**COMPLIANCE COMPONENT**

**DEFINITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Guidelines</th>
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**Description**
Short for *interactive voice response*, IVR is a computerized system that allows a person, via telephony technology, to select an option from a voice menu and otherwise interface with a computer system. Generally, the system plays pre-recorded voice prompts to which the person presses a number on a telephone keypad to select the option chosen, or speaks simple answers such as "yes", "no", or numbers in answer to the voice prompts.

**Rationale**
IVR systems are often criticized as being unhelpful and difficult to use due to poor design and lack of appreciation of the callers' needs.

**Benefits**
IVR systems can be used to create and manage many services including order placement, caller identification and routing, payment or balance inquiry, and ticket booking. A properly designed IVR system should:
- Connect callers to their desired service promptly and with a minimum of effort;
- Provide expanded customer service hours (24/7);
- Automate and provide self-service customer interactions with enterprise databases;
- Eliminate routine, repetitive and costly tasks for staff; and
- Increase overall customer service capacity without increasing costs or personnel.

**ASSOCIATED ARCHITECTURE LEVELS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specify the Domain Name</th>
<th>Interface</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specify the Discipline Name</td>
<td>Access</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specify the Technology Area Name</td>
<td>Interactive Voice Response</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specify the Product Component Name</td>
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**COMPLIANCE COMPONENT TYPE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document the Compliance Component Type</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Component Sub-type</td>
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**COMPLIANCE DETAIL**

**Key Components**
There are two key components to a good IVR design:

1) Providing the most commonly used self-help features in an easy-to-use format;

2) Recognizing that not everyone's needs can be provided through IVR and that a quick transfer to a person be included frequently in the format.

**Menu Structure**
- The main greeting should identify the entity reached (i.e., Missouri Department of …).
• Strive to keep the number of menu items to a maximum of five. Because people cannot actually see the menu items, they have to work to remember the items in the list.

• Place the most frequently used menu items at the beginning of the list.

• If using a keypress action as an input mechanism, do not skip numbers (i.e., do not do the following: "For Option A, press 1; for Option B, press 3"). People expect that the menu items will be sequential.

• If using a keypress action as an input mechanism, make sure there is an appropriate pause between menu items and between different menus. A person with a cell phone must constantly move the phone away from her ear in order to press the correct key.

• Use silence to convey structure to users but be careful of too much silence, users may think the system is no longer operating.

• The number key needed to activate a particular menu item should follow the text-description of the item itself. Therefore, menu items should be heard as: "To hear our product descriptions, press or say 1" instead of "Press 1 to...." This reduces users' dependence on short-term memory.

Language

• Use short, concise phrases for menu items and other prompts. This will encourage users to keep their responses short, as well.

• Avoid prompts that sound too similar.

• Keep syntax and semantics consistent across all prompts in the system.

• Present voice prompts in the user's language, using a friendly tone. Avoid the use of technical terms, unfamiliar acronyms, and the like for general purpose systems.

• Use a single voice for all system prompts which must be natural sounding and easy to understand. Avoid mixing voices and/or genders. (You don’t want your caller to hear one voice for the greeting, another voice for menu option 1, yet another for option 2, etc.)

• If an error occurs, when possible tell the user what the error was and explain in more detail what type of correct input is expected.

Navigation

• At the beginning of the application offer instructions on how to navigate the system and which keys are reserved for special functions (i.e., "For Help, press 9")

• Allow users to select an option at any time. Do not force someone to listen to an entire menu before they can make a selection.

• Always provide some default options that are used consistently throughout the application. Give the user a way to repeat a menu/spoken item, return to the main menu, access the "Help" functionality, and to speak with an actual human operator (usually, this is the "0" key).

• Verbally confirm user choices so that the user can be confident about what is happening and that the system correctly "understood" the input entered.
## Compliance Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Inovdesigns</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th><a href="http://www.inovdesigns.com/learningcenter/ivr.asp">http://www.inovdesigns.com/learningcenter/ivr.asp</a></th>
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## Contact Information

<table>
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<tr>
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## Keywords

List Keywords: Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, touch-tone, call processing, switching capability, speech recognition, text-to-speech, transaction processing, interface, telephone, telephony, prompts, phone menu, voice, response, keypress, phone, navigation

## Component Classification

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## Sunset Date

None selected

## Component Sub-Classification

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<th>Additional Sub-Classification Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conditional Use</td>
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Rationale for Component Classification

Document the Rationale for Component Classification

## Migration Strategy

Document the Migration Strategy

## Impact Position Statement

Document the Position Statement on Impact

## Current Status

Provide the Current Status:
- In Development
- Under Review
- Approved
- Rejected

## Audit Trail

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