



*Creating a Brighter Future Today  
by Leading the Transition  
to a Low-Carbon World*



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*Niall O'Hanlon, ESB Access Officer*

*Robert Forde – ESB Electric Ireland*

## ***Niall O'Hanlon***

***I am the ESB Access Officer and my role is to help customers and staff, with disabilities, to easily access ESB services and information.***

***ESB was one of the first public bodies to appoint an Access Officer.***

***I ensure compliance with the Disability Act 2005 by addressing barriers to access for customers and staff***

***Responsibilities include Promoting accessibility best practice in:***

- ***Communications,***
- ***Customer Service,***
- ***Information Technologies,***
- ***Buildings***
- ***Procurement***



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## **ESB Case Study**

**Name – John**

**Disability - Non-Verbal (although he can hear perfectly)**

**John was in an accident and as a result he injured his vocal chords, which prevents him from speaking, and he also has some dexterity issues with his hands.**

**John is a qualified Accountant.**

**John joined ESB in 2014 in an Accountancy role. John's role was expanded which required him to attend meetings and collaborate with colleagues outside of his own team.**

**John was struggling with communicating in his new role and was unable to write responses quick enough to keep up with the speed of the project.**

**John, however, had reasonably good typing speeds on a keyboard and was able to use his smartphone as a means to communicate short messages.**



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## ***ESB Case Study Challenges***



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*In discussion with John, he explained the difficulties he was having and that he felt that he would have to go back to his old role unless a solution could be found (please note discussion was via email).*

*The Line Manager was very supportive of John and really wanted him to stay in the role as his experience was vital but he was also realising that the communication issue was becoming more difficult.*



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## ***ESB Case Study***

### ***Outcome/Solution***

***Equipment required: iPad and mini keyboard (both small and portable) and load some free speech enabled software to the iPad.***

***This equipment allowed John to type his answers or questions on to the iPad which in turn spoke the words using the Speech enabled software.***

***It was now not necessary to pass around the note of what John had to say, the iPad was doing it all. Initially it was a bit slow until John's colleagues become accustomed***

***John's typing skills continue to improve and he is able to use the word predictor with far greater accuracy.***

***John even has his own special voice now giving him a feeling of individuality.***

## *ESB Case Study*

*Just to give you some idea how John can use his AT device.  
See the YouTube video of “Lost Voice Guy” who won  
“Britain’s Got Talent”.*

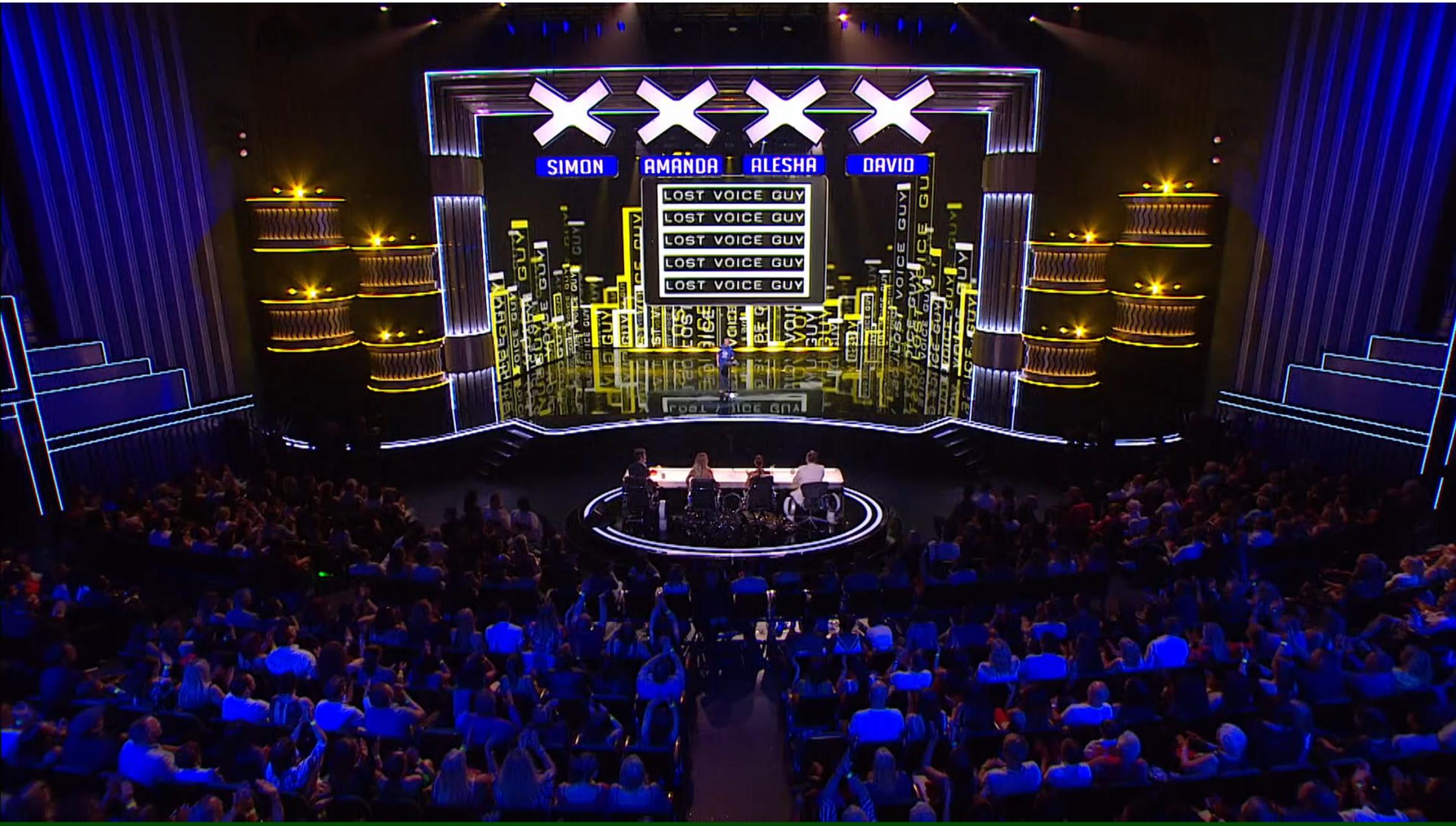


*Lost Voice Guy*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2YJYVYYhfl>



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## **Robert Forde**

*He joined ESB in 2006 and is presently based in Electric Ireland*

*He is a visually impaired, motivational speaker from Swords, Dublin.*

*He travels around Ireland sharing his experience of becoming blind at a young age, and how he has overcome his disability to do the things most important to him, in life.*

*He has developed his own website, [www.optimisteyes.com](http://www.optimisteyes.com)*

*Robert was asked "So, how do you view the world?" and in Robert's own determined manner, he replied:*

*"Initially I had doubts I would get a job or be able to move on in life after being left blind but I proved that attitude wrong. Instead of learning to live with blindness, I made the blindness learn to live with me!  
I was going to succeed and that was all that mattered."*

*Robert tells his story of losing his sight, from when he was young to the present day, in a very entertaining and upbeat way.*