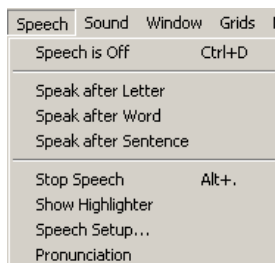


Using Speech

Help Sheet 12

1. Switching Speech on

Before you can use the speech features, you need to make sure that speech is switched on. This is done by clicking on the **Speech** menu.



If the speech is off, you can click on the top line (Speech is Off) to toggle the setting.

If you have the Normal or Simplified tool bar showing, you will be able to see at a glance if speech is switched on because the **Speech** icon will be black, otherwise it will be 'greyed-out' to show that option is not currently available. Here are the **speech** icons:



The one on the left (currently black) is the **Speech** icon, and is shown active. The other icon with two speakers on it is the **Repeat Speech** icon, and is on when you have selected something to speak, so that you can hear it again. This will be explained in more detail further on.

The speech settings are **NOT** global to the whole program. They are saved with each document file. So if you have more than one window open (for example in an environment, you need to make sure that you turn the speech on for each window you want to hear. So if you have put speech **On** in the **Speech** menu and your window does not appear to be speaking then look in the **Window** menu to see which is the active window. Then go to the **Speech** menu and check if speech is **On** for that particular window.

Once Speech is on, you can choose to have the speech output on demand or set to be automatic.

2. Speech on demand

The easiest way to activate the speech on demand is through the **speech** icons on the Normal or Simplified toolbars.

Put the cursor in, or at the beginning of, the first sentence you want to hear. Click on the **loud speaker** icon and the current sentence will be spoken. The cursor will then be positioned at the start of the next sentence ready to read that. In this way you can read a whole document sentence at a time, by simply clicking on the loudspeaker icon.

If you want to hear a section of text spoken you can highlight the text and click on the **speaker** icon. The whole section will be spoken.

To hear the last thing spoken again, you just click on the **Repeat Speech** icon (which contains 2 small loudspeakers).

3. Automatic speech feedback

There is the option to have automatic speech feedback after each key is pressed, or after each word (when a space is pressed), or after each sentence (when a full stop or **Enter** key is pressed). You can have some or all of these options active. They are turned on by checking them in the **Speech** menu. The options are:

Speak after Letter
Speak after Word
Speak after Sentence

You will need to consider the individual user's requirements when setting automatic feedback. The speech naturally takes some time, and somebody typing fairly fast with **Speak after Letter** set, may get frustrated because the speech will be trailing behind and impede the writing.

You can still get speech on demand when any of the automatic settings are checked.

4. Highlighting text as it is spoken

When listening to the speech feedback some users may find the use of the highlighter useful. This is a coloured box that moves through the text as it is spoken. The use of this may be particularly useful for those individuals who are not too confident with their reading. Make sure a check is next to **Show Highlighter** in the **Speech** Menu if you require this feature.

5. Using Speech feedback

When selecting the speech feedback options for a particular user, you may want to consider what is the aim of using speech feedback with that particular user. It may be to help them, by having their choice confirmed or it may be to keep them on task by motivating them every time they make a selection. That could determine the most appropriate type of feedback.

There are also environmental considerations. Speech feedback can be distracting for others sitting near to the computer. This can be avoided by using headphones that can make the possibility of using speech feedback in a small room, or in a classroom, much more practical.

6. Hearing the contents of a Grid cell

The text in a 'send' grid cell can be heard on demand by clicking in the cell with the **RT** mouse button. This is useful for visually impaired users and for language work, where the user can check the meaning of a word or phrase before putting it in their document.

7. Accessing speech from a grid

You can add speech functions to commands in a grid cell. This is useful for switch users who are not able to use the icon bar. This added through the addition of a macro to a cell. This is described in Help Sheet 18, Macros.

8. Choosing the Voice

A number of different voices come with the speech facility. The current voice is shown at the right hand end of the Normal toolbar.

The current voice in the illustration is Mary:



Click on the down arrow beside the voice to show the list of voices available:

Some of the voices are only slightly different from others, but you can also edit the voices to give a wider variety. This will be explained later.

The speech that is used within WWS2000 is Microsoft SAPI speech. SAPI speech provides you with a number of different voices. If you add more SAPI voices to your computer these will automatically become available within Writing with Symbols, for example different language voices.



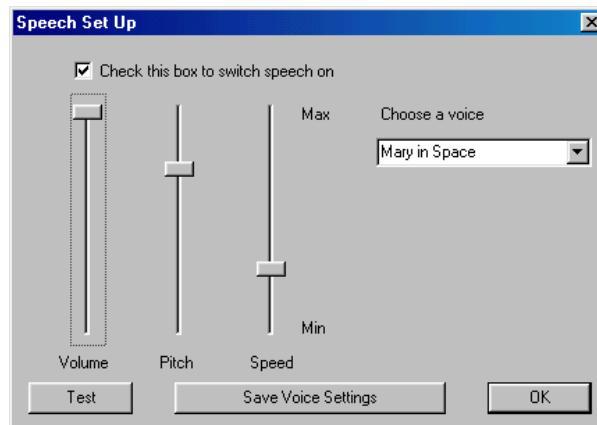
The speech acts just like a font, and can be applied to a whole document, or to any portion of it. You can have different voices in the same document or in other windows open at the same time.

To change the voice of a section of text, simply highlight that text and select a different voice from the Voice drop down menu shown above. Using this technique it is possible to have dialog read in different voices, or to have, for example, a different voice for narrative than direct speech in a story. You could colour the text to give a visual reinforcement as well. There is a slight pause in reading back a multi-voiced document when the computer changes from one voice to another.

The multi-voice feature is also very useful in switch scanning grids, so that you can have a different voice for auditory scanning than in the written document. Remember, however, that you will need to switch speech on in the grid as well as the writing document.

9. Speech Set up and Editing Voices

From the **Speech** menu select **Speech Setup**. This will give the following dialog box:



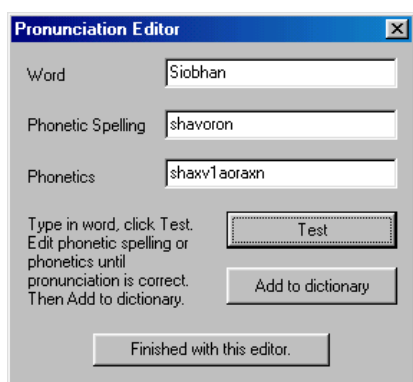
Select the voice you want to listen to and possibly edit. Try the effect of changing the pitch and speed. The volume setting can also be adjusted. Normally it will be better to adjust the volume on your speakers rather than in the program. However, it may be useful to have a quieter voice for auditory scanning than in the main document.

You can save these changed settings by clicking on **Save Voice Settings**. You can only edit an existing voice, you cannot **'Save As'** to create an additional voice.

10. Pronunciation

The quality and range of synthesized speech has improved greatly in recent years. In particular there has been improvement in the speech dictionaries and so there are fewer words that computers find difficult to pronounce. Words that still cause problems tend to be names of people and places.

An example of this is the girl's name Siobhan. When you type this into WWS2000 it is mispronounced. To correct mispronunciations, go to **Pronunciation** in the **Speech Menu**.



Type **Siobhan** into the space marked **Word**.

Into the **Phonetic Spelling** box type how you think the word should be said. You can alter and listen to this, as many times, as you like until it sounds right.

The first attempt on this word was **shivorn** but after some experimenting, **shavoron** sounded the best.

Sometimes the use of a space in the middle of a word, separating syllables can improve it.

When you test the new pronunciation you will notice that the Phonetics code is added to the **Phonetics Box**. For people who understand the Phonetics code this offers them an alternative way of writing in the correct pronunciation.

When you are happy with the pronunciation click on **Add to dictionary**. Then every time the word Siobhan is typed into WWS2000 it will be pronounced as you have just set it. This setting can be altered at a later date if you feel you can improve it after you have used it in the program for a while. You can continue to do a number of pronunciations at a time and then click on the **Finished with this editor** button to close the Pronunciation Editor.