

Inclusion Times

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& Youth with
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In This Issue

Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh v 2.0 . . .	1
Editor's Note	2
Conference Announcements	2
Size Does Matter: Computer Ergonomics for Children	5
Keystrokes 3.0 for the Macintosh	7
List Serv	8
Outlining on the Dana	9
Internet Resources	10
What's New and Updates	11

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Kurzweil 3000 for Macintosh Version 2

By Brian S. Friedlander, Ph.D.

The saying goes,—"good things happen for those who wait", and this is nonetheless true for Macintosh users who have been anxiously waiting for an upgrade to Kurzweil 3000 for Macintosh. In its current reincarnation, Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh v 2.0, has nearly all of the features that can be found on the Windows version. Macintosh users will be happy to learn that the new version is a completely rewritten application and not a simple porting of the Windows version. As such it has the "look and feel" of a Macintosh application and users will intuitively feel right at home with it. Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh takes advantage of the Macintosh operating system and adds some nice features not found on the Windows platform. Macintosh users will be very excited to learn that the latest version can run in native mode in OS X or under OS 9.2.2, in Classic mode.

One of the hallmarks of Kurzweil 3000, has always been its ease of use and this is true of the latest version for the Macintosh. For those of you who may be unfamiliar with Kurzweil 3000, one can purchase the Scan/Read version which would allow the teacher or student to scan text into the computer from a flatbed scanner. Generally, students have the Read version installed on their computers which would allow them to access the text-to-speech functions and all of the other study and dictionary features. The process of scanning text into the computer is very straight forward and easy to accomplish. For best results, it is important when scanning that you remove the

continued on page 3

Nov.-Dec. 2003 |

Kurzweil 3000 for Macintosh V. 2... continued

binding of the book so that pages can lay flat on the scanner. With a click on the Scan icon, Kurzweil 3000 will seamlessly scan the document and prepare it for being read. For anyone who has attempted to use the optical character recognition software that ships with most scanners you will be happy to learn that Kurzweil utilizes top of the line software so that the OCR processing is nearly flawless. Kurzweil 3000 on the Macintosh can be used with USB scanners that support the TWAIN protocol. You can check on the Kurzweil website (www.kurzweiledu.com) to see of list of compatible scanners. Using an Epson 1260 scanner, Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh flawlessly scanned the document and prepared it for being read. To scan another page, you simply click on the icon for Scan next page. Once you have scanned the pages you simply save the file and your students can access it with the Read version of Kurzweil 3000. If for some reason Kurzweil 3000 makes an error in the scanning process, it is very easy to edit the underlying text to correct the errors. Once a document is scanned it is very easy to extract the text into a word processor like Appleworks or Microsoft Word. In addition to scanning in text, Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh Version 2 can open PDF files, Word and Appleworks documents that you have stored on your computer.

Kurzweil 3000 on the Macintosh has a floating toolbar called the Kurzweil 3000 Reader that can be used to navigate the reading of the page. The Reader acts like the controls on a VCR, allowing you to quickly read the document. If you would like to have Kurzweil 3000 read the next sentence or the previous sentence it is accomplished very quickly by clicking on the arrows that are on the floating toolbar.

Kurzweil 3000 Reader

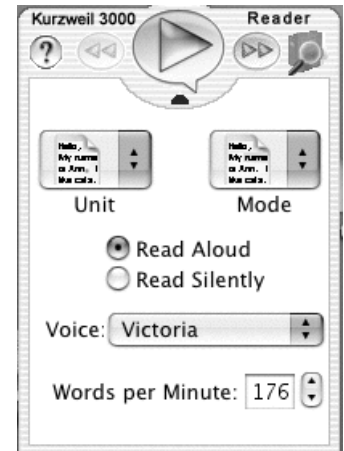
Users can quickly access a variety of features when Kurzweil 3000 is reading from this floating toolbar. By clicking on a small icon on the Kurzweil 3000 Reader one can disclose a multitude of features that the student can set. Students can quickly change

the unit that Kurzweil 3000 reads to include: read by word, sentence, line, phrase, and paragraph. Similarly, students can change the mode of how they read through a document and can decide if they want it self-paced, read continuously or read- word-by-word.

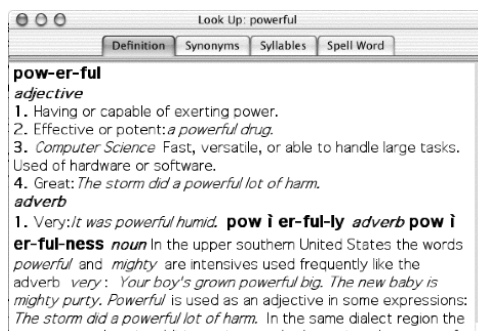
Students can use any of the voices that are built into the Macintosh, but will probably decide to stick with one of the high quality voices such as Victoria, Bruce or Agnes. Students can change just how quickly the text is read, by changing the words per minute that the voice speaks. Students will also find that having quick access to all of the Kurzweil 3000 reference tools is a wonderful feature which can also be found on the Kurzweil 3000 Reader. To look up a word in the dictionary, the student simply has to select a word and then click on the Look Up icon on the Kurzweil 3000 Reader. The process is very quick and students can then listen to Kurzweil 3000 read the definition within the dialog box. Definitions can be copied to the clipboard if students need to use them for a language development activity. By selecting one of the other tabs on the Look Up dialog, students can have Kurzweil 3000 produce a list of synonyms for a selected word; show them how to pronounce and syllabicate the word; or spell the word.

Look Up Dictionary Feature

As much as access to text is the primary reason for using Kurzweil 3000, the true benefits of this application can be found in its vast array of study tools that will come in handy in helping students develop comprehension and note-taking skills. To view the Study Skills toolbar one can go to the View menu and select Toolbars and then Study Skills.



Kurzweil 3000 Reader



Look Up Dictionary Feature

Kurzweil 3000 for Macintosh V. 2... Continued



Study Skills Toolbar

The Study Skills toolbar adds four different colored highlighting pens, a text note tool, a sticky note tool and a footnote tool. These tools can be used in the document to highlight keywords or for students to take notes while they are reading. Once a student has highlighted or annotated the page with notes it is very easy to extract the highlighted text and notes to a new file, by selecting Extract Notes & Highlighted Text from the File menu. Student can use the extracted material as a study guide or as an aide to organize the text that they read. This feature is a very powerful one and one that students will find easy to use.

Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh is an ideal tool for students who need to have their tests read to them. Using Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh teachers can scan or open tests created in MS Word or Appleworks, or stored in a PDF format. Students can use the highlighting pens to select their answer for multiple choice or true/false questions, or text boxes can be placed on the test for fill in the blanks, short answer or essay questions. With all the emphasis being placed on accountability and achievement Kurzweil 3000 is a wonderful tool to allow students to demonstrate what they really know. Students will enjoy the fact that they can take the tests independently without the assistance of a teacher. Many schools are using laptop computers and are providing students with headphones so that they can take the test just like all of their peers right in the classroom. After the student has completed the test it can be printed out or saved on disk or to the server in a networked environment.

Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh can also be used as a talking word processor for those students who rely on text to speech in the editing of their work. When using Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh students have access to a spell checker and can format the text as they please using the Writing Toolbar. Students can change the justification, line spacing and format the text as they would in a standard word processor. For those students who

would like to work with the text in their standard word processor students can export the text so that it can be opened in Word or AppleWorks.

Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh Version 2 is a powerful assistive technology tool for students with reading disabilities. Having a tool like Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh Version 2.0, running on the Macintosh under OS X and 9.2.2 adds tremendous value to those students who struggle with reading and need to rely on a high quality program with OCR and text to speech support. This is one tool that should be seriously considered as part of any schools assistive technology toolkit. Kurzweil Educational Systems has developed an excellent application and built a strong foundation for future development of this product on the Macintosh platform. Kurzweil Educational Systems has announced that Kurzweil 3000 Version 2.0.1, which supports the latest version of Mac OS X called Panther, will be released in January. (Editors note: Macintosh users who own Version 1 of this program are entitled to a free upgrade to Version 2. Call Customer service to make sure that your copy of Kurzweil 3000 for the Macintosh is registered so that they can mail you your free upgraded copy.)



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