

Self-service Solution for Mayor's Court Enables City to Use Existing ODT VISION VRU Unit To Meet Department's Change Needs

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needed to interact with individuals who had received citations.

What the User Needs

The nature of the user varies and the city wanted the citation holders to have the ability to interact with the mayor's court on a 24/7 basis and provide the following functions by calling a centralized number:

- See if the ticket received is the current city's citation
- Obtain information regarding the ticket such as arraignment date
- Determine whether fines and fees could be paid to cancel the arraignment or if attendance to their scheduled arraignment is required
- Obtain information on how to pay either in person, by mail, through the web or by faxing in forms with card information and signature
- Obtain the credit/debit card payment form via fax or from web
- Transfer to live personnel if further assistance is required during office hours

We begin the creation and customization of most ODT VISION self-service applications with an examination of the needs of the user and what is the required functionality to be provided to those users. That is perhaps an oversimplification of what is required to design any self-service solution using the ODT VISION Voice Response Unit. The needs of the customer service department must be met while taken into consideration the nature of data and information to be provided. Sometimes there are certain protocols and rules which must be maintained which effect everything from privacy to how the information is to be accessed and what information is to be provided. These rules of engagement will define the needs of the application itself.

We were recently approached by an existing ODT VISION VRU municipal client which wanted to provide a self-service solution for their Mayor's court. This account was using the ODT VISION VRU exclusively off their IBM iSeries/AS400 and the question arose, could we go to another platform simultaneously. The data for the Mayor's court was on a common Access database table. This connectivity issue was no problem but what we really needed to understand were the rules of how the court



This is not the first court system we have worked with and, as in any customer service application, certain rules of engagement must be met. The city's court personnel realized that the user calling into the ODT VISION VRU may not be the most sophisticated individual, in fact, they may be foreign born with English not their primary language. A multiple language system which would also include Spanish was planned for from day one. The court had three main goals:

- To make it easy for the ticket holder to obtain information regarding their citation
- (if allowed) To allow the user to pay their fees and court cost before the arraignment to save that individual's time and to cancel the arraignment with this self-service solution
- To offer the caller additional assistance where the VRU would transfer the call to live court personnel during office hours

There were also secondary goals of providing transfer to other city departments, giving phone numbers of the surrounding area court systems, and providing information including hours of operation, directions, and payment center's locations. No one likes receiving a ticket but the city desired to make the experience as painless as possible. They also desired to collect as many ticket payments as possible without an arraignment. This frees up the docket and lowers the overall cost for the court system.

The beauty of a live IVR application of data such as this Mayor's court is it allows any user to access information as soon as it is available. All ticket numbers are entered into the system to prove that this is indeed the City's citation. All a caller will need is their ticket number. If a user calls into the system before it has been posted, the caller will be told that this citation has not been posted yet and informed to call back at a later time. Once the ticket has been

posted to the database, the ODT VISION script logic looks at several significant record variables to determine what is said. We look at the level of the ticket to determine if the arraignment must be attended or if the fine and fees can be forfeited to cancel the arraignment. The IVR logic must also look at the arraignment date to see if it has passed or not. If the user can pay the ticket before the arraignment, they are instructed first on the total cost. They then go into a payment menu which covers payment in person, mail, fax, and web. If the arraignment attendance is required, they are instructed when and where their arraignment will be held. If the arraignment date is passed, the caller is transferred to live court personnel during office hours or informed to call back during business hours. The routine also looks to see if an arrest warrant has been issued. During office hours, this caller is informed that they need to talk with someone and the call is transferred to court personnel.



No IVR application can address every single user's need and the ability for the routine to transfer to live personnel is a must in most applications. The court personnel also wanted calls that come into the mayor's court that are for other city departments to be transferred automatically. In this City, boundaries crossed over to other municipalities so the city wanted to assist the caller with phone numbers for surrounding court systems.

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How Did They Do That?

Sample code used in the Mayor's Court System

The payment menu incorporates a fax/web form which must be signed. This document includes the citation number, payment card information, and signature. This form can be faxed, mailed or returned with payment in person at the court's clerk window during office hours or in the drop off boxes at various locations. All payments must be received by 5:00 PM on the day before the scheduled arraignment date.

Some advance functions require transfer to live court personnel off the general menu such as probation arrangements, request for continuances, supplying proof of insurance/valid license, and implemental payments which can only occur during office hours. The hours of operation for the court personnel are 8:30 AM-4:30 PM M-F. Also scheduled into the unit are official holidays where the office personnel are off. With these factors, the ODT VISION VRU know, if the office is open or close during a transfer request.

In conclusion, the court system will be easier to interact with when citation holders are able to obtain information regarding their arraignments at their own convenience. This is a real plus to someone who is just passing through the area and needs to handle a simple speeding ticket as they will not be in the area for the arraignment. It also frees up the existing court personnel to handle the non-routine calls which actually require human assistance. ■

Ticket Type

Typemenu:

```

If C = 2 then
  ReturnCode = Play
  "maxer.vox" ;you have ex
  ceeded the number of tries
  c = "0"
  Callfunction = "Call Transfer
  on Bad ticket type or no in
  put"
  GoSub Log
  GoTo Calltransfer
Endif

Cleardigits
ReturnCode = Play
"Typemenu.vox",0,"@" ;Press 1 for
traffic ticket, 2 for criminal or
civil, 3 for parking
ReturnCode = GetDigits 1,"#",5
Typeinput = DigitBuffer

If Typeinput = "1" then
  totaltt = toaltt + 1
  Casetype = "Traffic"
Elseif Typeinput = "2" then
  Casetype = "Criminal"
Elseif Typeinput = "3" then
  Casetype = "Parking"
Elseif Typeinput = "2" then
  totalpt = totalpt + 1
  Casetype = "Parking"
Else
  c = c + 1
  GoTo Typemenu
Endif

```

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How Did They Do That, Sample code used in the Mayor's Court System

Example of ticket where bond can be forfeit

```
If Ticketlevel = "" then
    MSGBOX "ticket not posted"
    Callfunction = "ticket not posted
to system yet"
    rtn = Play "TicketNotPosted.vox" ;
this ticket is not posted to the system,
call back in 24 hours
    gosub log
    goto endscrip
elseif Ticketlevel = "MM" then
    If ArraignmentDate > dtvar then
        Callfunction = "Arraignment
in futue"
        rtn = Play "YoucanGo.vox" ;
You can go to your arraignment date of...
        rtn = Speakdate arraignment-
Date, "MM/DD/YYYY"
        Rtn = Play "TrailTime.vox" ;
the mayor's court starts at 8:00 PM
        rtn = Play "OrPay.vox" ; or
pay the total amount of
        x = fine + courtcost
        x = x + fees
        rtn = Speakdollars x
        rtn = Play "Before9.vox" ;
before 9 AM on the day of your court
    elseif ArraignmentDate = DTVAR then
        Callfunction = "Arraignment
today"
        rtn = Play "YouMustGo.vox" ;
You must appear on the arraignment date
of...
```

```
rtn = Speakdate arraignmentDate, "mm/DD/
YYYY"
Callfunction = "Must appear at trial as it
is today"
    Gosub log
    Rtn = Play "TrailTime.vox" ; the
mayor's court starts at 8:00 PM
else
    Callfunction = "Arraignment past"
    Gosub log
    rtn = Play "arraignmentpast.vox.vox"
    Goto Calltransfer
Endif
```

Example of ticket where bond can not be forfeit

```
Elseif Ticketlevel = "F5" then
    If ArraignmentDate > dtvar then
        rtn = Play "YouMustGo.vox" ;
You must appear on the arraignment date
of...
        rtn = Speakdate arraignment-
Date, "mm/DD/YYYY"
        Callfunction = "Must appear at
trial"
        Gosub log
        Rtn = Play "TrailTime.vox" ;
the mayor's court starts at 8:00 PM
    else
        Callfunction = "Transfer ar-
raignment passed"
        Gosub log
        GoTo Calltransfer
    Endif
```