

Script Builder Taps Voice Market

By Linda Crockett

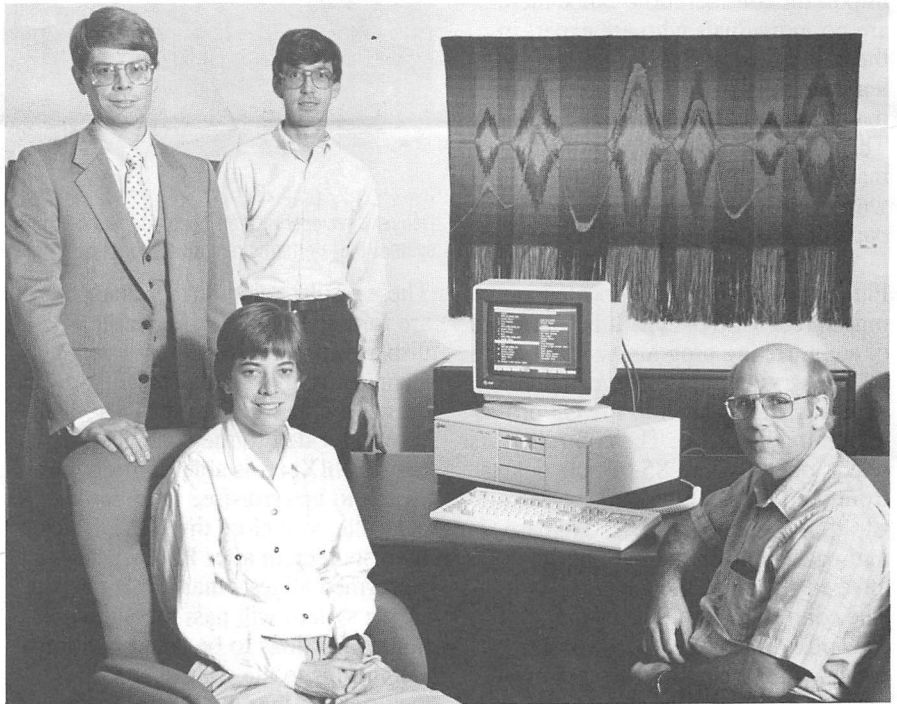
With the release of a new voice applications generator recently, the Conversant Systems Development Department developed a software tool that makes creating voice response applications easier and faster. AT&T's CONVERSANT® Script Builder System uses "scripts" or step-by-step descriptions of how to handle a telephone call.

Working with AT&T's CONVERSANT Voice System, Script Builder uses programmed instructions to handle calls for information about financial reports, airline flight updates or course registration. Script Builder directs the automated voice system to "talk" callers through their transactions. By pressing designated keys on a Touch-Tone telephone, callers can select a service and process requests for specific information.

"We developed Script Builder to meet customer needs that were identified by the Conversant Systems marketing group," says Supervisor Steve Handy. "Airlines, banking institutions and other businesses needed an efficient and economical system for developing and deploying voice response applications. The system also had to give them the independence of programming applications themselves or modifying standard applications developed for them. Script Builder offers business customers all these features."

Group Product Manager Chris Farrar, who is responsible for marketing AT&T CONVERSANT Systems developments, collaborated with Handy's Systems Development Group on designing the Script Builder. The window-based, menu-driven software package was developed by Jenny Cherng, Ilane Mathews, Sandra Oliver, Rajan Soundarajan and Art Sullivan. Steve Riederer of the Systems Engineering Group worked on the system requirements and certification. Dong-Lih Denq of the Applications Development Group integrated existing speech recording and editing software.

"There were a number of



Chris Farrar, from left, Art Sullivan, Ilane Mathews and Steve Riederer were among members of the Columbus development team who created Script Builder.

objectives we wanted to achieve when we designed the Script Builder," says Riederer. "Instead of starting from scratch, we reused available software and hardware products with excellent results. Script Builder was designed to run on AT&T's 6386 WorkGroup System, and work with AT&T's CONVERSANT Voice System using the telephone instead of special terminal equipment to access computerized information."

"The voice system provides customers with the power and flexibility to handle a wide range of transactions from a request for banking rates to compiling a company's payroll reporting," Riederer says.

"Script Builder has a 'front end' that interacts with the user to help design the script. It also has a 'back end' for generating script code that will answer phone calls, interact with callers and interface with mainframe computers," Riederer explains. "We used existing software packages to make the development simpler and faster and to help ensure a robust product. The user interface (the

front end of the system) uses an Extended Terminal Interface, and a Forms and Menu Language Interpreter, both standard supported packages for user interface management."

"When designing and installing voice applications on Script Builder, you don't have to remember specific commands or define variables. The activities necessary for programming applications are grouped logically into menus and forms in easy-to-follow windows that appear on the computer screen. For example, Script Builder organizes voice applications into logical components, and presents them in a menu. Users have the flexibility to develop their applications as they like, reflecting the components in any order," says Riederer.

"Script Builder is a powerful tool that can be used by both novices and experienced programmers," Handy says. "In many cases, users can develop and test speech applications in less than half the time it used to take."

For more information about the Script Builder, contact Handy at (614) 860-5740. □