

Microsoft Office 2010 Text to Speech

A well hidden feature in Microsoft Office 2010 is the option for to speak text out. The facility is pretty basic but it is available. We'll look at its use in MS Word 2010, the ever popular word processor which incorporates many useful accessibility features.

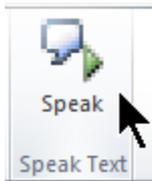


Figure 1 Speak button

The Speak feature is also available within PowerPoint (yes talking PowerPoint), Excel and OneNote (one of our favourite but least used programs). Follow the same steps to add the Speak feature in each program.

Because MS Office is integrated with Windows it means that whichever voice is selected in that computer's Control Panel will be used when you click on the **Speak** button. If either, or both, of the Scottish Voices (Heather or Stuart) are installed you can choose one or other of the voices to speak the text. You do this from the Control Panels [**Control Panels > Speech Recognition > Text-to-Speech**, selecting the voice from the drop down list.]

To use the **Speak** feature you need to first of all find it and then add it to your toolbar.

Finding the text-to-speech feature

The 'Speak' command does not appear on the Ribbon - the area above the Word document that has Tabs such as **File, Home, Insert** and so on. Each Tab includes several commands. For example the Home tab includes Paste, Font options, Paragraph options etc.

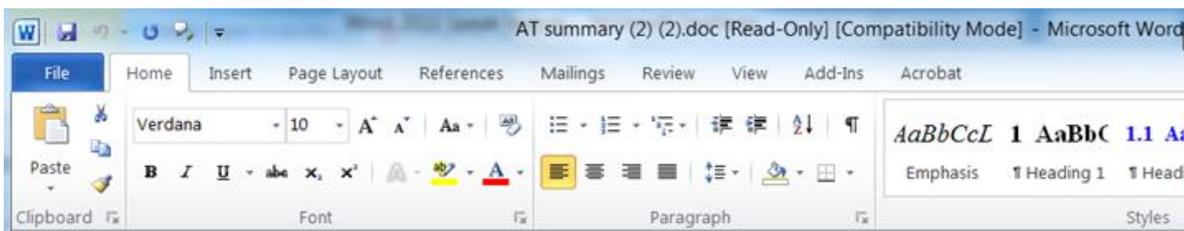


Figure 2 MS Word Ribbon Home tab

None of the Tabs includes the Speak feature, so you need to add it. First, you need to Find the elusive Speak command.

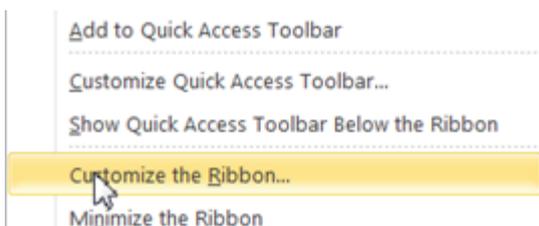


Figure 3 Select Commands Not in the ribbon

1. Right Click on the Ribbon (don't click above or below the Ribbon but somewhere in the area of the Ribbon itself). Scroll down and click **Customise the Ribbon**. You are presented with a complicated window with two main columns with several options.

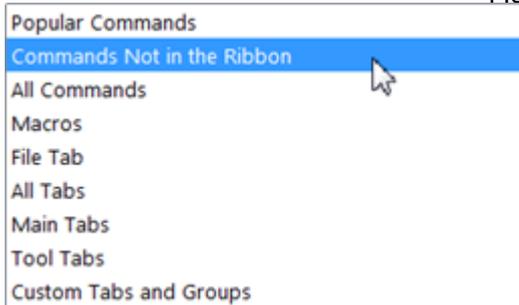


Figure 4 Selecting Commands Not in ribbon

2. To the left of centre near the top, select **Popular commands > Commands Not in the Ribbon**. Scroll down and select **Speak**. Next you need to add the Speak feature to the Ribbon.

Adding Speak button to the Ribbon

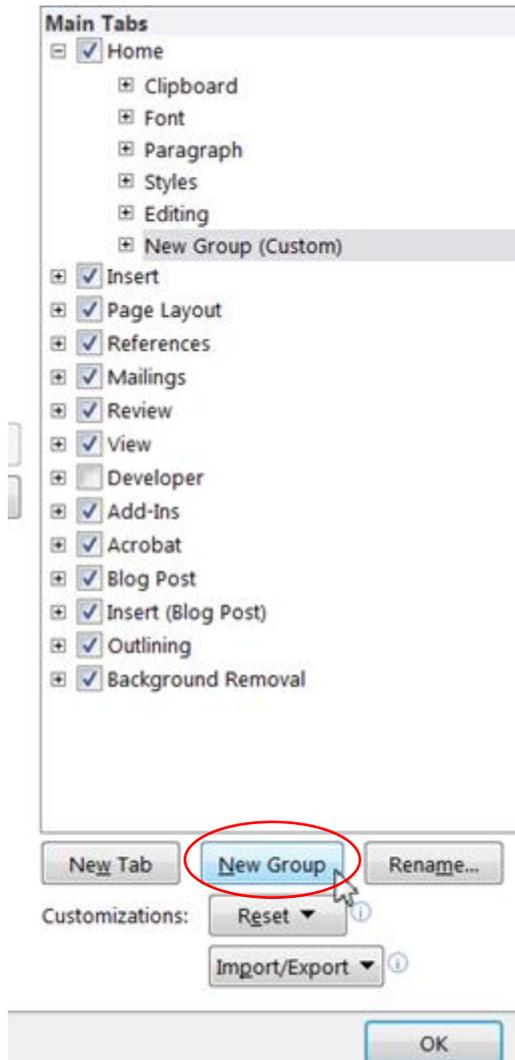


Figure 5 Adding a New Group to the Right Hand column

1. Decide where you would like to locate the feature. We'll add it to the end of the **Home** tab. In the right hand column click on the Home tab in the right hand column.
2. At the bottom of right hand column, click on **New Group**. A New Group will appear in the Home tab (Figure 5).
3. Right click the name New Group, scroll and select **Rename**. A dialog box appears with symbols and the option to rename it. We'll call it **Speak Text** but you may prefer just a symbol, or both a symbol and name.
4. With **Speak** still selected in the left column, and **New Group [or Speak Text]** selected on the right column, click **Add**. The feature will now be added to your MS Word Ribbon.

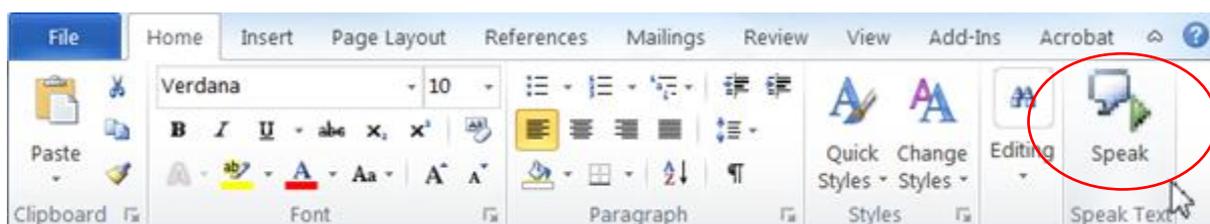
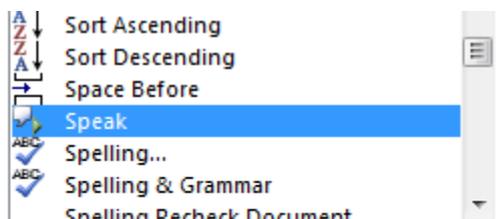


Figure 6 Home Tab showing Speak button added to the Ribbon.

1. A new group will appear in the **Home** Tab of the Ribbon containing the **Speak** symbol. (See Figure 6.)

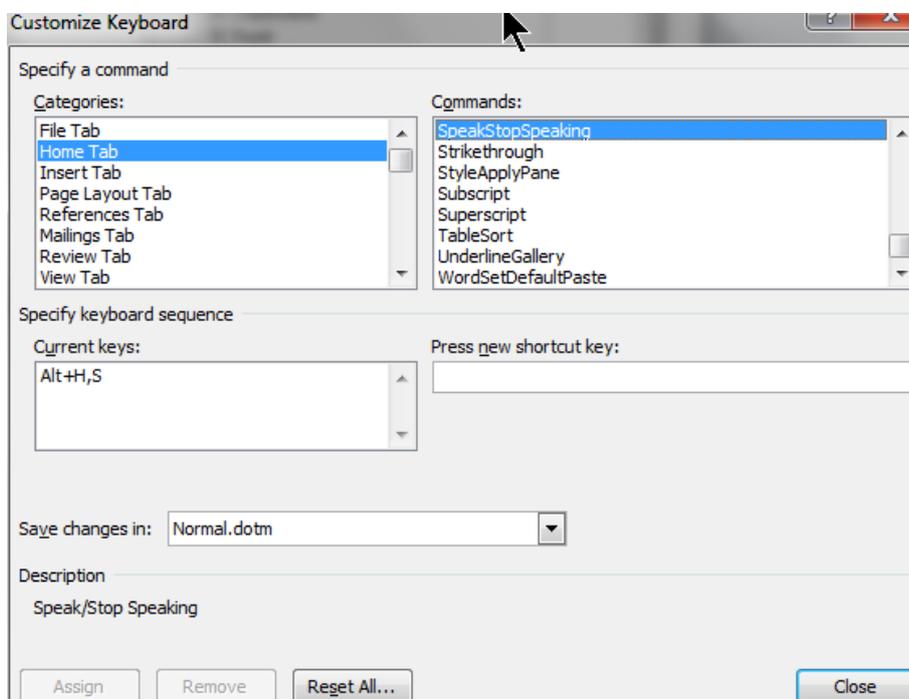
Assign a Keyboard Shortcut

You can set up a Keyboard shortcut for Speak Text / Stop Speaking. This is useful for pupils who can't see the buttons on the Ribbon or who have difficulty with mouse control, or who simply prefer to use the keyboard because they find it quicker than the mouse.



Keyboard shortcuts: [Customize...](#)

1. Bring up the **Commands Not in the Ribbon** dialogue box, and select the Speak icon [**File > Options > Customize Ribbon > Commands Not in the ribbon > scroll down and select Speak**].
2. Click on Keyboard Shortcuts Customize...



3. In the left column select **Home** Tab (if you chose **Home** for the Speak button).
4. Decide on a keyboard shortcut to use. Press the keys to use and they will appear in the box **Press new shortcut key** (the example uses Alt+H,S).
5. Click **Close**

Try out the Speak feature

All that's left to do is to select the text you want read out in your document - for example a Word, Paragraph, sentence page or even the whole document (Select All) and the text will be read out.

Customise the Quick Access toolbar

The Quick Access toolbar allows you to cut down on many of the distractions associated with the Ribbon and keep the most frequently used Commands to the fore.

Add Speak to the Quick Access Toolbar

A quick way to do this is to:

1. Right click in the **Ribbon** area.
2. Select **Customise the Quick Access Toolbar**.
3. Click on **Popular Commands** and scroll to **Commands Not in the Ribbon**.
4. Scroll down and select **Speak**.

5. Click **Add**.
6. Click **Ok**.

With **Speak** highlighted you can move it up or down the list so that it appears wherever in the Ribbon is most convenient to the pupil.

Position the Quick Access toolbar below the ribbon

To make things easier for the pupil you can position the Quick Access Toolbar below the ribbon. To do this:

1. Right click in the **Ribbon** area.
2. Select **Customise the Quick Access Toolbar**.
3. At the bottom Popular Commands column **check Show Quick Access toolbar below the Ribbon**.
4. Click **Ok**.

Choosing a voice to use with Speak

Because MS Office is integrated with Windows it means that whichever computer voice is selected in that computer's Control Panel will be used when you click on **Speak**. If you have Heather or Stuart, or both, installed you can choose one of the voices to speak the text. These changes are made in the Control Panel rather in MS word itself [**Control Panels > Speech Recognition > Text-to-Speech**, select the voice from the drop down list.]