the end of this and hopefully be happy with it, make it work for me.

Scott: I have total faith in you.

James: Thanks, Scott. Someone believes in me. Great. Your book just quickly give that a plug because, I think, people want to take it to the next stage is a great investment to go alongside your investment in the software.

Scott: It's called [The Writer's Guide to Training Your Dragon](#). It really exists because there's plenty of books out there telling you maybe why you should dictate, but this was written because I wanted writers in particular to be able to just get really accurate straight out of the box. It hopefully, shows you everything that you need to know in that regard.

Also, can I quickly mention? If you go to my website, [www.trainingyourdragon.com](http://www.trainingyourdragon.com), there's a load of free video training on there as well. You click the link, it says free video training. Put your email address. I'll send you a link to a private page.

There's about a good hour's worth of step-by-step videos on there as well, which people might find useful. I also have a free book on Amazon called [Quick Cheats for Writing With Dragon](#), which expands a little bit on the cheat sheet. There's bit a few extra things in them. That one is free.

James: Fantastic, Scott. Thank you so much for joining us.

Scott: Pleasure. Thanks for having me.

James: There we go. I've had the first few sessions. It was interesting. I have Dragon. I bought probably the wrong product, having interviewed Scott.

I'm using a better microphone. It's something, if you're watching on the YouTube version, you can see we're using Rode NT-USB microphones, which are very nice. Scott said you really have to use good quality microphones, as he said in the interview. I found that's made a difference. I also use this thing.

I'm being tolerant in the picture. This is a Zoom recorder, which I mentioned. They're quite expensive. This is probably about £200 or £300. You can get cheaper versions of it, but it's really good quality. It's that quality that makes Dragon work unless hassle. Having moved over to that, because I do that to walk around the room. That's the whole point really for me dictating is not sitting at a desk with this type of microphone.

However, I also find it a bit weird. I write, obviously, at a certain pace and you speak at a certain pace, and they're not at the same pace. That's the thing I'm finding the most difficult to get around, you sit here and you think of the words, you're writing them down. The writing process slows you down a little bit. The fact that you can speed up through dictation is obviously the point. On the other hand, coming up with the words at that pace, I find it difficult.

Mark: Yeah. That's something I haven't really done. Also now I have written 2 million words probably in the last four or five years, and that's developed a certain routine. It was physical routine, words stuck in my head. They transmit through my fingers. I see them on the screen. That's all part of the same process.

I think to take out the middle stage where I'm using my hands to write the words. That to me feels like it would be quite a big jump. Again, it's something I've never tried before really. I'm sure I have spoken to plenty of other people who use Dragon a little bit now. Another writer who've got up to 10,000 words a day, that is something that they're doing that by dictating. It takes some practice getting used to something a little bit unusual.

James: I'm certain that it's something you can train yourself to do, training you Dragon, of course, it's Scott's book. I'm sticking with it for a bit. We'll see how we get on with it. Yeah, I would love to hear your experience. Post those in the Facebook group, how people are getting on.

Don't forget. Scott is very kind to put together a really useful cheat sheets for you. If you're using Dragon now or you want to try experimenting with it, moving over to it, I totally recommend this. You can download the PDF, Cheat Sheet by simply going to [selfpublishing.formula.com/download60](https://selfpublishing.formula.com/download60), download 6-0.

Good. Don't forget. We've got our ebook, Vault, which contains everything that we've ever done in it in a handy ebook, which you can search on as well. Dragon, obviously, would come up in the future, and that gets included in the next one. You can download the Vault of the first 58 old episodes by going to [selfpublishingformula.com/vault](https://selfpublishingformula.com/vault), V-A-U-L-T. I think we'd jump over in the gym.

Mark: I think the Vault is the verb, not the none.

James: I think I've probably climbed over it, and I was in the gym. Good, excellent. Thank you very much indeed, for joining us. It's been a useful show. Thanks to our guest, Scott Baker. You could email us podcast at [selfpublishingformula.com](mailto:podcast@selfpublishingformula.com). We'll be back again next week.

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