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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):

STEP	ACTION
1	Launch TeachText 7.2 and notice the Voices sub-menu under the File menu. This lets you change voices 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.

Support Information Services

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