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For Help on Help, Press F1

Starting Announce!

You can start Announce! from either Windows Program Manager, Windows File Manager or the command prompt.

To start Announce! from the Windows Program Manager

- 1 Switch to the Program Manager window.
- 2 Open the group window that contains the Announce! icon.
- 3 Do one of the following:
 - Double-click the Announce! icon.
 - Use the arrow keys to select the Announce! icon, and then press ENTER.

To start Announce! from the Windows File Manager

- 1 Do one of the following:
 - Locate the ANNOUNCE.EXE file and double click on the icon.
 - Double click on a file with the VAP, or VOX extension.

The Announce! desktop

The Announce! desktop consists of 3 areas:

1) The ToolBar

The ToolBar is a horizontal row of buttons designed to give you fast and easy access to the most commonly used functions.

2) The Main Desktop, where the child windows are located

Announce! provides three different types of windows on the desktop:

voice editor windows

phrase list windows

3) The StatusBar

The StatusBar provides information about the current state of Announce!, and about the currently selected phrase or phrases.

Making an open window active

A window must be active before you can work in it. Announce! highlights or shades the window border and title bar of an active window.

From the Window menu, choose the document window that you want to make active (ALT, W, name).

Arranging windows

When several windows are open at the same time., the workplace can get cluttered. Select the Cascade or Tile menu items in the Window menu to rearrange your windows so they are all visible.

Voice editor windows

Voice editor windows provide a graphical display of a waveform. The display scale can be adjusted both in the x and y directions, so that any waveform can be viewed regardless of length or amplitude. A scale on the left hand side provides an indication of amplitude, together with the maximum allowed values for ADPCM and 16 bit samples. The x scale indicates time, in milliseconds or seconds as appropriate.

Setting a new cursor position

Click in the window to set the cursor to a new position. The cursor is the position where new samples are inserted when using the paste command and insert menu commands.

Selecting part of a waveform

Drag the mouse in the window to select part of a waveform. A purple rectangular box will show graphically the sample selected, and the StatusBar will show the start and duration of the selection in milliseconds. Alternatively, to make a large selection, click in the window at the desired selection starting point, and then click again at the desired end point while pressing the Shift key.

Most effect menu commands will operate on the selection, if there is one. Otherwise the commands will operate over the whole phrase.

Adjusting the x and y scale of the waveform display




Use these buttons to change the vertical scaling of your waveform



Use these buttons to change the horizontal scaling of your waveform

Phrase list windows

Phrase list windows show a list of phrases. Each phrase entry consists of 3 parts:

1. an icon showing the phrase type. .
2. the current format of the phrase (LN for linear, AD for ADPCM)
3. a name for the phrase.
4. an icon representing the attached filename for this phrase. The filename is used when saving each phrase to a separate file - useful for applications that require each prompt in a separate file.



This is a long phrase name ...

Double click on the phrase icon to play the phrase.

Click on the ellipses ... to see all of a filename that does not fit on one line

Double click on the name to edit the phrase name.



Drag the icon onto the desktop to edit the phrase.

Drag the icon into another window to copy the phrase.

Drag the icon into a new position in the same window or another phrase list window to copy the phrase.

See also

Working with phrases

The ToolBar



Click on the buttons above to get a description of each button.

If the mouse is moved over an active Announce! ToolBar button, the INFORMATION field in the status bar will remind you what action that would be performed by this button. If the button is not active for this window, the INFORMATION field will be blank.

The StatusBar



StatusBar fields

INFORMATION field

Shows the current status of Announce!.

If the mouse is moved over a ToolBar button, the INFORMATION field will show the action that would be performed by this button. If the button is not active for this window, the field will be blank. If you mouse down on a menu item, the INFORMATION field will show a more detailed description of the menu item. If you drag a phrase or phrases from a phrase list window. the INFORMATION field will remind you of the action Announce! will take if your release the mouse button at that point.

CURSOR field

In a phrase list window:

Shows the offset into the file of the first phrase of the selection

In a Voice Editor window:

Shows the start position in milliseconds of the beginning of the current selection

SIZE field

In a phrase list window:

Shows the duration in milliseconds of the selected phrase. If more than one phrase is selected, this field is blank

In a Voice Editor window:

Shows the duration in milliseconds of the selected samples.

RATE field

This field shows the sampling rate of the currently selected phrase in a phrase list, or the sampling rate of the phrase in a voice editor window. Pressing the RATE button will popup a dialog to allow you the change the sampling rate of the selected samples or phrase. See [SampleRate](#)

Overview

Announce! is a program that provides a multi-windowed environment for creating and editing voice prompts for voice mail and voice response systems. Announce! can read many different file formats, and can do voice processing to ensure high quality prompts. The graphical environment, drag-drop features and integration with Windows sound capabilities allow easy visualization and processing of the speech.

Announce! works with cards designed for voice response systems, and with Windows 3.1 sound cards. Using a sound card enables cost-effective high quality prompts by recording at 16 bits, either at the final sampling rate or at a higher intermediate sampling rate. Sound cards usually have extra features like an audio mixer and audio player inputs not available on voice cards. MIDI output can also be used to generate background music for prompts.

All the facilities of Announce! are available if you do not have a Windows sound card, with the exception of real-time silence detection during record. However when recording from a voice card, this is not a requirement since compressed speech takes up much less disk space, and the recorded phrases can easily be split up into phrases later. Announce! has a command that will remove extra silence from a list of phrases.

Announce! works with 16 bit samples during voice processing, and keeps voice data in this format until saved by the user as compressed ADPCM. This increases speed of operation, and improves quality by removing unnecessary ADPCM conversions. 16 bit samples have a greater dynamic range than ADPCM, allowing for temporary peaks during voice processing that might be clipped if using ADPCM.

Where possible, Announce! uses fixed-point arithmetic for calculations in order to improve performance on systems that do not have a floating-point coprocessor.

Announce! has a bulk processing capability that sets it apart from other voice editors. In Announce!, if you want to add, say Echo to all your prompts, you just select all the prompts in your window with 2 mouse clicks, and then select the Echo command. Announce! will take care of the rest. Compare this to loading in 150 files, configuring and executing the echo command for each one, and then saving each file

Starting a new project

First, plan your phrases and subphrases.

Second (very important!) ensure you have enough disk space. Unprocessed voice files take up many megabytes of disk space, especially if recording in linear format, and/or without silence detection.

There are 2 basic methods of recording phrases:

[recording from a pre-recorded tape](#)

[recording each phrase yourself interactively in front of the computer](#) .

[See also:](#)

[Naming phrases](#)

[Record Dialog](#)

Recording new phrases

There are 2 basic methods of recording phrases:

- 1) recording from a pre-recorded tape
- 2) recording each phrase yourself interactively in front of the computer .

See also:

Naming phrases

Record Dialog

Recording from tape

Recording from tape allows high quality recordings to be made in a recording studio or other quiet location (away from computer fans and other extraneous noises), and then loaded into the computer later on. This also is an economical method to use when using professional announcers. This method does have the disadvantage that any flaws in the recording may require a new recording session. It is often advisable to record at least 2 copies of each phrase.

Procedure using a Windows sound card

Connect the tape machine into the appropriate input on your sound card.

Open a new phrase file window. (See New or Open command)

Select Record from the Sound Menu. (See Record command)

Start the tape playing and monitor sound levels. Sound levels should not exceed -6db to allow for peaks. The meter in the dialog will show incoming sound levels.

Use the silence detect scroll bar to set the silence detect threshold above the noise level between phrases, but well below the maximum phrase level. If the silence detect threshold is set too high, the start and end of phrases may get cut off. If the silence detect threshold is set too low, noise may be detected as speech with erroneous results.

Now start recording by pressing the start button in the dialog. The silence detector should start searching for silence. Once a silence period has been detected, it will wait for the first non-silence and start recording the first phrase.

At the end of phrase it will load the phrase into the window display, and start searching for the next phrase. If the pauses between phrases are too close, the silence detector may not detect the silence and may record 2 phrases into 1 phrase in the file. This is not a serious problem since the phrases can be split later (using Split Phrase in the Phrase Menu).

Reducing the silence detect time in the Record Setup menu may also help. Note that phrases with multiple sentences (i.e. press 1 for this, <pause> press 2 for that) can have pauses that approach one second.

Your recordings should be made with pauses of at least 2 seconds between phrases to ensure that phrases can be recorded as intended.

Once the system appears to be adjusted correctly, open a new phrase file, start record and start the tape running.

Allow several phrases to be recorded and then check for sound quality and correct phrase splitting. If the end of phrases are being cut off, try reducing the silence threshold.

Once your phrases are recorded, save the file, and you are then ready to start editing your phrases

Procedure using a voice card

There are two methods of creating a series of phrases from a tape using a voice card:

The best method is to make a large recording of many phrases into a single file, and then split up the phrase using silence detection. The recording must have two or three seconds minimum silence between each phrase to achieve correct splitting.

Another method is to record each phrase manually by starting and stopping both the record process in Announce! and the tape machine. This option can be time consuming.

To make a bulk recording of many prompts, use the following procedure:

Open a new phrase file window. (See New or Open command)

Connect the tape machine into the appropriate input on your voice card.

Check VoiceCard to ensure you have configured the voice card to record from the input you are using, and to set a maximum silence time to 0 to disable silence termination.

Select Record from the Sound Menu. (See Record).

Start recording by pressing the start button in the dialog, and start the tape. Wait for several phrases to be recorded, stop the tape, and press the stop button in the dialog. A new phrase should be loaded into the Phrase window.

Close the record dialog and select the newly recorded phrase.

Select Split Phrase from the Phrase Menu. This will scan the phrase for silence and automatically split the phrase into smaller phrases. Announce! will report the number of phrases found, and the longest phrase. Multiple passes can be made if required, each using more sensitive silence detection.

Once the level has been adjusted correctly, the tape can be allowed to run to record all the phrases.

Interactive Recording

Recording prompts while interacting with Announce! is a useful method if you are using your own voice to record the prompts. You will be able to monitor progress and correct problems as you go.

A similar procedure can be used for both voice cards and sound cards:

Recording phrases in a phrase list

Select the first phrase in the list of phrases to be recorded, and press the record button. Announce! will show you the Record dialog and show the script for the first phrase to be recorded.

Recording from a sound card:

You will be able to press the AutoRecord button. Announce! will now start its speech detection process. When you start to speak, Announce! will start saving data to disk. When you stop, Announce! will save the phrase and display the next script to be recorded. You may need to adjust the silence detection level to ensure that the phrases are recorded correctly.

If you want to rerecord a phrase, press Last to back up to the required phrase and try again.

If you wish, you can use a manual start/stop method as described for voice cards below

Recording from a voice card:

Press the record button to start recording the phrase. You can press stop to terminate the recording or wait for silence detection to stop it for you. Press Next to move on to the next script to record, and then repeat the process.

Recording a phrase in a voice edit window

Position the cursor in the window where you want to start recording and press the record button. Announce! will show you the Record dialog.

Recording from a sound card:

Select the silence detection check box and press the Record button. Announce! will now start its speech detection process. When you start to speak, Announce! will start saving data to disk. When you stop, Announce! will save the phrase. You may need to adjust the silence detection level to ensure that the phrases are recorded correctly. Press OK to return to the voice edit window, or Record again to record some more speech.

Recording from a voice card:

Press the Record button to start recording. Press the stop button to terminate the recording or wait for the voice card to detect silence. Announce! will then save the phrase. If your voice editor window is set to a different sampling rate from your voice card, Announce! will do a sampling rate conversion before saving the data. Press OK to return to the voice edit window, or Record again to record some more speech.

Step-by-step Instructions

Announce! is a multi-windowed environment for creating and editing voice prompts for voice mail and voice response systems. The graphical environment allows easy visualization and changing of the speech.

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Creating a new project from scratch

If this is the first time you have needed to create a list of voice prompts, or if you wish to create a set of prompts from scratch, you will probably only have a list of the prompts, and possibly, a list of file names to save the files into. Announce! allows you to group a list of phrases into a project while you work on them to give you easy access to all your prompts. This simplifies cutting and pasting between prompts, and allows easy concatenation of prompts to check for smooth flow of phrases made up of several words or subphrases.

Once editing is complete, Announce! will save the phrases into the file format of your choice. You can store the original phrases in linear format to ensure no loss of quality if further editing is required.

If you already have some voice prompts, and wish to add to them, or change them, see also [Creating a new project using existing files](#) .

To open a new project, select [New](#) from the File Menu, and select New Phrase File from the dialog. An empty window will be created, into which you can record phrases. You can create phrases by recording from a Windows sound card or a voice card.

You can add existing files to your project by dragging them from the File Manager onto the Announce! desktop or onto a Phrase List or Voice Editor window, or by using the Import Voice command from the Phrase menu. You can import VOX (compressed ADPCM) files, WAV (Windows Sound) files, and LIN (16 bit Linear) files.

Editing an existing voice file

If you have a specific voice prompt that you wish to edit, choose Open from the File Menu, and select the appropriate file-type in the file type drop-down selection box. The default extension for compressed ADPCM files is VOX. Announce! will assume that the file has been compressed in the ADPCM format used by your voice card, as configured in the Voice Card Setup in the Sound menu.

Creating a new project from existing voice files

You have already created some voice prompts, and you wish to import them into Announce! for further editing or additions. The easiest way to import a large number of prompts into Announce! is to use the drag-drop feature of File Manager.

First, resize both File Manager and Announce! so that both your new phrase list window and the directory in File Manager where your phrases are stored are not overlapped. Select all the phrases you wish to import, using shift -click and /or control-click. Now click the mouse on one of your selected files, drag the files onto the Announce! desktop, and release the mouse button.

Announce! will read the files and ask you if you want to create a new Phrase List. Click the Yes button, and Announce! will load them as phrases into the phrase list window. If Announce! is not sure of the file type, it will assume compressed ADPCM format of the type used by your voice card.

Alternatively, you can create an empty project by selecting New from the File Menu, and select New Phrase File from the dialog. An empty window will be created, into which you can add phrases. You can add existing files to your project by dragging them from the File Manager, or by using the Import Voice command from the Phrase menu. You can import VOX (compressed ADPCM) files, WAV (Windows Sound) files and LIN (16 bit Linear) files.

You can also edit your phrases directly into a Voice Editor window, and copy all or part of them to the clipboard using the Copy command, and then the Paste command to paste them into your phrase file window.

Working with phrases

Once you have a phrase window containing your phrases, you will want to test them and modify them.

[Selecting phrases](#)

[Copying phrases](#)

[Moving phrases](#)

[Playing phrases](#)

[Editing phrases](#)

[Naming phrases](#)

[Using Phrase Filenames](#)

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Selecting phrases

To select a phrase in a phrase file window, click on it.

To select a number of phrases, click on the first phrase in your desired selection, and then press the Shift key and click on the last phrase in your selection. All the phrases will now be selected.

Most phrase and effects commands will work both on single selections and multiple selections.

To unselect a selection, click again in the window.

Copying phrases

To copy a phrase or list of phrases to a new location, use the drag-drop feature of Announce!. Click the mouse over the phrase you want to move, drag the mouse to the new position, and release the mouse. The new phrase will be named Copy of ...<original name>. Note Announce! uses the phrase name to distinguish amongst phrases so all names in a phrase window must be unique. Phrase names are of unlimited length.

Another method is to use the Copy command (Edit Menu) to copy the selection to the clipboard, moving to the new location, and then selecting Paste (Edit Menu) to move the selection to the new location.

Using copy - paste will allow you to copy phrases into a Voice Editor window and to copy all or part of a phrase from a Voice Editor window into a new phrase in a Phrase File window.

Announce! will use the StatusBar information field to remind you as you drag the icon over the screen what will happen if the mouse button is released at that point.

You can also insert a phrase into a voice editor window by dragging it over the voice editor window, The phrase will be inserted at the cursor position.

Moving phrases

To move a phrase to another location without copying it, you can use the drag-drop feature of Announce!. Click the mouse over the phrase you want to move, drag the mouse to the new position, press the Control key and release the mouse.

You can move phrases both within a window, and between windows. In addition, if you drop a phrase onto the Announce! desktop, Announce! will open up a voice editor window on that phrase.

Another method is to use the Cut command (Edit Menu) to copy the selection to the clipboard, moving to the new location, and then selecting Paste (Edit Menu) to move the selection to the new location.

Announce! will use the StatusBar information field to remind you as you drag the icon over the screen what will happen if the mouse button is released at that point.

Naming phrases




This is a long phrase name ...

If an name does not fit in one line in the phrase list window, Announce! will show the name terminated by ellipses. Click on the ellipses ... to see all of a filename that does not fit on one line. To name a phrase, use the Edit Name command. If you have a large number of phrases, and you have a text file containing the names for these phrases, you can set the phrase names from the text file by using the Load Scripts from File menu command. Announce! will prompt you to select the text file, and will use successive lines of this text file as names for your phrases. This file can be created using a text editor such as Notepad from a list of names you already have, or you can save the existing names into a text file using the Save Scripts from File command.

Using Phrase filenames

Each phrase or group of subphrases has an attached filename. This filename is used to save the phrase into an individual voice file for voice applications that require separate voice files for each prompt. Announce! will save each phrase into the designated filename when you choose Save As Phrases from the File menu.

To see a phrase filename, click on the  icon.

To set the filename of a phrase, use the Edit FileName command, or double click on the .


If you have a large number of phrases, and you have a text file containing the scripts for these phrases, you can set the phrase scripts from the text file by using the Load Filenames from File menu command. Announce! will prompt you to select the text file, and will use successive lines of this text file as file names for your phrases. This file can be created using a text editor such as Notepad from a list of names you already have, or you can save the existing scripts into a text file using the Save Scripts to File command.

The drive, directory and file extension are assigned by the Save Phrases command and are not required in the filename. The file extension can be specified if required, if not specified the default file extension for ADPCM files will be used. (See Voicecard Setup

Playing phrases

To play a phrase, select it with the mouse and click the play button, or double click on the icon




To play a list of phrases, first select all the phrases you wish to hear, and then click on the play button  or select Play from the Sound menu.

To stop a play operation, click on the button , or select Stop from the Sound Menu.

When playing to an 8 bit sound device, Announce! will warning if your waveform has exceeded the maximum value allowable.

If using a voice card, you may need to set a connection from another phone into your voice card. You can do this by dialling into the voicecard line before starting Announce!, since Announce! will go offhook as it starts. Alternatively, you can select Wait for Call at any time. Announce! will take the phone onhook and wait for an incoming ring and then answer the call.

Editing phrases

Announce! gives you many tools to edit and modify your phrases. In addition it allows bulk processing of all your phrases by allowing you to select one or all of them, and running the same command on all the selected phrases. For detailed editing of a waveform you can click the Edit Voice button  or choose Edit Voice from the Phrase Menu, or simply drag the phrase onto the desktop.

See also

Voice Processing

Voice processing

The voice processing commands (in the Effects menu) that you will find most useful will be the Pad Silence and Clean Silence commands. The Pad Silence command will remove silence or add extra silence if required so that all your phrases have the same amount of silence at the start and end of each phrase. The Clean Silence command will scan your phrases for pauses between sub-phrases or words, and will remove noise from these pauses.

The Louder/Softer command will also be useful to set the correct amplitude for your phrases.

The echo command can be used to good effect. Often a slight echo (1 echo, delayed 40 ms, -8db decay) is often enough to add more presence to your prompts. Like most of the effect commands, echo can be added to all of the phrases in a Phrase File window with one command.

For detailed editing, you can open up a voice editor window and use the loudness envelope command to fade in and out between words, and to adjust the level on a word-by-word basis.

Effect Menu

Pad Silence

Clean Silence

Filter

Echo

Fast/Slow

Louder/Softer

Loudness Envelope

SampleRate

Menu Commands

File Menu

New

Open

Close

Save

Save As

Close All

Exit

Edit Menu

Cut

Copy

Paste

Clear

Select All

Edit Script

Edit Filename

Edit Voice

Find

Sort by Filename

Sort by Script

Insert Menu

Silence

Tones

Merge Clip

Phrase Menu

Import Voice

Compress

Decompress

Load Scripts from File

Save Scripts to File

Load Filenames from File

Save Filenames to File

Effect Menu

Pad Silence

Clean Silence

Filter

Echo

Fast/Slow

Erase

Louder/Softer

Loudness Envelope

SampleRate

Sound Menu

Use voice card

Use sound card

Record

Play Clip

Play Selection

Stop

Wait for Call

Play Repeat Mode

Setup Menu

Sound Card

Voice Card

Font

Waveform Display

Waveform Colors

New command (File menu)

Use this command to create a new voice editor window or phrase file window, or a new phrase in a phrase list.

You can open an existing document with the Open command.

Shortcuts

Toolbar:



Dialog Box Options

Select the type of new file you want to create.

New List	Creates a new phrase file.
New Editor	Creates a new voice editor window.
New Phrase	Creates a new phrase in the currently active phrase file window. This option will only be available if the currently active window is a phrase file

Open command (File menu)

Use this command to open an existing phrase file or voice file in a new window. You can open as many windows as you like, subject to available memory.


You can use the Window menu to switch among open documents.

If you have a document on your screen that you no longer want to use, choose the Close command to close it.

You can create new documents with the New command.

Shortcuts

Keyboard Cntrl+F12

Toolbar: 

Dialog Box Options

File Name

Type or select the filename you want to open. This box lists files with the extension you select in the List Files Of Type box.

List Files Of Type:

Select the type of file you want to open. Files of type VAP will be opened into a Phrase List Window. Files of type VOX, LIN, or WAV will normally be opened into a voice editor window.

See Also [File Formats](#)

Close command (File menu)

Use this command to close the active window. If you close a window without saving, you lose all changes made since the last save. Before closing an unnamed file, Announce! displays the Save As dialog box and suggests that you name and save the file.

If you are closing a phrase file, and there are voice editor windows open on one or more of the phrases in the window, Announce! will close the voice editor windows first. If changes have been made to these windows, Announce! will prompt you to save these changes.

You can also close a window by using the Close command on the document.

In order to improve speed of operation, cutting or copying phrases to the clipboard does not actually copy the data, but stores a pointer to the file. If the clipboard contains a pointer to data in the window that you are closing, Announce! will warn you with a dialog before proceeding if the current clipboard contents will be lost upon close.

Shortcuts

Keyboard Cntrl+F12

Double-click on the window close box (top left hand button of the window)

Close All command (File menu)

Use this command to close all windows. If changes have been made, Announce! will prompt you to save the data. Before closing an unnamed document, Announce! displays the Save As dialog box and suggests that you name and save the document.


You can also close a document by using the Close command on the document

Save command (File menu)

Use this command to save the active file and the current name, location, and file format. When you save a file for the first time, Announce! displays the Save As dialog box so you can name your file. If you want to change the name, location, or format of an existing file, choose the Save As command.

Shortcuts

Keys: SHIFT+F12

Toolbar: 

Save As command (File menu)

Use this command to save and name the active window with a specified file format.

Notes:

To save a file with the existing name, format, and location, use the Save command.

To save individual phrases in a phrase window, use the Save Phrases in the Phrase Menu.

Shortcuts

Toolbar: (the first time you save a file)

Key: F12

Dialog Box Options

File Name

Type a new filename to save a file with a different name or in a different file format.

Use the current name, or select a name in the list to save a document with an existing filename.

Note: A filename can contain up to eight characters and an extension of up to three characters.

Announce! adds the extension you specify in the Save File As Type box.

Drives

Select the drive in which you want to store the document.

Directories

Select the directory in which you want to store the document.

Save File As Type

Announce! can save files in various file formats.

Phrase files can be saved as:

VAP (VBase40) files. VAP files are compressed files containing multiple phrases. They are limited to a single sampling rate and compression type.

Phrases in voice editor windows can be saved as a new phrase in the original source Phrase window, or as individual voice files in these formats:

VOX (compressed ADPCM) files.

LIN 16 bit linear files.

WAV Windows format sound files.

See also

File Formats

Cut command (Edit menu)

Use this command to remove the selected phrases from a phrase file, or to remove selected samples from a voice editor, and to store them on the clipboard.

This command is unavailable if you have no selected text or phrases.

In order to improve speed of operation, Announce! does not actually copy the data during cut or copy operations, but stores a pointer to the file. If this file is subsequently closed, Announce! will prompt you before closing the file.

Note that cutting phrases to the clipboard replaces the contents previously stored there.

Shortcuts

Toolbar:



Keys: CTRL+Del

Clear command(Edit Menu)

Use this command to remove selected phrases from a phrase file, or to remove selected samples from a voice editor. The data removed will be lost unless the window is closed without saving.

This command is unavailable if you have no selected text or phrases.

Shortcuts

Toolbar:



Keys: Delete

Copy command (Edit menu)

Use this command to copy selected phrases or samples onto the Clipboard. This command is unavailable if you have nothing selected in the active window.

In order to improve speed of operation, Announce! does not actually copy the data during cut or copy operations, but stores a pointer to the file. If this file is subsequently closed, Announce! will prompt you before closing the file.

Copying a selection to the Clipboard replaces the contents previously stored there.

Shortcuts

Toolbar:



Keys: CTRL+Insert

Paste command (Edit menu)

Use this command to insert a copy of the Clipboard contents at the insertion point. This command is unavailable if the Clipboard is empty, or if the active window cannot accept the data on the clipboard. A voice editor will not accept multiple phrases.

Shortcuts

Toolbar:



Keys: Shift+Insert

Select All command (Edit menu)

Use this command to select all the phrases in a phrase file, or to select all the samples in a voice editor window.

Find (Edit Menu)

Use this command when you have a large phrase file and you are searching for a particular phrase. Searching is always case-insensitive.

Sort by Filename (Edit Menu)

Use this command to alphabetically sort all the phrases in a phrase list by filename

Sort by Script (Edit Menu)

Use this command to alphabetically sort all the phrases in a phrase list by phrase script

Silence (Insert Menu)

Use this command to insert silence into a voice editor window. The silence will be inserted at the current selection point. The amount of silence can be adjusted as required.

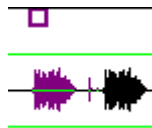
Tones (Insert Menu)

Use this command to insert a tone into a voice editor window. Click a button to select a standard dtmf or call progress tone, or make your own tone. Announce! can generate 2 simultaneous tones, which are added together and amplitude modulated (if required) with a third tone.


Merge Clip (Insert Menu)

Use this command to add the contents of the clipboard to a voice editor window, without affecting the timing of the original signal. The clipboard contents are added to the original sound, unlike the Paste command which inserts new samples into the waveform. The start time of the new selection can be moved in the window by clicking and dragging the mouse in the square in the top left corner of the merged samples. The cursor will change to a rectangle when over this point. You can test the effect of this command by choosing the play command, which will prompt you with a dialog to ask if you wish to hear the phrase with or without the merged samples.

Save your changes or abandon the merge operation by selecting the Merge command again. This will uncheck the Merge menu item, and load the merged samples into the waveform if you choose to save changes.



ShortCut

Toolbar: 

Edit Script (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to change the name of a phrase in a phrase window. Announce! will show a dialog into which you can insert or change the script. You can also play the script from this dialog, so that if you are updating the script to match an existing voice file, you can type the words as they play on your sound device. The loop play mode may also be useful.


ShortCut

Mouse: double click on the name in the phase list window

Edit Filename (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to change the filename of a phrase in a phrase window. Each phrase must have a unique filename. If a name conflict occurs, a dialog will appear asking for a new name. The dialog will not go away until you type in a unique name for this phrase. Filenames are limited to 8 characters. The drive, directory and file extension are assigned by the Save Phrases command and are not required in the filename dialog.


ShortCuts

Mouse: double click on the  in the phase list window

Edit Voice (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to open a voice editor window on a phrase in a phrase file. When the voice editor window is closed, or saved, the data will be saved back into the phrase file. However the changes will not be permanent until the phrase file itself is saved.

ShortCuts

Toolbar: 

Mouse: drag the selected item onto the Announce! desktop

Import Voice (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to create a new phrase with the contents of a VOX or WAV file.

ShortCuts:

Drag the file from File Manager and dropping it onto the Phrase window.

Compress (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to convert a phrase or phrases to compressed ADPCM format, using the appropriate algorithm for your voice card as specified in the Setup Menu. You cannot convert a subphrase to ADPCM.

Decompress (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to convert a phrase or phrases to 16 bit linear format, using the appropriate algorithm for your voice card as specified in the Setup Menu.

Announce! will convert your phrases to linear automatically if you select any of the voice processing commands.

Your phrases will be converted back to compressed ADPCM format when you save as VOX files or as VAP (VBase40) files, or if you select the Convert to Adpcm command.

Save Phrases as Files (Phrase Menu)

Phrases in a phrase window can be saved as individual phrase files, using the filename attached to each phrase. Phrases are converted to the sampling rate and format appropriate for your voice card.

Announce! will show a file save dialog to allow you to choose the directory to save the files into. All phrases will be saved into the same directory.

If the filename for a phrase has not been set, you will be prompted to supply one. You can set up the filenames prior to using this command by using the Load Filenames from File command or the Edit Filename command.

Save Scripts (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to save the phrase scripts in a phrase file to a text file. This file can be modified using a text editor and loaded back into the phrase list with the Load Scripts from File command. This method is useful if you have a large number of phrases to rename.

Save Filenames to File

Use this command to save the filenames in a phrase file to a text file. This file can be modified using a text editor and loaded back into the phrase list with the Load Filenames from File command. This method is useful if you have a large number of filenames to rename.

Load Scripts from File (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to set the scripts for all the phrases in a file from a text file containing the desired scripts. Each line in the file is used to rename phrases in order starting from the top, until the end of file is reached, or until all phrases are renamed.

Load Filenames from File (Phrase Menu)

Use this command to attach filenames to the phrases in a file from a text file which contains the desired filenames. The contents of each line in the file is assumed to be a filename. All filenames are renamed in order from the top of the file, until the end of the text file or until all phrases have been processed. The drive, directory and file extension are assigned by the Save Phrases command and are not required in the filename dialog.

See Also

[Using Phrase Filenames](#)

Pad Silence (Effect Menu)

Use this command to set the amount of silence at the beginning and end of a phrase or phrases. This command can be used in both voice editor and phrase file windows.

Announce! will use silence detection to find the start and end of each phrase. If there is more silence than specified by the leading and trailing silence parameters set in the dialog, Announce! will shorten the silence period to that specified. If there is less silence than specified, Announce! will add silence as necessary.

This command is useful to ensure that phrases can be concatenated with the correct amount of silence between each one in order to sound natural.

The Pad Silence dialog allows you to set the silence detection level, and the amount of silence required at the start and end of each phrase. We recommend you first experiment with the settings in a voice editor window, where Announce! will show you the silence detect level in the window, and the points where the start and end of the phrase have been detected. Once you have set up the silence level parameter, you can go back to the phrase file window, select all your phrases and perform the pad silence operation on all phrases with one command.

Clean Silence (Effect Menu)

This command is used to quieten periods of noisy silence in gaps between words and at the start and end of phrases. Announce! uses silence detection to find the start and end of each word or subphrase, and inserts complete silence into the gaps. There is a transition period between the end of the word and the silence where the previous samples are decayed exponentially to zero to avoid unnatural sounding transitions.

The Clean Silence dialog allows you to set the silence detect threshold, and also the minimum amount of silence which can be detected as silence. In addition, you can change the period of decay at the start and end of each word. The effect of the settings is shown graphically in the window, when using this dialog in a voice editor window.

Announce! uses the Loudness Envelope to make the changes. If you select Cancel, Announce! does not save changes, but leaves the loudness envelope display in the window. You may then customise the envelope using the mouse, before saving changes by selecting Loudness Envelope in the Effects menu.

The Test button allows you to hear the effect of your filter before saving changes.

Filter (Effect Menu)

Use this command to filter a phrase to alter the sound or remove unwanted noises. You can set a lower cutoff frequency, an upper cutoff frequency, and the order of the filter, which is a measure of how sharp the cutoff will be.

The dialog normally shows the amplitude response of the filter, however the phase response is also available by pressing the Show Phase button.

The Test button allows you to hear the effect of your filter before saving changes.

Echo (Effect Menu)

Use this command to add an echo effect. Often a slight echo (1 echo, delayed 50 ms, -10db decay) is enough to add more presence to your prompts. You can set the number of echoes, the amount that the level of each echo is reduced by, and the time between echoes. Adding more echoes, with larger delays and less decay will produce some strange effects, and may cause clipping to occur.

The Test button allows you to hear the effect of your echo before saving changes.

Once you have found the right parameters for your application, you can select all the phrases in your file and process them all with one command.

Fast/Slow (Effect Menu)

Use this command to speed up or slow down a phrase or selection. Announce! does not do pitch adjustment, so the pitch of the voice will alter accordingly.

The Test button allows you to hear the effect of your echo before saving changes.

Erase (Effect Menu)

Use this command to silence a portion of the phrase without altering the timing. The selected samples are reduced to silence but are not removed.

Louder/Softer (Effect Menu)

Use this command to increase or reduce the gain of a phrase.

All phrases in a phrase file can be processed with one command. If this command is used in a voice editor window, only the gain of the current selection is altered.

The Test button allows you to hear the effect of your echo before saving changes.

Loudness Envelope (Effect Menu)

Use this command in a voice editor window to graphically change the gain of parts of your phrase. After you have selected this command, the menu item will be checked, and you will see a green line across the center of the window. Also, you will see a scale appear on the left hand side of the window, showing the relative gain level. The center line is the default gain of 0dB, or x1. Use the mouse to click on the line and drag the line to a new position. The line shows how much the gain will be adjusted. It is possible to increase the gain, decrease the gain, and fade in and out. If the envelope line is moved above the center line, the level of the signal will be increased, and if the line is moved below the center line, it will be reduced.

To hear the effect of your envelope changes, use the Play command. This will give you the option to hear the clip with or without the envelope changes. Announce! will then prompt you to save the envelope changes when you turn off envelope mode by choosing the envelope item again.



Here is part a word that is being operated on by the loudness envelope. The end of the word will be louder than before, giving it more emphasis.

SampleRate (Effect Menu)

Use this command to change the sampling rate of a phrase. Announce! will show a dialog containing a drop-down selection box to allow you to select one of the most common sampling rates, or type your desired sampling rate into the edit box.

Note that when reducing the sampling rate of a phrase from a higher frequency to a lower one, it is advisable to filter the samples first, to avoid unwanted noises appearing in the phrase. Announce! will prompt you to do this if you do not set the anti-alias check box in the dialog, and anti-alias filtering is required. Announce! will use the default anti-alias filter for this purpose. Anti-aliasing is required due to an effect of digital sampling a waveform.

Sampling rate conversion runs faster if the new sampling rate is an exact multiple of the previous one.

Shortcuts

StatusBar: RATE button in StatusBar .

Use voice card / Use sound card (Sound Menu)

Use voice card

Use sound card

Use these commands to select which device to use for play and record operations. If you have both a Windows sound card and a Voice card, you can easily test the sound quality with both systems by using this menu.

The currently active playback device is shown with a check mark on the menu.

Record (Sound Menu)

Use this command to start a recording session. Announce! will show the record dialog

This dialog is different depending on whether you have chosen to use a voice card or a sound card, and whether the active window is a phrase list or a voice editor.

Phrase list window:

With both cards, the record dialog will show you the script for the currently selected phrase. You can record directly into the phrase. If you change the script for the phrase, a new phrase will be created. You can scroll back and forth through the phrases using the Last and Next buttons.

Voice Editor window:

When you choose record from a voice editor window, Announce! will show a dialog which will allow you to record a single phrase into the voice editor window. The phrase will be inserted at the cursor.

See Starting a new project .

Record Dialog

Shortcuts


Toolbar:




Play Clip (Sound Menu)

Use this command to play a phrase from a phrase file window, or to play the entire clip in a voice editor window. Once playing, the command can be terminated by clicking on the stop button, choosing stop from the Sound menu, pressing the escape key, or just clicking in a window. When playing to an 8 bit sound device, Announce! will warning if your waveform has exceeded the maximum value allowable.

Shortcuts


Toolbar: 

Mouse: double click on the  icon to play. Click anywhere to stop play.

Play Selection (Sound Menu)

Use this command to play a selection from a phrase in a voice editor window. Once playing, the command can be terminated by clicking on the stop button or choosing stop from the Sound menu. When playing to an 8 bit sound device, Announce! will warn you if your waveform has exceeded the maximum value allowable.


Shortcuts

Toolbar: 

Stop (Sound Menu)

Use this command to stop a play function.

Shortcuts

Toolbar: 

Mouse: click in a window

Wait for Call (Play Menu)

Use this command to make a connection through the phone system to your voice card from another phone. Announce! will go onhook on the voice card line, and wait for an incoming ring. If a ring is received, Announce! will go offhook on the line to answer the call. If the cancel button is pressed, Announce! will go back offhook on the line.

Play Repeat Mode

This command will set Announce! into a mode where all play commands continuously loop until terminated by the stop command. This is useful when evaluating short phrases, and when transcribing pre-recorded phrases into script text.

Record Dialog

fields:

Last Button:

This button is available when recording to a phrase list. It will step you back through your list of phrases.

Next Button:

This button is available when recording to a phrase list. It will step you back forwards your list of phrases.

Record Button:

This button starts the record process. If using a sound card, and silence detection is enabled, recording will not start until you start talking.

Stop Button:

This button stops a phrase currently being recorded. If silence detect is enabled, Announce! will stop speech detection until Record or Autorecord is pressed.

Autorecord Button:

This button is only available when recording into a phrase list from a sound card. It will allow you to automatically step through the phrases in a phrase list recording each one. This speeds up the recording process. If you make a mistake, you can use the stop button and back up using the Last button to re-record a previous phrase.


Auto silence detect: check box

This is available if you are recording from a Windows sound card. If you check this box, recording will not start until speech is detected.

Silence Level meter and Scroll bar

This gives visual feedback of the sound level being recieved. In addition. the scroll bar sets the threshold for silence detection. If you are using silence detection, and the beginning or ends of your phrases are not being recorded, try reducing this level, or increasing the sound level from your sound card.

Shortcuts

Toolbar: 

Windows Sound Card (Setup Menu)

Use this command to tell Announce! about your Windows sound card, and the parameters specific to recording with a sound card. When using recording with silence detection, you may need to alter the silence detection parameters to ensure good pause detection.

Non-silence detect time

Increasing the non-silence detect time will help to remove coughs and other noises in between prompts, but you may also miss short prompts such as "one", or "two".

Silence detect time

Increasing the silence detect time will ensure that pauses between phrases in a larger prompt, such as "press 1 for support,<pause> press 2 for sales" will not be detected as 2 separate prompts. However the minimum pause between each prompt recording must be greater than the silence detect time or you will have more than one prompt in each phrase. (this is not a big problem however since you can easily split them up afterwards with the Split Phrase command)

Record Frequency

Most Windows sound cards support recording at different sampling rates. We recommend setting up your Windows sound card to sample at the same sampling rate as your voice card. However, some sound cards will only record at specific frequencies (usually 11025Hz and 22100 Hz). In this case the recordings will be converted to the voice card frequency when the files are saved as voice files.

Sample rate conversion will be much faster if you use an exact multiple of the final sampling rate.

You can select one of the provided sampling rates from the drop-down selection box, or you can type your desired sampling rate into the edit box.

Announce! supports all Windows sound cards with Windows 3.1 sound drivers.

When using a sound card, use the manufacturers mixer application to select the correct input port and the record level.

Voice Card (Setup Menu)

Use this command to tell Announce! about your Windows voice card. It is important to correctly specify all the parameters in this dialog for your voice card to work correctly.

Voice Card channel

Dialogic channels are numbered from 1, and Pika channels are numbered from 0.

Record Silence Timeout

This field sets the maximum amount of silence in seconds before the voice card will stop recording. If set to zero, recordings will not terminate on silence.

H/W interrupt

Use this setting to tell Announce! which hardware interrupt is used by the Dialogic driver. If you specified the hardware interrupt when you loaded D40DRV.EXE, then this setting may be left at 0.

Wait for ring before offhook

If this box is checked, Announce! will start up with the voice card line on-hook. When it detects an incoming ring, Announce! will go offhook on that line. See also Wait for Ring in the Sound menu (page 46).

Use local phone

You can choose whether to use the local phone if you are using an PIKA AVA-1B with the local phone option, and whether to use the microphone input or the phone port for recording.

Compression Type

Use this command to set up the type of compression and decompression to use when working with compressed voice files. Announce! can compress and decompress both Dialogic format and PIKA format files.

Sampling Rate

Announce! also needs to know the sampling rate used by your voice card. You can select one of the provided sampling rates from the drop-down selection box, or type the sampling rate into the edit box.

Extensions

In addition, you can change the default file extensions to be used for voice files. These extensions are used in the file dialog boxes when saving to compressed voice file format.

Font (Setup Menu)

Use this command to change the font used by all windows. The color of the font used in voice editor windows is selected in the waveform colors setup.

Waveform Display (Setup Menu)

Use this command to enable an alternative method of the graphically showing the samples in voice editor window. The normal Announce! method for displaying samples in a voice editor window is to take the average of the samples corresponding to each pixel on the screen. Using the max envelope will always show the largest valued samples. This is sometimes useful to find whether clipping may take place on record.

Waveform Colors (Setup Menu)

Use this dialog to change the colors used by Announce! in voice editor windows. Announce! normally uses the Windows system colors for drawing the waveforms, cursors and other graphical objects in the voice editor window, and in the phrase list window. You can change the colors of the different objects in a voice editor window by selecting an object using the radio button, and then choosing the color associated with that object from the color boxes. Note there are actually 2 colors associated with some items such as cursors, which are displayed superimposed on top of the display. A different color will be shown for these items depending on whether they are over a white portion of the screen or a black portion. This ensures that the cursor is always visible.

File Formats

VBase40 files (*.vap)

VBase40 is a common format for storing compressed ADPCM files. In addition to the data, VBase40 files store the sampling rate used for all phrases, a name for each file and an index into the phrase data. See [VBase40 file format](#).

ADPCM Voice Files (*.vox, *.voi)

These are normally individual phrases stored in compressed adpcm format. There is no formatting information in these files. Sampling rate and compression type are assumed to be as set up in the Voice card Setup Menu.

Windows Sound Files (*.wav)

These are standard Windows sound files. These files contain information about the sampling rate and compression type, and mono/stereo. Announce! can open all mono and stereo WAV files, both 8 and 16 bit, with sampling rate of 32kHz or less. When opening 8 bit sound wave files, Announce! scales the 8 bit samples to normal ADPCM amplitude. When saving to a 8 bit wave file, or when playing to an 8 bit play device, Announce! will scale the samples back to their original value. Announce! will warn you if any part of your waveform has exceeded the allowable value for 8 bit samples during play or save operations. When opening stereo wav files, Announce! adds the two channels to convert to mono, and reduces the amplitude to avoid clipping.

VBase40 File Format

A VBASE40 phrase file format is broken into three sections:

- 1) Header
- 2) Index
- 3) Data

Header

The file header contains various pieces of information about the phrase file. The following C language structure definition describes this header:

```
struct PFILEHDR {  
    long      max_phrases; /* maximum # of prompts in the header*/  
    long      sampling_rate; /* sampling frequency */  
    long      phrases;      /* # of prompts in use */  
    long      reserved_1;  
    long      bytes_in_use; /* file size */  
    long      reserved_2;  
} phdr;
```

The header occupies the first 24 bytes of the phrase file.

Index

The phrase file index is made up of *phdr.max_phrases* copies of the following C language structure definition:

```
struct PFILEIDX {  
    long      phr_offset; /* offset (in bytes) of phrase */  
    long      length;     /* length (in bytes) of phrase */  
    long      text_offset; /* offset of text record */  
} pindex;
```

There is one index entry for each phrase.

Data

The phrases and text records are stored in the remainder of the file. Phrases are accessed with the *phr_offset* and *length* members of the appropriate *pindex* structure. Since the data in a voice phrase is binary, there is no special terminating character to mark the end of a phrase.

Text records are stored in ASCII format and are terminated by the ASCII NUL character ('\0').

