

Radish tries out another homegrown tech product

Entrepreneurs sold first firm for \$40M

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If the story of Radish Systems seems familiar, that's because its founders launched a company with almost the same name before — one that also blended online data and voice technology.

That was 21 years ago.

Radish Systems LLC's founders, Theresa Szczurek and Richard Davis, of Boulder, were less gray then, and they sold telecom hardware. After six years of building the company, they sold it for more than \$40 million in 1996.

The married entrepreneurs aim for the same kind of result this time. But they don't expect things to take as long because their new technology is a software app sold by download, not requiring new hardware.

"Things happen so much faster now," Davis said.

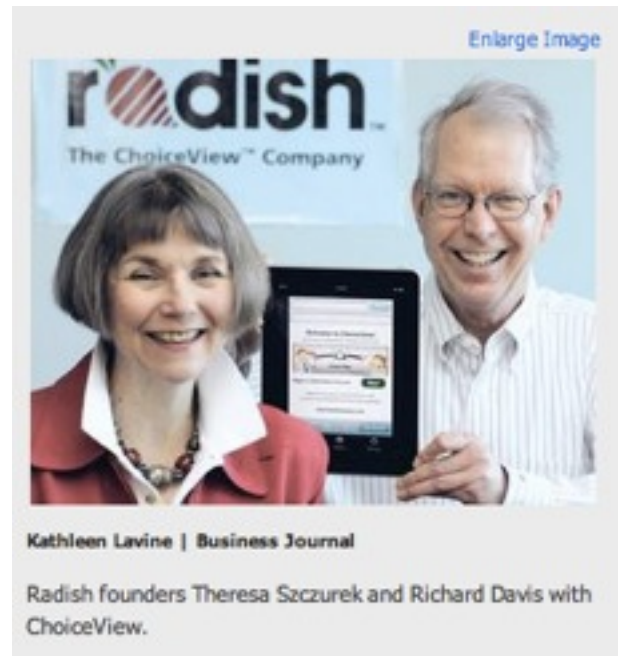
Davis, a former Bell Labs telecom researcher in Denver, has created a software application, called ChoiceView, for Apple iPhones. It allows online documents and video to be pushed to mobile devices and displayed at the same time as a voice conversation — something that can't be done on an iPhone.

The software routes both voice and data to the same phone number — or multiple numbers — so that audio and visual information arrives in unison on a person's iPhone. It works on the iPad as well as with Internet phone services, and soon will be available for devices that run the Android operating system, Davis said.

Call centers are targeted customers

Radish Systems initially is trying to sell ChoiceView to call-center technology companies and businesses with their own customer care or technical support call centers.

The idea is that operators can use ChoiceView, in conjunction with their verbal scripts, to guide a customer through something complex, such as installing a piece of electronic equipment, by showing them images or how-to videos of the steps they're describing.



The feedback Radish Systems has been getting at trade shows suggests there's a lot of interest in the idea, CEO Szczurek said.

"The market has been demanding something, and the technology is available. Lo and behold, Dick invented the solution," said Szczurek, who left AT&T marketing before joining Davis in founding their first company in 1990.

She envisions ChoiceView being used in telemedicine by rural doctors, by pharmaceutical sales forces, and as a training or supporting technology for installers working in the field.

Scosche Industries, an Oxnard, Calif., maker of after-market auto electronics, made ChoiceView part of its technical support service for its downloadable installation and product-specifications guide that thousands of independent installer can buy.

It's expected to save installers a lot of time by making schematics, installation tips and audio-visual assistance more easily accessible, **Kas Alves**, a Scosche executive vice president, said in a news release.

"Installers won't have to leave the installation to retrieve a fax or browse the Internet," he said. "All the information will be available at their fingertips on their phone."

ChoiceView's blending of telecom capabilities is similar to the earlier product of Szczurek and Davis' first company, which was called just Radish.

In 1990, the earlier Radish launched VoiceView, a piece of hardware that let voice and data travel nearly simultaneously over dial-up Internet connections. The product came out when going online tied up a phone line.

Early adopters of VoiceView included securities brokerages that wanted to be able to talk to traders and monitor prices simultaneously. Other large companies — Sony, NEC, Blockbuster Music, 1-800-Flowers.com — became VoiceView customers. SystemSoft Corp. ultimately bought Radish to acquire the technology.

It took years of working out clunky hardware and more than \$3 million in venture capital to make VoiceView a success.

With the investment of its founders and a couple of angel investors, today's Radish Systems has ChoiceView on the market in under two years.

Szczurek said the company does have revenue, though it's less than \$500,000 so far. About 10 people work on ChoiceView, mostly remotely and part time. Half of them worked with Szczurek and Davis at Radish in the 1990s.

Today's Radish reflects the change in technology and telecom startups — a virtual work force, a downloadable product and rapid turnaround for expected product development. Forming a business to sell smartphone software also means this generation's Radish doesn't have to persuade customers to buy expensive hardware.

"We don't have to worry about how the devices get in the hands of people this time," Davis said. "They fly off the shelves all by themselves. It's a beautiful thing."