

Vicorp Delivers Speech Services with Robust GUI Tools

For over 20 years, companies have relied on interactive voice response (IVR) systems to build and deliver a wide variety of self-service applications such as call routing, information delivery, and order processing. Service creation environments for VoiceXML allow value-added solution suppliers to quickly and easily build and deploy voice-driven telephony applications using an easy and comprehensive suite of graphical tools that leverage a flow-chart-like drag-and-drop development model.

Vicorp's xMP is arguably the most advanced Service Creation Environment (SCE) on the market being used for speech and multi-media application development and VoiceXML server platform management. There are key strategic benefits to using Vicorp's xMP (Expansible Multimedia Platform), which give users of services created with these GUI tools the following capabilities: multi-tenancy, separation of branding or content from core application logic, easy customisation of "white-label" services, and a true, open-standards architecture. It is the combination of these and other factors that Vicorp believes will enable customers to reduce their true on-going costs associated with the building and management of new services over the coming years.

The IVR platform layer provides the basic functionality for the interfacing of inbound calls, but there is a huge amount of additional hidden costs associated with delivering the actual speech or self-service applications. It is this area that developers can address using GUI SCE tools, providing reduced costs to their clients and rapidly producing applications to deploy and manage.

Vicorp's xMP has four core tools — **xMP Director** for building the call flows, **xMP Studio** for managing the content, and **xMP Console** used for deploying and managing services, and **xMP Reporter** which give comprehensive reporting data on live calls flows. xMP as a suite of tools has unique features making it an ideal choice for both customer premises-based or hosted solutions. The two most common required capabilities are "white-label" application services and multi-tenancy.

xMP Director is a multi-disciplinary desktop tool at the heart of xMP service creation. Director is more than a call flow builder, providing support for requirement capture, service documentation, scenario walk-throughs, service decomposition, and extensive validation. These facilities make xMP Director a crucial part of the quality process of producing real-world voice and interactive applications. Director is the most extensible tool on the market, allowing users to add their own business logic elements — either mark-up language components, such as VoiceXML, or new Java business logic. Customers can also extend the interface to include their own icons, custom forms and template code generators.

Most importantly, the applications produced by Director are based completely on open web application frameworks, removing lock-in to proprietary runtime engines and providing the most open approach to service creation on the market.

Separation of Content From Logic — "White-Label" Services

xMP Studio is used to tailor content (audio & prompting) delivered to the end user callers and integrates the service into the operational support systems of a particular environment. xMP Studio provides a rich capability to update the content of an application to enable complex prompting, such as building up a prompt based on a combination of pre-recorded audio, concatenated audio, and text-to-speech. The system separates the specification of the content that will be required from the actual content items that will be used at run time. xMP Studio thereby supports template and white-brand services by ensuring that customer-specific configuration and content information are cleanly separated from the service logic.

xMP Studio enables content to be changed and maintained without recourse to the skills and tools required for the creation of the original application. Services can thus be quickly adapted to specific business needs without having to alter service logic and without going back to engineering. The dynamic content delivery framework within xMP Studio allows attributes such as language, time of day, location, user profile, and persona to alter the flavour of the service presented. The result is a “white-label” service that can be re-used and branded multiple times without having to recreate the service.

xMP Studio is not restricted to speech but also enables the easy creation of video services, through the xMP Content Management, where video can be seamlessly integrated, including concatenating multiple video clips together, thereby creating services that use a combination of audio and video as appropriate.

Vicorp’s xMP Console provides platform resource management, service and content deployment through a standard web browser. The Console provides both a Platform Operator view and a Service Operator view with password control. The Platform Operator view enables provisioning and management of platform resources that can either be shared or dedicated to different internal units or divisions. The Service Operator view enables customer self-management and point and click service deployment, for example DNIS / DDI application mapping, resource management, and reporting.

Finally, xMP Reporter gives users a comprehensive reporting package that provides complete end-to-end data on every aspect of the xMP applications, out of the box and with no additional development effort. This provides management, business analysts, service designers, and call center staff with everything they need to monitor the success of an application. With a fully documented database and reporting structure, xMP Reporter enables users easy access to any reporting views required, related to the actual call flows deployed through the IVR to meet their needs.

Multi-Tenancy

xMP has been built from the ground up to support a multi-tenancy solution mandated in hosting environments. This capability for application design extends to enabling users to access their own partition within an IVR server farm, securely via the web, using the xMP Service Management Console tool. It also enables users to log into their own environment and provide the ability to deploy, manage, analyze, and update services, without needing to involve the business owner of the IVR platform. Coupled with the ability to, for example, update prompts within a service on-the-fly through xMP’s dynamic content feature, this provides complete self-sufficiency for tenants, even within a shared environment.

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