



The World's First Trilingual Speech-enabled Automatic Gas Meter Reporting Hotline System

The Hong Kong and China Gas Company

Established in Hong Kong in 1886, the Hong Kong and China Gas Company ("Towngas") is the sole supplier of heating gas to commercial and residential customers in Hong Kong. Its long service to the public has made it one of the community's most recognized companies.

As the volume of gas accounts expands rapidly, Towngas recognized the need to enhance its communication channel with its customers. The company wanted to employ a more cost-effective method to collect accurate billing information, enhance customer service, and reduce the operating costs of onsite meter recording.

The Solution

In July 1997, InfoTalk developed the world's first trilingual speech understanding application for Towngas – the Automated Gas Meter Reporting Hotline System. With this system in place, customers are able to call the hotline from any phone 24 hours a day and report their gas usage. InfoTalk's advanced conversational speech understanding engine, **InfoTalk-Recognizer**, recognizes the account numbers and meter readings in English, Mandarin and Cantonese. As a result, Towngas enjoys reduced costs of maintaining a labor-intensive onsite meter reading operation and is able to collect more accurate gas billing information.

The Technology

- Speaker-independent conversational speech understanding
- Powerful phonetic and syllabic models
- Tri-modal design: incorporating speech recognition, touch-tone and dial-pulse
- Scalable client-server architecture
- Languages include: English, Mandarin and Cantonese

The Benefits

User-friendly & convenient: Towngas customers can report their own gas usage by simply speaking over any landline or wireless phone, 24 hours a day throughout the year.

Multi-cultural customer care: The system provides a range of languages including English, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese to serve customers with different cultural backgrounds and language needs.

Time-saving: Customers enjoy a high level of convenience. By using this system, it takes customers only about one minute to report their quarterly gas meter reading.



Towngas

The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited

"InfoTalk Technology has provided Towngas with a cost-effective solution to collect accurate gas usage data, which is a good example of how organizations can go about implementing IT solutions to enhance customer value, and channel our resources to better serve our customers in other areas."

Mr. Sunny Lee
Chief Information Officer
Towngas



Hassle-free: Customers can avoid miscalculated gas bills and the frustration of being overcharged or given an under-estimated bill.

Cost-effective: With this new speech-enabled Automatic Gas Meter Reporting Hotline System, Towngas is able to significantly reduce the labor costs for maintaining a large group of meter readers.

Maintenance-free: The InfoTalk system is completely self-maintained. It does not require any special operation and runs around-the-clock without operator attention or interference.

InfoTalk' s Mission

InfoTalk' s mission is to develop and market multi-lingual conversational speech understanding technology to enhance the quality and efficiency of our daily lives.

Bringing in a full set of RSVP products: **InfoTalk-Recognizer, InfoTalk-Speaker, InfoTalk Verifier** and the VoiceXML platform, InfoTalk advances Business solutions by the company's robust core engine, with text-to-speech and speaker authentication capabilities, fully supporting VoiceXML specifications.

Designed for the diversified cultural environment in Asia, InfoTalk' s award-winning InfoTalk-Recognizer understands natural continuous speech in **multiple and mixed** Western and Asian languages.

InfoTalk' s speech technology creates a user-friendly, natural, spontaneous and interactive interface for computer-telephony solutions. It enables users to access information and services, perform transactions and interact directly with computer systems over the telephone and the Internet.

Many companies are using InfoTalk' s speech technologies to enhance their computer-telephony applications. So can yours. Unlimited possibilities are waiting for you. Come, let' s talk.

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