



Charles J. Faruki

Faruki Ireland & Cox P.L.L.

Dayton, Ohio

Philips SpeechExec Enterprise digital dictation workflow system a “force multiplier” for Ohio law firm

The Dayton, Ohio-based firm, specializing in commercial litigation, had used the same antiquated tape-based dictation units since the founding partners opened the doors in 1989. “We really didn’t think about new options for dictation,” says John K. Kendall, Executive Director. “The equipment was reliable and everyone knew how to use it.” Plus, he adds, the firm concentrated on building infrastructure in other areas. “When it came to the overall ‘technology pie,’ dictation seemed like a small slice. There were other areas that demanded automation sooner.”

This “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it” attitude was effective until the system started to, well, break down. Kendall says Faruki Ireland & Cox encountered a significant pain point in 2007 when the analog equipment began to fail, and staff found replacement parts expensive and hard to come by.

In addition, the firm recognized that the old system hampered productivity for younger associates. “The attorneys we hired right out of law school were tech-savvy,” Kendall explains. “They could not be convinced to use a dictation system based on 40-year-old technology. They were certain they could type their own work faster than they could dictate it, arrange for tape delivery and have the files transcribed.”

Centralized deployment a plus

To solve these problems Faruki Ireland & Cox turned to its trusted technology vendor, BEC Legal Systems, which recommended that it consider Philips Speech Processing. While assessing its options, leadership was introduced to Philips’ SpeechExec Enterprise, a system-wide model that enables voice files to be automatically transferred through the firm’s network, sent by e-mail or uploaded onto an FTP server. In addition, the technology allows access to the Web to transfer dictation voice files and attached documents.

“We immediately recognized the great benefits available with Philips SpeechExec Enterprise,” says Kendall, who consulted with the firm’s managing partner and IT director throughout the process. SpeechExec Enterprise features an intuitive Windows-based user interface, with centralized configuration tools to simplify administration (so user parameters can be modified unilaterally, for instance). The system also offers active directory functionality, and is forward-compatible with Citrix and Windows Terminal Services (WTS) environments.

“Our top priority was ease of use both for those who dictate and those who transcribe,” notes Brenda Hinkle, IT Systems Manager at Faruki Ireland & Cox. “The IT department has been able to take advantage of the ability to configure

The partners at Faruki Ireland & Cox were dealing with a welcome problem. They were delighted that their client base of Fortune 500 companies was expanding rapidly. Consequently, however, they realized that the firm needed to improve workflow efficiency and optimize attorneys’ productivity.

The firm always had taken advantage of the latest technology for most internal processes, yet lagged behind in one notable area: The 40 attorneys at Faruki Ireland & Cox continued to use outdated tape recorders for dictation. As growth demanded that attorneys increase their case load and travel more frequently – and that administrative support turn transcription around more quickly – leadership recognized it was time to upgrade to Philips SpeechExec Enterprise digital dictation workflow system.

PHILIPS



John Kendall

the users at a network level, and manage the set-up and functions of the software firm-wide,” she says, noting that much time and effort is saved because IT staff does not need to run from workstation to workstation to install and upgrade software. Hinkle says the capability to set up and configure dictation units for check-out by attorneys who dictate infrequently likewise as been a boon.

[Workflow management tools enhance productivity](#)

Philips SpeechExec Enterprise also addressed the firm’s need to blend communication and efficiency tools, and to encourage teamwork. Workflow management tools available through Enterprise allow attorneys to record dictation from any location and upload it directly to the firm’s file server. Dictation can then be automatically routed to the responsible secretary for transcription. The “new job notification” feature alerts

secretaries when transcription files arrive, and facilitates efficient work routing in cases of critical need or overflow.

“This is essential in our environment, where transcriptionists need to be able to access a fellow transcriptionist’s pending dictation,” says Hinkle. Transcriptionists can access voice files directly from their desktop computers and are presented with clear job overviews, including flagged priority files, to ensure efficient task planning. The Philips system features advanced sound quality, so secretaries can more easily understand dictation without needing to rewind multiple times. In addition, Faruki Ireland & Cox implemented an advanced SpeechExec Enterprise workflow management module to augment and extend the solution’s inherent functionality. Among other benefits, it allows multiple transcriptionists to access work from multiple locations.

“This was the perfect solution for us,” notes managing partner Charles Faruki. “Our case load is growing and our attorneys are on the road more. This enterprise-wide technology facilitates efficiency and teamwork.”

“We were delighted to be among the first customers in the United States to adopt the Philips SpeechExec Enterprise system,” Kendall adds.

[Smooth implementation drives demand](#)

To begin the implementation process, Faruki Ireland & Cox surveyed attorneys in the firm to find out who dictated all the time, who dictated enough to keep equipment in their office and who dictated so rarely that they checked out equipment only when needed. By the end of 2007, the firm purchased 38 Philips digital recorders and rolled them out to attorneys who needed and wanted them the most. “The



Mark Amos

process was very smooth and the transition was easy. In fact, the roll-out went so well that even the attorneys who had rarely dictated wanted to start using the Philips system,” says Kendall.

Marc Amos, an associate with the firm and a heavy dictation user, was among the first to begin using the digital system. He likes the fact that attorneys simply insert their recorder into their PC or a docking station, and dictation is electronically uploaded for transcription. “If we can’t access the Internet for some reason,” he adds, “the system offers call-in capability for uploading voice files. In the past, we’d have to dictate into our secretary’s voice mail, with our head cocked into the phone.”

[Philips technology is a ‘force multiplier’](#)

Characterizing the Philips technology as an “absolute force multiplier,” Amos adds that he appreciates the ability to insert additional information or instructions right in the middle of a file without recording over previous dictation. “I don’t have to tack comments on the end of the dictation or tape any longer. I can simply go back to the point in the file where I need to add something and insert it. Or I can add an instruction for the secretary whether to use a semicolon or a period at the end of a thought, for instance.”

This functionality proved to be highly valuable not long ago when Amos needed to draft a lengthy pleading. “I was able to create an outline and rough out the general content at one session, and then go back to finalize it



Philips Digital Pocket Memo 9610 with LAN Docking Station 9160

later. This would typically have taken me about four days to complete in the past. With Philips technology, I cut that time in half.”

The Philips SpeechExec Enterprise system offers several options to identify and prioritize dictation. Files can be labeled by work type (memo, letter or brief, for example) or by time entry (indicating how long the file is). Attorneys can also mark a file as priority to alert secretaries that a particular dictation file should be transcribed first. “We no longer have to place yellow sticky notes on the tape to let the secretary know what the dictation is, how long it lasts and how urgent it is,” Amos says.

Just as the dictation process has been simplified, the transcription process is similarly transformed. Secretaries can plan their day’s work based on the priority and length of jobs in their transcription “in box.” They can quickly identify and access individual dictation files, without having to fast-forward or rewind through tapes to locate a specific file. And, because all files are on the server, they can re-route excess work to colleagues or floating secretaries. “The support staff tells me the sound quality is much superior with the Philips digital technology. That makes their job significantly easier,” Kendall notes.

[Phase two includes statistical model, encryption](#)

The technology plan at Faruki Ireland & Cox called for the Philips SpeechExec Enterprise dictation management system to be implemented in two phases. The first rolled out

the new Digital Pocket Memo 9600 recorders with easy-to-use features – like smart-button functionality that allows attorneys to customize dictation headers and display time entries for billing purposes.

Later in 2008, the firm will begin to use the system’s full capabilities. For instance, Philips SpeechExec Enterprise includes a statistics module that allows users to track a wide variety of statistical data. This allows firms to assess a variety of functions – from monitoring billable hours by client...to calculating system ROI based on dictation/transcription activity...to measuring administrative productivity. Encryption will also become essential for privacy and security when voice files (such as meeting recordings and voice messages) are sent over the Internet.

“When we purchased the Philips digital technology, we anticipated that it would help us streamline our dictation and transcription activities, and turn around work more quickly,” says Faruki. “We have been delighted to discover that Philips also provides advanced tools to increase efficiency and productivity throughout the firm, and to conduct extensive analysis of our business processes.”

“The Philips SpeechExec Enterprise system offers such a wide variety of features,” Kendall adds. “In our business, it is important that we stay on top because our clients stay on top. Philips helps us do that. I honestly don’t know how we survived so long without it.”



For more information, please visit
www.philips.com/dictation