

AUTO DIALER



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1. Abstract

Autodialing is a type of telephone technology software used in businesses like call centers, schools, and doctors offices. Its purpose is to automatically dial telephone numbers from a long list. Calls can be made for a variety of reasons such as: telemarketing, emergency school closing notifications, appointment confirmations, surveys, and political campaigning. This paper mainly discusses autodialing software in call centers, technology, commonly used terms, and a service provider comparison.

2. About Autodialing in Call Centers

Autodialing systems are used in call centers to make calls from a large list of telephone numbers. These systems go through these calls with the goal to either send a message, conduct a survey, or give product information. Autodialing systems can also be used to connect call center agents with a live person. Since the autodialing system can be programmed to connect agents to a call only when a live person answers, less agent time is wasted on no-answer calls. Autodialing is used to perform three main functions: getting a message to a certain number, interacting with the call reception through an automated receptionist or IVR menu, and connecting calls to a live agent.

2.1. Autodialing- How Does it Work?

The setup and installation of auto dialing software requires four things. There needs to be a phone line, a computer, a voice modem (the technology that makes it possible to play the pre-recorded audio when the call is connected), and auto dialing software.

The system goes through a list of numbers, when the call is connected (to either a person or a voicemail system) a pre-recorded message plays. The recorded message can be combined with interactive voice response (IVR) technology in order to interact with the person on the other end of the phone. For example, the call recipient can answer survey questions after being prompted to "press 1 for yes, press 2 for no...".

In some cases the call is connected to a live agent. During these types of calls, information will be given by an agent instead of by a pre-recorded message. When a call is connected, voice detection technology goes to work. This technology determines the difference between a live person and a voicemail. It works by counting the number of rings before the call is connected and looking for patterns in voice responses. For example, humans pause in between words and have a typical way of answering the telephone ("John Smith's Office"). Once the system identifies the recipient as either automated or live, the message is played or a live agent is connected.

2.2. Different Autodialing Systems

There are a few different types of autodialing. Smart dialing is a type of automatic dialing which allows the pre-recorded messages to be personalized during the call. This type of system is used with IVR technology. Based on the responses given by the person on the other end, different messages are played.

2.2.1. Smart Dialing

Smart dialing is a type of automatic dialing that allows pre-recorded messages to be personalized during the call. This type of system is used with IVR technology. Based on the responses given by the

person on the other end, different messages are played.

2.2.2. Semi-Automatic Dialing

Semi-automatic dialing is another type of auto dialing, but it involves a live agent instead of an automated system. The agent controls the dialing and playing of messages. This also gives the agent the option to speak with their live voice at any point during the call.

2.2.3. Telemarketing Dialing

Telemarketing dialing is commonly used in call centers. This system makes multiple calls simultaneously and rarely involves a live agent. Calls are made from an extensive list and pre-recorded product information is delivered once the call is connected. This type of system can also be used with IVR technology, which gives the lead (potential customer) the option to move through the telephone system in order to learn more about the product or make a purchase.

2.2.4. Predictive Dialing

Predictive dialing is a feature offered by most automatic dialing providers. The percentage of calls answered by a live agent, agent availability, and time of day are all factors that predictive dialing takes into account when determining optimal times to make calls. The purpose of this type of system is to make calls at a time when a live person is most likely to answer. Predictive dialing is also the technology that supports live agent connection if and only if the call is answered by a live person.

2.2.5. Natural Predictive Dialing

Natural predictive dialing is a type of autodialing that always involves a live agent. Unlike the other types of autodialing, a live agent is connected to the call, even when a live person did not answer the call. This type of autodialing is used because customers are more likely to respond to a live agent than to an automated receptionist. However, since autodialing generally involves thousands of phone numbers, the chances of no-answer calls is high. Because of this, natural predictive dialing is not offered by many providers, or used in many call centers. It results in a lot of agent time wasted on no-answer calls, answering machines or disinterested call recipients.

3. Terms to Know

1. **IVR (Interactive Voice Response):** The technology that makes it possible to [communicate with an automated receptionist](#) through either a spoken voice command, or a command typed on a keypad.

2. **Preview Dialing:** Allows agents in a call center to have control over which telephone numbers are dialed.
3. **Survey Calling or Campaigning:** From the list of phone numbers, calls are made to conduct surveys for customer service reasons or market research. Used with IVR technology.
4. **Predictive Dialing:** Predicts the best time to make a call based on time of day and agent availability. Its purpose is to decide when a live person is most likely to answer the call. From there a live agent will be connected to the call.
5. **Voice Modem:** A system in a computer that allows the transmission of audio data. This is what makes it possible to play the messages for the call recipients or voicemails.
6. **List:** All the telephone numbers the software will automatically call.
7. **Notifications:** Most autodialer providers offer a notification feature. In case of emergency, the large list of telephone numbers is dialed and a message is left. For example, if there is an emergency school closing a list of parents telephone numbers will be called immediately and automatically.
8. **Telemarketing:** The process of selling a product or service over the phone.
9. **DNC (Do Not Call):** Residents can sign on to the national do not call registry and will be removed from the auto dialers list.
10. **Call Recording:** A service offered by most providers. Calls are recorded for quality and customer service purposes.
11. **Robo Calling:** Sometimes autodialing is referred to as Robo calling. It is short for robot calling, because the calls are made by artificial intelligence systems instead of a live person.
12. **Voice Broadcasting:** The process of playing a pre-recorded message once the call is connected.
13. **Answering Machine Detection:** The voice detection technology that determines if a live person answered the call based on factors like response patterns and number of rings before call connection.

3. 1. Standard Features of AutoDialing Providers

- Notification and Alert Features
- Ability to Conduct Surveys
- Predictive Dialing
- Call Recording
- Telemarketing Dialing

- Free Trial

4. How to Choose an Auto Dialer Provider

Ask yourself these four questions to decide if autodialing is right for your call center.

4.1. What type of call center do you run?

Some call centers benefit more from auto dialing systems than others. For example, medical call centers can benefit from autodialing because of the notification and reminder features offered by most providers. Patients can be reminded when to take their medication, or called to confirm their appointments. Telemarketing call centers can also benefit greatly from autodialing because it is used to share product information with a large number of people. Inbound call centers, who are not working to generate leads or sell a product, do not need autodialing software.

4.2. Do you need to improve customer service levels?

Autodialing providers can offer customer check up services as well as make survey calls. The system can be used to follow up on any customer concerns as well as conduct surveys about agent performance and customer satisfaction. These types of customer service calls are used in combination with IVR technology and automated menus.

4.3. Do you want to better utilize agent time?

With predictive dialing, agents are only connected to the call when a live person answers. This results in less agent time wasted on no answer calls.

4.4. Do you need autodialing services daily?

Some autodialing services are integrated into your call center software while others can be hired for a limited amount of time based on your companies needs. For example, CallFire offers pay as you go plans, an hour of autodialing services costs two dollars.

5. Providers

5.1. CallFire

Pros

They offer a free trial and pay as you go plans

Cons

Voice Broadcasting does not come standard.

Conclusion

Since opening in 2004, they have grown their network and now work with about 100,000 customers. They work for customers like Allstate insurance and Dominos Pizza. They have locations in New Jersey and the Ukraine, but their headquarters is located in Santa Monica, California.

CallFire's auto dialing system can be used for emergency notifications, reminders, bill collection, telemarketing, product information, and more. They offer pay as you go plans. They have three different plans, a lite plan, a standard plan, and a professional plan. The lite plan costs two dollars per hour, the standard plan is three dollars per hour, and the professional plan is four dollars per hour. Voice broadcasting is an extra 3.5 cents per minute. They offer a free trial which allows for full access to all of their services.

5.2. Database Systems Corp.

Pros

They offer a software demonstration as well as preview and predictive dialing.

Cons

They can only be integrated with Telemation CRM software.

Conclusion

Database Systems Corp. has been in business since 1978. Their headquarters is located in Phoenix, Arizona. They can offer a four line auto dialing system and have more than just standard features of autodialer services. They can also offer Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) and Interactive Voice Protocol (IVR) systems.

Their autodialing system can be used for debt collection, survey calling, market research, customer follow up, and telemarketing. They offer preview and predictive dialing as well as data import. Unfortunately, they can only be integrated with Telemation CRM software. Call reporting is available but does not come standard. They do offer a demonstration of their software, but perspective customer have to inquire for pricing information.

5.3. 3CLogic

Pros

Offer a free trial and a free software demo. They also have positive reviews online.

Cons

Auto dialing is not their specialty (There are more of an all-round call center solutions).

Conclusion

3CLogic is a cloud based system. It offers predictive dialing and call recording. Their autodialing services can be used for telemarketing, surveys, reminders, and emergency notifications. They offer a demo of the systems as well as a free trial. Although customers have to inquire for pricing options, their website does say that they are "commitment free". This probably means that they do not have yearly contracts.

They strive for "productivity and efficiency" when it comes to their auto dialer services. Their site states that with their service, the amount of time it would take to reach prospective customers can be decreased by 50-75%. They also offer 24/7 customer support.

5.4. Voicent

Pros

User-friendly and offer auto-retry and recurring calling features.

Cons

They have limited live customer support.

Conclusion

Vocient is a user-friendly autodialing solution. They offer predictive, preview and power dialing. Their services can be used for marketing, lead generation, notifications, reminders, debt collection. They are entirely software based and do not require any hardware installation. They offer services such as auto-retry which means that the system will automatically redial phone numbers if the call went unanswered. Another service they offer is recurring calling. With recurring calling, certain numbers are programmed to be called on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis.

They also have a built-in calendar that comes standard with their service, and text to speech services. Perspective customers can use to service for free to make up to twenty calls. They have a standard plan which is \$299, but only allows one call to be made a time. They also offer larger professional plans which range in price from \$499-\$9,999. They have customer support on their site, but only offer live support for higher paying customers.

6. Auto Dialer Matrix

	Database Systems Corp.	CallFire	3CLogic	VOICENT
Predictive/Power Dialing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Notifications	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Surveys	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Call Recording	Does not come standard, but can be integrated for extra costs	Yes	Yes	Yes
Customer Service	Offers customer service during business hours only (8-5)	During business hours	24/7	FAQs on site, live help for pro clients
Free Trial	No	Yes	Yes + software demo	Yes
Auto Retry	No	No	No	Yes
Pay As You Go Plans	No	Yes	No contract plans	No
Voice Broadcasting	Yes	Extra	Yes	Yes
Pricing	Inquire	\$2/hr. lite, \$3/hr. standard, \$4/hr. pro	Inquire	Ranges from \$299 to \$9,999