

# Voice Banking Message Banking Digital Legacy

## Access to Communication and Technology

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# Who and when?

## Who might bank their voice?

- People who have a condition which could result in the loss of their speech over time or temporarily following a procedure.
- This could include people that have a progressive neurological condition such as Motor Neurone Disease (MND) or people with cancers of the throat and mouth.
- If this is considered early enough your voice can be recorded to allow it to be heard and used later on.

## When should I bank my voice?

- As soon as possible. The stronger your voice, the better quality the recordings of your voice will be.
- It can be a tiring and time consuming process, so the longer you give yourself to complete it, the better.

# How?

## How do I bank my voice?

- Before you start the process, it is important to understand the different options available.
- The option you choose will depend on your reasons for wanting to bank your voice
- It is possible to use more than one option, but time and fatigue should be taken into consideration.
- This leaflet will explain three different options that you can consider:



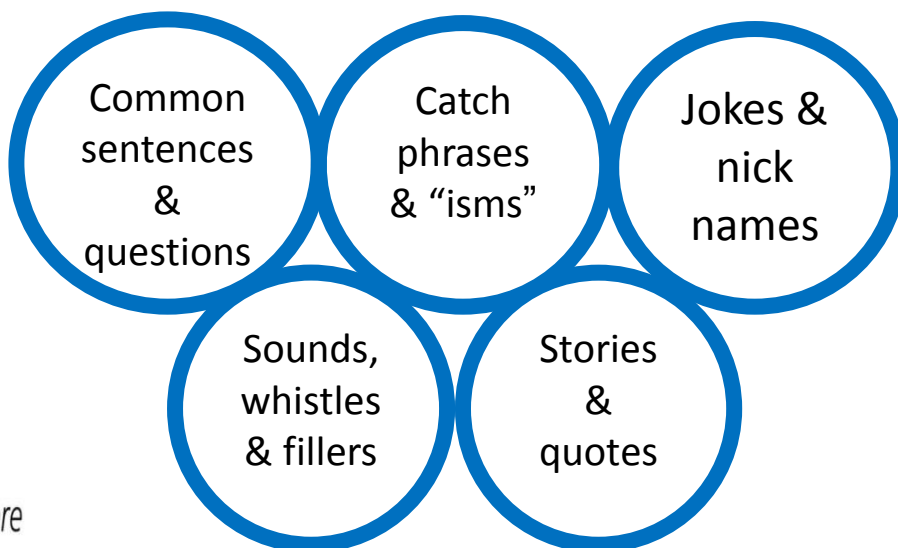
# 1. Message Banking

## What is Message Banking?

- Message banking is the process of recording or documenting phrases and sentences that reflect your personality.
- This could be done by recording your voice so that your intonation is captured or in paper form, by collecting a bank of written phrases
- For voice recordings the messages can be played back on a computer, or later using a communication aid. Once recorded, the messages cannot be changed.

## How do I message bank?

- Firstly, you and your family/friends need to think about the sorts of phrases you say or use often and write them down. This can include:



# Message Banking

## How do I record my messages?

Messages can be recorded in the following ways:



Using a Voice Recorder app on a Smartphone. These are usually already available on smartphones and are free



Using a dedicated voice recorder, such as a Zoom recorder. These can be purchased from any electronics store or online at a cost of the user



Using Audacity software. This is free software that allows you to record voice messages onto a PC. It can be downloaded using this link <https://www.audacityteam.org/>. You will also need a headset



Using paid-for Communication Aid software. This allows for messages to be recorded straight onto a tablet or grid e.g. The Grid 3, Grid for iPad, Predictable



In paper form, using a communication book set up to store and categorise written messages

- Recorded messages need to be saved as a wav file on a computer, labelled and categorised into a clear order.
- Your local speech and language therapist may be able to help you with this process. A free website can be used to help categorise your messages: <https://www.mymessagebanking.com/>
- Messages can be stored on a computer (and backed up on a memory stick) until a communication aid is needed.

# 2. Voice Banking

## What is Voice Banking?

- Voice banking is a process that allows a person to record a set list of scripted words with their own voice, while they still have the ability to do so. This recording is then converted to create a personal synthetic voice.
- It is important to note that the voice that is created sounds a bit like the person however it will lack most intonation or emotion and can sound somewhat monotone.
- The voice is then installed in a communication aid. Everything that is typed is spoken using the personal synthetic voice.

## How do I bank my voice?

- Voice banking services are accessed online.
- You will need:
  - A laptop
  - Wifi
  - A USB microphone headset
  - A quiet environment
  - Time and energy



# Voice Banking

## What voice banking service should I use?

- There are many different services available. They all differ in the amount of phrases you need to record and in cost.
- You need to research the different services to determine which one might best suit your requirements.
- A few services to look at are:
  - Model Talker
  - Cereproc CereVoiceME
  - Vocal ID
  - Acapella MyOwnVoice DNN
  - Lyrebird / Project ReVoice

## Is there funding available to help with the cost?

- If you have a diagnosis of MND, the Motor Neurone Disease Association (MNDA) can sometimes help with funding.
- The Sequel Trust



# 3. Digital Legacy & Memory Banking

## What is a digital legacy or memory banking?

- Collecting stories about your life / decisions/ events that you may want your loved ones to know about.
- The concept of a 'legacy' refers to 'what a person leaves behind – how a person will be remembered and what they will be remembered for' (Breitbart, 2016, p.1).

## How do I leave a digital legacy or memory bank?

- You can record stories into a digital format (similar to message banking but with more content e.g. memories / wishes)
- Alternatively you can keep a written bank of stories or gather meaningful mementoes into one place
- All records or communications that you keep online, in your name, are also part of your digital legacy. These may contain personal, social, financial or legal content. It is important that family can access this once you've gone. More information about this can be found at this website: <https://digitallegacyassociation.org/for-the-public/>
- You can use certain video-based websites where you can choose to answer questions about your life. Record Me Now is one option and is free to use: <http://www.recordmenow.org/>. Once recordings are made, they can be saved onto a disc or stored in iCloud for sharing electronically with others.

# Comparison Table

	<b>Message Banking</b>	<b>Voice Banking</b>	<b>Digital Legacy</b>
<b>How is it done?</b>	By recording frequently used phrases and words using a mobile phone, voice recorder or audacity software. These messages are saved as a wav file on a computer.	By using paid-for, web-based software to record a set list of phrases using your own voice. The voice is analysed and then converted to create a personal synthetic voice.	By recording information and stories about yourself either using a voice recorder, computer microphone/ camera or a video-based app such as <a href="http://www.recordmenow.org">www.recordmenow.org</a>
<b>What is the result?</b>	A bank of stored, personalised messages that reflect your personality. The message cannot be changed.	A voice file containing a voice that sounds similar your own. The voice will have a monotone quality so will not sound exactly like your own.	A bank of personal stories and information about yourself in audio or video format that can be listened to or watched by family and friends.
<b>How is it used in a communication aid?</b>	Each message is transferred onto a communication aid, one wav file per button. When you press the button you hear the message. Phrases that haven't been pre-recorded will use a synthesised voice in the communication aid.	The voice is installed on the communication aid. Everything that is typed is spoken using the personal synthetic voice.	It is not intended to be used in a communication device.

# Comparison Table

	Message Banking	Voice Banking	Digital Legacy
<b>How does it sound?</b>	Exactly like the person doing the recording. This is a digital recording.	Close to your own voice but with a monotone quality. The quality varies for each person.	Exactly like the person doing the recording. This is a digital recording.
<b>What is the cost?</b>	Free, unless you decide to purchase a dedicated voice recorder or app.	The cost varies depending on what provider you use. Charities can sometimes help with funding.	Free, unless you decide to purchase a dedicated voice recorder.
<b>How long does it take?</b>	Typically 1-5 hours  Average 4 month process	Low quality – 30 minutes High quality – between 3-7 hours (with a clear voice and no fatigue issues).  For someone struggling with speech and fatigue the process can take many hours over many months.  The risk is that if they do not manage to complete it, they may only be left with the option of using a synthesised voice in a communication aid.	Depends on how many messages/stories you record and how long each one is. You can record as little or as much as you choose.

# Further resources

## Websites for message banking:

- <https://voice.adobe.com/a/PNpRA>
- <http://www.childrenshospital.org/centers-and-services/programs/a--e/als-augmentative-communication-program/protocol-of-assessment-considerations/message-banking>
- <http://www.mcmasterchildrenshospital.ca/body.cfm?id=559&fr=true>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YIQp7rdku-s>
- <https://www.audacityteam.org/>
- <https://www.tobiidynavox.com/en-GB/software/web-applications/message-banking/>

## Websites for useful advice on voice banking:

- [www.modeltalker.com](http://www.modeltalker.com)
- <https://www.cereproc.com/en/products/cerevoiceme>
- <https://vocalid.ai/human-voicebank/>
- <https://www.acapela-group.com/voices/voice-banking/>
- <https://www.projectrevoice.org/>

# Further resources

## Websites for digital legacy:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vkTAvFU00cw&feature=youtu.be>
- <https://digitallegacyassociation.org/for-the-public/>
- <http://www.recordmenow.org/>

## Other websites:

- <http://www.bhamcommunity.nhs.uk/patients-public/rehabilitation/act/>

## Document History:

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1	February 2019

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