



## **UCSD Researcher Calls on SmartAction(TM) Virtual Agents to Capture and Report Student Illness Symptoms for CDC Pilot Program**

*SmartAction Virtual Agents are based on an artificial intelligence engine that enables them to conduct natural language voice conversations. Once Virtual Agents have been trained for a new task, they can provide services that previously required a human to perform. For the UCSD application, "virtual nurses" quickly and efficiently gather illness symptoms via a telephone interview.*

Playa del Rey, Calif. (PRWEB) March 5, 2010 -- David Kirsh, a professor of cognitive science at UC San Diego, working with a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has chosen SmartAction Virtual Agents to capture and report on student illness symptoms at an elementary school in 4S Ranch, California.

Smart Action Company LLC is a provider of automated Virtual Agents powered by artificial intelligence that answer and make calls for contact centers. The system also features the best natural language speech recognition and synthesis technology available, making user interaction open and easy.

The pilot project was established to determine if increased information about medical absences reported to schools would lead to improved intelligence about contagious diseases, possible biological attacks or other notable trends in student health. According to Kirsh, "This type of system greatly improves information quality and enables more rapid analysis, allowing us to detect trends in symptoms and disease."

When parents call the school to report children absent or ill, the SmartAction Virtual Agent answers the call and asks a number of questions about symptoms. Information provided goes into a database for later reporting and analysis. The Virtual Agent automatically identifies parents or relatives based on Caller ID, and remembers yesterday's symptoms for speedy reporting.

The system also gives callers the option to provide additional information, which is recorded. Smart Action reports the results to the researchers in three ways: By email with a summary of information captured, including recorded parts; with a real-time database update to the university system; and a web-based report with a click-to-listen feature.

David Kirsh said, "After a poor experience trying a conventional interactive voice system, it was clear we had to find something more advanced to do the job. Smart Action had the technology to provide an optimal caller experience and capture the needed information effectively. And their rapid implementation allowed us to meet our first-day-of-school deadline."

Peter Voss, CEO of Smart Action, echoed David's comments: "This was an ideal project for our artificial-intelligence-based Virtual Agents. Not only is the necessary information captured quickly and easily, but it is available immediately to the school district and the CDC in a database. They have real time access to current health trends and will be able to mine growing historical data to uncover longer-term trends."

At the conclusion of the pilot program at the end of the school year, Kirsh and other researchers will present their findings to the CDC and hope that it will be adopted as the new way to gather such information in schools and districts across the state and country.

### **About SmartAction Company LLC**

Smart Action provides automated Virtual Agents that answer and make calls for contact centers. The Virtual Agents are much more intelligent and capable than the most advanced IVR systems available, yet just as affordable. Smarter technology enables open conversations that quickly determine caller meaning and intent, resulting in higher customer satisfaction, higher automation rates, and better business results. Smarter technology also means much more rapid deployment and more advanced new applications. Smart Action is a new company redefining the future of self service automation with a new solution that combines breakthrough technology with can-do no-excuses customer service.

[www.smartaction.com](http://www.smartaction.com)

### **Contacts**

David Kirsh  
UC San Diego  
(858) 822-2475

Norm Pensky  
Smart Action  
(310) 878-4755