



Wizzard Software To Distribute AT&T's TTS Engine

Wizzard Software has announced the expansion of its relationship with AT&T with the addition of distribution rights for the Telephony Server version of AT&T's Natural Voices text-to-speech (TTS) engine. In addition to adding the Telephony Server product line, the agreement between Wizzard and AT&T has been extended beyond its original three years. The AT&T Natural Voices Telephony Server edition is targeted to include corporate IT servers and Internet Service Providers. The Server Edition products also offer compact hardware to simultaneously support different languages for a bilingual or multi-language telephone applications more efficiently and effectively. Compact software for voice portals can support multiple languages for international customers with one AT&T Natural Voices TTS engine and multiple foreign language voice fonts, all on the same hardware platform, which can potentially offer savings on voice portals and ISPs.

www.wizzardsoftware.com

VoiceObjects Joins The SALT Forum

VoiceObjects AG, as software provider that develops voice-operated telephone services, has announced its joining of the SALT Forum and adopting the Speech Application Language Tags (SALT) 1.0 standard. VoiceObjects Factory now supports both VoiceXML and SALT, the two standards for voice-operated applications. This software includes a voice application server and a desktop with an integrated development environment as well as functions for administering content management. VoiceObjects Factory allows companies to publish instructions and e-commerce information to their voice-operated telephone services more

simply and economically. As with Web applications, servers, VoiceObjects Factory's voice application server generates personalized voice applications for each caller. This personalization can help increase the usability of automated telephone applications. Because personalized applications use already known business data, they are optimized for handling routine telephone calls and transactions without the need for taking pressure off call centers.

www.voiceobjects.com

People demand freedom of speech
as a compensation for the freedom of
thought which they seldom use.

— Søren Kierkegaard

Definition Du Jour

Voice Browser

Working in the same manner as a standard browser, a voice browser allows the user to interact with Web pages using speech. Instead of using HTML, like a standard browser, a voice browser uses VXML (Voice Extensible Markup Language), a standard of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and allows users to speak and listen to Web applications. To deliver information to a caller, a voice browser uses text-to-speech technology to translate the text of Web applications into speech and "speak" content back to the caller. Many voice browsers also use CCXML, or Call Control Extensible Markup Language. CCXML, another standard of the W3C, is an adjunct language created to complement and integrate with a VoiceXML system by providing telephone call control support.

Automated Voice Service, Then: Your overage is not helpful and you call the number listed in the user's manual. You reach an automated line "For each sales say one..." Ten prompts later, you still aren't sure which number to say, nor do you remember the choices. So you start again...and again...and again.

Automated Voice Service, Now: Your overage is not helpful and you call the number listed in the user's manual. You reach an automated line that asks "How can we help you?" Your reply, "I need maintenance on my oven." In less than 30 seconds you've reached the appropriate person, provided background on the problem and made an appointment to have your oven fixed.



too. It includes improved employee productivity, lower operational costs and increased revenue. But ultimately, speech automated service solutions are about the customer.

Customers are more savvy and smarter than ever, with more choices before them. Every interaction customers have with your enterprise must say, "We value your business, we value your time and, most important, we value you." Enterprises must provide consistent quality communication as a touchpoint. This creates two very important complementary results. You minimize customer frustration while also providing a hispanic consistent with the right information quickly. But his biggest next question — how? How can an enterprise implement or upgrade current customer contact applications and improve engagement with its customers? And how can an enterprise do so without spending large sums of capital?

Step One: Identify the business transaction.

You must think about what type of transaction you want to create and how to do so. Transactions well suited for speech automation include simple, repetitive transactions such as account opening or order status reporting, as well as more complex

Speech Automated Self-Service Solutions: From Sidelines To Primetime

By Roxann Swanson, Nortel Networks

We born out of a new and improved world of speech automated service. Once a "nice concept, but not reality" application, the adoption of speech recognition within the enterprise is poised for breakthrough in the coming years. In the Gartner report "Speech Recognition: Telephony Software Worldwide 2002-2007," analysts said the speech recognition market is poised to reach more than \$258 million by 2007, with contact center and business portal applications the largest segments for adoption.

Why now? In an increasingly competitive environment, customers need to keep customers happy. Customers will readily adopt such services with the following caveats: they must be quick, simple and reliable. Additional important byproducts of speech recognition and contact center

transaction such as obtaining a stock quote or one of 15,000.com panels listed on Nasdaq's stock exchange. Regardless of the complexity of their transaction,.com panels need to find a new way for customers to interact with them, as this presents an ideal opportunity to improve customer loyalty.

For example, some banks permit customers to carry out financial transactions at a time suitable to them by simply speaking to their instructions. The instructions are converted into commands that are executed on the bank's mainframe computers. Response is provided to customers in natural speech. The customer does not need to sort through a confusing multitude of options nor does the customer need to be on the phone for an extended period. By understanding what type of information a customer will seek, .com panels can better able to ensure that customers get the information they need quickly.

While this is the primary benefit of the interactive voice response (IVR)-enabled approach, another is reduced cost for the organization in two key areas: time and resources. Rather than present a long list of alternatives which requires a customer to stay on the phone longer, as speech-enabled IVR helps the customer out of the chase. A call that usually takes 90 seconds can be reduced to 30 seconds. Also, if a customer can receive the information quickly through the IVR-enabled approach, there's less chance he or she will engage a company representative. This creates a more effective deployment and use of call center representatives, freeing them up for more critical customer service needs.

Step Two: Evaluate current investments

You must evaluate the type of infrastructure you currently have in place. Then you must determine if your contact center is relatively up-to-date (5 to 7 years

old). Also, you need to consider your plan to deliver the maximum value out of your legacy system and, in particular, you must determine how you can extend or enhance your contact center with new technology. A converged voice and data network is a solution that blends IP telephony enabled applications with legacy systems to protect a new, exciting investment while also enhancing the system. It is a less

expensive way to transfer voice and data information associated with a call to a single agent's desktop, so the caller does not have to repeat information.

IVR platform and Voice Extensible Markup Language (XML) will work with a new, exciting infrastructure to manage multiple forms of communications securely and reliably. The VoiceXML standard

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"Speech Automated Self-Service" continued from previous page

allow enterprise to leverage back-end Web infrastructure and enable seamless top-to-bottom customer experience and transactions via the phone and the Internet. For example, a customer can transfer money on the Web and then use the phone to hear the updated balance. Other features to consider include end-to-end project management, training, installation and ongoing maintenance services.

Step Three: Pick the right tools.

To meet your specific business requirements, you need to create and deploy flexible advanced speech recognition applications based on various speech recognition tools (large vocabulary recognition, natural language understanding, speaker verification and text-to-speech). This will require a mix of both standardized and customized applications as each plays an important role in a comprehensive speech recognition deployment.

A application portfolio has to consist of a large number of standardized applications with completed design, coding and testing helps ensure you have a good foundation on which to build your solution. From there, you can customize applications with specific requirements or host in the fastest that map to your specific business needs.

In the end, you must make the custom your primary focus. In this context, speech recognition applications are the competitive element in a top-notch CRM environment with the proper system integration, reliability, scalability and investment protection, you can make these technologies a vital component of your organization's competitive advantage. Don't forget, as speech recognition systems can yield shorter calls, increase accuracy of information provided, elimination of dreaded long hold times and, in the end, a more satisfied customer. By products include reduced agent expenses and well-coordinated transaction processing. Done wrong, you have one very unhappy customer.

Applications That Benefit From Speech Recognition

- **Healthcare Services**
 - o 24 x 7 access to patient information
 - o Patient enrollment/notification services
 - o Claim status/processing/billing
 - o Immunization status/requirements/locations
 - o Scheduling appointments
 - o Lab results
 - o Payment tracking
 - o Electronic bill pay
 - o Admission and discharge records
 - o Office locations
 - o Operating hours
 - o Call routing
 - o Medical history retrieval
- **Pharmacies**
 - o Prescription refill
 - o Pharmacy locations/hours
 - o Post-care follow-up
 - o Insurance claims
 - o Outbound surveys
- **Insurance**
 - o Eligibility and coverage verification
 - o Claim status inquiry
 - o Medical and Medicaid
 - o I.D. card request
 - o Co-payment information
 - o Beneficiary changes
 - o Rates/premiums
 - o I.D. card request
 - o Amenity quotes/information
 - o Policy/pension quotes
 - o Employee health plans
- **Pharmaceutical Services**
 - o Contact center automation
 - o Clinical services
 - o Program enrollment
 - o Fulfillment
 - o Product information
- **Telecommunications Service Providers**
 - o Directory assistance
 - o Enhanced services
 - o Customer service
 - o Account management
 - o New customer acquisition
 - o Order transaction status
 - o Service of literature
 - o Service price and availability
 - o Location finder
 - o Shipment status
 - o Change of address
 - o Bill payment
 - o Service activations
 - o Automated prepaid calling
- **Retail**
 - o Order transactions
 - o Product of literature
 - o Product price and availability
 - o Location finder
 - o Ordering
 - o Shipment status
 - o Lead capture
 - o Change of address
 - o Gift registries
 - o Product returns
 - o Service activations
 - o Catalog request

customer. In this economic environment, the test is how net gain or loss can be afforded.

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