

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX
IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

4/15/2004

Inside this issue:

Teaching a dog new tricks (cont.)	2
Next month will feature case study of WA Butler, JBA account using screen scraping	2
Recording voice file and forwarding it by e-mail	3
Do you use an industry standard software	3
"How they do that," New code in release 6.0	4

How To Teach An Old Dog New Tricks

When did it become a bad thing to be green screen?

I don't know when it became a bad thing to have green screens. Just mention it and instantly you will hear, "Oh,, why are you still using a legacy type system?" It has become the general consensus that green screen is a bad thing or outdated. Never mind that:

- Your users like the screens they are accustomed to
- Green screens interact with the host faster
- Green screen is actually faster for keying data
- Dumb terminals are cheaper then PCs
- Dumb terminals may be more reliable then PCs
- Your environment may not have open desktop space for a mouse or be good for PCs
- Application software was designed for green screen

Do you need to do new things with existing systems?

Over the years, you have made a large investment in hardware and software that has served you well. Your applications may be grown in-house or you may have purchased from multiple vendors. Just because you are on green screen applications, doesn't mean that you can't perform new functions like telephony that you need to improve service for your users. Telephony voice response units are a way of life now in corporate America. It is estimated that it costs \$7.00 per call for a live customer service representative to answer a customer request. ¹ This same transaction through the web is \$2.50. Our ODT



Benefits of ODT VISION VRU

- Can interact with existing green screen applications
- Can interact with other platforms concurrently
- ODBC compliant
- Affordable
- Can be customized in-house
- Short development cycle
- Any touchtone phone is a terminal to interact with your system
- Security of your system is maintained
- Allows improvements to customer service while optimizing existing personnel
- This lowers total administrative costs

VISION VRU can handle the transaction for pennies per call.

How do you make your green screen applications talk?

The ODT VISION Voice Response System can interact with real-time data information on the host by either ODBC or Screen Scraping. No modification to the host system is required. If you have green screens on your iSeries/AS400, we will generally use screen scraping. The ODT VISION VRU has a script which will be customized around your existing screens. The script is defined as a short code listing which is needed to support the interactive features of the ODT VISION. This simple script which has been created has combinations of the five functions listed:

- Speaking voice banner
- Reading the contents of a field which becomes a variable and that value can be spoken or used in a condition statement
- Writing the contents of the input buffer to the field
- Issuing a trigger key to go into or back out of a screen
- Checking error conditions or system status

When using screen scrapes, prerecorded application

voice files (banners like: "Enter your customer number") are combined with system voice files, where data fields are captured from the screen and spoken. The user's system process flow will be determined by the flow of the host screens. Begin with a flow chart outlining the host display program process flow. Your script will follow this sequence. The script begins with a little house-keeping such as signing on to the system and opening a window for each line of the VRU, checking system status and going to the first display screen required by the application. When the phone line rings, it goes off-hook and speaks the first banner file listed in the script. It also re-checks the system status to make sure the subsystem is up and that you are at the appropriate screen. The script will follow the flow of the host application screens by requesting information from the user or reading data information back. There are several tricks of the trade worth mentioning here. Before entering any critical data to the host system, you may want to speak back the data buffer input value before sending this to the host system and use a line edit to correct this data if it is not consistent with the wishes of the user. Also, you must constantly monitor the host system for error conditions. Finally, you must always watch for a hang-up to exit the

host display screen program in order to reset the unit if the user quits the voice system without finishing the host application.

The main advantage of the ODT VISION VRU is that it requires no modification of the host system code. Also, the application for the screen scraping can be created in a short time frame with a short development cycle before production. Since this system is using Micro-technology, the cost is low with a very quick pay-back. Customer service is increased while personnel costs are minimized and your firm is now open for business 24 hours a day. "Who knew you could teach that old dog to talk?" ■

Looking Ahead

Next's months newsletter will feature an article about WA Butler. They are a national veterinarian supply company which uses JBA software on an IBM iSeries system. Their applications are on green screens so this will be a good example of using this type of customization to provide telephony to your users in the outside world.

¹ Found in article from IBM at

<http://www-1.ibm.com/businesscenter/us/enewsletter/enewsarticle.jsp?id=8823&ca=smbbiztrends110103&me=W&met=inli&re=SMBNewsTrends1>

Application In the Spotlight, Recording a voice file and forward it to an e-mail address

It is hard to imagine a business today without the ability to leave a recorded message to individuals who are not accessible at the moment. In fact, voice mail is so common-place that it seems like we never talk with anyone live anymore. But, what if we don't want the recorded message to just lie in voice-mail and it needs to be forwarded to personnel in the field or employees on-call when an emergency arises outside the normal business hours?

The ODT VISION VRU has the ability to:

- Record voice messages
- Play them back for the caller's approval
- Determine who the voice recording should be forward to
- Convert it to a "wav" type sound file so it can be played on a soundcard
- E-mail to the proper contact
- Build an audit trail of what has occurred

Your IVR application may also require you to get additional



information about the caller, which will be included with the recorded "wav" voice file. The receiving individual can use this message to clarify the action they need to take from this "Store and Forward Application."

Recordinfor:

```
Rtn = Play "RecordallInfo.vox",0,"@" ; "At the beep, please say your Name, and call back number
```

Beep

```
Voicefilesloc = "C:\Program Files\ODT VISION\Folder\"
CaRecord = voicefilesloc & controlno
```

```
CAREcord2 = CAREcord & ".WAV"
CARECORD = CARECORD & ".VOX"
```

```
Rtn = Record carecord,0,"#",10,1,true
```

```
RTN = Play "YouRec.vox"; You are.....
Rtn = Play carecord
```

ClearDigits

```
Rtn = Play "okselect.ox",0,"@" ;press 1 to select or any other key to try again
```

```
Okselect = GetDigits 1,"#",10
```

```
If Okselect <> 1 then goto Recordinfo
```

```
VOXWAV CARECORD ; converts to wav file type
```

```
Email "eaddress@test.com"
```

```
EmailSubject "New Customer to Register in System"
```

```
Emailtext "Play voice file"
```

```
EmailAttach Carecord
EmailSend ■
```

Do You Use an Industry Standard Software Package

One of the advantages of working with industry standard software packages such as the JBA application which will be mentioned in the next month's newsletter is once the customization around the screens is done, it is applicable to other accounts using the same package.

We have worked with a number of software vendors

over the years such as JBA, JD Edwards, HTE, CAP 2020 and a number of others. This means that your application may be a plug and play type of customization where almost no development or customization is required. Please call us to discuss what packages you are currently using in either your host or ODBC linked database applications.

We always find it interesting if you have a legacy green screen application as those are always easy to do. Please feel free to call if you have any questions regarding what it would take to expand your current applications to now use telephony and allow 24/4 access.■

Get Your Own Demo Today

200 East Campusview Blvd. 200
Columbus, Ohio 43235

Phone: 614-985-3814
Email: sales@ODTVISION.com



Go to www.ODTVISION.com to get your own demonstration of the ODT VISION Voice Response Unit which will run on any Windows based PC of Windows 98 or later with sound card and speakers. This is a simplistic order entry and shipment status system which is running off a Microsoft Access database. The demo is in the test mode and you will be using the "Test Phone" feature of the ODT VISION VRU to simulate a phone call to the data.

Manuals and case studies are also available on

Improving Customer Service Affordability

Submit your technical questions or get free project analysis regarding your telephony application to:
TechSupport@ODTVISION.com
Or Call: 614-985-3814

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?
"New Syntax which makes the ODT VISION Release 6.0 easier to customize & adds functionality"

Caller ID

WaitForRing 3
CallerInfo = CallerID

Troubleshooting Caller ID support

The following is a list of possible reasons why the CallerID property returns UNAVAILABLE.

The Dialogic hardware you are using does not support Caller ID.

You are not using the correct version of the drivers.

The phone line connected to the Dialogic board does not provide Caller ID information.

The PBX you are attached to does not pass Caller ID information

The WaitForRing command is waiting for less than 2 rings.

`Rtn = PlayGet file.vox, digits [, stopchar] [, maxtime]`

New Play Command

(any single character) **GetDigits** completed by the user pressing a termination key.

"MT" **GetDigits** completed because *maxtime* occurred.

"LS" **GetDigits** completed because caller disconnected.

"DE" Playback failed because a DOS error occurred.

"ER" **GetDigits** failed because an error occurred.

`Cust = PlayGet "EnterCust.VOX", 10, "#", 15`

New Play/Get Digits

Instead of the old way of.....

ClearDigits
Rtn = Play "EnterCust.VOX", 0, "@"
Rtn = GetDigits 10, "#", 15
Cust = DigitBuffer

; Both versions play a voice file to the user asking
; for a customer number. Enter up to 10 characters
; or until the user keys a "#" to indicate the end
; of the customer number. Wait up to 15 seconds
; for the user to enter the customer number before
; returning an error.

Play file through Speakers

PlayLocal file.wav

Plays a voice file (.WAV) to the local computer speakers.
Can be used to "Notify" a local operator of certain events.

`val = InitializeProgram "ODT VISIONCall.ODT VISION-`

Call other programs

`Class" [,Server]
InitializeProgram "ODT VISIONCall.ODT VISIONClass" [,
Server]`

Initializes an externally called program.

Used if the externally called program needs parameters or has long running functions

Only one externally called program can be active at a time. Use the TerminateProgram command to end the program.

If a variable is to be returned, it will return one of the following:

0-Called
n-Error

See the chapter on creating an externally callable program for more information.

Examples:

; This first example would execute the "DATE"
; command in the VB6 program and returns the
; current date in the "val" variable.

`InitializeProgram "ODT VISIONCall.ODT VISIONClass"
val = CallProgram "DATE"
TerminateProgram`

; This next example shows how parameters are
; passed to the VB6 program.

; The variable "CustNo" is passed as the

; "Customer" parameter and the variable
; "OrderTot" is passed as the "OrderAmount"
; parameter.

; Then the "CreditLimit" command is called
; in the VB6 program. The VB6 program then
; takes the Customer parameter checks it
; against a database or another system and
; returns the credit limit of the customer
; in the "CrLim" variable of the script.

; Then the "CreditApproval" command is
; called in the VB6 program. The program
; takes the Customer number and the order
; amount and checks an Accounts Receivable
; system to determine if the customer
; order will be held due to a credit
; limit problem.

; The script then speaks either "Your
; order was approved", or "Your order
; was not approved, you are over your
; credit limit of \$20,000.00"

`InitializeProgram "ODT VISIONCall.ODT VISION-`
`Class"`

`ProgramParameter "Customer", CustNo
ProgramParameter "OrderAmount", OrderTot`

`CrLim = CallProgram "CreditLimit"
Approved = CallProgram "CreditApproval"
TerminateProgram`

`If Approved then
 Speak "Approved.voc"
else
 Speak "NotApprove.voc"
 Speak "OverCredit.voc"
 SpeakDollars CrLim
Endif`

Next Month, look for
commands for "Text to
Speech"