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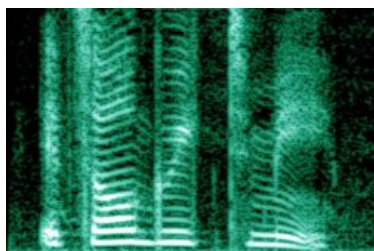- Home
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The Voice Bank Project

- Posted by **bespoken administrator** on July 26, 2013 at 7:28 in Featured Innovation
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We are really excited about this project and think it could make a massive difference in many peoples' lives.

Modern technologies are a lifeline for people who have difficulty in communicating. If you loose your voice due to illness or disability, there is a raft of technology available that enables you to communicate verbally. We have all heard Stephen Hawking but the electronic voice is impersonal and robotic. The Voicebank Project hopes to change this.

This study aims to generate a personalised voice, for use in a communication aid, for individuals who due to disease, are losing the ability to speak. This is achieved in one of two ways; firstly, by taking a recording of your voice early on in the disease and storing this for your use if required at a later date when speech may become affected; secondly, for people unable to record their own voice we hope to be able to combine anonymised "clips" of individual recordings (with permission from the recording donors) to synthesise a computer generated voice that retains accent, age and gender qualities but cannot be identified to an individual donor.

Either of these goals would represent a major advance on current voice provision that is restricted to impersonal and robotic voice products that are not matched even to age or accent. Multiple feedback from patients, carers and patient societies has indicated that this is a major unmet clinical need and

provision of personalised speech is associated with greater dignity and improved self-identity for the individual and their carers / family.

We asked Euan what does the Voicebank project mean to you?

"People lose their voice for a number of reasons whether this is foreseen or as a total surprise. The Voice Bank project aims to generate a personalised voice, for use in a communication aid, such as a Tobii. This will be achieved in one of two ways for individuals who due to disease are losing the ability to speak. Firstly, for individuals who can currently speak, by taking a recording of your voice early on in the disease and storing this for your use if required at a later date. Secondly, for people who are unable to record their own voice, we hope to allow them to 'choose' a computer generated voice that retains accent, age and gender qualities but cannot be identified to an individual donor. Either of these goals would represent a major advance on current voice provision that is restricted to impersonal and robotic voice products that are not matched even to age or accent. This project is currently in the research phase with a prototype scheduled for early 2014. I feel that a person's voice is one of the most personal things that they possess and the Voicebank project is another project that I feel passionately about."

To learn more about the Voice Bank Project click here.

Tags: Centre, Communication, Euan, MacDonald, Speech, Voicebank

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Attachments:

- Participant Information Sheet2012_01_19 V1 2.pdf, 75 KB
- InformationSheet donors.pdf, 99 KB
- Record_Journey_2012b.pdf, 600 KB

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