



**CASE STUDY:**

## **NY State IVR-Based System Streamlines Public Inquiries**



New York, one of the most populous states with over 19 million resident, relies on Plum VoiceXML IVR to deliver numerous real-time status inquiries to the state's healthcare community and to the general public.

### **Automating millions of calls annually**

Every year, millions of callers contact the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) to do background checks on healthcare providers throughout the state. By law, New York compiles data on healthcare workers, and makes this information available for the public.

Many calls are related to accessing up-to-date information on the professional status of nurses, as hospitals, nursing homes, and insurers must check status prior to hiring a nurse for a job. Such inquiries are ideal for automation and lend themselves well to a self-service model. And for this reason, New York State has instituted an automated system that enables callers to make database inquiries possible via an 800 number. Callers initiate their requests via the IVR and then seek fax back acknowledgment of accreditations or violation information.

To develop this IVR system, NYSDOH articulated a number of essential requirements that were best met through collaboration with a Plum professional services team. Among these requirements were:

**Complete professional services to provide data and equipment integration:** Plum provided, complete, end-to-end service, that included professional database and telephony equipment integration.

**Database Integration:** Plum collaborated with the Thomson Prometric, state's data processor and manager, to fully implement both an IVR and a web access mechanism for data housed in an Oracle database.

**PBX and ACD Integration:** Plum professional services' team integrated the turnkey, on-site IVR system to integrate with the applicable database and a Nortel Meridian PBX and ACD system. Telephony interaction was accomplished via channelized T1 lines (using the protocols D4, AMI, and E&M), installed between the Nortel PBX and the Plum Voice system. An E&M protocol was employed that enabled a variety of information to be passed between the two systems, including ANI and DNIS information. If callers require human assistance, transfer to a call center cue occurs upon demand.

**High Responsiveness:** Plum engineers deployed a DTMF-only platform to provide speedy responsiveness for this application. In addition the Plum user interface team optimized call flow to move callers efficiently through the call.

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**Failproof Reliability:** Plum monitors the systems operation 24x7x365 from the Plum operations center in Boston. Should maintenance be required, the Plum system team has the capability to rebuild the system remotely. For immediate backup, a fully operational replacement of the New York State system is housed at the Plum hosting center. In the case of catastrophic outage of the onsite system, service can be back up and running within minutes by simply re-routing the 800 access number to a mirror of the NYS VoiceXML application at the Plum hosting center.

### **Ongoing Advantages**

The Department of Health's Plum IVR system has proven highly effective as less than 20% of calls require transfer to a live customer service agent. Thanks to high call quality, clear system performance, wide scalability and optimal call flow, public inquiries to the database are answered not only with swift efficiency but also with complete information.

As a versatile asset, the Plum IVR system can be deployed in a number of ways for the NYSDep. of Health. With the ability to scale call volume by nearly 100% through licensing of additional ports, call capacity can be added easily and affordably without interruption to the current application. Additionally, telephony gateways can be installed within minutes to increase call capacity even further. Each gateway is managed from a central administrator interface; multiple gateways can be managed as one, with each running the same application suite.

As future application requirements arise, the same Plum system can be used. The current application suite can be modified with ease. The application suite employs VoiceXML and PHP, each of which are W3C public domain languages, and each with voluminous documentation. Tens of thousands of practitioners understand both VoiceXML and PHP, and the Plum professional services team continues to supply support as needed. Changes to the application suite can be deployed without even interrupting or shutting down the current application suite.

As the need arises completely new applications with new functionality can be added over time. All Plum systems offer the ability to run any number of applications simultaneously, each application triggered by a unique DNIS. As additional applications are added, connectivity to the database can be reused for future IVR applications as well as additional web applications.

Please contact us for more information via [sales@plumgroup.com](mailto:sales@plumgroup.com) or call 1-800-995-PLUM to speak with a representative.

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**About Plum Voice:**

Plum produces standards-compliant IVR and computer telephony solutions. Plum VoiceXML platform software and complete turnkey systems provide powerful and flexible functionality, supporting all VoiceXML-2.1 features and advanced functionality such as data-driven scripting, speech recognition, text-to-speech synthesis, and CTI.

The Plum team is composed of professionals with computer telephony and user interface expertise from Siemens, Compaq, Xerox PARC, and News Corp. Customers include New York State, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cummins, National Institute of Health, and AT&T. Partners include Intel and Hewlett Packard. Plum is a privately held company with primary offices in New York and Boston.

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