Ohio Data Transfer

THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

City of Dublin Moves It Community Hotline Over To The ODT VISION VRU

Paramount to any organization is the flow of information between the user and that organization.   Instrumental in any self-service information delivery application is that it matches the needs of the end-user. Customer Service now requires 24/7 information flow and your firm is obligated to match the criteria of the end-user. A common approach for providing this information is a hotline.   A hotline allows a user of a standard or cellular phone the ability to obtain information from your organization. This application is open to any individual and doesn't require internet access or for the user to be sophisticated. If this hotline is just playing voice messages this could be achieved off your PBX but if the information changes based on the real time data or if the caller's inputs changes the logic of the routine, your solution requires more than can be delivered though your PBX. A hot-line solution which requires real-time data must have a live connection to the data to insure accuracy.   The information flow between the end-user and the organization may need to be bi-directional where the caller is supplying data back to your organization. The data and caller process logic may be ever changing. The ODT VISION VRU may be the interface of choice as the end-user can perform the customization in-house and multiple concurrent platform connectivity can be accomplished.

The City of Dublin surrounds the Scioto River in the northwest area of metropolitan Columbus. Dublin is home to the Jack Nicklaus's Memorial PGA golf tournament at the Muirfield Golf Club which each year features some of the best golfers in the world. Dublin has over 3,000 businesses including Wendy's, Cardinal Health, OCLC, and Ashland Chemical. The city uses a Council/Manager form of government. Data Processing is preformed primarily on the IBM iSeries/AS400 running SunGuard HTE software. They have had a ODT VISION VRU for a number of years which does a variety of applications including Mayor's court.

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Dublin Moves Hotline to ODT VISION VRU

The City of Dublin has used a hotline for a number of years to reach out to its citizens. This Community Hotline allows citizens and visitors to the community to learn about services offered or to report issues to the city. Until recently, this hotline was provided through the PBX but the city changed its PBX system and lost some of the hotline's functionality. The city not only wanted to bring back to the hotline the functionality of the old system but have the ability to add new enhancements and change the system on the fly. The easiest approach to accomplish this was to move the hotline application from the PBX over to some open lines on the existing ODT VISION VRU which they already owned.

Where to Begin

The main benefit of using the ODT VISION VRU for this application is that it is just an interface which can be customized by the end-user to perform any application. Initial work was the same here as in any client's application, where the requirements of the application are documented. The first goal was to clone the old hotline but also the city wanted to enhance its functionality. The first stage was to create a transcript of the actual text and menu options within the existing hotline application. This was supplied by personnel from the City. This transcript lead to the creation of a flowchart which was created using Microsoft Visio. The Visio flowchart was sent back to the city to make sure it met the requirements of the hotline. The benefit of documenting is that this gives us a

visual tool of what the application looks like to take to the city associates. This analysis ensures that we are creating a true clone of the current system. At this point and time, we were also looking at what we could add to improve the hotline. The flowchart was refashioned to reflect the enhancements and this lead to the modification of the transcript to reflect the new logic. As the logic of the hotline changed, so did the text of some of the voice file prompts. Finally a base script was created to reflect the latest flowchart and transcript.

Preparation for Installation Day

The City of Dublin had recently upgraded both the hardware and software of their ODT VISION VRU. A game plan was created which outlines the requirements for installation and what issues needed to be addressed for a successful installation day. From a hardware perspective, the only function that needed to be addressed was new phone extension lines to open ports. From a software aspect, Outlook needed to be loaded onto the unit and an account configured to use the ODT VISION email option. The voice files which provide the voice prompts used within the application script were recorded. This is always done by the actual client so if changes are required in the future, the same person can be used so all voice file prompts match. The city also provided email address for the various departments where the request would be delivered and the date ranges that some of the voice file prompts would use within the routine. Based on the date of the call, certain seasonal voice messages would be played.

Brad Jones,
New PL of ODT VISION VRU, City of Dublin

"The ODT VISION was easy to learn and cus-

Project Leader

In all accounts, we always have a project leader who is responsible for the ODT VISION VRU, its applications and is considered our technical contact for this firm. The PL at the City of Dublin for the past four years had just retired so we had a new PL for this account. We saw that moving the hotline to the ODT VISION VRU gave the city two main advantages. First, it gave us a real life application for our new PL to see how customization is done and secondly, this application would now be documented with a flowchart and transcript. These tools allow other city associates to evaluate the application and will be used in the future if any new individuals need to work on this application. This type of documentation is something we always insist on.

Elements of the Dublin Hotline

The Dublin hotline initially welcomes the caller to the Community Hotline. A new enhancement to the system is the ability for a city manager to remotely call into the system and change a status variable to an emergency condition (such as snow emergency) and record a voice prompt. Any caller into the system would be notified with the managers recorded message if the city is indeed in an emergency status. Now the caller hits a general menu. The options within the main menu allow the caller to find out about services offered and in addition, some options allow the caller to schedule services or make request. Another new enhancement, the caller's request will be delivered directly to the department

associated for that request. This request could be to schedule a trash pickup, to report a road pot-hole, or to report an emergency type of situation like a sewer backup. The request is delivered to the department in the form of an email. This email consist of both record audio wave type files and actual text. This WAV file is a standard windows wav file that can be replayed through the city employee's soundcard. Example of the caller's recorded audio files are their name, their address, and a recorded message describing the request. New to this application is the building of a log file which shows all activity including date and time stamp. This log file will be used in the future to modify the application.

Future Enhancements

In the future, the city will use the log file to optimize the main menu and modify this application to match how the system will actually be used. Currently at the conclusion of each element of the main menu is a voice recording prompt which give the phone number and hours of operation for each department. We have discussed the transfer of the caller upon caller's request directly to the department instead of this voice file if the office is open.   This is a function which the ODT VISION VRU can do quite easily. The hotline could also be expanded to service other areas of the city.

For example, remotely a park and recreation manager may cancel all baseball league games due to field conditions and parents could call into the hotline to see if little Jonny's or Mary's game has been canceled. This would allow a parent who has just picked up a child at school to communicate with the city's park & rec. department using their cellular phone.

The creation of all application work like this story. First discover what the application requires, the nature of the data platform and the requirements of the user. Then it is just a process of putting the pieces of the puzzle together.◘

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Go to www.ODT VISION.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 VI-SION VRU to simulate a phone call to the data.   Manuals and case studies are also available on the web site.

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Hidden Manager menu for Snow Emergency
* 9 get you to manager menu
* Enter Security Code
* 1 truns Snow Emergency on where mgr. records snow emergency greeting
* 2 truns off snow emergency

Answer Call
Welcome to the City of Dublin Hotline

1 — Play Clipper Program Information → sub routine for Scheduling & Emailing → Office Status → Return Menu

— end call

Please Press 1 for Information about the Clipper Program
Please Press 2 to report a problem with refuse, recycling, or yard waste collection or to report a damage container
Please Press 3 to report a problem with issues such as pothole, dead animal, hydrant issue, sewer backup, litter or any street or right of way concern
Please Press 4 to hear information regarding seasonal programs such as Dublin's ,mosquito program , leaf collection, Christmas Tree Removal, or Snow Removal
Please Press 5 to hear information about refuse collection
Please Press 6 for information about curbside recycling collections
Please Press 7 for information about yard waste collections
Please Press 8 for information about textile/Haz. collections
Please Press the * Key to repeat this menu

***** — Repeat Menu

2 — Play Solid Waste Reporting → sub routine for Scheduling & Emailing → Return Menu

3 — Play Street Reporting → sub routine for Scheduling & Emailing

4 — check Month → Play Proper Seasonal Message

5 — Play Information About Refuse Collection

6 — Play Information About Curbside Recycling

7 — Play Information About Yard waste

8 — Play Information About text./ haz. waste