IBM

Amacis Visibility provides fast, accurate e-channel management.

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Application	Customer Interaction Management (CIM) solution for global organizations
Business Benefits	300% growth in revenues projected over next 3 years; 40% savings in implementation time compared with engines without self-learning capabilities; thousands of dollars of cost savings in consultants' fees for customers; ability to handle 1,000,000 messages per day
Software	IBM Text Analyzer Business Component IBM MQSeries® IBM DB2® Universal Database™

Quality customer service is widely acknowledged to be the key differentiator in the scramble for successful customer relationships. Most companies offering services on the Internet recognize the need to interact with their customers using e-mail and other electronic text channels. Unfortunately, many of these companies are not yet equipped with the technology to manage the tremendous volume of electronic communication they could receive.

Says Erik Hille, vice president of marketing for Amacis, Inc., a Customer Interaction Management (CIM) company,

"We are positioned as a thought leader in the marketplace because of our advanced capabilities, many of which are enabled by Text Analyzer."

– Erik Hille, Vice President of Marketing, U.S., Amacis, Inc.

"Most people see disappointing results from their attempts to contact companies by e-mail. They send an e-mail or fill out a Web form, and the response they
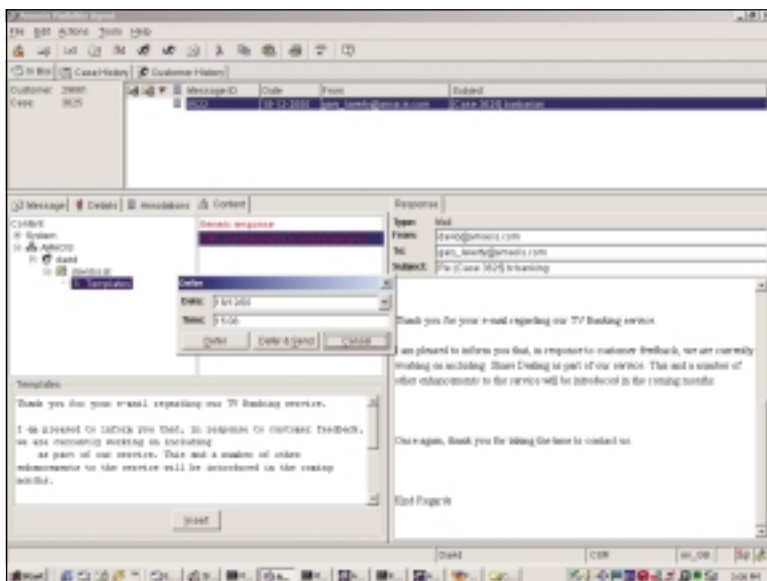
Using IBM Text Analyzer, Amacis helps companies realize their vision of one-to-one interaction with their customers using e-channels.

e business

Companies frequently solicit customer communication through e-mail or Web forms without being prepared for the volume of messages they receive.

receive isn't even specific to the inquiry they made. Or they hear back two or three weeks later when the answer isn't relevant anymore."

With offices in Belfast, London and Boston, IBM Business Partner Amacis, Inc. started up in 1999 to help companies route and respond to electronic communications as accurately, quickly and comprehensively as possible.

The Amacis solution, which is called Visibility, helps companies answer customers promptly with appropriate responses that take into account the customer's request, utilizing relevant data from back-end systems.

Amacis realized it needed to incorporate a robust categorization engine — a core component that could identify the contents of digital documents. After thoroughly evaluating products on the market and considering the idea of building its own categorization engine, Amacis chose IBM Text Analyzer Business Component, part of the IBM WebSphere® Business Components family of software products. WebSphere Business Components support open standards-based technology, such as Java™ and XML. This helps developers create flexible applications that enable smooth responses to business changes, improved productivity and reduced maintenance and support costs. WebSphere Business Components provide reusable, pre-tested sets of application content that work together and can be tailored to build unique e-business solutions.

Hille explains, "We selected Text Analyzer because of its scalability, speed and accuracy, and because it is backed by IBM research. Also the double-byte character sets available in Text Analyzer provide language capabilities in Japanese, Korean and Chinese — critical languages for us since we intend to focus on global clients." And Amacis liked the fact that Text Analyzer is based on Java technology. "Visibility is a 100 percent Java-based product and we believe in that as a standard, largely because of the portability that comes with that architecture," says Hille.

Amacis is projecting growth of more than 300 percent over the 3 three years and has already announced customer wins for its cross-industry application within the banking, insurance, telecommunications and utilities industries. "We are positioned as the thought leader in the marketplace because of our advanced capabilities, many of which are

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— John Rendle, Internet Services Manager, HSBC Bank Plc

enabled by Text Analyzer," says Hille. Comments Peter Lawless, IBM EMEA sales manager, CRM software, "By combining IBM Text Analyzer with Amacis Visibility, customers can now automate in excess of 80 percent of incoming mails, through a combination of artificial intelligence rules and innovative routing technology."

Intelligent categorization engine is easy to train

When a bank receives an e-mail in Spanish requesting an account balance, the Text Analyzer categorization component recognizes that the customer is both communicating in Spanish and requesting information about a bank balance. Visibility then compares the result of the categorization with the skill sets of the bank's internal representatives and forwards the request accordingly. For instance, the solution might retrieve the customer's last ten transactions from legacy systems and present the original request and a recommended response to a Spanish-speaking customer service representative who can confirm it, alter it or escalate it to a manager.

Text Analyzer includes a training unit, which develops its own business rules by processing a fixed number of characteristic documents for each category of content. Text Analyzer further fine-tunes itself as it is run with pre-categorized and live documents. If the results are not satisfactory, the business experts can alter the rules manually using their own intuition and knowledge of their business operations. In recent accuracy tests using the industry standard Reuters-21578 collection of documents, Text Analyzer ranked highest of all commercially available text-categorization products.

Reducing implementation time

The self-training capability of Text Analyzer and the ability of domain experts to interact with the training unit on an intuitive basis differentiate Text Analyzer from competing products, which are statistically based. The self-training feature reduces implementation time almost 40 percent, compared with software that requires manual set-up, and the fine-tuning feature saves the cost of additional programming, which sometimes can amount to thousands of dollars. Says Hille, "The ability to use artificial intelligence to aid in the initial implementation is a powerful feature that makes Text Analyzer unique."

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Amacis and Text Analyzer helped HSBC Bank Plc respond quickly to customer concerns when the bank moved from dial-up to Internet-based banking.

Text Analyzer hands off its categorization results to an Amacis-built distribution service, one of the 18 components built around Text Analyzer. The service forwards the results to the correct department and returns a correct response, using MQSeries messaging to retrieve the relevant data from the legacy back-end applications. Amacis Visibility works with IBM DB2 Universal Database or Oracle as data management solutions and can run on one server or on multiple servers in a distributed, global environment.

HSBC to handle hundreds of thousands of inquiries monthly

Amacis has begun implementing the Visibility solution at London-based HSBC Bank Plc, which wanted to solicit open-ended e-mail feedback from its customers and determine whether categorization could help it communicate with customers effectively. "In the end it came down to technology," comments John Rendle, Internet services manager at HSBC. "The Amacis solution, including IBM Text Analyzer, was truly scalable and a good fit for our architecture." Even in a non-structured environment, in which the bank was not able to predict what categories of content it would receive, Text Analyzer was able to categorize more than 40 percent of documents and suggest appropriate responses.

In the next phase, as HSBC opens its e-channels to more structured communications based on its new Internet banking facility, the bank expects that Amacis Visibility with Text Analyzer will be able to correctly categorize 80 percent of its incoming e-mails and Web-based forms. "We now know that we will be able to handle hundreds of thousands of e-mails per month with a staff of approximately 35 people," Rendle says. "In other words, Amacis and Text Analyzer make it feasible for us to open up a customer communication channel for all forms of retail banking."

IBM drives credibility in the marketplace

Amacis believes that its relationship with IBM and the credibility that IBM brings are crucial to its marketing efforts. As Hille remarks, "The IBM focus on research is a critical factor in marketing this type of product. When we say that Amacis Visibility successfully handles one million contacts per day, we know our claim is credible because IBM research is behind us."

Another important factor for Amacis is the direction IBM is taking with the WebSphere Business Components family of software products. Hille comments, "We like the idea of components that work with each other or with other companies' products to help us create flexible applications and enable companies to maximize e-business opportunities. We think this initiative will support our efforts to enhance our product and create innovative new CIM solutions."

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G325-5325-00