

Text Messages Translated To Voice

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SpeechWorks International is partnering with Speech Design to offer speech recognition and text-to-speech services to telecommunications organizations across the world.

One of the latest highlights is a tool to convert SMS text messages into voice for Deutsche Telekom, Europe's largest telecommunications carrier.

The Deutsche Telekom service delivers SMS (short messaging service) messages from a T-Mobile mobile phone to a fixed-line telephone. Approximately two million SMS messages have been sent to the fixed line network each month since the launch of Deutsche Telekom's SMS-to-voice service in July 2001. 900 million SMS are transmitted through Deutsche Telekom's T-Mobile network each month, representing a growth in SMS and data transmission.

The Deutsche Telekom speech service is powered by SpeechWorks' ETI-Eloquence embedded, text-to-speech product and Speech Design's THOR platform. Speech Design, which provides unified messaging services in the German market, is working with SpeechWorks to deliver speech-enabled solutions to leading telecom organizations using SpeechWorks' OpenSpeech Recognizer engine, and

Speechify and ETI-Eloquence text-to-speech engines.

ETI-Eloquence provides fixed line telephone users with access to SMS, which has historically been restricted to mobile communication. If an SMS recipient does not own a new SMS-capable fixed line phone then the message is routed to the THOR platform. There the message is converted to speech using SpeechWorks' TTS software.

For example, a mobile user can key in a message on their mobile phone's keypad and have that message delivered to an individual on a fixed line phone. When the addressee answers their phone, the Speech Design solution announces the incoming message and uses the SpeechWorks software to read the contents of that SMS to the individual. This unique service uses a dictionary which identifies typical SMS jargon and "emoticons" which are popular among younger SMS users. For example, a "smiley face" entered in the mobile handset can generate a laugh at the other end of the phone line.

"SMS has proven to be the killer application in Europe and other regions. Around the world, a total of 75 billion text messages were sent in the first quarter of this year. Using speech, telecom providers can offer new, enhanced services to their customers and drive minutes of use," said Howard Gross of SpeechWorks