

# Now Hear This

**IN THE MOBILE ENTERPRISE, VOICE WILL SUPPLANT GRAPHICS IN USER INTERFACES.**



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**“44 percent of I.T. executives were aware of compromises to voice communications on cellular networks.**

Wireless voice applications useful for business have been overshadowed by wireless data applications in recent years. However, with the average typing accuracy rate on a mobile device at 70 percent, client-side wireless speech recognition promises both increased productivity and a vastly improved user experience. Arriving in parallel are new tools to protect mobile conversations and authenticate mobile callers.

Traditionally, mobile devices have shipped with embedded speech recognition engines utilized for voice-activated dialing, i.e., static local content on the device without access to the network. A voice user interface on a mobile device, which would enable access to live data such as current weather, inventory, traffic conditions or flight status, has been as elusive as the Holy Grail. On May 8, 2007, after six years of effort, the first-ever global standard for embedded speech was pre-released. Java Speech Application Programming Interface Version 2 (JSAPI 2) is supported by IBM, Motorola, Nokia, Siemens AG and Texas Instruments, all part of the expert group. According to Steve Rondel, CEO of Conversay and the specification lead for the standards group, “The Java standard is significant because Java is the leading transport language for downloading applications to cell phones. In 2006, 80 percent of all cell phones shipped worldwide contained Java, and with over 4 million programmers, Java is the most popular programming language in the world for portable devices.”

On the security side, intercepted cellular calls are not just the stuff of Hollywood films. In an August 2007 survey of 219 I.T. professionals in the United States conducted for

Koolspan by Zoomerang, a MarketTools company, 71 percent of the polled executives indicated cell phones in their firms were used to discuss confidential business topics, and 44 percent were aware of compromises to voice communications on cellular networks. Founded in 2002, Koolspan has developed a patented peer-to-peer, SD microchip-based voice encryption solution that will operate on any wireless network and any SD slot-equipped handset. The firm is now piloting GSM/Windows Mobile handsets, with Symbian OS and RIM OS versions to follow.

Finally, the total cost of identity fraud to U.S. businesses and consumers will be \$49.3 billion in 2007, according to Javelin Strategy & Research, down 12 percent from \$55.7 billion in 2006. However, telephone account identify fraud has risen by 5 percent since 2006. Voice authentication for cell phones is critical to protect financial transactions utilizing voice prompts, whether purchases, bill paying or bank transfers. Almog Aley-Raz, CEO of Israeli biometrics firm PerSay, whose client Bell Canada authenticates 300,000-plus customers, says that spending on U.S. voice authentication is currently \$30 million to \$50 million and at an inflection point. “We believe that client-side voice authentication is perhaps a year away. We currently have a tier-one European carrier project running a hybrid solution, with a voiceprint in the mobile device,” he says.

These emerging mobile voice solutions hold exceptional promise for enterprise users, as globalization accelerates and cross-border deals require increased attention to voice conversations to keep transactions moving smoothly and productivity gains flowing. //

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