

Affordable text-to-speech software from India

eSpeak is a compact open source software speech synthesizer for Linux, Windows, and other platforms. Based on an existing text-to-speech-software, eSpeak made it accessible to 12 Indian languages.

«eSpeak for Indian languages is an open-source, community-driven project to provide voice support benefiting over 63 million people with print disabilities.»
(Nirmita NARASIMHAN)

eSpeak Text to Speech Engine

Organisation:	Centre for Internet & Society
Country/Region of origin:	India
Beneficiaries targeted:	Blind and visually impaired persons
Approach/model/solution:	Open-source translation software for text-to-speech

FACTS & FIGURES

- Project implemented on a national level
- Could benefit over 63 million people
- Supports 12 Indian languages

PROBLEMS TARGETED

India has 63 million persons with visual impairments and several million persons who are in other ways disabled or illiterate, who require voice-based communication systems. The unavailability of TTS in local languages and the high cost are preventing large-scale deployment of the technology.

PROJECT

eSpeak is a Text-To-Speech system that addresses the crucial gap by providing a voice translation tool in Indian local languages.

eSpeak can be used in combination with screen readers on computers, as well as on mobile phones. Being an open-source software tool, it is affordable and compatible with other software.

The project is being undertaken at a national level in collaboration with DPOs for blind persons from different states. The beneficiaries are involved in the development process from an early stage in order to cater to their needs.

CURRENT SITUATION & OUTLOOK

It is envisaged that the combination of eSpeak with an open-source Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) screen reader could provide an almost no-cost solution for the reading needs of users in the future. And it could be easily integrated with other projects and into other communication systems such as emergency response tools.

Not only will Indians benefit from eSpeak, but also persons living in neighbouring countries which share a language with India, such as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan.



A young man with visual impairment is using the screen-reader in combination with eSpeak text-to-speech translation into his local Indian dialect. This empowers him to participate in the business world.
(Photo: Saksham)

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EXPERT VOTING



- Top marks from:
- all voters
- Top marks for:
- access to ICT,
 - targeting p. with physical disabilities