

VOICE USER INTERFACE DETAILED DESIGN CONSULTING

A consulting service offered by:

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Introduction and Overview

This document is one of a series of white papers prepared by Enterprise Integration Group (EIG) to help clients understand EIG methods and processes. EIG is a leading provider of design and evaluation products that deliver superior customer self-service solutions to the enterprise.

What is Design Consulting?

All products that are used by customers have a component known as the “user interface.” This is the part of the product that interacts directly with the user to get work done. Many products use knobs or buttons, display screens or meters to perform this important function. IVR systems accept caller input in the form of touch tone or speech and present machine information in the form of voice response. When EIG clients refer to “product design,” “call flow,” or “scripting,” they actually mean the design of the user interface—that is, the part of the product that can be touched, handled, observed, and judged.

The ultimate goal of the entire portfolio of EIG consulting products is to increase the probability that an effective user interface will ultimately find its way into the final product. To this end, EIG often contracts with clients to directly generate the complete specification and design under a single customized program. This is what is meant by “user interface design consulting.”

User interface design consulting services are the most variable in price and scope, as they depend on the size and details of the project.

All but the smallest of these contracts include multiple phases—most often a design plan, then call flow and script development, followed by prototyping and usability testing.¹ Occasionally more than one round of testing is included in the contract. Details are developed in a proposal and mutually agreed before work begins.

EIG has an experienced staff of scientists, analysts, designers, technicians, and project managers to oversee the entire process of user interface design and specification.

What is the Value of User Interface Design Consulting?

The user interface is pesky to design under the best of circumstances—calling for specialized skills that are difficult to hire, train, and retain. But the challenge becomes much greater when the application uses audio or speech recognition. Such specialized skills are best outsourced for most organizations. By contracting with EIG to provide and manage these resources, the client acquires best of breed quality at a fraction of the cost that would be required to pull the work in house.

Deliverables

The design is often described in a Visio document (Visio is a graphical design tool). This is because Visio is common in the IVR industry, providing a way to present design flow charts graphically to stakeholders that exhibit varying levels of technical skill.

¹ See other EIG white papers for descriptions of these services.

Deliverables depend on details of the consulting agreement, but may include:

- Detailed call flow in the form of Visio file(s), consisting of some 50-200 pages of technical flowcharts;
- Detailed scripting with talent-ready listings of all prompts;
- Microsoft Word document that explicates the flowcharts;
- In some cases, the recorded prompt files themselves;
- Complete grammars, updates to existing grammars, or coverage recommendations based on examination of vendor-supplied grammars;
- Support material in the form of measurements extracted from audit/evaluations;
- Other relevant data or deliverables.

In cases where the contract includes usability testing, the library of video clips is annotated and delivered as well. In most cases, a CD containing all deliverables plus a printed and bound copy of the visual material constitutes the physical form of delivery.