

Recording G.729 Prompts for Cisco Unified IP IVR

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This document defines the options for recording custom G.729 voice prompts for use with the Cisco® Unified IP Interactive Voice Response (Unified IP IVR) solution for Cisco Unified Contact Center Express.

Please note: Cisco is responsible for and supports or Cisco prompts only. Recording quality has many variables and can vary widely. Beyond contracting with Cisco for custom prompts for the same quality and voice talent as the Cisco standard prompts, Cisco cannot be responsible for endorsing or validating any other option cited herein. Presenting these options is only an attempt to delineate all options available to you.

Options for Recording Prompts

Self-Recording Using Cisco Unified Contact Center Express

To record and save your own G.729 prompts, you must use the Record Step in the workflow on a system installed with the G.729 option to produce a G.729 recording. The sample SNU.aef shipped with the system can easily be modified to store the recording into a file. There is a sample script, recordwrite, in the publicly accessible Script Repository:

http://www.cisco.com/en/US/partner/products/sw/custcosw/ps1846/products_implementation_desi gn_guides_list.html.

Self-Recording Using Windows Applications

You can use well-known tools such as CoolEdit and SoundForge for recording or converting previously recorded files. Another free tool for recording and editing sound is available at:

<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>.

Please note: In order to use these tools with G.729 on Microsoft Windows, the G.729 codec should be loaded on Windows, because unlike G.711, G.729 is not in the public domain and the codec is not freely distributed for commercial use.

Prompt Conversion Options Using Cisco Unified Communications Manager

The Cisco Unified Communications Manager Music on Hold (MOH) audio translator will output G.711 and G.729 formatted files. Reported quality varies widely, most likely because of quality variations of the input files.

Please note: Cisco is not responsible for these conversion results.

Use the following steps to convert prompts using Cisco Unified Communications Manager:

1. Open the C:\Program Files\Cisco\MOH\DropMOHAudioSourceFilesHere folder on Cisco Unified Communications Manager.
2. Some customers report using the MOH Audio Source page in Cisco Unified Communications Manager to (temporarily) add these files as MOH Audio Source. These MOH Audio Sources are deleted after clearing them out of the Cisco Unified Communications Manager configuration.

3. Upload the prompt(s) to the Cisco Unified Contact Center Express server using the newly created file. The prompt(s) will appear as <originalFileName>_g729.wav. You can find the files in the C:\Program Files\Cisco\MOH folder. Use Cisco Unified Communications Manager online documentation:
http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/sw/voicesw/ps556/products_documentation_roadmaps_list.html for more information.

The steps to convert prompts in Linux-based Cisco Unified Communications Manager follow:

1. Log into Cisco Unified Communications Manager Administration.
2. Under Media Resources-> Music On Hold Audio Source, upload the <originalFileName>.wav file and save it. This process generates the G.729 format.
3. Log in using the Secure Shell (SSH) Protocol with the Cisco Unified OS Administration username and password to access the command-line interface.
4. Execute the command **file get activelog mohprep/<originalFileName>.g729.wav** and specify the Secure FTP (SFTP) server details to fetch this file.

Obtaining Voice-Recording Prompts from Cisco

To obtain voice-recording prompts from Cisco, partners and customers must work directly with their Cisco representative to submit the text and language required. The Cisco representative will in turn work with the appropriate resources internally to produce the same high-quality voice prompts using the same voice talent that is used in our currently shipping prompts.

Contracting with Voice Recording Studios

Customers and partners can also opt to work with a professional studio to develop prompts. When providing files to a professional studio, you may want to provide the original CD quality recordings as well as the G.711 or G.729 files.

Summary

You have different options for recording prompts using the G.729 codec, including using Cisco Unified Contact Center Express or Microsoft Windows Applications to record your own prompts, converting prompts using Cisco Unified Communications Manager, obtaining prompts directly from Cisco, or contracting with a professional studio to record prompts. If you want the same voice for all prompts, you should use a Cisco recording partner for consistency. It will help you avoid having to rerecord all prompts with a professional studio if the studio's original voice talent is no longer available.

For More Information

For more information, contact Cisco Support.

Appendix: Installing Voice Prompts

When you have new voice prompts, it is important to follow the instructions for installing the prompts in AppAdmin under Tools → Prompt Management.

Links to all documentation are located at

http://www.cisco.com/univercd/cc/td/doc/product/voice/sw_ap_to/.

The link for the Cisco Unified IP IVR 3.1 follows:

http://www.cisco.com/univercd/cc/td/doc/product/voice/sw_ap_to/apps_3_1/english/admn_app/cra_adm/toolmenu.htm#1080641.

Trade-Offs of G.711 vs. G.729 Prompts

- The G.711 codec is in the public domain and is present in every Microsoft Windows installation. In contrast, the G.729 codec has intellectual property rights and is not freely available; you must purchase it for commercial use. As a result, even some professional recording studios may not be able to provide prompts using G.729.
- The problem of the prompt quality between G.711 and G.729 is subjective, whereas the costs vs. benefits of using one standard over the other are more obvious. For example, G.711 provides higher-quality prompts, but it requires more bandwidth, adding to the cost of using them. If you have bandwidth constraints, G.729, which is a high-compression codec, is more suitable, but remember that G.729 will have less "quality" than G.711, and fewer recording and playback options are available.
- High-compression codecs such as G.729 are more highly tuned to voice and they do not handle other requirements (music, special effects such as reverb and echo to enhance the customer interface) very well.

Both art and science are involved in prompt production. The many variables include the microphone, voice talent, digitization, postprocessing, and equalization of the recording in the desired codec. The conclusion: producing your own voice prompts is not easy, and quality is likely to be suspect.



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