

WILL VOICE RECOGNITION SOFTWARE REPLACE KEYBOARDING SKILLS?

By Harriet D. Rogers

In 2005 and in 2009 a questionnaire was sent to all school districts in Wisconsin—426 school districts in 2005 and 428 school districts in 2009. In 2005, a total of 263 responses were received, resulting in a 62 percent response rate. In 2009, a total of 286 responses were received, resulting in a 67 percent response rate. The questionnaire was primarily directed to ascertain the status of elementary keyboarding in Wisconsin, but questions were also asked about middle and high school keyboarding classes. The questionnaires were completed by a diverse group of educators, including Superintendents, Administrators, Principals, Directors of Instruction, Curriculum Coordinators, Tech Coordinators, Business Education teachers, Computer teachers, Elementary classroom teachers, Media Specialists/Librarians, and Computer Lab Assistants/Aides.

On the questionnaire, one final question was asked, “Do you think voice recognition software will replace the need for keyboarding skills? If “yes,” the respondents were asked to indicate within 1 year, 2 – 5 years, 6 – 10 years, or beyond 10 years.

Table 1.
Summary of Responses

2005				2009			
<u>Answer</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	263	63	24.0	Yes	286	57	19.9
No	263	157	59.7	No	286	199	69.6
No Resp.		43	16.3	No Resp.		30	10.5

However, when deleting the number of responses that did not indicate a “Yes” or “No” answer to this question, the percentages increased to:

Table 2.
Summary of Yes/No Responses

2005				2009			
<u>Answer</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Answer</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	220	63	28.6	Yes	256	57	22.3
No	220	157	71.4	No	256	199	77.7

The respondents that answered “Yes” that voice recognition software would replace the need for keyboarding skills indicated when they thought this would happen. Table 3 reports their responses.

Table 3.
Voice Recognition Summary

<u>When</u>	<u>2005</u>		<u>2009</u>	
	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>Responses</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
1 Year	0	0	1	1.7
2 – 5 Years	6	9.5	6	10.5
6 – 10 Years	28	44.4	27	47.4
Beyond 10 Years	25	39.7	23	40.4
Maybe/Probably	4	6.4	0	0

2005: N = 63 2009: N=57

Interesting, the largest group of educators answering “Yes” to whether or not voice recognition software will replace the need for keyboarding skills in both surveys were Business Education-licensed teachers (19, 30.2% in 2005; 28, 49.1% in 2009). The second largest group of educators were Directors of Instruction or Curriculum Coordinators (12, 19% in 2005; 20, 35.1% in 2009). The third highest group of respondents were Technology Coordinators with 8 responses (12.7%) in 2005 and 2009 (14%).

In both surveys, an overwhelming number of respondents (71.4% in 2005 and 77.2% in 2009) answered “No” that voice recognition software will not replace the need for keyboarding skills. Most educators believe that keyboarding skills are basic, fundamental skills that set the foundation on which students input data and build computer skills. Not all computers have voice recognition software installed and until the many problems with discerning different dialects that are problematic with the software, students will need to rely on good keyboarding skills.

For more information, please contact Dr. Harriet Rogers, UW-Whitewater, rogersh@uww.edu (262.472.5437).