HEALTHCARE

UT Southwestern Leverages Voxeo VoiceObjects to Provide State-of-the-Art Disaster Response Program

"*One huge advantage of Voxeo VoiceObjects is that it enables us to quickly develop prototype applications that we can use to demonstrate the advantages of speech recognition. In addition, Voxeo's VoiceObjects technology allows us to rapidly voice-automate applications that may be too small to have previously warranted the time to create them. This allows us to realize the benefits of voice automation at many, many places throughout our organization.*"

Elwyn Hull, UT Southwestern's Telecommunications Director

Background

The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas ("UT Southwestern") is leveraging the power of voice-driven automation in diverse areas of its operations.

With Voxeo VoiceObjects, UT Southwestern is now able to rapidly prototype, create and deploy voice-driven interfaces to mission- critical functions. The first, implemented application is used by UT Southwestern's business continuity group as an important part of the comprehensive disaster response program.

Additional applications that will be implemented are Employee Self Service and Patient Billing Systems, resulting in enhanced patient and employee satisfaction and immediate cost savings.

Challenge

UT Southwestern is one of the country's leading academic medical centers, patient-care providers and research institutions, with over 10,000 employees. They already have a history of success with voice-driven user interfaces: the medical center and each of its two hospitals previously deployed voice-driven automated attendant systems, resulting in considerably reduced holding times and significant savings in salary.

UT Southwestern wanted to repeat its past success in other areas of its operations, but was concerned about the time, effort and cost that would be required to develop well-designed voice-driven applications.

Additionally, while any solution would need to work in conjunction with UT Southwestern's existing third party IVR platform, the solution would need to be compatible with any later-adopted IVR platform or technology.

Finally, in recognition of the speech industry's broad move towards the VoiceXML platform, all of UT Southwestern's voice-driven systems would need to be VoiceXML-based. For additional cost savings, all UT Southwestern's requirements for new voice-driven business solutions had to be realized with minimal computer programmer time.

Solution

After attending the Voxeo University training class for VoiceObjects products, the UT Southwestern team was able to use Voxeo's VoiceObjects Desktop to develop its first live voice-driven application in less than two days and deploy it on their existing IVR system in less than two weeks. This award-winning platform enabled UT Southwestern business people to create a disaster response application as part of the medical center's comprehensive disaster response program in this short time frame with minimal assistance from the organization's programmers, meeting a key organizational objective.

Using Voxeo VoiceObjects, applications are created in a modular, building-block fashion, ensuring that the industry's best practices are reflected in every finished application. VoiceObjects translates the high-level design into appropriate VoiceXML coding, ensuring that the technology platform is standards-based. Finally, Voxeo VoiceObjects' innovative, driver-based approach will allow the university to choose another IVR platform in the future, without modifying its applications.

The Future

UT Southwestern intends to deploy a voice-driven patient billing application, reducing patient telephone hold times and lowering billing representatives' call volumes. The system will also give patients the flexibility to conduct transactions and to obtain information at times where billing representatives may not be available. To ensure customer acceptance, UT Southwestern plans to develop the required state-of-the-art front-end to this new application using Voxeo's services.

In addition, UT Southwestern will soon begin to prototype a voice-driven replacement for the touch tone interface that currently greets callers to its clinics. The clinic system will provide a self-service mechanism to permit patients to make and cancel appointments, to take patient surveys and to access information resources.

Other projects slated for development at UT Southwestern are additional speech recognition surveys, interactive driving directions that will enable patients and visitors to find any location on the UT Southwestern campus, and an automated continuing education class registration system.

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