



I feel that altering MY pronunciations and inflections to correspond to some voice recognition flaw is a weird bow to computers and their omnipotence. Shouldn't IT change for ME?

I said what?

C. Douglas Phillips, MD, FACR

*“A word to the wise is infuriating.”
—Hunter S. Thompson*

I don't talk the same anymore.

I pronounce many words differently than I used to. Yeah, yeah, I know I live in the Northeast now, and I used to live in the South. That's not what I mean, however. I used to say y'all, and I said ma'am and sir quite a bit more, and I had a little twang (I **still** have it when I talk to my parents). But that is not the intent of this screed.

I say many words differently for another, quite different reason.

For example: “petrous.” I used to say it like the chateau in France, with long e sound: “PEE-trus.” Now, I say “PET-rus.” There are many other examples. I also stopped using some words and phrases. Not that I still don't need them. I just got tired of not having them come out right and adding them in by typing them or trying again and again to teach the computer what I was saying, so, with a reasonable but less optimal replacement available, I just dropped the other word. Why?

Voice recognition.

I can talk to my computer and it repeats what I say in text. I don't always think this is a good thing. I feel altering MY pronunciations

and inflections to correspond to some voice recognition flaw is a weird bow to computers and their omnipotence. Shouldn't IT change for ME? Am I not supposed to be the dominant entity in this relationship?

Voice recognition is a great thing, I've been told. It certainly changed the typical turnaround time for reports and also gives us the ability to be much more than radiologists and physicians – we get the opportunity to be transcriptionists and type editors. That's what that medical degree is all about. You thought you were going to be listening to hearts and lungs and maybe even doing surgery. Nope, you get to read reports and fix voice-recognition errors. Well, someone has to do it. Might as well be you. I must also point out one other potentially related item: I do **NOT** use voice recognition to generate these rants.

Where is this heading to? Might we all begin talking in machine-like speech patterns? Maybe we will all find ourselves with perfect pronunciation. Automaton.

Not me. Personally, I occasionally curse at the stupid thing and defy it to put that word in the report. If it gets it correct, I swear I'll leave it there. At least to this point, it never has.

Keep doing that good work. Mahalo.

Dr. Phillips is a Professor of Radiology, Director of Head and Neck Imaging, at Weill Cornell Medical College, NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital, New York, NY. He is a member of the Applied Radiology Editorial Advisory Board.