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Talking Software Speaks for the Voiceless

NextUp Talker Users Embracing Text to Speech Software as Voice Alternative

CLEMMONS, NC – The loss of one’s voice can be devastating. Instead of the natural ease of speech, communication becomes a newly awkward, often time-consuming process, with signs or hand signals, or a painstaking scribble of words, replacing the easy ebb and flow of spoken conversation. The loss of speech by itself can, in fact, be every bit as devastating as dealing with the medical condition that caused it. The Text to Speech specialists at **NextUp.com**, however, recently launched a new program, **NextUp Talker**, to provide an affordable, easy and natural-sounding voice alternative to computer users. The company’s most recent customer survey shows that the program is a resounding success.

NextUp Talker is a software application specifically designed to “speak aloud” by computer (using Text to Speech technology) for people who have temporarily or permanently lost their voices, using Windows-based Desktop, Laptop, or Tablet PCs. The program’s surprisingly natural, human-sounding voices offer a vast improvement on the cliché of the robotic-sounding “computer voice” of ages past, and the program even offers convenient (and easily personalized) shortcuts for quicker response using conversational, commonly-used sentences and phrases, as well.

Praise for *Talker* from Survey Respondents:

B. Hughes, Retired Aircraft Maintenance Supervisor: “Most people don’t realize how frustrating it is when you have lost your voice and can’t get your point across. My voice has gone due to ALS, and I use the *NextUp Talker* program to communicate my wants and needs at home. Since I have a variety of caregivers, I can now type up instructions on my word processor

and then paste them into *NextUp Talker*. More importantly, I can talk with my granddaughter again! I can tell my wife I love her. It's simple to use, and the voices are incredible. I would recommend *NextUp Talker* to anyone who has lost their voice.”

Howard P., Retired Engineer, Southern California: “My elder sister had a stroke, leaving her partially paralyzed and unable to speak. I got the *NextUp Talker* program to help her communicate, using an old IBM laptop on a tray with speakers, which is set on her bed or wheelchair. She cannot type with her left hand as yet, so we pre-typed commonly used phrases for her to use more easily, and arranged them into categories. Before *NextUp Talker*, my sister was only able to say "yes" or "no" -- now she can communicate much more easily. The program is easy to use, has awed her listeners, and returned many more smiles to my sister's life.”

Krista D., Drama Teacher: “*NextUp Talker* helped me so much -- it allowed me to teach my classes while I was on vocal rest. I could not have coped without its help, and the fact that so many of my students passed their qualifications while I was incapacitated just proves that the product can make up for an awful lot.”

“Research indicates that in the United States alone, over one million people suffer from diseases or afflictions that can cause loss of voice, with over 85,000 more cases diagnosed annually each year,” comments **Rick Ellis**, President of NextUp.com. “As an established Text to Speech technology provider, we've heard from countless users seeking a program like *NextUp Talker* over the years, and our development of the software was in direct response to these requests. We're therefore really delighted that *NextUp Talker* is meeting the needs of such customers, and enabling them to regain the ability to communicate through voice.”

Unlike other technology products that are too often prohibitively expensive for many users, *NextUp Talker* offers an affordable solution to the voiceless – and with a free 30-day trial that anyone can download and evaluate immediately. If users then decide to purchase *NextUp Talker*, natural-sounding voices are available in a wide range of genders, ages, accents, and approaches for a truly "conversational" Text to Speech solution. *NextUp Talker* was specifically

designed for use in conversation, is pleasant and “conversational” in sound, works easily with either mouse or keyboard, offers easy-to-use shortcuts for common words or phrases, and adapts to the user’s own style and speech. The program can even insert actual sound files along with speech, helping to make kids more comfortable in talking with an adult using a computer to speak.

NextUp Talker is priced at just \$99.95, and is compatible with Windows® 98, NT, 2000 and XP, or Tablet PCs. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via <http://www.talkforme.com/>. NextUp.com also offers *NextUp Talker* with more optional premium voices from **AT&T Natural Voices (TM)**, **NeoSpeech (R)**, **Nuance (R)** and **Cepstral (R)** – for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere.

About NextUp.com

NextUp.com, a division of NextUp Technologies, LLC, provides award-winning Text to Speech software for consumers, business customers, educators, and those with visual or vocal impairment, or learning disabilities.

In addition to *NextUp Talker* and its popular *TextAloud* program, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. *NewsAloud™* is a talking personal “news agent” that finds the stories users want, and then reads them aloud or to portable MP3 files. *WeatherAloud™* is a weather application that lets users select and listen to personalized weather forecasts, while *StocksAloud™* reads stock updates and related news headlines aloud for specific companies of interest.

Note to Editors:

Evaluation copies of *NextUp Talker* are currently available upon request, along with background materials, images, and a host of highly positive and informative user testimonials. To receive a review copy, or for more information on NextUp.com or *NextUp Talker*, please contact **Rick Ellis** at rdellis@nextup.com.

Meanwhile, for images, logos, box shots, or other information or artwork on *NextUp Talker*, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or admitchell@nextup.com.

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