



Wired for Speech: How Voice Activates and Advances the Human-Computer Relationship (MIT Press)

Clifford Nass

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Interfaces that talk and listen are populating computers, cars, call centers, and even home appliances and toys, but voice interfaces invariably frustrate rather than help. In *Wired for Speech*, Clifford Nass and Scott Brave reveal how interactive voice technologies can readily and effectively tap into the automatic responses all speech -- whether from human or machine -- evokes. *Wired for Speech* demonstrates that people are "voice-activated": we respond to voice technologies as we respond to actual people and behave as we would in any social situation. By leveraging this powerful finding, voice interfaces can truly emerge as the next frontier for efficient, user-friendly technology. *Wired for Speech* presents new theories and experiments and applies them to critical issues concerning how people interact with technology-based voices. It considers how people respond to a female voice in e-commerce (does stereotyping matter?), how a car's voice can promote safer driving (are "happy" cars better cars?), whether synthetic voices have personality and emotion (is sounding like a person always good?), whether an automated call center should apologize when it cannot understand a spoken request ("To Err is Interface; To Blame, Complex"), and much more. Nass and Brave's deep understanding of both social science and design, drawn from ten years of research at Nass's Stanford laboratory, produces results that often challenge conventional wisdom and common design practices. These insights will help designers and marketers build better interfaces, scientists construct better theories, and everyone gain better understandings of the future of the machines that speak with us.

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