

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – January 31, 2008

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Cancer Survivor Overcomes Voice Loss with *NextUp Talker* *Text to Speech Software Helps May Rone Maintain Everyday Communication*

CLEMMONS, NC – In April of 2007, husband and wife **Chuck and May Rone** received the difficult news that May had cancer -- and that the treatment would necessitate the loss of her tongue and voice box to surgery. The couple took the news with courage and optimism, and decided to explore technology options to help speak for May. Most importantly, they wanted something that could also preserve the sound of her voice in memorable phrases and statements. Their search quickly led them to ***NextUp Talker*** (<http://www.Talkforme.com>), an easy-to-use program from the Text to Speech experts at NextUp Technologies. *NextUp Talker* offers a unique and affordable software solution for those suffering voice loss to communicate in spoken voice once again, simply by using an ordinary Windows computer or laptop.

Planning ahead for their life after the surgery, Chuck bought his wife a voice recorder, and had her make voice notes of important little phrases such as “Good morning,” and “I love you,” as well as statements that would be vital in the days to come, such as “I’m in pain.” “I never wanted to forget how her voice sounded!” he comments. Working with the voice recorder, Chuck quickly discovered the power of Text to Speech software and chose *NextUp Talker* to aid May in speech replacement after her surgery.

Unlike other technology products that are 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, via <http://www.Talkforme.com>. 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 Text to Speech solution that’s truly “conversational.”

“All this was new to me,” Chuck comments. Researching as many options as he could, he called on several companies selling Text to Speech devices. “One well-known company took a week to return my call,” he adds, “while another demonstrated their products for us but left us unimpressed. The technology was very highly priced, was difficult to operate, and not very mobile.” Chuck and May finally decided on *NextUp Talker* as the best, simplest and most affordable option, choosing the NeoSpeech voice “Kate” from the premium voices available. “We installed the program, and WOW! You could type in the program and it would 'talk!'“ he enthuses. “Best of all, *NextUp Talker* and NeoSpeech are far superior to all the other options we had explored, and there is no comparison to cost, as well.”

May’s surgery was a success, and during her recovery she quickly became accustomed to using the program on a UMPC (Ultra-Mobile PC) running Microsoft Vista. Easy to install and use with “Kate,” the NeoSpeech voice of her choice, *NextUp Talker* allowed May to supplement her speech loss with computer speech with ease. Chuck, wanting to make sure he used the program to its full potential, also turned to help from *NextUp Talker*’s tech support, and was highly pleased with the process. “I needed help integrating May’s prerecorded and predefined phrases, as well as getting used to the shortcut keys and other aspects,” comments Chuck. “Here, I have to acknowledge Jim Bretti of *NextUp Talker* support, who was fast to respond, and very smart. I have never received such support from any company as I have from Jim.”

Chuck and May soon began using *NextUp Talker* on an ongoing basis with extraordinary success. The program empowered May with the ability to continue to speak aloud, and for Chuck to continue to hear her voice every day, even after voice loss.

“My wife can now talk to her doctors, family and friends, make phone calls, go shopping and carry on as close to a normal life as possible,” adds Chuck. “We are very thankful for the people who have put so much time and effort into *NextUp Talker*. I would recommend the program to anyone who has a voice impairment. *NextUp Talker* has made our lives a whole lot better!”

NextUp Talker was specifically designed for use in conversation, offering pleasant and “conversational” speech and working easily with either mouse or keyboard. Easy-to-use shortcuts for common words or phrases help the user adapt to their 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® Vista, XP, 98, NT, 2000, or Tablet PCs. The program is available for fast, safe and secure purchase via <http://www.talkforme.com/>. *NextUp Talker* comes with a pair of male and female premium voices from either **AT&T Natural Voices™** or **NeoSpeech®** for the most natural-sounding computer speech anywhere. Additional premium voices offered optionally by NextUp.com include **RealSpeak®** and **Acapela®**.

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*, NextUp.com markets other innovative Windows software designed to save time and deliver vital information. *TextAloud™* converts text into spoken audio for listening on a PC or laptop, or lets you save text to audio files for playback on portables like the iPod®, PocketPC®, and a wide range of other players and devices. *NewsAloud™* is a talking personal “news agent” that finds the stories users want, and then reads them aloud or to portable audio 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 *TextAloud*, please contact publicist Angela Mitchell at **(904) 982-8043** or via Admitchell@Nextup.com.

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