(V) HOST
TECH NOTES

Oddcast Tech Note No. 5
Guidelines for using the VHost Text to Speech API

A. Introduction

Text to Speech can be used with VHost characters in one of two ways –

       1. Dynamic TTS - via the API - by calling the JavaScript function 'sayText'

       2. Static TTS - via the user interface - by typing in your text.

The first method is more powerful.
The second method is simpler, especially for non-programmers.

To use Static TTS simply press the 'Add Audio' button and select the TTS option. There is no need to read any further.
To get started with Dynamic TTS – read this document.

B. Step by Step Instructions

Dynamic Text To Speech is enabled via an API function call, which allows you to indicate in real-time the text to be spoken by the VHost character. The steps you need to go through to make this work are as follows:

1. Embed a Scene in an HTML page:

Create a Scene where the audio is set to "none".

Embed the scene or the show in your HTML page. Do not use 'optimized' embed code – as it does not support dynamic TTS. Make sure that the 'JavaScript API checkbox is ON.

2. Set the Domain:

TTS is licensed per domain. Domain specific licensing is implemented as a security measure to prevent TTS stream theft from your account. A TTS license comes bundled with two domains.

To use TTS you need to specify the domain name from which your pages are served. To do so - within your account go to "Account Info" and edit the domain from which your HTML pages are served. An example for a domain name would be:

www.mycompany.com

(do not include http:// or any path information)

You may use multiple domains within your account to support deployments on several web sites (2 domains come bundled. Additional domains can be purchased in the VHost Store). You may modify your licensed domains at your convenience.

3. Review the 'sayText' API function:

Please review the syntax of the sayText function call within the API Reference document (Note: this and other helpful resources are available in the support section at http://vhost.oddcast.com/support).

By calling this function you may invoke dynamic TTS in response to events. By specifying the function parameters you can specify the language and voice to be used.

A list of available languages and voices can be found in Appendix B in the [API Reference](). Advanced users may also wish to examine the available SSML tags, which allow you to fine-tune TTS audio. See Appendix C for details.

4. Call the 'sayText' API function:

You may call sayText to induce speech at any time after the Scene is fully loaded. Common uses include speaking when the mouse rolls over a certain area of your page, or speaking after a certain amount of time has elapsed. But the two most common uses are -

- You want the VHost character to speak when a link is clicked. The link should refer to "javascript:sayText(…)". In a similar way you may invoke TTS in response to rollover or any other event that Javascript can detect or generate.

  Example:

  ```
  <a href="javascript:sayText('something',1,1,1);">Click here to say something!</a>
  ```

- You want theVHost character to speak when it is first loaded. To do so, you must add an event callback function to your page to capture the 'vh_SlideBegin' callback event. This event indicates that the Scene is loaded and ready to accept your call (see more information about Event Callback functions in the [API Reference]()). Add the sayText function call within this callback function.

  Example:

  ```
  <SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
  function vh_slideBegin(sceneNumber){
          sayText("Welcome to my website!",1,1,1);
  }
  </SCRIPT>
  ```

C. Working Example

[See example]() for Text to Speech implementation using the methods described above. Right-Click and select 'View Source' to see the page source code. Feel free to copy & paste portions to use in your own page.

D. Troubleshooting

You followed the instructions above but TTS does not work in your page? Here is what you should look into:

1. Verify that the VHost Embed code has been copied into your page. Make sure that when copying the VHost code, the option for 'JavaScript API' was enabled.

2. Verify that the licensed domain name has been configured properly. In your account open 'Account Info". One of the domain names configured there must be identical to the domain name you see in your browser's 'address' line – if you strip away the preceding "http://" and any path information. For example –

   Browser address line is: http://www.mycompany.com/abcd/index.html

   Licensed domain name should be: www.mycompany.com

3. Verify that the sayText function is indeed being called. The best way to do so is to add a JavaScript alert just prior to the 'sayText' function call. Add the line:

```
alert("sayText is called");
```

and try again. The alert should come up whenever you expect the VHost to speak. If you don't see the alert come up, then your code is not making the function call to sayText. You need to examine your code.