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Contact: Angela Mitchell
admitchell@nextup.com or (904) 982-8043



2668 Lewisville-Clemmons Road
Clemmons, NC 27012

Acclaimed Musician Joey Stuckey Chooses TextAloud to Read, Work, Produce, and More

Text to Speech Software is a Hit for Award-winning Blind Musician

CLEMMONS, NC and MACON, GA -- One of the most popular products in the **NextUp Technologies** (www.NextUp.com) software line, *TextAloud* continues to find rapidly growing popularity among the blind and visually impaired for its ease of use and superb voice quality. Most recently, famed blind musician, producer, and radio personality **Joey Stuckey** has discovered *TextAloud*, and is now an official and enthusiastic endorser.

"We're delighted to have the endorsement of Joey Stuckey, who is one of the Southeast's most famous and remarkable people," comments **Rick Ellis**, President of NextUp.com. "His use of *TextAloud* software, as well as *NewsAloud* and *WeatherAloud*, is an example of just how easy and useful our software products can be for those who are blind, or who are battling some form of visual disability."

TextAloud seamlessly converts text into spoken audio for listening on a laptop or desktop PC, and which can also save text to audio files for playback on portables like the iPod (R), PocketPC (R), and a wide range of other players and devices. Simple to use for anyone with a PC, *TextAloud* is inexpensive and affordable, with an array of terrific, natural-sounding voices also available. It's no wonder that *TextAloud* has already proven enormously popular with the blind and visually impaired, who too often face robotic voices and monotones when desiring to listen to books or articles read aloud.

Stuckey himself is a successful blind guitarist, songwriter, singer, composer, producer, radio personality, teacher, and sound engineer, who in April 2006 was also appointed the official Ambassador of Music for Macon, Georgia by its mayor and city council. He lost his sight and sense of smell as an infant as the result of a brain tumor, yet remained in mainstream education

and actually graduated from high school at age 14. By the age of 17, while attending classes at Mercer University, he began his musical career by taking classical guitar lessons from noted music professor Terry Cantwell, and he had found his calling. Joey is now an award-winning musician, producer and entrepreneur in his own right, and he was delighted when he discovered the ease and value of NextUp's *TextAloud*.

"I was very impressed with *TextAloud* -- most especially with the quality of its voices," Stuckey comments. "I have a screen reader designed for the blind that I have to use for more advanced applications, but honestly the sound quality is just the pits. I read several eBooks per week, and if I want to read for pleasure, then I only use *TextAloud*!"

While it cannot replace high-end screen readers (as those offer the added ability to navigate menus, toolbars, and more) *TextAloud* is a superb and affordable addition to the blind person's arsenal of tools and products (and is quite accessible for the blind if used in tandem with a minimum of JFW 5.1 or higher). Stuckey adds, "Every blind person should have *TextAloud* on their computer -- the quality of the pronunciation, combined with the excellent audio quality, and the very human-sounding voices, make *TextAloud* the only choice for reading Word, PDF, web, and other text documents."

Stuckey also values *TextAloud*'s ability to export documents, books, or other text in specific *TextAloud* voices, to audio files. "It's a great tool for sighted people that have blind folks as friends or family," he adds. "For example, you might use *TextAloud* to send an audio file of a letter you wrote to a blind friend -- or you can record an eBook to CD for the listening enjoyment of a family member in a hospital or nursing home."

Stuckey's favorite voice for use with *TextAloud* is "Mike," from AT&T Natural Voices (TM). "The voice quality is heaven -- simply remarkable," he comments. "It allows me to listen to something I have written, like an article or a blog post, with a more human voice. It's something that is very useful when trying to think about how it will flow when someone else reads the final

version. It's even helpful for when I write radio spots, as it lets me get a feel for how it will sound with the voice talent as well!"

In addition to use on his laptop and desktop computers, Stuckey uses *TextAloud* on his iPod in order to learn song lyrics, as well as to assist him in memorizing outlines for his public speaking appearances. "I just get the info in a document, save it to an audio file and then take it on the road," he adds. Stuckey also uses NextUp's *WeatherAloud* for his daily weather reports, and *NewsAloud* to catch up on the day's headlines.

About Joey Stuckey

With four successful albums to his credit, **Joey Stuckey** (www.Joeystuckey.com) operates an acclaimed digital recording facility, Shadow Sound Studio, and has hosted three radio programs dedicated to preserving and promoting Georgia music. He currently owns and operates a 24-hour internet radio station, WTMT, and is also heard weekly on Massachusetts-based "Engage Internet Radio," on his popular audio music magazine "Audio Style." He has been featured in PRI's "The World", GPB's "Georgia Gazette", and "Big Takeover Magazine," and has received such honors as Recording Artist of the Year (1999) from The Atlanta Society of Entertainers, as well as the Little Jimmy Dempsey Award for Musical Excellence (2000, 2005), and the Jazz Artist of the Year in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. He won the Cotton Carrier Award in 2000 from the Atlanta Country Music Hall of Fame, as well as the 2004 Reader's Choice Award in Eleventh Hour Magazine for Best Singer/Songwriter. In April 2006, Joey was appointed the official Ambassador of Music for Macon, Georgia by its mayor and city council.

Stuckey and his band have opened for legendary artists including **Ted Nugent, Bad Company, Trisha Yearwood, James Brown, the B-52's, and Smashmouth**. In his other roles as producer, composer, sound engineer or hired musician, Stuckey has worked with such greats as **Trisha Yearwood, Carole King, Chris Hillman, Jimmy Hall, Charlie Daniels, George McCorkle, Razy Bailey**, and actor **Ron Lester**. Stuckey is currently

working on his debut jazz album, entitled "*Sneakin'*," as well as his country album, "*Welcome to Stuckey Country: Population You.*"

About *TextAloud*

TextAloud has been featured in *The New York Times*, *PC Magazine*, *Writer's Digest*, on CNN, and more. Hailed by critics and users alike, *TextAloud* is priced at just \$29.95, and is compatible with systems using Windows (R) 98, NT, 2000, XP and VISTA. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via <http://www.NextUp.com>.

NextUp.com also offers *TextAloud* with optional premium voices from **AT&T Natural Voices (TM)**, **NeoSpeech (R)**, **Nuance (R)**, **Acapela (R)** and **Cepstral (R)** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Available languages include US English, UK English, Indian Accent English, Scottish Accent English, French, Canadian French, Latin American Spanish, Castilian (European) Spanish, Mexican Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, European Portuguese, Russian, Mandarin Chinese, Cantonese Chinese, Korean, Japanese, German, Italian, Dutch, Belgian Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Polish, and Arabic.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text to Speech software for consumers, business customers, educators, and those with visual or vocal impairment, or learning disabilities.

In addition to *TextAloud*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. *NewsAloud* (TM) is a talking personal "news agent" that finds the stories users want, and then reads them aloud or to portable audio files.

WeatherAloud (TM) is a weather application that lets users select and listen to personalized weather forecasts, while *StocksAloud* (TM) reads stock updates and related news headlines aloud for specific companies of interest. NextUp *Talker* is an easy and affordable program that allows people who have lost their voices to use the latest in high-quality computer voices to

communicate with others. Most recently, NextUp introduced a new text reader, *AbleReader*, available with the AT&T Natural Voices (TM) for use on Mac computers. Information on *AbleReader* is available at <http://www.AbleReader.com>.

Note to Editors:

Evaluation copies of *TextAloud* are currently available upon request. To receive a review copy, or for more information on NextUp.com or *TextAloud*, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via Admitchell@Nextup.com.

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Media Contacts:

Angela Mitchell
Paranoid PR (for NextUp.com)
(904) 982-8043
Admitchell@Nextup.com

Jennifer Tade
Senate Records
(478) 742-7956
jennifer@senaterecords.com