

Re: MCE Communicator 1st Impressions

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Thanks for the writeup, I've also reposted on my blog.

Pete

G wrote:

Ok curiosity got this cat, being one to always take risks and love leading edge technologies I plunked down my \$150 and here's what I got. My main goal with this software is at a minimum to make a voice controlled music jukebox.

Box Contents:

CD, Logitech USB Microphone and manual.

Preliminaries:

I read the manual (only because it was about 10 pages) and started with the install. One thing to make note of is this was on an HP Z545 Media Center (2GB of Ram) and has a lot of other non- media center software installed into it such as Beyond TV , WinDVD, and a lot of other applications.

I plugged in the Logitech microphone and it automatically installed all the drivers (just like the manual stated). So far so good.

Then I put the CD in, I used the default settings and the software loaded nicely. It recommended a restart which I did. Upon the restart I got a blank pop-up dialog box with two blank buttons(What the heck is that all about). I never seen anything like it before, it's definitely some type of bug. So I opened the task manager to find out what this was all about

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and it appears to be newly installed applet conflicting with my wireless keyboard. I then proceeded to kill that applet and everything appears to be working fine (including the keyboard).

I then ran the tutorial and started to "Train" the software to my voice.

Ok, enough of the preliminaries here's the beef. Most of the main commands worked OK. The response time was acceptable. The audible feedback after stating a command is a little annoying. I rather has the response time be quicker then to have my commands regurgitated. But oh well can't have everything.

Here's the Beef:

All the MY TV commands work great,

All the MY Radio commands work great.

All the MY Pictures commands work great.

The My Videos commands don't work well. Maybe it's because I haven't completed all the voice training. Asking a command like "Bahamas May 2005" doesn't work. But changing the same file name to "Vacation" worked. And then any of the commands to pause, stop , restart didn't respond within My Videos whereas in the MY TV, and MY Pictures sections the same commands worked. Go figure! Another gripe is that any Video files inside folders are a pain to get to, When using "My Pictures" and selecting a folder the program would proceed to play everything within that folder. This is not the case in "My Videos".

This needs to be fixed and the ability to request a folder by it's name should also be added to the list of commands.

Now to what I truly wanted the software to do, a voice controlled Jukebox via " My Music". Well let's say it works OK. I have found that with more Voice Training it recognizes more artists than when I originally started with the software. For example when saying "The Rolling Stones" nothing would happen. But if I said "Bad Company" it would find the artist. and start to play the songs. I wish there was a way to add

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songs to a play queue. This software doesn't allow this but it will play playlists. Another request would be showing the list of songs available from each artist.

The Rest of the Software:

Also included with the software is Messaging. I don't use that so I'm not sure if it works or not.

The e-mail reader works ok. It will download the text from your messages and read them out loud. I wish I could turn that off and just read them.

The e-mail sending part is misleading. There is no way to actually use voice commands to fill out the "To" and "CC" sections. You need to use the keyboard for this (So much for getting rid of the remote controls and keyboards). You supposedly can dictate voice to fill out the message but since I already have to use the keyboard to fill out the "TO" and "CC" fields it's kind of pointless to use voice dictation. This area of the software is in dire need of rework.

Now the voice e-mail section. Well my expectations from the normal e-mail were extremely high so I recalibrated my expectations for the voice e-mail section (Luckily I did so because....) The same "TO" and "CC" issue from above still exists (need the keyboard). The actual voice recording needs to start via the remote or keyboard. These guys don't get it. Why use voice recognition if you still require the remote or keyboard to actuate commands. The voice recording works flawlessly, too bad you can't do the entire process via voice. One other thing, when I sent the message to myself I receive a plain vanilla message with a "Wav" file attachment message with no "wav" file. The recording is MIA. As before, this area needs some major rework.

The VOIP may work, but I saw enough in the above areas not to invest any more money in this companies goods.

Overall Impression:

I was going to invest in the stock market in "ONEV", But I'll hold off on that for the now. I wish there was a demo prior to purchasing this software, then again I'm a sucker for anything new and most likely would have still bought it.

Another option to enhance this software is an area to

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customize this software by adding more voice commands or even swap out unused ones. But this software offers none of that. What you get is it, Nothing more and actually plenty less.

MY overall Grade for this software would be a "C". It's a start of something really great but this is far from a polished gem