Text to Speech on an AV Macintosh (10/94)

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TOPIC --

If you have an AV Macintosh, you may want to use its capabilities in processing
speech and sound. This article describes how to use your computer to generate
spoken documents from typed ones.

DISCUSSION --

An exciting Technology available in the AV machines is Text-to-speech.
Text-to-speech lets text in applications be "spoken" by the computer. Solutions
for this technology include proof reading without the user focusing on the
computer and storage of many hours of "voice" (text takes up 1,000 times less
space than even the lowest quality digitized speech).

The version of TeachText (7.2) on the hard drive of the Quadra 840 AV and 660 AV
and the Centris 660 AV supports the PlainTalk Text-to-Speech feature. Other
applications may not yet support this feature, but are expected to add it in the
future where it may be useful.

Speech Recognition, or, the ability of the computer to respond to spoken
commands, does not need to be active, however the PlainTalk Software, which
includes the voices, must be installed for this to work.

The Speech Manager

The Speech Manager lets users switch voices within applications. Any selected
text can be spoken back by selecting the appropriate command from the Edit menu
and users can direct an appropriately designed application to change between
voices in a body of text to create a dialog effect.

Steps to Follow

Follow these steps to convert text to speech (these steps use an example Read Me
file):

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  STEP                  ACTION
  ----  -------------------------------------------
    1   Launch TeachText 7.2 and notice the Voices sub-menu
        under the File menu. This lets you change voices
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between spoken selections without having to open the
        Speech Setup Control Panel (the default voice is
        Female Voice, Compressed).

    2   Close the untitled window.

    3   Open the Read Me document from the File menu.

    4   If no text is selected, you can issue the Speak
         All menu command (Command-H) and the entire text is read
         back. If you select a portion of text, the menu changes
         to say Speak Selection and just that is read back. Even
         though some ReadMe files are not editable (so users
         don't change them) and therefore do not let portions of
         text be selected, TeachText lets the user select Speak
         All and have the contents of the ReadMe spoken back.
         To stop speech in the middle of speaking back, select
         Stop Speaking from the File menu.

If your applications do not have an option for Text-to-speech, you may want to
check with the application developer about plans to integrate Text-to-speech
into the application.

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