How to Use ModelTalker

www.modeltalker.org

The ModelTalker System is a revolutionary speech synthesis software package developed by the Nemours Speech Research Laboratory and designed to benefit people who are losing or who have already lost their ability to speak. It allows people who use a Speech Generating Device (SGD) to communicate with a unique personal synthetic voice that is representative of their own voice.

Provided below are step-by-step instructions on how to get started with ModelTalker. Please speak with your Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) about an evaluation before using ModelTalker.

Please Note: This document is simply a resource that The ALS Association Florida Chapter is sharing. The ALS Association Florida Chapter is not at all associated with ModelTalker. Should you have any questions, concerns, or tech issues, please contact your Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) or ModelTalker Customer Service at staff@modeltalker.org or +1-302-651-6545. When calling, please note customer service is available between the hours of 8am and 2pm EST (GMT – 5) Monday through Friday.
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Getting Started

A. Software and Hardware
   1. Download the Google Chrome web browser at this address: www.google.com/chrome/browser and follow installation instructions.
   2. Insert the headset microphone USB cord into the USB port of your computer. Place the headset band over your head and place the microphone slightly below your lower lip.

B. Accessing the ModelTalker Website
   1. Open Google Chrome by double-clicking the Google Chrome icon:
   2. When the Google chrome web browser launches, enter http://www.modeltalker.org/ into the web address bar near the top of your screen.
   4. After you enter the website name into the address bar, press ‘Enter’ on your keypad to load ModelTalker’s main page (pictured above).
To Set-up a ModelTalker Username and Password (If this process was not completed during your evaluation)

In the top, right hand corner of ModelTalker home page, click on “Voices,” and then “Banking.”

Click “Get Started.”
Enter required information for “ModelTalker Registration (AAC).”

When you arrive at the “Thank You” page, select which recording setting you will be using (whether you will be recording online or downloading the MVTR program for Windows only). Online recording is recommended. If using online recording, click, “Proceed to online setup and recording.”
Proceed with onscreen instructions for ModelTalker setup. Once setup is complete, follow remaining instructions below.

C. Logging Into the ModelTalker Website

1. After accessing ModelTalker’s main page, click the “Login” button located in the top right corner of the website:

   ![Login button on ModelTalker website]

2. On the login screen, enter your username and password into the designated fields.
3. Check the box that says, “I am using a head-mounted USB mic.”

   ![Login screen with box checked]

4. Click “Login” to direct you to the voice recording page of the ModelTalker website.
Using the Program

A. Measuring the Silence Level

1. Locate and select the “Settings” button near the upper left portion of your screen:

2. Type the word “Screen” (without quotes) into the box labeled “Inventory”. This will tell the website to collect a sample of your speech that a ModelTalker representative will evaluate, and then email you feedback about, to ensure the quality of your recording.

   - Type the word ‘screen’ here and then move to step 3.
3. Click the ‘Microphone’ box and you will be presented with a list of available recording devices. Select the headset microphone by clicking it. After clicking, it should then appear in the ‘Microphone’ box.

4. Be still and quiet, then click ‘Measure’. The silence measurement will count down for 5 seconds. You must stay silent while this countdown occurs -- if there is an unexpected noise during this 5 seconds, click ‘Measure’ again to redo the measurement.

5. Click the ‘Start’ button at the bottom right to return to the voice-recording page.

B. Recording the ‘screen’ Sentences

1. After clicking the ‘Start’ button, the first sentence will begin playing immediately. When you are ready to record the sentence, click the ‘REC’ button.

2. After you speak each sentence, ModelTalker will automatically move to the next. Repeat step #1 for the following nine ‘screen’ sentences.

3. If you make a mistake at any time, click the back or forward arrow to move between sentences and re-record any sentence by clicking ‘REC’.

4. After completing the ten ‘screen’ sentences, ModelTalker will present a ‘Finalize’ button at the right edge of a red background (pictured at the top of the next page). If you’re satisfied with your recordings click the ‘Finalize’ button. If not, re-record any sentences you wish to repeat.
5. After clicking ‘Finalize,’ ModelTalker will present you with a dialogue window asking for confirmation that you are finished recording (pictured below). Click the ‘OK’ button to finish.

6. **Wait for an email** from a ModelTalker representative who will review the quality of your speech sample and share feedback.

C. **Begin Recording Your ‘full’ Speech Sample**

1. After receiving your feedback email from ModelTalker, make any recording adjustments advised by the representative.
2. Insert the headset microphone USB cord into the USB port of your computer. Place the headset band over your head and place the microphone slightly below your lower lip.
3. Log in to www.modeltalker.org, and click ‘Settings’
4. Follow the same procedure as in section ‘2. ModelTalker Setup’ of this document **EXCEPT**:
   i. Type ‘full’ (without quotes) into the ‘Inventory’ box this time and for all future recording sessions on the ModelTalker website.
   ii. Ignore the step about waiting for an email response from ModelTalker (this only applies to the initial ‘screen’ recordings).

*PLEASE NOTE: You will need to complete this setup procedure each time you log in to ModelTalker for a new recording session.*
5. Record as many sentences as you wish without causing too much fatigue.
6. When you are done, move on to the steps of section ‘D. Logging Out of the Program’. ModelTalker will start you wherever you left off the next time you log in and complete the setup process.

D. Logging Out of the Program
1. Click the “Session” button near the top right of the screen:

2. Click the “Logout” option. This will bring you back to the main page of the website.
3. You can now close the window and/or the web browser.

See the next page for Tips and Suggestions.
Tips and Suggestions

1. Stop to listen to your recordings periodically, especially when you start a new session, to be sure they sound the same as they have on previous sessions. If you don’t think the recordings sound right, contact ModelTalker customer service. If you are using the web recorder, also listen to your synthetic voice examples as you progress. If these do not seem to be improving, especially in the early stages of recording, contact ModelTalker.

2. A consistent, almost boring, speaking style is crucial. Try to say the phrases just like the auditory prompt and at about the same speaking rate. You should NOT pause between words (if you can help it). You should NOT make an effort to make the phrases sound interesting or meaningful. The sentences are all about the speech sounds they contain and not about their meaning!

3. Don’t let yourself get stuck on a sentence just because the pronunciation score is poor. Don’t try to redo a sentence more than two or three times at most. If the amplitude score is OK and you feel you have spoken the sentence as well as possible, just proceed.

4. Don’t change any of your audio hardware (Mic, USB interface, sound card, etc.) without checking with us. If you are using a laptop computer, make sure it is unplugged while recording to prevent electrical line noise in your recordings.

5. Don’t make any changes to your recording environment. Record in the same room and prevent typical sources of background noise such as fans, air conditioners, heaters, or other appliances.

6. From one recording session to the next, try not to let the position of the mic vary. Make sure it is not right in front of your mouth, but more to the corner.

7. Recording the full inventory can take a strong speaker about 6 - 8 hours. We suggest this recording process be done over several days and preferably at the same time each day. People’s voices are usually strongest in the morning. If you feel like you are getting tired, stop for the day and continue the next day.

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