CLAIMS

1. A system for distributed text-to-speech synthesis comprising:

a guest device configured for transmitting text input in the form of a text string;

a host device configured to receive the text string and process the text string by converting the text string to an audio index representation of an audio file associated with the text string, the host device comprising:

a text analyzer configurable to process the text string to produce phonetic information and linguistic information;

a prosody analyzer configurable to generate prosodic information based on at least the phonetic information and linguistic information,

wherein the converting at the host device being based on at least the phonetic information and prosodic information, and includes identifying audio units from a first audio unit synthesis inventory on the host device,

wherein the guest device comprises:

a second audio unit synthesis inventory where audio units are selected from and selection of audio units from the second audio unit synthesis inventory being based on the audio index representation sent from the host device; and

a unit-concatenative module for concatenating the selected audio units.

2. The system as recited in claim 1 wherein the host device and the guest device are in communication with each other, the host device adapted to receive a text input in a form of text string from either the guest device or any other source; the host device having a unit-selection module configured to create an audio index representation of an audio file from the text string on the host device and to convert the text string to an audio index representation of an audio file associated with the text string at a text-to-speech synthesizer, the unit-selection module being arranged to identify audio units from the first audio unit synthesis inventory, the identified audio units forming the audio file, the identified audio units being represented by the audio index representation.

3. The system of claim 1 wherein the guest device is a portable handheld device.