

# Oh, the voices!

With more than 50 voices in his repertoire, actor Jeffrey Hedquist 'tickles people's imagination'

by JASON CLAYWORTH  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Libertyville's Jeffrey Hedquist has more than 50 voices. They can be heard across the country and around the world.

He can talk like an old man, a circus announcer or even an excited teen-ager. He literally makes his living off his mouth.

"I deal with tickling people's imagination," he said.

Hedquist does more than tickle people's imagination — as a voice-over actor with his own studio, his work speaks for some of the country's largest corporations.

His digital analog studio employs four people. At 1,000 square feet with a control room, studio and three offices, it's small as studios go, but each year it produces thousands of voice clips for use around the world.

"In truth, you have to love what you do," Hedquist said. "It's not a job anymore because I love doing it."

### Cornfields? No Problem

Since 1984, Hedquist and his studio have been located near Fairfield where he and his wife, Linda, moved from New York to practice transcendental meditation with followers of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

"I thought, 'I can't be out in cornfields. I need to be near my clients,'" Hedquist said. "It turned out that I'm able to very easily do my business here."

Hedquist's voice can be heard in the commercials of many of the world's largest consumer companies, including Goodyear, HBO/Cinemax and Hardee's restaurants.

"It's fun to do those because you know it's going to get national exposure," Hedquist said, "but some of the local and regional pieces have been our most successful."

Hedquist has won more than 600 awards, many from state and local competitions. Several are international awards — including four Clios.

"They're like the Oscars of the ad world," Hedquist said.

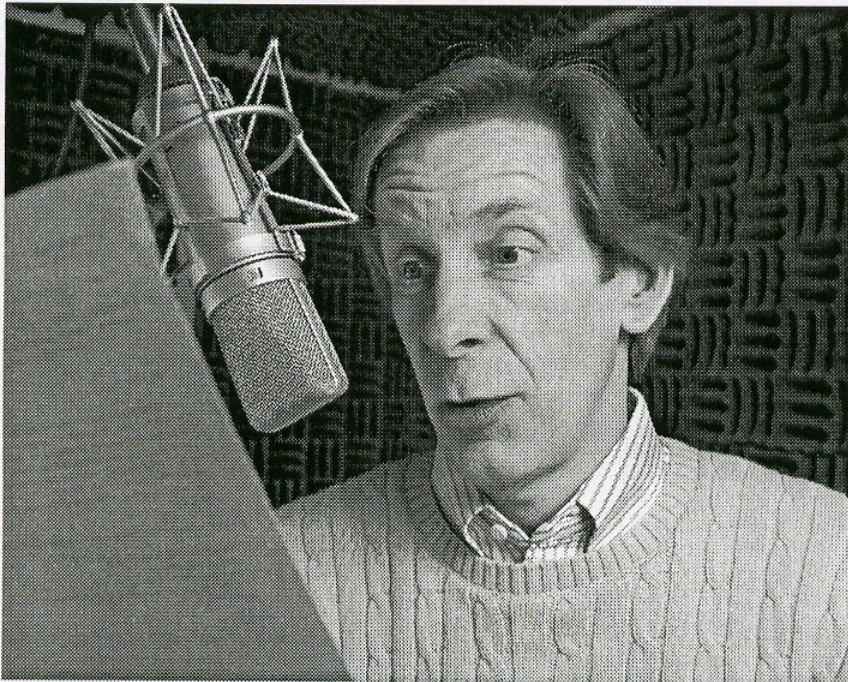
### Technology Gives Boost

Technology advances allow Hedquist and voice actors like him to do their jobs outside of major metropolitan areas.

"With digital technology, people can work in studios anywhere they want," said Rafe Greenlee, a spokesperson with the Screen Actors Guild. "You will probably see more of this in the future."

Greenlee said the technology, known as Integrated Services Digital Network, allows voice-over producers and actors to transmit their work anywhere in the world.

With the digital network, Hedquist is able to conduct his business in 44 states and four foreign countries



Jeffrey Hedquist, a voice-over actor, didn't think his business would survive outside of New York. Now, he says technology can connect him with clients anywhere in the world instantly.

with "perfect" quality.

"It has allowed us to view ourselves as more than a recording studio," Hedquist said. "We're more like a network."

While the system is beneficial to many voice-over actors, Greenlee said it has created a new type of problem for the profession — added competition.

"For some, it's bad," Greenlee said. "Now anyone can work as a voice-over actor. It's more competitive now and not just centered in New York or Los Angeles."

### An Early Start

Hedquist, 53, said people interested in the work must be persistent. He began his career when he was 16 at a radio station in Bristol, Conn. He later attended Union College in New York where he graduated with a degree in psychology and a minor in English in 1967.

"That's what I majored in. But what I really did in college is work at the college radio station," he said.

Hedquist said he started as a voice-over actor by making commercials for local radio stations.

There are a handful of voice-over actors in Iowa, he said, and many radio stations also produce voice-overs for commercials.

But Greenlee said Hedquist is a rarity.

"Obviously, Hedquist makes a lot of money," Greenlee said. "I don't think that's typical. He is rare."

Depending on the customer,

### On the Web



Listen to the voices of Jeffrey Hedquist at

[www.dmregister.com/extras/voices](http://www.dmregister.com/extras/voices)



Hedquist Productions has four employees, including Andrew MacKenzie, left, and Jay Mattsson.

\$500 to \$1,000 speaking to advertising clubs. He said he makes 12 to 18 speeches a year.

"I've always been an entertainer," Hedquist said. "It's tough for me to pick out my favorite work. I always think it's the most recent one I've done. If I had to make one choice it would be a humorous one. I think that and my natural voice is what has been the most successful."

*Here is Jeffrey's letter to the editor which appeared  
in The Des Moines Register*

I was honored and amazed at your feature article on Hedquist Productions, "Oh, the Voices!" in the Nov. 22 Sunday Register. I was honored because of the completeness of the article and amazed at the enormous overstatement of my income. I was hoping that beneath the photo it would say "Hedquist Recording a Promo for AXN TV Network in Singapore," but instead, the article stated I made \$500,000 to \$1 million a year.

My wife would like to know where all the money is, as I'm sure would the IRS.

As nice as that amount would be, the

total yearly gross income of our Fairfield, Ia., company from writing, casting, talent, music and production services is closer to the low end of the range stated above. After the bills are paid, I make only a percentage of that gross salary.

Other than that, it was a great article, and I thank you for the coverage.

**Jeffrey Hedquist, president,**  
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