THE FUTURE OF VOICE-OVERS

From digital media productions to mobile applications in 2010.

Authored by David Ciccarelli, CEO of Voices.com
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Collectively, we work in an industry with eight decades to its claim and one that has undergone a phenomenal series of changes. Estimated to be a $12.3 billion industry world-wide, voice-overs and language services penetrate all forms of both media and new media, touching the daily lives of nearly everyone in Western culture.

HISTORY OF VOICE-OVERS

The first voice over was recorded in 1900 by Reginald Fessenden who reported on the weather during a test. More familiar was the first cartoon voice over in 1928 by Walt Disney as Mickey Mouse in "Steamboat Willie." The following year, 1929, the first cartoon series produced, Looney Tunes, debuted in cinemas.

FIRST PROMINENT VOICE ACTORS

The first prominent voice actor was former radio personality, voice actor and comedian Mel Blanc who joined Leon Schlesinger Productions in 1936, a company that made animated cartoons which were distributed by Warner Bros. Mel was famous for his versatility and is still known today as The Man of 1000 Voices. In today’s industry, the most famous person in voice-overs is Don LaFontaine, who in 1962 recorded his first voice-over for a movie trailer. He was paid $82.00, a far cry from the premium rates that professional voice over talents can command today. Throughout his long and successful career, Don was able to set the standard for how movie trailers were written and voiced, literally becoming the voice of the movies. Although his physical passing on September 1, 2008 has left a great void, his spirit remains and Don’s legacy continues to grow and serve those in the voice over community.
THE FUTURE OF VOICE-OVER

As we embrace the year 2010, milestones cause industry professionals to not only reflect on the changes of days gone by, but also to envision what the future has in store for the industry. What’s amazing is that ideas once conceived to be in the distant future are here today.

From mobile Internet to radio that you can listen to anytime, anywhere and with books available for download at the touch of a button on revolutionary mobile devices such as the iPhone, iPod Touch and now the newest Apple product, the iPad, the prospects for working voice actors has never been so bright.

A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

While the opportunities for voice-over professionals are broad, this report focuses on three unique and quickly emerging areas. These niches are not speculative. They have a proven track record of use by digital media producers, publishers and advertisers. Furthermore, both small businesses and global corporations are engaging their customers with the use of digital media productions, all of which require the expertise of voice talents.

IDENTIFYING OPPORTUNITIES

The opportunities highlighted in this special report are audiobooks, podcasting and more broadly, Internet radio as well as mobile applications with an emphasis on mobile gaming.
AUDIOBOOKS
How voice-overs will be used in the book publishing industry.
OVERVIEW OF AUDIOBOOKS

Audiobooks have a unique and fascinating history. In 1933, anthropologist J.P. Harrington, drove the length of North America to record oral histories of Native American tribes on aluminum discs using a car battery-powered turntable. Now, in the 21st Century, the definition of books and publishing is evolving as technology advances and the consumer demands change. Audiobooks allow avid readers to multi-task in today’s hectic world. Consumers can listen to an audiobook as they commute, exercise, or cook. At the same time, audiobooks preserve the oral tradition of storytelling that J.P. Harrington pursued many years ago. Narration, sound effects, and music can complement the reading experience.

Source: Audio Publishers Association
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A historical perspective by Marianne Roney: In January 1952, Barbara Cohen and Marianne Roney, sat down with Dylan Thomas in the bar of the Chelsea Hotel and persuaded him to record some of his poetry. Spoken word records were almost unheard of at the time. Cohen and Roney knew that Thomas’s poetry was shocking, moving and important, and that they wanted to record it to preserve the sounds. With the promise of five hundred dollars, and much coaxing and cajoling, a recording session was arranged. Thomas selected the poems, writing the list in his tiny round letters in Miss Roney’s appointment book for Friday, February 15th, 1952. Caedmon Records was born the next week, named, appropriately enough, for the first poet to write in the native language of Old England. February 15th came and went, without Thomas. It is difficult to imagine how much nervous energy was expended in trying to find the lost poet and rescheduling his recording session. On February 22nd, Peter Bartok, son of the composer Bela Bartok, had set up his equipment in Steinway Hall to do the recording. Thomas began the session with “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.” Bartok had perhaps expected a quavery poet’s voice, but instead he got a French horn. After some consideration, he adjusted the microphone for a symphonic recording to accommodate Thomas’s sonorous voice. To fill the other side of the record Thomas recorded a story he sold to Harper’s Bazaar, A Child’s Christmas in Wales. This recording established A Child’s Christmas in Wales as a Christmas classic. It is Dylan Thomas’s most widely known work and, as a model of translucent prose, stands as an everlasting testament to his greatness as poet and bard.

Source: Audio Publishers Association
AUDIOBOOK PUBLISHERS HOLD GROWN THROUGH ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The Audio Publishers Association (APA) recently released the results of the 2009 APA Sales Survey, conducted to evaluate trends and measure the growth of the audiobook industry. The independent research firm, LewisClarkBoone Market Intelligence, surveyed audiobook publishers and analyzed consumer sales data from 2008, comparing current statistics against the previous year’s findings. The results show the audio industry experienced only a slight drop in sales in 2008, comparable to those of the trade book industry.

For the first time, the APA is releasing the measure of publishers’ revenues, a metric that other publishing industry trade associations use. Revenue reported by 30 member companies is $331 million, down only 6.7% from last year. The APA estimates that the total size of the audiobook industry, based on the dollars spent by consumers and libraries, is close to $1 billion.

The audiobook industry has been growing steadily for more than a decade. And while some segments of the audiobook business slowed in 2008, some formats saw significant growth.

- CD sales represent 72% of the audio market.
- Downloads grew to 21% of the market.
- The sales of preloaded devices increased significantly, now making up 3% of the total market.
- Cassette sales stayed the same since 2007, accounting for 3% of sales in 2008.
- Unabridged audiobooks made up 68% of the units and 85% of the 2008 audiobook market

Source: Audio Publishers Association
Sales of downloadable audiobooks increased in 2008, to 21 percent of sales, up from 17 percent in 2007.

Pre-loaded audiobook devices increased from 1 percent in 2007 to 3 percent in 2008, while MP3 CDs stayed the same at 1 percent of sales.

Measured by publisher revenue, retail is the audio industry’s strongest channel, followed closely by the library channel.
• The majority of audiobooks continue to be targeted at adults, with 83 percent of the dollar volume, up from 74 percent in 2007. Audiobooks geared toward children and teens accounted for 17 percent, down from 25 percent in 2007.

# TOP AUDIOBOOK PUBLISHERS

## Audiobook Survey Participants:

The following audio publishers participated in this year’s survey:

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<tr>
<th>Audio Publisher</th>
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<td>Apollo Audiobooks, Inc.</td>
<td>L.A. Theatre Works</td>
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<td>Audible, Inc.</td>
<td>Listen &amp; Live Audio</td>
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<td>Simon &amp; Schuster Audio</td>
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<td>St. Anthony Messenger Press</td>
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<td>DogEar Audio</td>
<td>Sue Media Productions</td>
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<td>Hachette Audio</td>
<td>Ulverscroft Group, Ltd.</td>
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<td>Weston Woods Studios</td>
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<td>HighBridge Company</td>
<td>Writer’s Audioshop</td>
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Source: Audio Publishers Association
RADIO
How voice-overs will be used in radio, podcasting and mobile audio.
RADIO TRENDS ON AIR AND ONLINE

A record has been set. By the end of 2007, online advertising spending in the United States outpaced radio advertising spending for the first time.

But radio hasn’t gone away… what we’re seeing is indicative that traditional radio is being consumed in more diverse ways and becoming associated more closely with the broader sector called “audio.” Within that sector, digital and interactive technologies are changing both the distribution and access of audio content, and this in turn, is changing traditional business models.

Internet radio, satellite radio, podcasting, high-definition (HD) radio and mobile audio services are revolutionizing an industry that until recently remained largely unchanged for a century. Among the traditional media sectors, radio has lagged behind both television and newspapers in adapting to the emerging digital, interactive and on-demand media world. But this is beginning to change. There are many synergies between radio and the Internet and, for the most part, they complement rather than compete with each other. Advertisers should not abandon radio in favor of the Web but combine the two media to take advantage of the unique attributes of each.
TERRESTRIAL RADIO

While traditional radio continues to reach over 90% of the American public weekly, revenues for the industry have been flat over the past six years. This has led to a shifting landscape, perhaps best illustrated by Clear Channel, the largest radio company in the US, selling over 448 of its smaller radio stations. Clear Channel is also in the process of going from being a public company to a private one. CBS and ABC have also sold dozens of their smaller radio stations as the leading companies in the sector search for growth opportunities.

Source: eMarketer
SATELLITE RADIO

INTRODUCTION TO SATELLITE RADIO

One of the first major rivals to terrestrial radio was satellite radio. Based on a subscription model (as opposed to free radio supported by advertising), two companies, XM Satellite Radio and Sirius Satellite Radio, grew rapidly during the early part of the decade.

CHALLENGES AND RIVALRIES

The satellite radio business experienced exciting yet challenging times. As of the second quarter of 2007, leading company XM reported 8.25 million subscribers to Sirius’s 7.1 million. After several years of explosive growth coupled with financial strain, XM and Sirius merged to strengthen their position in a volatile market helping them to acquire new subscribers and maintain the ability to secure well known talk show hosts the likes of Oprah Winfrey and Howard Stern.

SATELLITE RADIO FORECAST

Bridge Ratings forecasts steady rather than spectacular growth for satellite radio over the next eight years. By 2010 (this year), there will be 23.4 million satellite radio subscribers, up from 9.1 million in 2006. Bridge Ratings does not see the merger as negatively affecting subscriber additions in the long term.

Source: eMarketer
HIGH DEFINITION RADIO

HD radio is still in its infancy in the US and, according to recent estimates, is likely to continue to be so for some time. While an HD TV makes sense to many people, forking out money for new equipment to listen to the same radio content with a modicum of improved audio clarity has yet to catch on. The value proposition for both broadcasters and consumers is not yet clear.

TRANSITION PERIOD

The transition from analog TV to digital TV is nearly complete in the US, and radio is beginning to go through a similar transition. According to M Street Corp., there are about 11,000 commercial radio stations in the US and, as of July 2007, more than 1,300 radio stations were broadcasting in HD.

HIGH COSTS POSE ADOPTION ISSUES

As is the case with digital TV, digital radio provides existing radio broadcasters with greater signal capacity that offers higher quality sound and interactive functionality for the user. Like digital and HDTV, however, consumers need to buy new equipment to access the digital signals. High-cost digital equipment was one of the initial barriers to the adoption of HDTV in the past, and HD radio is likely to undergo a similar experience. HD radio will grow as equipment becomes affordable and more HD content becomes available.

Source: eMarketer
PODCASTING

OVERVIEW OF PODCASTING

A podcast is a portable, on-demand broadcast. A radio podcast is a digital audio file of a radio show that a user can download and play on a PC or portable audio device. For radio broadcasters, it allows a user to listen to a show at a time other than when it was aired live, which is analogous to the DVR in the TV sector. But podcasting is not confined to the radio sector. On the contrary, podcasting has become popular for both professional and amateurs alike across a broad cross section of industries and interests.

TIME SHIFTED MEDIA

On-demand and time-shifted media have emerged across all media industries. In the radio sector, podcasting is the technological innovation that has given radio listeners greater freedom of how, when and where to access audio content. Recent podcast estimates from Bridge Ratings peg the active US podcast audience (those who download a podcast at least once a week) at about 7.1 million in 2007, less than 4% of US Internet users. This is likely to rise significantly when traditional broadcasters invest greater resources in their digital services.

AUDIENCE

Demographic data from comScore show that iTunes podcast listeners skew male and are more likely to be highly educated and wealthy. Additional data from Arbitron show that technology news and commentary is the most popular podcast content.

Source: eMarketer
INTERNET RADIO

Internet radio includes both the simulcast of terrestrial broadcasts online as well as Internet-only audio streaming. According to a recent report from Arbitron and Edison Media Research, about 29 million Americans access Internet radio regularly each week, and another 50 million access Internet radio occasionally each month. Some of the largest online radio networks, such as AOL and Yahoo!, are receiving between one million and two million listeners a week.

To date, online radio has been largely complementary to traditional radio, rather than in competition with it. Yet few advertisers have been attracted to the medium.

Source: eMarketer
MOBILE RADIO

RADIO ON-THE-GO

Listening to radio content on mobile audio devices is a far more attractive proposition for consumers than HD radio. Many new mobile handsets now have integrated FM radios, and satellite radio providers have teamed up with mobile operators to have their services available on mobile phones.

The proliferation of portable audio devices—in combination with the development of wireless broadband networks—gives radio broadcasters an opportunity to make portable radio synonymous with mobile phones.

Familiarity with mobile audio features will grow as these features become standard on mobile phones in the years ahead. Today, US mobile phone users are more familiar with downloading music tracks (e.g., ringtones) over the air but are less familiar with satellite radio or free FM radio services.

The most popular way mobile audio users are using their mobile audio phone is in transferring music from their PC or music player to their mobile phone. Direct streaming of subscription (satellite) radio or free FM radio is used by about one-third of mobile audio users.

Source: eMarketer
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Source: eMarketer
Data from the radio advertising bureau (RAB) show that in the late 1990s the US radio industry grew rapidly, reaching revenues of $19.8 billion in 2000, up from $13.8 billion in 1997. Since 2002, however, revenues have been flat.

**TOP RADIO ADVERTISERS**

While national and network radio advertising spending makes up less than 25% of overall radio advertising spending, the leading radio advertisers within this segment include communications, retail, automobile, insurance and entertainment companies. Verizon Wireless Service was the No. 1 most-advertised brand on US radio in 2006, with $77.2 million spent advertising the service.

**TOP 10 ADVERTISERS**

US Radio's Top 20 National Network and Spot Advertisers, Ranked by Spend

1. Verizon Wireless $77.2
2. Home Depot $75.7
3. GEICO Auto Insurance $69.3
4. AT&T Long Distance Residential $40.9
5. ABC-TV Network Entertainment Division $38.8
6. Fox-TV Network Entertainment Division $37.6
7. Dodge Dealer Association $36.2
8. Safeway $32.7
9. Chevrolet Dealer Association $26.3
10. Macy's $22.2

Source: Radio Advertising Bureau
MOBILE RADIO ADVERTISING

CONSUMING HOURS OF CONTENT PER WEEK

Mobile audio listeners are listening to between two and four hours of audio content per week on their mobile phones. For radio broadcasters, this provides an indication of the possibility of extending their audiences beyond the usual locations of car, work or home. While the traditional radio sector may seem like yesterday’s news to some, the fact is that the same rules of content creation and distribution apply to radio as they do for all media sectors.

CONTENT CREATION

Content that is compelling and easily accessible to consumers will be attractive. Technologies such as the Internet, satellite radio, HD radio, podcasting and mobile devices are potential enhancers to traditional radio content rather than a means of detraction.

PROFITABILITY

One of the great benefits of radio has always been its portability, and there is no better illustration of this than the fact that an AM/FM radio is a standard feature in all cars. But the ubiquitous use of mobile phones, the emergence of wireless/mobile broadband networks and the widespread adoption of portable music devices and satellite radio are expanding the idea of portable audio. If the radio industry adapts well to the new environment, there seems no reason why this market cannot find a new lease on life and benefit from the growth in the online sector.

Source: eMarketer
MOBILE APPLICATIONS
How Voice-Overs Will Be Used on the iPod, iPhone and iPad
OVERVIEW OF THE iPHONE

The iPhone 3G S combines all the revolutionary features of iPhone plus 3G networking that is twice as fast, built-in GPS for expanded location-based mobile services, and iPhone 2.0 software which includes support for Microsoft Exchange ActiveSync and runs hundreds of third party applications available through the new App Store.

Apple announced it sold its one millionth iPhone™ 3G on Sunday, just three days after its launch on Friday, July 11, 2007. iPhone 3G is now available in 21 countries — Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the US.

Recommendation:

With so many technology enthusiasts and financial investors excited about the possibilities, it's worth your time to get “hands on” with one of these devices by visiting a local Apple store or AT&T store. The iPhone could also be of great benefit to your business and let you work from anywhere that service is offered by an Internet service provider.
Apple Inc., seeking to revolutionize the publishing business in the same way the iPod transformed the music industry, unveiled a tablet computer starting at $499.

The iPad can display full Web pages, books and iPhone applications, and has a touch-screen keyboard, Chief Executive Officer Steve Jobs said. The product will come in two versions: one with just a Wi-Fi connection and another that also uses third-generation mobile-phone service.

All of the built-in apps on iPad were designed from the ground up to take advantage of the large Multi-Touch screen. And they work in any orientation. So you can do things with these apps that you can’t do on any other device.

Apple unveiled an electronic-book reader application for the iPad and is opening an e-book store. Pearson Plc’s Penguin, Harper Collins Publishers, CBS Corp.’s Simon & Schuster, Macmillan and Hachette Book Group have already signed deals to offer electronic books on the iPad. Be prepared for author interviews, author podcasts and other interactive content to be embedded in to the iBooks application that comes installed on all iPads.
OVERVIEW OF THE APP STORE

With both the iPhone and iPad can tap into the App Store and you’ll find applications in every category, from games to business, education to entertainment, finance to health and fitness, and productivity to social networking... some are even free. You can download them wirelessly and start using them right away.

Apple's newly launched App Store is going to transform the company again. Many people believe the App Store will be as transformative for mobile applications as iTunes was to the music and entertainment industry. On Wednesday, January 27, 2010 Apple (AAPL) issued a press release announcing that 3 billion apps had been downloaded from the App Store. Apple accomplished this feat in less than 18 months.

Recommendation:

Get up to speed on the App Store and envision how your voice can be used in iPhone applications: http://www.apple.com/iphone/features/appstore.html
The number of offerings on the App Store hit 140,000 recently and includes popular games like Texas Hold’em and Crash Bandicoot, business tools like Bloomberg News and Salesforce Mobile, and social networking programs like Facebook, MySpace and AIM. Roughly 20% of the apps are free; 90% of those with fees cost $10 or less.

**Recommendation:**

Do an introductory email marketing campaign targeted at application developers to see if you can be of service to them. If you come across an application that already has a voice over, be sure to follow up with the application creator and let them know that you are available to voice any future apps for the iPhone and beyond.
VOICE-CONTROLLED MOBILE APPS

AT&T has developed a software trick that will let modern mobile handsets, including Apple Inc's iPhone, recognize voice commands without the need for specialized voice recognition software.

In a prototype mobile version of the YellowPages website, AT&T, in a research video, shows an iPhone user entering the business name and location into text fields on the page just by speaking them at the appropriate times. While typing would work in such a case, the company claims that voicing the information is faster and more convenient -- especially when driving.

Recommendation:

Work your connections at telecommunications companies to learn if they will be creating voice-based applications for the iPhone. If they are, offer your services and let them know that you are interested in working with them when the need arises.
VOICE-CONTROLLED MOBILE APPS

As BusinessWeek pointed out in 2008, Apple was able to make a big splash at E3 without even having a physical corporate presence. That reminds me of its looming presence at the CES trade show every year without setting a foot in Las Vegas. Electronic Arts executives said at the time that they would be making Spore, Tiger Woods and Need For Speed for the iPhone platform, all released in 2009. SEGA America president, Simon Jeffery, pointed out that the iPhone was as powerful as the Dreamcast player. SEGA has released SEGA Super Monkey Ball and plans on releasing more games.

According to data collected by Cellufun, AOL’s designated mobile game portal, “iPhone gamers are generating four times the number of page views” or about “an average of 21 minutes of game play and 65 page views per iPhone player session, compared to 11 minutes and 15 page views for sessions on other phones.”

Recommendation:

Keep your ear to the ground for any opportunities voicing mobile games. The market is growing by leaps and bounds where these games and apps are concerned. By being at the forefront, you’ll be well positioned to become a voice in demand working for developers who will need fresh talent as well as start long term relationships with professional voice actors for mobile games, PC games and traditional console based games.
CONNECT WITH iPHONE AND iPOD TOUCH DEVELOPERS

Just like software developers or video game developers, iPhone developers are creating applications that are designed to take advantage of iPhone features such as Multi-Touch, the accelerometer, wireless, and GPS. The iPhone also supports audio and video, which means there is an excellent opportunity for voice-over talent.

**Recommendation:**

Visit the App Store and learn about the audio applications. Reach out and contact some of the iPhone application developers and introduce yourself. Offer your services as a voice talent and inspire these developers to use voice-over recordings in their applications. Explain how you can will help them make their application stand out by creating a more interactive experience.

Here is a list of iPhone applications being reviewed, as well as links to the developer websites: [http://reviews.cnet.com/8300-13549_7-30.html](http://reviews.cnet.com/8300-13549_7-30.html)
MOBILE ADVERTISING

Mobile advertising network AdMob, recently acquired by Google, is launching a whole new set of customized ads for iPhone apps. Rather than the static text or image ads that make up most of its mobile ad inventory today, these take advantage of specific features of the iPhone.

For instance, an ad for a product or service can stream an audio file. A movie ad can open up YouTube so you can watch the trailer. An ad for a retailer can find nearby stores on Google maps. Others call a number through the phone, or can take you to a specific Web page. And just like on Facebook, where many of the ads on apps are simply promotions for other apps, an ad for an iPhone app will launch the App Store.

What’s the key difference between AdMob and other iPhone app-focused ad networks we've seen so far? It already has a host of big-name advertisers and publishers signed up. Initial advertisers include Ford, Electronic Arts, Land Rover, Jaguar, and Universal Pictures, and app publishers include AccuWeather and MovieTickets.com. Ads start at 30 cents. AdMob expects the market to settle around 40-50 cents per click, and is offering developers a 50% cut.

Recommendation:

Be prepared to have quotes ready for mobile voice overs. As more and more companies decide to advertise using AdMob or similar services, rates that pay respectable fees for voice over need to be set, so take the time to establish what your rates for mobile voice overs are now.
ABOUT DAVID CICCARELLI

As the founder of Voices.com, David offers management experience as well as a clear vision the company's future. Currently, David oversees infrastructure maintenance, infrastructure development, and web application development. David was nominated for the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award by the Business Development Bank of Canada and has also presented Voices.com as a New Voices winner at DigiFest, an award recognizing Voices.com as an industry leader who provides digital media products and innovations that contribute to Canada's economic and cultural future. In 2000, David graduated from the Ontario Institute of Audio Recording Technology with an Honor's Degree in Audio Technology.

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ABOUT VOICES.COM

Voices.com was established in 2004 and is now the technology and industry leading website that connects businesses with professional voice talents. Radio and television stations, advertising agencies and Fortune 500 companies rely upon the Voices.com marketplace to search for, audition and hire voice talents with the assistance of our innovative SurePay™ escrow service and our Web application.

The winner of several awards, including the 1to1 Impact Award for Full-Suite CRM, CRM Elite Award, and the DigiFest New Voices Award, Voices.com has raised its profile significantly this year ranking on the PROFIT Hot 50 recognizing 534% growth over the past two years and just this summer was featured on Backbone Magazine’s and KPMG’s annual Pick 20 Listing as an “innovative company”.

Clients include NBC, ESPN, PBS, The History Channel, Reader’s Digest, Comcast, Nortel Networks, Bell Canada, Microsoft, Cisco Systems, ING, Western Union, Ford, GM, Jaguar, Firestone Tires, American Airlines, the US Army, the US Government and thousands more.

Voices.com is a very professional organization with easy interface and people that are easy to work with.

While this is a competitive industry, voices.com gives you many great tools at your fingertips to help you compete and succeed.

- Paul Hernandez, Customer