



Tech Info Library

Plaintalk 1.4.1: ReadMe File (8/95)

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TOPIC -----

This article contains the Read Me file included with the Plaintalk 1.4.1 software package.

DISCUSSION -----

PlainTalk is a collection of software that enables your Macintosh to speak written text and respond to spoken commands. PlainTalk 1.4.1 includes three components, each with its own installer: English Text-to-Speech, Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech, and English Speech Recognition.

This document describes each of these three software packages, and discusses the differences between PlainTalk 1.4.1 and earlier versions of PlainTalk.

English Text-to-Speech

With the English text-to-speech software installed, many Macintosh programs can read English text out loud. To install the English Text-to-Speech software, you need the following software and hardware:

- any Macintosh or Power Macintosh computer
- version 6.0.7 or later of system software
- at least 300 kilobytes (K) of RAM in addition to what the rest of your system software requires
- at least 5 megabytes (MB) of space available on your hard disk

For more information about the English Text-to-Speech software, see the Using English Text-to-Speech document or the About English Text-to-Speech document in the English Text-to-Speech folder.

Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech

With the Mexican Spanish text-to-speech software installed, many Macintosh programs can read Spanish text out loud. To install the Mexican Spanish text-to-speech software, you need the following hardware and software:

- a Power Macintosh computer or a Macintosh computer with a 68020, 68030, or

68040 processor

- version 7.0 or later of system software
- at least 1.3 MB of RAM in addition to what the rest of your system software requires
- at least 2 MB of space available on your hard disk

For more information about the Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech software, see the Using Mexican Spanish TTS document in the Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech folder.

English Speech Recognition

With the English Speech Recognition package and the proper hardware, your computer can respond to spoken commands. The English Speech Recognition package includes the Speech Recognition system extension, the Speech control panel, and a utility called Speakable Items. With Speakable Items, whenever you say the name of an item inside the Speakable Items folder (which is inside the Apple Menu Items folder), the computer acts as if you double-clicked the item.

You can turn Speakable Items on and off using the Speech control panel. You can also use the Speech control panel to set several preferences for how Macintosh Speech Recognition programs listen and respond. For example, you can set the Listening options in the Speech control panel so that the recognizer only listens while you hold down a key of your choice. When you use this option recognition accuracy is improved and misfires (when the computer thinks you spoke a command but you didn't) are eliminated.

To install and use the English Speech Recognition software, including the Speakable Items software, you need the following hardware and software:

- a Power Macintosh computer
- system software version 7.5 or later
- a 16-bit microphone, such as the Apple PlainTalk Microphone or the microphone built into some Apple audiovisual displays.

For more information about the English Speech Recognition software and the Speakable Items utility, see the Using Speech Recognition document in the English Speech Recognition folder.

Differences between PlainTalk 1.4.1 and PlainTalk 1.4

PlainTalk 1.4.1 is a minor update to PlainTalk 1.4. It includes a few bug fixes, including the following:

- English Speech Recognition 1.4.1 works better than 1.4 worked with microphones built into Apple AudioVision 14 displays.
- Version 1.4.1 of the Speech control panel (which is installed by version 1.4.1 of English Text-to-Speech, Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech, and English Speech Recognition) contains a fix to incompatibilities that version 1.4 of the Speech control panel had with HyperCard 2.3's popup menus when running on

PowerMacintosh computers.

- Version 1.4 of the Speech control panel failed to run on some 68000 Macintosh computers (including Macintosh SE computers). Version 1.4.1 of the Speech control panel runs on all Macintosh computers with system software version 7.1 or later.

Differences between PlainTalk 1.4.1 and PlainTalk 1.3

Version 1.3 and earlier versions of the PlainTalk software had a single installer program that installed both text-to-speech and speech recognition. This version (1.4.1) contains three different installers to make it easier to install just the parts that are appropriate for your needs: English Text-to-Speech, Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech, and English Speech Recognition.

You don't have to install them all. However, if you are going to install version 1.4.1 of English Speech Recognition or Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech then you should first install version 1.4.1 of English Text-to-Speech, even if you already have an older version of English Text-to-Speech installed.

Deciding whether to upgrade to version 1.4.1

Version 1.4.1 of PlainTalk is a minor update to version 1.4. It fixes a few bugs discussed above in the section titled "Differences between version PlainTalk 1.4.1 and PlainTalk 1.4". If you are using version 1.4 and are experiencing any of those bugs, then you should update to version 1.4.1.

In general, version 1.4.1 offers a more robust and flexible set of features than version 1.3 or earlier versions. However, some people in special circumstances may do better with version 1.3.

- If you have a Macintosh AV computer that has a 68040 processor and you use PlainTalk 1.3's speech recognition capabilities, Apple recommends that you continue using version 1.3 of the PlainTalk software. Though the new text-to-speech software works with these computers, the new speech recognition software does not (because it runs on Power Macintosh computers only). It is not recommended that you mix versions, using the old recognition software with the new text-to-speech software. (Note: all the new software works with Power Macintosh AV computers.)

- If you make extensive use of PlainTalk 1.3's Speech Macros, the Speech Macro Editor, or the ability to speak menu commands, then you might want to continue using version 1.3. As part of the effort to make the software more robust, version 1.4.1 of English Speech Recognition supports Apple's standard AppleScript ScriptEditor instead of the Speech Macro Editor, and it does not support the ability to speak menu items. This is discussed more below.

What's new in English Text-to-Speech

English text-to-speech software version 1.4.1 is a minor update to version 1.4, as discussed above. English text-to-speech software version 1.4.1 is also very similar to version 1.3 and earlier versions. The main differences are:

- English Text-to-Speech 1.4.1 has its own installer.
- English Text-to-Speech 1.4.1 includes a Speech control panel that lets you select a system-wide default voice and rate, which is used by many text-to-speech programs, including SimpleText and the Speakable Items utility.

What's new in Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech

Mexican Spanish text-to-speech software version 1.4.1 is a minor update to version 1.4, as discussed above. PlainTalk 1.4 was the first version of PlainTalk to include support for Mexican Spanish text-to-speech.

What's new in English Speech Recognition

English speech recognition software version 1.4.1 is a minor update to version 1.4, as discussed above. The most notable improvement from version 1.4 is that version 1.4.1 of English speech recognition works better than version 1.4 did with microphones built into Apple AudioVision 14 displays.

English Speech Recognition version 1.4.1 has some significant differences from the speech recognition software in version 1.3 and earlier versions of PlainTalk. Some features have been eliminated to simplify speech recognition and make it more robust and usable. Other options have been added to increase accuracy and eliminate misfires.

- Version 1.4.1 offers a new listening option in the Speech control panel, "Listen only while key(s) are pressed," that lets you leave Speakable Items on all the time without worrying about misfires. It also improves the accuracy of recognition.
- Version 1.4.1 works in a wider range of environments thanks to its greatly improved adaption to room acoustics.
- Version 1.4.1 does not include or support Speech Macros, the Speech Macro Editor, or Speech Rules. It still supports speaking dialog buttons and the Speakable Items folder. Any item you place inside the folder becomes speakable—saying the name of the item launches or opens the item. You can use the AppleScript ScriptEditor to create scripts that are launched by speaking a command: just save the scripts inside the Speakable Items folder. To see examples, look inside the Speakable Items folder.
- Version 1.4.1 runs on Power Macintosh computers only, and does not support Macintosh AV computers with 68040 processors. You can continue to use PlainTalk 1.3 on 68040 Macintosh AV computers.
- Version 1.4.1 does not include automatic support for recognizing the spoken names of menu commands. You can still manipulate scriptable programs, such as the Finder, using AppleScript commands. To see examples, look inside the Speakable Items folder.

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