

## AudioFlash by Christina Fosbrink

Have you ever commented on your students' work and felt that you could really critique better without having to strain your hand? Now you can with AudioFlash. AudioFlash is a free streaming and audio recording application. It is very easy to use. Go to

<http://www.audioflash.org/>

and download the free version, which turns your voice into MP3 files with just a few clicks. Hook up your microphone, hit Record and click Next. You can even upload your files to an FTP site. This amazing program allows you to record your critiques for each student assignment within minutes. Then just upload your MP3 files into each discussion and post as an attachment. This is a great way to get "live" with each student.

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Want to spruce up your Course Home page, but are not sure how to do it? With Wordle, you can easily create interesting "word cloud" designs based upon the content you are teaching. Go to

<http://www.wordle.net/>

paste in a bunch of text and hit Go. You can then choose fonts, colors and more to tweak your project how you want it. After you complete your steps, you'll receive a code in which you can copy and paste into the classroom. The only downside to this application is that the code they give is for a small image. What you need to do is open your design in a window, hit the print screen commands on your keyboard and take it into Photoshop and save it as a larger file. It's a fun program for you to get creative!

## Blogs in Newsletter

THE ART INSTITUTE OF PITTSBURGH ONLINE DIVISION

TECHNOLOGY AT ITS FINEST

### Dictation Software

by Janice Lee

Responding in discussion threads is tedious at times but are you aware that there are some technological answers to this chore? While it is great to have a host of ideas to enhance with personal comments, dictation software can give you a quicker way to truly personalize your responses without spending hours on this activity. Here are a few options available.

Nuance has a program called *Dragon NaturallySpeaking*. There are many versions but the basic version works just fine! For \$99.00 you can have a program that allows you to speak your comments while the response is written out. This has several advantages. One thing that is nice is that the words are not misspelled as a rule. Though you do have to proof your response, because after all it IS a machine, most of the time this works quite well and can place a 100-200 word response into the discussion in a matter of seconds. You no longer have to wait for your fingers to catch up with your thoughts!

The newest *Dragon NaturallySpeaking* does not even have to be trained as the older versions seemed to need. So it is a great way to take the wearisome work out of being there for your students. As an alternative, if you have Windows Vista or Windows 7 OS you already have a voice recognition program that will work for you for FREE. You can find this in your control panel under Voice Recognition.

<http://www.nuance.com/dragon/what-is-new/upgrade/index.htm>

As one last hint for a great new idea, typing your responses in Word first and then posting to the discussion thread will ensure the quickest way to cut down on the time you need to spend in the threads to give high-quality responses that tend to your student's needs. Happy dictating!

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