

## Current Trends

# Think you are done automating your password reset calls? Think again!

By Jeff Engle

“Houston, we have a problem.” That’s close to what help desk managers hear when help desk analysts notice they are spending a third of their time taking calls for password reset. These are mundane calls that cost IT departments far more than they should. As a result, IT help desks are looking to build or buy a solution that will reduce the number of password reset calls.

Many IT help desks approach this problem in two steps: consolidate the number of passwords needed and then reduce the number of password reset calls remaining. Consolidating the number of passwords creates an interesting side-effect -- there are now fewer “keys to the castle” so stricter security enforcement is required. Password consolidation leads to higher standards for password complexity and shorter durations for password validity. So while the numbers of reset calls are reduced because there are fewer applications having their own password, reset calls actually increase for the applications where passwords still exist. Self-service password reset can automate the 50% - 55% of the calls that still arrive at the help desk, even after Single Sign-On (SSO) and Password Sync are implemented. Self-service password reset comes in many forms. It can interact with end

users via PC (Web, thick client), kiosk, or telephone, using a variety of technologies to identify and authenticate. Although PC-based reset sounds like a great solution,

### Differing Results

- Web or thick client**  
25% automation and \$-200 in savings
- Touch-tone IVR**  
35% automation and \$760 in savings
- Speaker verification IVR**  
50% automation and \$1,660 in savings
- Speech-enabled IVR**  
85% automation and \$3,700 in savings

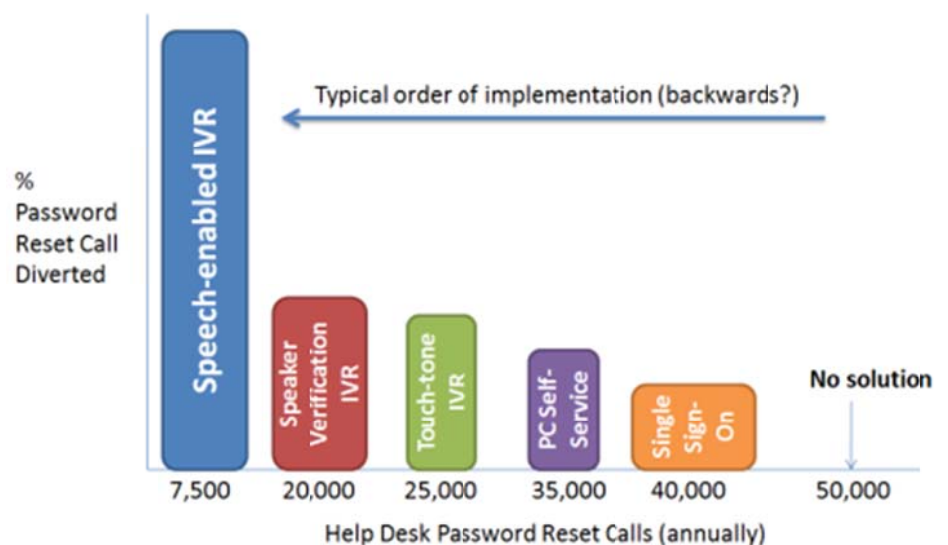
as sure as death and taxes, telephone calls for password reset will still haunt your help desk.

So does this mean that your company’s investment in SSO and PC-based password reset are in vain? It turns out that any combination of these approaches is more effective than any single approach. Consolidating the number of passwords actually

implement. Moreover, if you choose the combination of PC-based and speech-enabled password reset, you can divert up to 85% of the password reset calls from ever arriving at your help desk for the greatest cost savings (see charts).

The bottom line -- keep doing what you’re doing with your eye on the ultimate goal -- to reduce password resets and the calls they generate, and to automate as many of the reset calls left over as possible.

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