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Audiolog® Voice Recording

According to Bob Jagendorf, Audiolog®'s present is as exciting as its past...and almost as exciting as its future.

Jagendorf's Symposium presentation was titled, "Audiolog®'s Recent Enhancements & Future Direction." As Director of Sales and Marketing for Mercom, Jagendorf presented a unique perspective on Audiolog® and its leadership position in the field of voice recording.

The first Audiolog® system was shipped in 1996, and today nearly 3000 installations can be found worldwide. The largest site currently using Audiolog® is Toronto Dominion Bank, with over 3500 channels. Listeners could see that there's good reason

why Mercom has been named to the Inc. 500, *Inc. Magazine's* list of America's 500 fastest-growing, privately-held companies, for two years in a row.

Audiolog® has revolutionized the voice recording industry, a feat that Jagendorf said was planned from the very beginning. Mercom was determined to create a manage-

ment information system that coordinated with call centers. Most competitors approached product development from the opposite view. Jagendorf also pointed out that Audiolog®'s design makes it "infinitely upgradeable," and that many of the first Audiolog® systems installed are still in place...though in some cases they look quite different!

In recent months, Mercom has enhanced Audiolog® with features like Genesys and Cisco integration, Aspect and Siemens certification, an SQL database option that can handle 400,000 call records a day, and more. Audiolog® has also been made compatible with TAPI, TSAPI and CSTA industry standards.



What's to come for Audiolog®? Two developments in the works are VOIP Recording (designed primarily with home-based workers in mind), and a Resume Routing Record Trigger that will route calls to agents with specific skill sets based on differing caller criteria. One thing is sure: Mercom remains committed to product development that's centered around the end-user's needs.

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Proxy Gateway from Funk Software

Screen capture programs are a must for most call centers, whether their focus is customer service, sales, or public safety. Screen capture answer these questions:

Is data entered right the first time?

Are screens launched in the correct sequence?

Do the agent's screen moves keep pace with his/her conversation?

Are emails and webchat messages grammatically correct?

What's going on during audio dead space?

Yet despite their benefits, screen capture programs can be a problem when they cause "blue screens"...system crashes and frozen networks. Is there a solution?

Duncan Temple, OEM Strategic Account Manager at Funk Software, Inc., provided some insights on this issue to Symposium attendees.

Temple pointed out that data overloads result in most "blue screen" incidents. By trying to transfer too much data, too quickly, the screen capture program can crash entire systems...causing more problems than it prevents.

Funk's product, Proxy Gateway, was designed to eliminate data overload. The program puts only 1-2 kilobytes per second on the network, a transfer rate that's one twentieth of some competitive products. But doesn't that mean

less information is captured.

Not at all. Temple's multimedia presentation demonstrated how Proxy Gateway captures only the pixels used in each action, rather than the entire pixel region in which the action took place.

Also, after the initial data hit (for example, when a new screen comes up), only changes are recorded. Many other products record the entire screen at specific intervals, resulting in excess data transfers

as well as windows in which information is not captured. Temple compared the difference in approach to viewing a movie (where all action is seen) to looking at snapshots (what happened between pictures?).

Better throughput is a prime advantage, but it's not the only one Proxy Gateway offers. Temple discussed three other advantages that users enjoy: efficient storage (one hour of recordings requires only 6.5 megabytes), automatic installation on agent's machines, and a Funk support team that is dedicated exclusively to resolving video card issues.

While more than 6,000,000 copies of Funk's software have been purchased individually, Proxy Gateway is also integrated into Mercom's IntellAgents 2000™. The combination sets the standard for competitive products to meet...if they can.



The industry's best throughput and most efficient storage format are hallmarks of Funk's screen capture software.

Automated Agent Evaluation

How well did the creator of your call center software understand the issues involved in call center operation?

If you use software from TPG, Inc., the answer is, "Very well indeed." As Chris Repholz, Senior Vice President of TPG, discussed his company's background, listeners learned that TPG actually provides call center services. In fact, TPG provides outsourced quality monitoring to organizations like Verizon and Discover, among others. This gives them a unique perspective when it comes to development of evaluation software like that integrated into IntellAgents 2000™.



Because TPG's products are, as Repholz said, developed "by users for users," the evaluation components of IntellAgents 2000™ concerns itself with four key areas:

- Subjectivity
- Calibration
- Agent Coaching
- Correlating Quality to Productivity

Through his interactive, real-time demonstration, Repholz went on to illustrate the effectiveness of his product as both a monitoring and a coaching tool.

For example, agents can be color-coded within the system so supervisors can easily see the agents'

needs. Agents highlighted in yellow have scored below the company's quality threshold, while those highlighted in white are yet to be monitored.

When an evaluation is begun, the evaluator has access to the agent's online history, including cumulative and individual skill set scores. A facilitator box allows for "monitoring the monitor," so supervisors can see how many calls each quality assurance person monitors, and when.

The evaluation templates in the program are totally customizable and updateable by the user...meaning the forms are more

immediately responsive to changes within the company.

Of special note were Repholz's comments in regard to Watch Command, TPG's evaluation software for public safety applications. Watch Command was the first product to be approved for use in 911 Centers in Pennsylvania...the first state to mandate quality assurance in those centers.

As Repholz pointed out, you can't improve productivity without data. His presentation showed clearly how voice recording, screen capture, and evaluation software provide the data needed for any company to achieve maximum call center performance.

By automating the agent evaluation process, companies can now quantify the impact employee skills have on both operational productivity and profitability.





At left: Toni VanHorn, Director of Marketing for Sound Communications, presents the "grand" door prize to Elizabeth Hoover of Nationwide Insurance.

At right: Enjoying a little networking time after the Symposium. Shown with Bruce Fairchild of Digital Design are Takako Sakai, Po Syvilayrack, Dale Pockett and Ahmed Muhumad of Sound Communications.



At right: The Club Level at the new Paul Brown Stadium offered the perfect atmosphere for winding down after the presentations. Shown from left to right are Dean Bolton of the Ohio Emergency Management Agency and Eric Tracy of Ameritech.



At left: The Sound Communications technical team was on-hand to answer any questions. Shown from left to right are: Po Syvilayrack, Ahmed Muhumad, Hal Winfield, Dale Pockett, Gene Szatkowski and Darin Cooper.

At right: The audience of more than 85 attendees enjoyed three technical presentations plus a panel discussion.

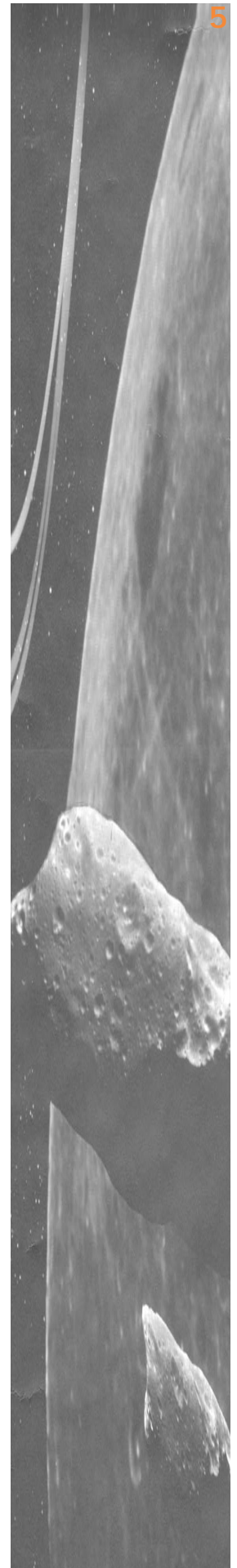


At left: Many attendees talked informally with Symposium speakers after the day's events. Pictured from left to right are: Jayne Singer, Sandy Fielder and Eric Morris of American Electric Power, and Chris Reholz of TPG, Inc.



At left: Sound Communications' President Garry Stephenson discusses the Symposium with Gary Long and Chris Lawson of Cinergy.

At right: Darin Cooper, Systems Engineer for Sound Communications, and Bob Jagendorf of Mercom Systems, are shown in front of the Audiolog® technical display.



Client Panel A Symposium Highlight

The high point of the Symposium was a panel discussion featuring five Sound Communications clients, and moderated by our Systems Engineer, Darin Cooper.

The panelists' comments shed light on the variety of effective applications for voice recording, screen capture, and automated evaluation.

Eric Morris, American Electric Power (AEP)

Eric is in charge of seven AEP customer service center spread throughout several states. He currently has four centers, with some 400 agents, linked through IntellAgents 2000™ in a "virtual call center" environment.

AEP does event-based recording with changeable triggers such as Caller ID, day and time of call, etc. All emergency calls from police or fire departments are recorded. Currently, about eight percent of calls are recorded. The centers received eight million calls last year.

Eric's goal in moving to IntellAgents 2000™ was to improve "uniformity" across the centers under his jurisdiction. In some centers he also needed to replace a previous, "crash-prone" system. IntellAgents 2000™ has met his goals.

Sgt. Mark Bowron, Dayton (OH) Police Department

The Dayton police and fire departments began searching for new, joint voice logging technology about a year and a half ago. In Dayton, all

911 calls come into the police department first, then are transferred to the fire department as needed. In their previous configuration, duplicate recording devices were located in both departments.

After research indicated Audiolog® was the "best on the market," Sgt. Bowron contacted Sound Communications to work out a customized solution. The result is a recently-installed 96-channel system, integrated with a 17-channel radio trunk network accommodating 300 talk groups and 3000 people.

Sgt. Bowron focused on specific public safety benefits Audiolog® provides, beginning with quality of recording and ease of storage. All 911 calls must be saved for court purposes. These recordings can have a tremendous impact on trials. As Sgt. Bowron commented, "Some defendants just plead guilty as soon as they hear the tape."

Another benefit is the ease of accessing recorded calls, which are public records and must be provided upon request. The previous process was laborious: find the reel, copy to cassette, dub additional copies, and send out. Now delivery is as simple as accessing the digital file and e-mailing it to all concerned.

Dave Ziegler, City of Columbus (OH), Communications Division

The discussion of public safety applications continued with Dave, who coordinated Columbus's upgrade to Audiolog® two years ago. At that time, the division had two new and two older Dictaphone® recorders in place.

We'd like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our panel for their willingness to share their experiences at the Symposium.

Symposium Client Panel, cont.

Research indicated DVDs were the best storage medium, and that led Dave to Audiolog® and Sound Communications.

To meet its needs, Columbus required 80 channels, plus redundancy to ensure performance in the case of equipment problems. The Communications Division therefore ordered two 96-channel recorders. Police and fire department calls are logged on both machines, as are calls on a trunk radio system with 28-channels and 6,600 radios.

Audiolog® has proven unique in its ability to work in combination with the division's Motorola 800 software. This gives Columbus the ability to record not only selected audio from consoles, but also mobile-originated calls that are missed with other systems: patch calls, private calls, and even car-to-car calls.

As another benefit, Dave noted the ease of accessing records as well as the ability to copy files and tie together specific recordings...important advantages for a center so busy that it fills "DVDs on each machine in two days."



**Gary Long,
Cinergy**

Gary's reputation was established early in his interview, as Darin related how, during a demo tour prior to Cinergy's purchase of Audiolog®, Gary tested the system's response to a power outage by pulling the plug. Fortunately, Audiolog® lived up to its reputation, and Cinergy replaced its Dictaphone® recorders with Audiolog® units at each of its two in-bound customer service centers.

The purchase culminated a process that began three-and-a-half years earlier when Gary met Mercom's Bob Jagendorf at a trade show. Today, Cinergy uses the units in combination with internally-developed screen capture and evaluation software. To assure continuous quality improvement, Cinergy has one QA person for every seven fulltime CSRs. Ten percent of calls per agent per month are monitored.

Gary cited the "can-do" attitude of Sound Communications as a key benefit to his company. He related how he once called in a "hurry up" order for a 32-port system, and had it installed within three weeks.



**Christine Evans,
Safelite Auto Glass**

Christine, our final panelist, represented the first and largest site to do single-step conferencing. Safelite uses 7-8 linked Audiolog® units at four call centers. In one busy center, two machines are used to record 400 agents, yet the call records can be viewed as a single database and administered by a single individual from a single site.

Safelite records all calls, and Christine said the recordings are used to provide "lots of coaching." Safelite provides glass claim customer service for several insurance companies, and their reps appear as an "extension" of the insurer. Audiolog® is crucial in ensuring CSRs ask the questions they must for legal reasons, thereby protecting Safelite.

One of our goals at Sound Communications is to form a permanent client advisory panel. Watch for more information on this in upcoming issues of Sound Bytes.

Symposium Deemed A Success

The Cincinnati riverfront provided a dramatic backdrop for Sound Communications' first Symposium, held at the new Paul Brown Stadium on Thursday, May 3, 2001.

More than 60 attendees enjoyed technology presentations followed by stadium tours, and a networking reception.

The program included technology presentations by representatives from Mercom, Funk Software, and TPG, as well as a panel moderated by Darin Cooper and featuring a variety of Sound Communications' clients. Tours of the stadium and a cocktail and hors d'oeuvres reception concluded the Symposium.

We were excited to welcome more than 85 individuals to the Symposium. For those who could

not attend, we thought we'd share Symposium highlights in this issue of *Sound Bytes*.

We'd also like to offer congratulations to the following attendees who were winners in our Symposium drawing:

Paul Kindell, Warren County Telecommunications (\$20 gift certificate to the Bengals' Pro Shop)

Brent Harris, Louisville Gas & Electric (Audiolog® AMC License)

Eunice Heard, Bureau of Workers' Compensation (Sound Communications shirt)

Grand Prize Winner Elizabeth Hoover, Nationwide Insurance (Two Club Level Bengals/ Bears tickets and a riverview room at the Embassy Suites).



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