

First text to speech voices launched for Dutch children

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Acapela Group, Dutch charity Nederlandse Stichting voor het Gehandicapte Kind (NSGK) and AssistiveWare today launch the first Dutch text to speech children's voices. They will benefit children who cannot speak and rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems. From today, the voices will be available to download exclusively in Proloquo2Go. The award-winning iOS app already gives a voice to over 175,000 children, teens and adults around the world.

Amsterdam, Netherlands - Today AssistiveWare, assistive technology pioneer, adds Dutch children's voices to its symbol-based communication app Proloquo2Go. The voices were developed in collaboration with Acapela Group and supported by Nederlandse Stichting voor het Gehandicapte Kind (NSGK). The Dutch voices, named Thijs and Merel were recorded by and for children. They will benefit children who cannot speak and rely on Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems.

"Children using AAC have always been limited by adult voices. It's so exciting that technology has made it possible for them to speak in such a fantastic sounding child's voice. This means that they will be able to identify with their AAC more than ever. It will become a part of who they are." says Professor Dr. Hans van Balkom.

An estimate of over 50,000 dutch speaking children are unable to make themselves understood with their own voice. It is vital for them to have access to a means to communicate. For many of these children, high tech AAC is the best opportunity for them to communicate. This ground-breaking project introduces the first ever Dutch Text to Speech children's voices.

Last summer, two children (a boy and a girl) spent days in the studio. They made recordings of all kinds of sentences, sounds and expressions. These formed the basis to make genuine, natural-sounding Text to Speech voices that will allow children to say anything they want.

"AssistiveWare has been our partner since the inception of the children voices. Together we have contributed to change the daily lives of children and their families that are using Acapela voices with AssistiveWare's award-winning solutions. Over 20 voices in different languages are already available, and we look forward to keep continuing offering voices for kids all over the world," says Nicolas Mazars, Business Unit manager of Acapela Inclusive.

A special release:

From today, the voices will be available to download exclusively in Proloquo2Go. The award-winning iOS app already gives a voice to over 175,000 children, teens and adults around the world.

This release is extra special for AssistiveWare, "As a Dutch company we are truly excited to be able to deliver the first ever Dutch Text to Speech children's voices together with our partners Acapela Group and NSGK. Combined with Proloquo2Go, Dutch children who are unable to speak will for the first time be able to say whatever they want in a voice that matches their age and gender." explains founder and CEO of AssistiveWare David Niemeijer.

It is important to all the partners that all Dutch children who need AAC can have access to these voices.

"For NSGK it's vital for children with disabilities to be included at school, sports

clubs, in the playground - everywhere. There are thousands of children who are unable to make themselves heard with their own voice, and some with access to only an adult's voice on their AAC system. For these children being able to communicate with a child's voice is so important to be able to express themselves, communicate and be heard. That's why we are supporting this wonderful initiative" says Henk-Willem Laan, NSGK director.

Later this year, they will be made available for other companies to license, allowing even more children to speak with a voice they can identify with.

About Proloquo2Go:

Proloquo2Go is an award-winning symbol-based communication app that gives a voice to those who cannot speak. It is used by people with autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy and other diagnoses for everyday communication and language development. The award-winning app

has provided a voice to over 175,000 people worldwide who use it in English, Spanish or French. Proloquo2Go is used for iPad, iPhone, iPod touch and Apple Watch.

About NSGK:

De Nederlandse Stichting voor het Gehandicapte Kind (NSGK) helps children and young people

with disabilities to enjoy equal opportunities to play, learn, live and work. NSGK supports the children's voices project from it's Technology program. Together with other partners, they improve the lives of children and young people through technology.

About Acapela Group:

Acapela Group, leading player in voice solutions for more than 30 years, is constantly creating new voices to better interact with users, thanks to voices that adapt to the context. Voices that convey meaning, intent and emotions. Acapela Text-to-speech solutions give the say to tiny toys, robots, autonomous vehicles, smartphones, IoT and much more.

Acapela creates personalized voices that read, inform, explain, present, guide, educate, tell stories, help to communicate, alarm, notify, entertain. From standard high-quality voices to domain-based applications and custom voices, Acapela's skills cover the full chain of voice needs in 34 languages. Our latest innovations in deep learning and AI opens up new exciting possibilities for voice creation.

Supported Languages:

* English, Dutch, French and Spanish

Device Requirements:

- * iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch
- * Requires iOS 10.3 or later
- * 848.7 MB

Pricing and Availability:

Proloquo2Go 5.5 is \$249.99 USD (or equivalent amount in other currencies) and available worldwide exclusively through the App Store in the Education category. For more information, please contact Sophie Lap.

AssistiveWare:

<http://www.assistiveware.com>

Proloquo2Go 5.5:

<http://www.assistiveware.com/product/proloquo2go>

Purchase and Download:

<https://itunes.apple.com/app/proloquo2go/id308368164>

prMac: Publish Once, Broadcast the World :: <http://prmac.com>

Vimeo Video (Behind the scenes with Merel & Thijs):
<https://vimeo.com/257524054>

Acapela Group :
<http://www.acapela-group.com/>

NSGK :
<https://www.nsgk.nl/english/>

Since 2000, AssistiveWare has established itself as leading assistive technology pioneers. They are committed to empowering people with communication difficulties and make a difference to people's lives. To achieve this goal, they work closely with therapists, parents and adults who use their apps. In 2009, AssistiveWare was the first company to release a full-featured Augmentative and Alternative Communication solution for iOS - the award-winning app, Proloquo2Go. Together with Acapela Group, AssistiveWare was also the first to create genuine children's Text to Speech voices. All Material and Software (C) Copyright 2018 AssistiveWare. All Rights Reserved. Apple, the Apple logo, Mac OS X, iPhone, iPod and iPad are registered trademarks of Apple Inc. in the U.S. and/or other countries. Other trademarks and registered trademarks may be the property of their respective owners.

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Sophie Lap
PR and Communications

s.lap@assistiveware.com

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