Speaking Email tips

Hi again [firstname]

What do you think of Speaking Email? Does it all seem logical to you or do you wonder what we were thinking when we designed it?

I thought I'd share how I use Speaking Email myself as a tool to help maintain inbox zero. It will give you a feel for the ideas behind Speaking Email.

I run a ten-person web development company and get about 100 emails a day. I encourage my team to cc me on stuff so I know what's happening. This feeds my inbox which I clear twice a day - morning and night as I drive to and from work.

Listening to email allows me to process and reflect without the pressure of a busy work environment. When I arrive at my desk in the morning, then I write replies and action the emails I've listened to.

I designed Speaking Email to help support an "[inbox zero](#)" approach. To me, this means archiving all email once I have absorbed it, actioned it or have it in another system. As I drive home, at least half of my emails can be archived - they have been dealt with or need no action from me. But they help fill me in on details and keep me up to date, and those that remain I will review again next day and then action.

It's a lot easier to do "inbox zero" with an extra 40 minutes a day of distraction free triage and review time.

Whatever your method of working through email, I think some dedicated listening time helps stay on top and frees up your time. Use your driving time for emails, and spend your work time productively.

PS. You can actually reply - let me know your first impressions and whether you think it's for you.

PPS. We are planning to send you 10 tips to help you get the most out of Speaking Email. There's a link below to opt out of these - we don't want to create extra junk mail for you!

What do you do when you're done with an email?

Archive it? Delete it? Mark it as "read"?

We support all these scenarios.

Double-tap on an email and it will trigger the "done" command. The "done" command can be easily configured to mark-as-read, archive, delete, or move to a folder. Speaking Email updates the message flags or moves it on your server. If you don't want it to change mail on your server, that's fine, you can disable double-tap.

Look under 'Preferences' to set up Speaking Email double-tap command to your own requirements.

Hi [firstname]

We don't want to become a swiss army knife. We are not Siri or Google Now. Speaking Email can be better at reading out emails because we keep a narrow focus on what we do.
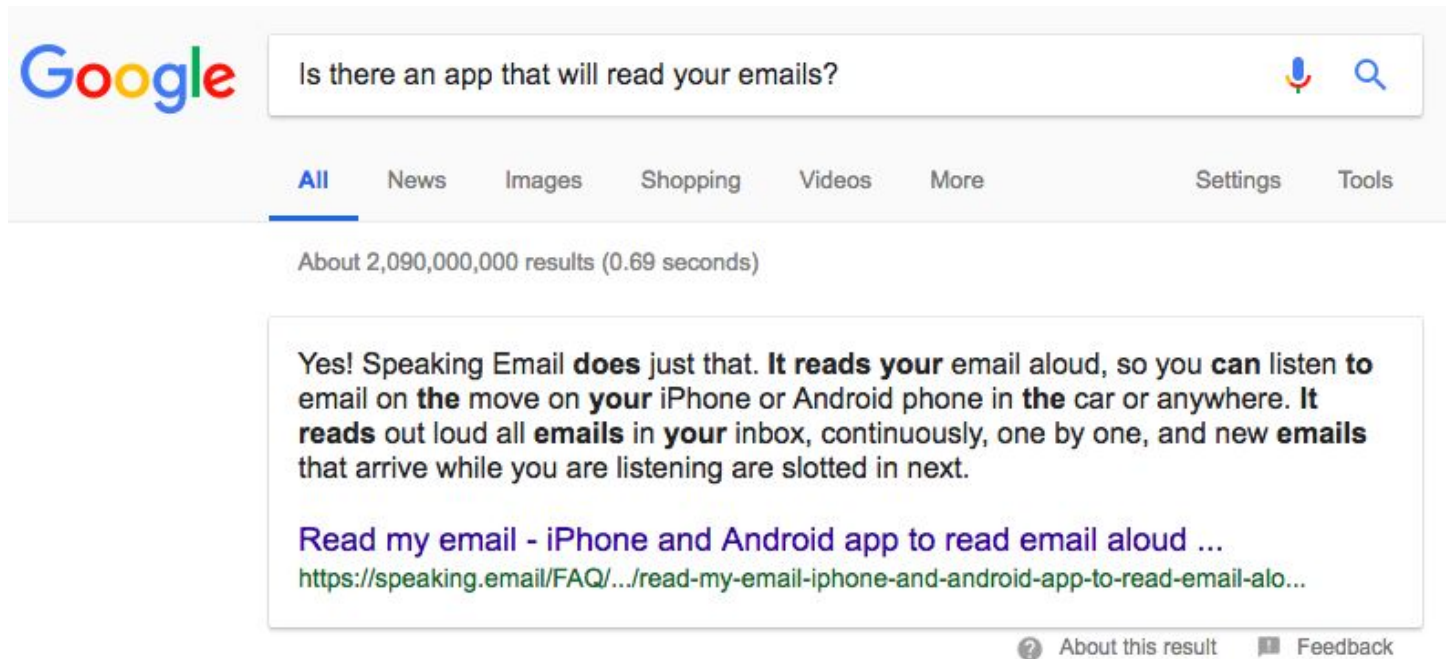
We focus on reading out email, so we built proprietary algorithms to detect legalese disclaimers, email signatures and other common email clutter and skip over them.

We are targeting drivers and people with reading or vision problems, so we don't rely on looking at the screen.

We make our experience extremely simple, with voice commands, simple whole screen gestures (swipe, tap, or double tap anywhere), and large buttons.

Hi [firstname], here's a tip about using Speaking Email handsfree and different interaction styles. This is important for blind or visually impaired users and also particularly relevant for drivers. If you drive to work or for work Speaking Email can be a great time saver, and it's not hard to get set up.

Interaction style

You can either use Speaking Email completely hands free, or for best results, have your phone mounted in a cradle so you can touch it. There are actually several different interaction styles which you can mix and match to suit.

Hands free usage with voice commands

Speaking Email can wait for voice commands at various times, such as start or end of each email.

For example, at the start of the email, after the headers are announced, there is a short pause where you can decide whether you want to hear this email to move on to the next. It says "listening for command". You could say "next" to move on or it will by default carry on as usual and play the email body. You can in fact say any command at this point - for example "ignore" if you don't want to hear emails like this in future.

You control how often you want Speaking Email to pause for your command - set this up under Preferences.

Full screen touch

If you can touch the phone, you can tap anywhere to bring up the voice commands / buttons at any time.

Other full screen gestures are swipe back or next, and double tap for "done" (by default it is "mark-as-read" or you can change it to something else, such as "archive").

If using Speaking Email while driving you must use a mobile phone holder.
These are pretty inexpensive and enable you to see and touch your phone screen, safely and legally.

Legislation throughout the world is very similar, with it being illegal almost everywhere to hold the phone in your hand while driving. It is legal to use a phone while driving only if it is in a phone holder and it is used safely.

Steering wheel controls (iPhone only)

If you have Bluetooth in your car and audio control buttons on the steering wheel, we support these (iPhone only). The pause button will pause for your voice command too.

Inbox radio

Just listening to emails back-to-back without any interaction works pretty nicely hands-free, with smart content detection skipping of disclaimers, signatures, email headers, email trails that you're in, limiting email length, and automatically moving to the next email. You may notice we even shorten common text like dates and times, http://www is shortened to dubdubdub, and we read out smiley faces (can be essential to get the mood of the writer!)

If you keep your inbox in good shape, reading our your inbox one email at a time will give you a good idea of what's on your plate. Speaking Email is also a great tool to help you tidy your inbox, with its easy "archive" and "trash" commands.

Audio

For sound you may be able to just listen to the phone speaker, or connect an audio cable (also pretty inexpensive), or pair to your car's Bluetooth handsfree (this is not for the faint hearted - it involves reading your car manual - see here for help).

Also you need some alone time - other people don't want to hear your email!

Then you are away...

Everyone does email differently. We recognise that, but balance it with a simple interface that suits most users.

We've given you the flexibility in Speaking Email to change many preferences - such as whether to read out senders, recipients, CCs, dates, use sound effects, slow down or speed up the speaking.

You can also choose under Account Settings what order to play your email. In the Basic Edition you can choose unread email first, unplayed email first, or just all email in date order. When we say "unread" email, this means it has "unread" status on your mail server. We also keep our own track of what you have listened to in Speaking Email and we call the email you haven't yet heard "unplayed".

If you upgrade to Premium Edition there are many more options, such as skipping promotional messages, marking as read when speaking, playing only unread email, playing only unplayed email, auto play emails immediately on launch, settings your signature, and setting up your forwarding recipients.

You may find the Premium Edition has some features you can't live without. If you are still on the Basic Edition, consider splashing out to upgrade to the Premium Edition for a month to try it.

If like Speaking Email please support our ongoing development by becoming a paying subscriber.

Premium features include:

Voice commands - before and after each email, and any time you tap for commands, you can have Speaking Email listening for commands. Just say the name on any button currently on the screen to activate that command.

Reply dictation - you can speak your replies and have the message read back before sending. Tap the screen to say a dictation command. As usual you can say "help" to hear about all the commands you can use while dictating.

Flag command - you can flag emails so you know what needs action when you get to your desk.

Trash command - throw emails in the trash right from Speaking Email at the tap of a button.

Ignored senders - some emails we just don't need to listen to. You can simply tap a button to add any sender to an ignore list. Next time they won't be read out.

Important senders - say "important" to have emails from this sending read out first.

Skipping reply threads - if you sent someone an email, you typically don't need to hear the part you wrote, or if you are CCed part way down an email thread you will already have seen it. We've created an option that skips when it gets to a part where we know you have already sent or received. To be transparent, Speaking Email explains why in each case it skipped the rest of the email - for example "skipping reply thread because this was in reply to an email sent by you".

Forwarding - you can even delegate tasks on the move. You can set up to five email addresses as forwarding recipients. For example, you may simply need to review and forward invoices to your finance department.

Multiple accounts - you can set up as many accounts as you like. Each account can have up to 250 messages.

Reading attachments - PDFs and Word docs are converted to text and read out loud after the email body. This is an option you can switch on if you wish.

Preferences - there are tons more settings to work your email how you want it.

Hi [firstname]

I'm not sure if you have discovered our reply and forwarding features. If not, I will give you a rundown.

We have two reply methods - dictation and instant reply - plus forwarding.

Instant reply
The "instant reply" feature is perfect for sending a quick "thanks" or "OK" to a friend or colleague or anyone who doesn't need a detailed reply. We have 10 preset replies and with the Premium Edition you can customise them.

Dictated replies
Dictation is a premium feature and works in any language, defaulting to the language of the email you are replying to, using the system voice recognition (using Apple or Google technology). It allows you to edit by saying "delete word" or "replace" and reads your reply back to you before sending.

Forwarding
You can also forward to a colleague, with a preset list of forwarding addresses you can set up. You can dictate the text or if you have "instant forwarding" turned on then it will just add the text "FYI".

How do these come through?
Emails are sent from your email address. There is no configuration needed. We add a disclaimer saying the email was sent with Speaking Email and to please excuse any dictation errors. You can turn this off and/or add your own signature if you wish.

"Triage" is the first read through of your email, assessing what's important and what you can leave.

In Speaking Email you can put your mail into these three categories:

Archive - If you have listened and no further action is required, archive the email with a double tap anywhere on the screen.

Flag - If it needs action, click the flag button to star/flag in your inbox.

Skip - Just swipe to the next email to leave it in your inbox.

With this simple triage, you can whip through your inbox clearing clutter at the same time you are listening.

In our Premium Edition you can set up the "achive" and "flag" commands to move mail to a folder, mark it as read, and flag or archive the email.

Premium Edition also includes **Reply**, **Forward** and **Trash** so you can do, delegate or delete right from Speaking Email.

Some ideas to use Speaking Email to free up your time

Switch your email off so you can get some work done and then review email on the way home. This way your whole day doesn't get taken up by emails.

Stop checking emails in the evening and weekends - you can do that on the way to work in the morning.

Arrive at work having already digested the latest emails while you're driving. Clear the clutter, star important items and get your inbox into a good shape ready to start the day.

Help us spread Speaking Email by recommending it to friends and colleagues.

Every friend you invite gets 3 months Premium Edition absolutely free (with no payment or credit card details).

And to say thanks, we will give you 3 months Premium Edition too! (If you're already a Premium user it will be added to the end of your subscription)

Tap the 'Plan' button to get sharing.

Tip: it's best to tell your friend about it first before sending the link so they know to expect it. They need to connect with the same email address you send to them, then you both get the bonus 3 months.