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Getting Vertical Focus: **Hospitality**



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Executive Editor, IP Communications Group,
Paula Bernier (pbernier@tmcnet.com)

Executive Editor, Strategic Initiatives, **Erin Harrison**
(eharrison@tmcnet.com)

TMC LABS

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

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(srucco@tmcnet.com)

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Getting Better All the Time

New data from KPMG LLP indicates U.S. communications and media execs are largely upbeat about our sector and its prospects for a continuing recovery this year and into 2011. And those executives surveyed indicated they were investing for growth by a 2-to-1 margin.

The audit, tax, and advisory firm, which surveyed 81 CEOs and other C-level executives during April and May, says wireless/mobile applications and digital devices are the two areas from which these leaders expect the most revenue growth over the next three years. About 83 percent of the group expects revenue increases from digital devices and services this year. And 46 percent of these executives say that revenue growth should be at least 7 percent.

What's more, KPMG reports that 65 percent of those surveyed believe revenue and profitability is better now than it was a year ago, although they don't expect the U.S. economy at large to recover until early 2012. And 75 percent believe both revenue and profitability for our sector will be better yet a year from now.

That may explain why, although the jobs picture generally remains hazy, about 53 percent of this group expects to add to their employee counts this year. On the down side, however, 22 percent expect to eliminate some positions.

In other recent upbeat news, **Verizon** Business announced that its global wholesale VoIP minutes of use grew more than 200 percent in 2009. The company has a base of more than 700 wholesale VoIP customers.

"Since we launched our VoIP portfolio 10 years ago, we've seen steady growth reflecting customer desire for reliable, cost-effective IP voice services," says Mike Millegan, president of Verizon Global Wholesale. "And, as this market grows, we continue to add new VoIP services while enhancing our existing portfolio."

To further expand the appeal of its VoIP services, Verizon this year is adding more robust VoIP network interfaces in Europe, support of caller-provided CLI and greater integration into customer portals. (Caller-provided CLI is a caller ID feature that allows a main phone number to appear as the called ID even when a call is made from an extension, branch office, or home-based agent.) And, by the end of the year, wholesale customers outside the U.S. should have the ability to electronically access their call detail records and directly download their monthly invoices.

While executive outlooks, and traffic volumes for video and VoIP, clearly are on the upswing, large-cap mergers and acquisitions have not accelerated at the pace some expected, although (as I noted in my May Top of Mind column) we have seen a smattering of recent M&A action in the communications arena.

PricewaterhouseCoopers Transaction Services reports that U.S. M&A activity was down 3 percent compared with the same period in 2009. The number of closed deals in the first half of 2010 represents the lowest deal volume this decade, according to PwC. For the first five months of 2010, there were 2,969 closed deals representing \$317 billion, compared with 3,065 deals valued at \$323 billion in the same period of 2009, the firm reports.

While PwC believes an improvement on this front is unlikely in the near future, prospects for mid-market transactions are good. In fact, the median deal size in the first half was \$107 million, indicating that smaller, middle market deals have become the new normal, according to the firm.

"Going into the second half, record dry powder in the private equity space and unprecedented cash levels on the balance sheets of corporate America will combine with the desire of family-held businesses and private equity backed management teams to sell prior to looming tax increases," says Bob Filek, partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers' Transaction Services.

The firm expects to see action on this front by software outfits that want to expand their portfolios to better target specific verticals and as major hardware companies move to deliver end-to-end solutions. **IT**



A Day Made for Twitter

The events of one day back in June certainly seemed custom-made for

Twitter, as news flowed in so fast it was difficult to convey all of it immediately with any more depth than 140 characters.

First there was the report that the U.S. had an exchange of generals in the Afghanistan war.

Around the same time the BP oil spill took a turn for the worse when a robot accidentally knocked into some equipment causing the spill volume to increase.

Meanwhile, the U.S. prevailed in a historic World Cup win in the final moments of a game against Algeria – even though it seemed referee calls in back-to-back games were decidedly anti-American (U.S. vs. Algeria, U.S. vs. Slovenia), resulting in two important goals being called invalid.

And while the Earth figuratively shook in Africa as Americans won a major soccer game, it literally shook in Canada, where a 5.0 magnitude quake hit. Michael Roston at True/Slant wrote that Twitter was one of the first sources of information about the quake. Not to be outdone, Facebook saw the launch of a new group titled “I survived Canada’s Earthquake 2010,” which is liked by around 14,030 people.

While the above turmoil took place, and sports fans watched a tennis match that seemed to last forever, the tech world also saw big news with the launch of the iPhone 4. In fact, INTERNET TELEPHONY’s Tom Keating, who also writes for TMCnet and runs TMC Labs, reported that the Apple iPhone launch caused FedEx servers to choke, sputter and gasp as hundreds of thousands of customers waited impatiently to get their shiny new gadgets delivered.

Around the same time, there was a release about Motorola Droid X making its debut on the Verizon network. Actually, it wasn’t available for a few weeks but it is

always good to counter the news of your competitor just before they release a new product to keep them from capturing too much market and mind share. (Although it is made from a rival company, I expect this phone to perform similarly to the HTC Incredible as it also runs the Android OS and has solid technical specs as well. And the Incredible is quite good – almost as good as the iPhone 3G.)

But is it as good as the iPhone 4? After getting my hands on one, it seems like a denser version of the 3G with much better response time. Taking a picture, for example, is super fast. With 100 new features and hundreds of new developer APIs, expect this phone to captivate millions of new users – in fact some reports say there were already a million of these gadgets sold!

To me one of the biggest achievements of the new iOS 4 software, which can also be applied to iPhone 3GS models and recent iPod Touches, is its limited multitasking and the ability to categorize apps. Ironically, neither of these features is groundbreaking, as PDAs did this handily 10 years ago. But still, somehow when Apple decides to catch up with the rest of the world on certain features a decade later, we call it groundbreaking. But whether it is a big deal or not, these two features will result in less desire to jailbreak, which could mean good news for Apple investors and the U.S. economy as more people buy their apps instead of getting them for free. Remember, Apple is the OPEC of the West.

One final comment on Android: Google has come a very long way, and this platform is much better than it was in the past. It has become a very credible and serious iPhone competitor; and as we see Android tablets achieve some popularity (beyond the Nook) we can expect the Google ecosystem to be a viable Apple OS competitor – across the board.

I need to spend some time backing up my current iPhone and saving the pictures and videos so I can be ready for the iPhone 4 to arrive. Me and my 999,999 potentially new Facetiming video chat friends are indeed very happy. **IT**

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A Technology Marketing Publication,
River Park, 800 Connecticut Ave. 1st Fl.
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Columns

- 1 Top of Mind**
Getting Better All the Time
- 2 Publisher's Outlook**
A Day Made for Twitter
- 12 Guest Room**
Summer Storms Over the Potomac
- 14 Viewpoint: Voice of the Customer**
Turning a Dead Battery Turned into a Great Customer Experience
- 14 Thinking IT Through**
IT in Social Software
- 16 Next Wave Redux**
The Next Wireless Broadband Enabler: Wi-Fi!
- 16 Regulation Watch**
The FCC Takes on Network Neutrality
- 18 Virtualization Reality**
The Next Big Thing
- 20 Disaster Preparedness**
Jump Start Your Business Continuity Project

Cover Story

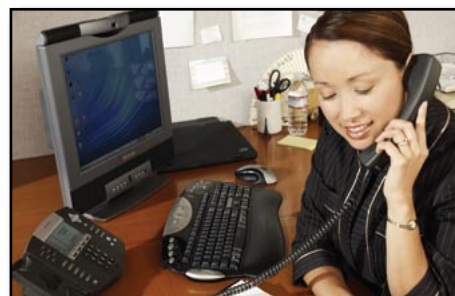
- 40 Fueled By Nortel CVAS Deal, GENBAND Continues Its Ascent**



Feature Articles

- 44 Three-Screen Strategies**
Who's Delivering Content Across TVs, Computers and Mobile Devices & How
- 50 A Look at Multimedia Phones**
Why This Time They're Really Going to Take Off
- 54 Lowering the Transport Cost of Mobile Internet Traffic**

32



Special Focus

- 56 TMC Labs Innovation Awards 2010 – Part 2**

44



Departments

- 6 Getting Vertical – This Month's Focus: Hospitality**
 - 6 Amid Travel Slowdown, Communications Help Hotels Leave the Light On
 - 8 ExteNet Wi-Fi System Trumps Others
 - 10 Hospitality Briefs
- 26 The Channel**
 - 26 ITS Addresses Financial Vertical with HFN Deal
 - 27 On RAD's Radar
 - 27 Channel & Agent News
 - 28 The Channel Perspective
- 30 News**
 - 30 Enterprise News
 - 31 Service Provider News
 - 32 Wireless News
 - 34 TEM News
- 36 Open Source**
 - 36 Demand for Open Source and Standards-Based Solutions Moves Upward
 - 38 Open Source News
- 64 Ad Index**

50





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Amid Travel Slowdown, Communications Advances Help Hotels Leave the Light On

The hospitality industry has taken a hit in recent months due to the recession and fluctuating gas prices. Nonetheless, it remains a key vertical on which telecom and IT solutions providers are focused, and these companies say hotels can use this time to leverage communications to lower costs, build customer loyalty and drive new revenues.

"An industry previously projected to grow its wages and employment by 17 percent between 2004 and 2014 is now wrestling with low occupancy rates, a credit crunch, and increased layoffs as businesses and consumers cut back on their travel and associated leisure spending," said Cort Isernhagen, vice president of Industry Insights, an IDC company, in an April 2009 conversation with Avaya. "In light of the economic reality, the industry is seeking ways to attract and retain guests while operationally managing their CAPEX during the credit crunch."

Welcome to Hotel Optimization

The top 10 companies in the U.S travel and hospitality industry spent the largest portion of their IT budgets (29 percent) on hardware, according to a recent research report at companiesandmarkets.com. The second largest spends by the group were on software and services.

While that group certainly is interesting, Meredith Whalen, group vice president of vertical market business units with Industry Insights, says it's the small and medium hotels that are really holding up despite the down economy. However, she adds, the typical IT spend of this group is just 1 to 1.5 percent of operating expenses. So it should come as no surprise that improving operating efficiencies is the No. 1 business priority in medium-sized hospitality organizations.

"It is important to remember that optimization does not just mean cost reduction; it also means an increase in efficiency," she says. "Initiatives that can improve efficiency, even with the same cost base, will become a priority, especially if performance improvement can translate into revenue gains."

Investments in call centers, cloud-based solutions, IP telephony systems, mobile and wireless infrastructure and unified communications solutions can often result in new efficiencies, as well as other benefits, according to INTERNET TELEPHONY sources.

In fact, Hotel Technology Next Generation, a non-profit trade association for hospitality technology, says, "the emergence of cloud computing and reliable networks has led to an opportunity to dramatically alter the cost/performance landscape for the hospitality industry through the sharing of many technology services across multiple hotel companies."

The organization surveyed the CIOs and other top IT folks from 20 of the largest hotel companies to determine there is great interest in this new computing model.

"We believe that we're at a watershed moment for this industry," says Douglas Rice, executive vice president and CEO of HTNG. "This model can offer efficiencies and performance enhancements that will redefine standards of delivery, quality and performance for hospitality technology functionality for decades. Indeed, more than 80 percent of the participating IT executives were willing to share such applications as guest-room device management, concierge, point of sale, housekeeping, facilities management, and applications for several back-office and human resource functions."

Daryl Page, managing director of global hospitality at Avaya, tells INTERNET TELEPHONY there's a lot of interest by hotels, especially U.S.-based multi-property ones, in moving to a hosted PBX model. That's because such solutions as Avaya Aura can sit on top of other PBXs while allowing an organization to move its applications and management to a centralized location off the hotel properties. However, ultimately, he says, everyone would like to go to a cloud-based/utilization model.

Here's a Map to the Property

In a separate initiative by HTNG, the group in May released specifications for new standard interfaces to enable the connection of hotel guest kiosks to property management systems, as well as for simplifying connectivity of payment systems. These specs are among the many interconnectivity guidelines provided by the HTNG, and they're all about allowing for easier integration of multiple communications and management systems.

In fact, Avaya in June introduced the Avaya Hospitality Enablement Suite, which is server software that allows hotel PBXs and popular property management systems to interface in a standards-based way. Page says that enables hotels to keep track of and more efficiently respond to guest requests, such as room service, housecleaning and restaurant reservations. The platform also supports and tracks key hotel staff functions, such as the posting of mini-bar charges and room status

updates directly from the room. New efficiencies in terms of faster response times and elimination of paper waste can save hotels significantly, says Page, adding the reduction of hard copy materials alone can amount to nearly \$100,000 annually for the typical 300-room hotel.

3CX is also now discussing the importance of solutions that allow for ease of integration between hotel PBXs from companies like itself and property management systems. Nick Galea, CEO of 3CX, tells INTERNET TELEPHONY that new interfaces allow his company's reseller partners to more efficiently deliver to the hospitality industry solutions that combine its Windows-based PBX with systems from companies like MICROSOFT's Fidelio and RoomMaster that help hotels manage check in/check out, guest requests and the like.

Galea says hotels can benefit from this solution because it is integrated with property management systems and allows them to move away from costly proprietary phone systems to open systems like those offered by 3CX. Saying an open IP-based phone solution like the one from 3CX can deliver around 50 percent savings in upfront costs, as well as additional services savings over time, Galea indicates that pitch is resonating with the hospitality industry, given 3CX and its partners (which include Super Technologies) have done more than 100 hotel installations in the past six months.

In other recent news along these lines, Xorcom Ltd. has partnered with PBillX Inc., developer of P\$X FIAS software, to enable the former company's Asterisk-based IP PBX solutions to interface with Amadeus Hospitality, Micros PMS and Protel PMS property management systems.

Ruth Bridger, Xorcom's vice president of marketing, says the company is always on the lookout for vertical markets that could benefit from its solutions, and that hospitality is among the hottest verticals right now. She adds that the Xorcom solution is an ideal one for this vertical given its scalability and ability to support analog phones.

Izzy Gal, Xorcom's vice president of innovation, also notes that the company earlier this year added Zigbee wireless functionality to its PBX, saying that could enable it to support additional hospitality applications such as property security and energy management on the same platform.

Enjoy Your Stay

In addition to improvements in centralized communications solutions, room-based devices are also seeing a noticeable upgrade.

For example, if you're lucky, you may have already stayed in one of the rooms equipped with an Avaya Guest Media device. The SIP-based system features a large color touch-screen interface through which guests can make phone calls, set alarms, get stock quotes, check the weather, make restaurant reservations, peruse wine lists, explore local attractions, or set a tee time. Hoteliers also can use it to deliver property-specific applica-

tions such as full-motion streaming video, concierge services and real-time property tours.

But what may be most interesting about this solution to hotel owners is its potential to allow them to increase sales of their own products and services, or the products and services of other entities like local businesses.

"Avaya's hospitality solutions are ideal for hotels seeking to provide a one-of-a-kind guest experience," says Page. "They can drive top-line growth by helping hoteliers increase more traditional revenue sources, such as food and beverage sales and spa treatments, while opening new avenues via split-revenue models, where off-site shopping, recreation and other non-hotel attractions can be promoted via the Avaya Guest Media Hub."

Among the hotels using the product are the Park Hotel Weggis, a five-star hotel on Switzerland's Lake Lucerne, and Maxims Hotel at Resorts World Manila in the Philippines, a new six-star property expected to open in November. **IT**

Key Challenges for Hotels During 2010

Maintaining occupancy levels. The global economic downturn has decreased travel-related spending across almost all categories of the industry. The small and medium-sized hospitality property executives will need to identify which segments will be least impacted and swing their focus and resources heavily towards them.

Gaining market share. Although the business climate is difficult, savvy companies will use this as a time to gain market share. Often, the guest profile of the traveler using small boutiques or franchisee hotels is one that is more price sensitive and less brand-loyal than those in other segments. The hospitality executive will need to be weary of larger competitors taking market share and adopt preventative strategies. The special relationship and customer intimacy that often characterize small and medium-sized properties will be especially important to emphasize (along with competitive pricing).

Changing traveler profile. Driven by the cost of air travel, as well as increased costs in some cities for lodging, we see different travel patterns emerging. For example, there is a growing trend with business travelers embarking on numerous short-stay trips to multiple destinations rather than a connected, continuous multi-leg journey. IDC also sees segments of leisure travelers increasing despite the economic downturn. The small- and medium-sized hotelier will need to vary offerings and amenities to accommodate these ever-changing travel preferences.

Source: Industry Insights, an IDC company

ExteNet Wi-Fi System Trumps Others

Wi-Fi has become a must-have amenity for most hotels. ExteNet Systems Inc. has a solution that caters to that need – but without all the muss and fuss or your typical high-speed Internet installation. The company recently went live with such a system at Chicago's Trump International Hotel and Tower. INTERNET TELEPHONY recently interviewed Jon Davis, vice president of indoor networks at ExteNet, about the solution.

What's cool about ExteNet's installation at the Trump hotel in Chicago?

Davis: Anytime ExteNet Systems gets to work with an organization with that kind of caliber, that is cool. Wireless networks that go up to the 92nd floor of an American skyscraper – it is probably one of the highest indoor networks in the U.S. – that's a great project.

When a beautiful hotel is up and running, the last thing any building owner wants is a construction project that is going to interfere with the hotel's operations or with the quality of stay afforded to their guests. The beauty of ExteNet's iDuct technology is that we use the metal ductwork of a building's heating, ventilating and air conditioning system as the waveguide for the radio signal; there's no need to put hundreds of miles of cabling into a structure when you can take advantage of its existing infrastructure. This makes for an installation that can be undetected – during deployment and afterward – by hotel guests.

Is hospitality a key vertical for ExteNet?

Davis: Absolutely. The hospitality industry is responding to massive customer demand for wireless connectivity. [And hospitality] is similar to each of ExteNet's other vertical markets: health care, transportation, government and higher education. We are finding that business traveler-focused hotel operators are very proactive about getting an indoor network up and running. Think about this: During 2009, close to 120 billion photos and videos were sent from mobile phones to mobile phones – a 750 percent increase over the number of photos and videos sent during 2005. We have to expect that people who are traveling and are taking advantage of mobile technologies will continue unabated. With the growing prevalence of social networking, network operators that cater to vacationers are right on the heels of savvy business-focused hotel operators.

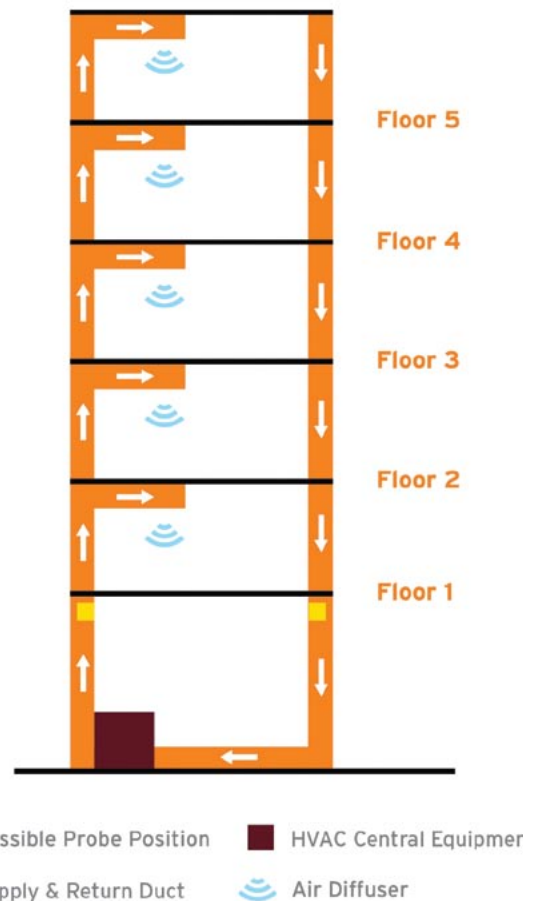
What is your go-to-market for the hospitality space?

Davis: In hospitality, we are in the enviable position of being contacted by companies that are interested in deploying indoor networks. When we receive those inquiries, we focus on the things

we do well – from design to installation and through to network operations and maintenance. ExteNet's expertise is in outdoor networks as well as indoor networks. We can install traditional distributed antenna system networks indoors, and if the building has the needed infrastructure, we can install our patented iDuct network that offers savings in terms of ease of installation, time and financial savings. Finally, more and more facilities are asking us to build and operate "open networks" where the capital costs are shared and access to the venue's network is provided to multiple stakeholders; this is similar to the long-term practice of collocating different carriers' antennas on the same macro cell sites.

What are hotels' unique requirements?

Davis: In a few words, I would say coverage, capacity and quiet. Hotel operators need indoor networks that provide coverage just about everywhere – in meeting rooms, on the guest floors in the furthest spot from the elevator, as well as fitness rooms and the restaurants, even in the sales and hotel opera-





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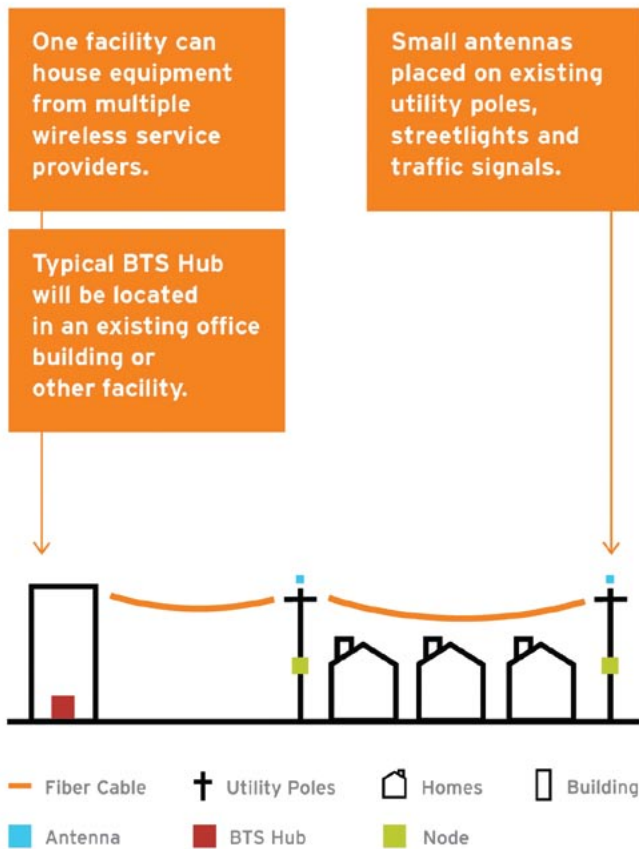


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tion offices. Good indoor networks – and our iDuct offering is particularly adept – provide strong attenuation of a wireless service provider's network signal throughout an entire floor or building. Indoor dead zones are just as bothersome to mobile users as outdoor dead zones.

[As for capacity], this is the same issue that the carriers face with their outdoor, macro networks. It's not just a matter of having access to the network – it's a matter of designing the networks so that they can handle growing numbers of users. My analogy here is that a two-lane road between Chicago and Seattle will give you the ability to travel from one city to the next, but not very efficiently if you are lined up behind 50 other cars and trucks. Build an interstate between the two cities. Make sure that in the high-density population zones between the two cities you have increased capacity to handle long-haulers as well as commuters. ExteNet's distributed indoor and outdoor networks can do this for carriers' networks. As I said earlier, hotel operators (not to mention hospital executives or college/university administrators) are not interested in a messy and loud construction process that goes on for months and months. ExteNet's indoor networks using iDuct are easily installed in a matter of a few days or a couple of weeks depending on the complexity of the building where the installation is taking place. **IT**

Windy City Property Taps Amcom, NEC

A Chicago business called theWit Hotel is using Amcom Software Inc.'s E911 solution along with the NEC UNIVERGE SV8500 IP communications server to provide a 911 caller's location, including the floor and room number, to the local 911 call center. First responders can find and assist callers from any of the 1,000 phones at theWit without trying to guess the caller's whereabouts. The hotel spans 298 rooms and 29 floors and includes three restaurants, two bars, and meeting space.

www.amcomsoftware.com

www.necam.com

Concierge Gateway Helps Hotels Go HD

Vecima Networks Inc. exhibited a range of gateway product solutions featuring a live demonstration of its new Concierge Gateway at the recent HITEC show 2010 in Orlando, Fla. The Concierge IP to QAM Gateway is a high-density, IP-to-QAM converter compatible with satellite, cable and IPTV operators that offers continuous, high performance operation for free-to-guest and video-on-demand services. It's ideally suited for properties that need a cost-effective solution for providing HD channels over a standard RF coaxial distribution network, according to the company. Concierge can de-encapsulate up to 1 GbE of input, decrypt multiple MPEG streams and encrypt each program stream with Pro:Idiom. Program streams are modulated onto 12 QAM channels at the output, delivering up to 48 HD programs in a single rack unit.

www.vecima.com

Tropicana Transformation Includes Video, Wireless Upgrades

Cox Business/Hospitality Network are upgrading the free-to-guest and video-on-demand services, as well as wireless Internet connectivity, at the Tropicana in Las Vegas in a big way. The video-on-demand storage system at the 1,658-guest room property is being upgraded from a tape-based to a digital-based system. The free-to-guest video offerings include 36 of the most popular news, sports and information cable television channels in standard- and high-definition as well as major local television networks in addition to six channels of commercial free digital music from Music Choice. Hollywood blockbuster and adult features as well as pay-per-view programming also are available. It's all part of a larger, \$165-million effort to transform the property.

www.cox.com

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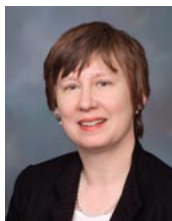
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By Laura Phillips



Summer Storms Over the Potomac

In the spring the Federal Communications Commission announced an ambitious National Broadband Plan. While much in that plan to bring pervasive high-speed broadband to nearly everyone in the United States depended upon the actions of executive branch agencies, state and local governments and even private actors, the FCC assumed at the time it adopted the plan's main principles that it possessed rules of the road authority over facilities-based broadband Internet access providers. The FCC also assumed it had the authority to impose net neutrality and other policies in support of The National Broadband Plan.

The FCC in 2005 regarded classified broadband Internet access as an information service and effectively deregulated it, declaring that henceforth the agency would regulate only as necessary under its Title I ancillary authority provided to it under the Communications Act. In a companion policy statement, the FCC espoused several general principles of good behavior it would expect of market participants. Then came the D.C. Circuit's stinging rebuke of this use of Title I authority in the form of the *Comcast v. FCC* opinion issued in April. Suddenly the FCC's leadership was left with serious questions about the basis for its authority to require, for example, facilities-based Internet access providers to stop blocking peer-to-peer or other applications running over their platforms or to engage in business behaviors that might be considered privately beneficial, but potentially publicly detrimental.

It did not take long for the FCC to regroup. Within weeks, Chairman Julius Genachowski and his general counsel, Austin Schlick, began a public dialogue on what they termed to be a "third way" to reassert a more traditional form of regulation over the transport and connectivity elements of any facilities-based broadband Internet access provider. Since the *Comcast* case rejected the FCC's reliance on its Title I ancillary jurisdiction under the Act as a legitimate basis for regulation, the next best option to retain more or less the status quo, according to the chairman, was to reassert the Title II, telecommunications services classification for the transport/connectivity element of broadband access – not the monopoly or duopoly price and terms regulation structure of old Title II, but an updated, savvy forbearance from unnecessary regulation.

Despite vigorous dissents from the two Republican commissioners who view this proposal as upsetting the status quo, the FCC on June 17 voted to issue a Notice of Inquiry seeking comment on possible reinterpretations of the agency's legal authority over facilities-based broadband access. While Commissioners Baker and McDowell noted as some consolation that one of the options contained in the NOI is to use elements of Title II as a basis for continuing to assert ancillary jurisdiction, they objected to the alternative proposal to assert Title II jurisdiction while applying statutory forbearance on all but the "core" Sections

201, 202, 208 and 254 of the Act to ensure adequate universal service, competition and consumer protections.

As part of making the case for the third way, the NOI cites the wireless industry as a prime example of a lightly regulated telecommunications provider that has prospered despite living under a partially deregulated federal scheme, suggesting that similar light regulation of the transport/connectivity portion of the broadband Internet offering to the public would not be onerous and would pave the way forward to achieve other elements of The National Broadband Plan.

The FCC on June 17 voted to issue a Notice of Inquiry seeking comment on possible reinterpretations of the agency's legal authority over facilities-based broadband access.

As the NOI was widely anticipated, many commentators warned already of the potential for creeping regulation and market uncertainty that a reassertion of even core Title II provisions might bring. While the NOI contains assurances that Internet content and applications would remain generally unregulated under the third way and seeks comment on many issues related to regulatory reclassification, that assurance does not mollify critics. The very rapid comment cycle (July 15 for comments, Aug. 12 for replies) strongly suggests that the chairman intends to move quickly to reach a conclusion by fall. Mid-term elections and Congressional politics could well be playing a role in this timing. For those expecting a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking and years of wrangling over details, the chairman and his general counsel have stated that this process is an interpretation of regulatory classification that does not require the formality of rule making public notice and comment prior to an FCC vote.

It could be a stormy summer around the Potomac for those who view this fight as pivotal to decisions about broadband investment, future competition and the fate of net neutrality. **IT**

Laura Phillips is a partner with Drinker, Biddle & Reath LLP (www.drinkerbiddle.com).

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By Elaine Cascio



Turning a Dead Battery Turned into a Great Customer Experience

Several days ago, I went to start my car... and nothing. I called my insurance company, where an upbeat, yet sympathetic agent told me she would dispatch help and told me what I could expect. Within minutes,

I received an automated message telling me that help would be here in an hour. About 40 minutes later, I received another call saying that the truck would be here within 10 minutes. Five minutes later, a tow truck rumbled into my driveway.

This is the kind of textbook experience we all want our customers to have. But not only was it a customer pleaser, it also meant that I wasn't calling the contact center to check the status of my case. Proactive outbound notification is not exactly new, but we are seeing it being used in ways that not only create a positive customer experience, but reduce inbound call volumes.

Look at outbound flight status, which is a lifesaver for many business travelers. Often, you're notified of a flight delay or cancellation before it gets posted, so you can sidle to the counter and get rebooked before the mad rush. Drug stores are deploying outbound speech applications to remind custom-

ers of pending prescription refills and letting them refill the prescription on the phone. And some of the stores even deliver – how customer-centric is that?

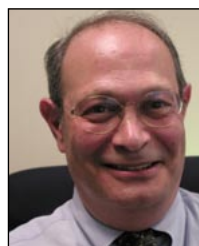
Text or outbound voice calls remind us of appointments, notify us when our account is past due, or let us know when the power will be restored. Are there opportunities for outbound applications in your business? Consider things like account status, updates and reminders, even awareness and fund raising. But be careful that you don't barrage customers with outbound contacts that are of no value to them. Make sure that the messages you convey are personally relevant and timely. In general, marketing messages are not something that customers want to receive via a call or text – they are more successfully delivered through e-mail or other channels.

Done well, outbound notifications create a sense that as a customer, I am valued and special. And increasing intimacy usually means more loyal customers. **IT**

Elaine Cascio is a vice president at consulting firm Vanguard Communications Corp. (www.vanguard.net).

Thinking IT Through

By David Yedwab



IT in Social Software

At the public launch of Quad, Cisco Systems' new enterprise collaboration platform, I had the opportunity to discuss it and the development process with Jim Grubb, the company's vice president

of corporate communications. This discussion followed a presentation about how Cisco's IT department participated in the genesis of Quad by developing a collaboration platform for Cisco's internal use – across the company. Cisco has a long history of Cisco on Cisco – using its own technologies to power its own business.

Jim may be better known as Cisco's chief demonstration officer, providing fascinating demos supporting John Chambers' keynotes. And, actually, Quad has a long history in Jim's demos, which frequently feature new tools being developed, tested and deployed for use within Cisco.

After being incubated within the Cisco IT shop, the concept ultimately became productized. Quad is about linking people, information and communities with an individual's "My View" at its center. It is an extensible enterprise collaboration portal providing communities, enterprise search, micro-blogging, contacts, news feeds and alerts, and connections to unified communications capabilities such as voice, video, messaging, mail and IM.

Accessible via the Web through most popular browsers, Quad couples the Cisco mantra of "Connect - Communicate - Collaborate" with the need to continuously learn. Certainly, Quad will evolve as early customers provide feedback through the company's sales and partner teams.

Interestingly, the theme of IT involvement in the selection, implementation, culture transformation and deployment (not necessarily in that sequence) of social software within enterprises was a subtle topic percolating across the Enterprise 2.0 Boston conference (where Quad was launched). There were several sessions and lots of informal discussions touching on the role of IT in social software – and that's certainly very different than the geeky advanced studies in computer science that populated my graduate school program, which talked about IT being involved in the culture of organizations. This could become a major theme/issue in the continued rollout of UC and collaboration solutions: How active should IT be in this next transformation of business communications and operations? Expect more discussions about this in the future. If your IT organization isn't involved, change your plans quickly so that IT is not only involved but at least a co-lead; otherwise, your future will be determined by others – and that never bodes well. **IT**

David Yedwab is a founding partner in Market Strategy and Analytics Partners LLC (www.mktstrategy-analytics.com).

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By Brough Turner



The Next Wireless Broadband Enabler: Wi-Fi !

As wireless moves to 4G, Wi-Fi technology will dominate.

LTE and WiMAX will remain robust markets, but more wireless broadband bits will be carried by Wi-Fi technology than by LTE and WiMAX combined. What's more, Wi-Fi technology will come to dominate both cellular backhaul and fixed wireless broadband services wherever direct fiber connections remain expensive.

The Wi-Fi market has enormous diversity and openness, which drives innovation. As a result, Wi-Fi leads in deployment of 4G technologies like OFDM, MIMO and beamforming, while Wi-Fi market growth has produced high volume and low prices for Wi-Fi silicon. Today, Wi-Fi silicon is being adapted for both unlicensed and licensed wireless devices, and these devices are being adopted rapidly by fixed wireless ISPs.

But the big impact will be in mobile broadband where Wi-Fi will beat out Femtocells to carry the bulk of wireless broadband bits. Femtocells are a great way to extend coverage, but mobile operators' problem is data capacity, where Wi-Fi wins for many reasons.

First, most mobile data is destined for the open Internet, not for someplace on the mobile operator's network. Meanwhile, the mobile operator's network is complex – designed to support differential services and fine-grained billing, so it's significantly more expensive than a best-effort network. Yet operators can't charge for

this extra capability when people just want to get to the Internet.

Most mobile data demand is from computers and smart-phones. Laptops have Wi-Fi, as do newer smartphones; thus, the only potential disadvantage of Wi-Fi is rapidly vanishing.

Wi-Fi access points cost less than femtocells. Besides being somewhat simpler, they are being produced in very high volumes, far higher than mobile operators are likely to achieve with femtocells, and Wi-Fi hotspots are showing up everywhere.

Individuals spend most of their online time in just two locations: home and the office. Enterprises will not install femtocells that the IT department can't control. Consumers, retail and public locations are already doing Wi-Fi. They won't install femtocells unless there is some form of subsidy from the operator – another cost with no net benefit.

In the end, mobile operators will encourage Wi-Fi offload by bundling "free" public Wi-Fi access with their mobile data plans. Thus, in the future, most mobile data bytes will go over Wi-Fi, while the 3G and 4G networks provide backup when no Wi-Fi is available. Mobile operators' path to success is to focus on facilitating anywhere connectivity for their customers regardless of the technology involved.

So LTE and WiMAX are great, but Wi-Fi technology will carry the load. **IT**

Brough Turner is CTO of BigBroadband.net (www.bigbroadband.net).

Regulation Watch

By William B. Wilhelm and Jeffrey R. Strenkowski



The FCC Takes on Network Neutrality

On June 18, the FCC released a Notice of Inquiry to review the legal

framework for reclassifying broadband Internet service, which would thereby allow the FCC to implement network neutrality rules. The NOI seeks comment on three alternative approaches: (1) continuing to classify broadband Internet access as an integrated offering without a separate telecommunications service component under the FCC's Title I ancillary authority; (2) classifying broadband access to include a Title II telecom service transmission component, with full common-carrier regulation; and (3) the FCC chairman's "third way," which includes classifying broadband Internet access to include a telecommunications transmission component, but forbearing from applying all but the core provisions of Title II similar to the regulatory framework governing commercial mobile radio services.

Under the first proposal, the FCC would continue to rely on Title I ancillary authority to implement broadband policies. Under the second proposal, the FCC seeks input on whether

recent legal and policy developments suggest a need to classify Internet connectivity as a fully regulated telecommunications service. Under the third way, the FCC seeks comment on whether it should forbear from applying all provisions of Title II other than the handful of sections that are needed to implement universal service, competition and small business opportunity, and consumer protection policies.

The primary goals of the third way are to create net neutrality rules prohibiting broadband providers from selectively blocking Web content (including services), to reform the Universal Service Fund, and to enhance consumer protections. While these classification efforts are not directly aimed at over-the-top VoIP and other application providers, any change in how broadband is regulated may impact the rights and obligations of application and transmission providers with respect to how services are carried over broadband facilities. **IT**

William B. Wilhelm is a partner and Jeffrey R. Strenkowski is counsel at the global law firm of Bingham McCutchen LLP (www.bingham.com).

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By Alan Murphy



The Next Big Thing

I've been fortunate enough to work closely with virtualization technologies for many years – from using virtualization on my old Linux desktop so I could run a corporate Windows image, to building large virtualized test and lab deployments, through architecting entire virtualized data centers, and currently coming full circle running a corporate Win7 image on my MacBook Pro. I even took a fun (and highly productive) two-year detour into virtualization security (which I've previously written about in this column). Through all of that I've seen a very nice and smooth progression of virtualization technologies as they have gained mass adoption.

And now in 2010 we're really seeing virtualization become the de facto standard for building agile data centers both inside and out of the enterprise. Nowhere is this more obvious than with cloud computing and how the enterprise has begun to embrace off-premises computing and utilizing virtualization as part of its entire infrastructure. There's no question that over the next few years we will continue to not only see cloud computing as a concept grow but also to see the enterprise create new and unique ways to make the cloud an extension of its own data centers.

If we all agree that cloud will continue to demand our attention for the next few years, then let's look at what else will be big in enterprise virtualization. What will be the next big thing?

Hosted Virtual Desktops

Desktop virtualization – virtualizing the desktop operating system and running it on a hypervisor client device – has been gaining traction slowly but surely for the past few years. We've seen new solutions from VMware, Citrix, and Microsoft offering turnkey virtual desktop solutions, removing many of the challenges that previously crippled desktop virtualization deployments such as managing the virtual back-end, managing users, and managing desktop distribution over the network. The next logical step in desktop virtualization is to combine the best that virtualization has to offer and move those virtual desktops off premises to a hosted virtual desktop provider, or a more standard hosting or managed service provider.

HVDs offer flexibility for the end user by providing mobile desktops that can be regionally distributed – a user may pull a desktop from the DC data center when on the East Coast and the SJ data center when on the West Coast – and for IT – single-point desktop management from a central location for users everywhere. Managing desktops for remote users has long been a challenge for IT. By first virtualizing the desktop and moving the desktop off of local hardware and then moving the desktop closer to the user, HVDs are going to create a new level of flexibility for both local and mobile users.

Virtualization Management

Managing virtual infrastructure has been on the forefront of virtual platform provider solutions for the past year, and we're starting to see some excellent results. Both VMware and Microsoft

have been releasing management solutions in parallel with major hypervisor and product releases so that customers can manage new virtual deployments, upgrades, and existing systems out of the gate. The market needs management solutions for virtual deployments, and for the most part the vendors are providing.

Moving forward I expect to see a huge push from the larger, more traditional data center management platform providers to extend their reach into virtualization, specifically in the realm of integrating off-premises computing resources. Being able to manage traditional hosting, managed hosting, and cloud-based hosting solutions as an extension of the internal data center will become more of an issue over the next few years. Regardless of what technology is moved off-premises – be it traditional cloud-based applications, storage, HVDs, etc. – managing it as an internal service will be a requirement.

I am a huge fan of a completely virtualized application stack – delivering applications to users without having to deliver a running environment, i.e. the OS.

Application Virtualization

I am a huge fan of a completely virtualized application stack – delivering applications to users without having to deliver a running environment, i.e. the OS. To be honest, I'm surprised we haven't seen more of a push away from virtualizing the OS and all of the overhead involved with creating full virtual machines, hosting them on shared storage, patching them, etc. HVDs are an excellent example of where the market has chosen to move ahead with full OS virtualization as opposed to delivering just applications.

But users care about applications, not operating systems. If we can finally move away from virtualizing the OS solely to deliver applications, and instead spend time working on how to deliver easily just the apps to users, we would see drastic overhead savings in processing cycles, network resources, storage blocks, etc.

Whether the next big thing in virtualization is going to be an extension of something we're already using or something completely new and different, virtual technology continues to amaze me and keep me glued to my keyboard. **IT**

Alan Murphy is technical marketing manager of management and virtualization solutions with F5 Networks (www.f5.com).

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By Rich Tehrani & Max Schroeder



Jump Start Your Business Continuity Project

This column has continually emphasized that business continuity and disaster recovery planning are essential for the long-term survival of an organization. VoIP, FoIP, [SaaS](#), managed and hosted services and cloud computing are some of the possible components of a 21st Century BC/DR implementation that make this process easier than ever before. But how does a novice begin the process of evaluation to determine which combination of these technologies best meets their requirements? Simple – attend [ITEXPO West 2010](#), Oct. 4-6, 2010, in Los Angeles.

ITEXPO offers a comprehensive mix of educational sessions and exhibitors displaying the latest technologies including IP telephony, virtualization, unified communications and hosted solutions. Individuals looking to develop a BC/DR plan can jump start the process by spending three days at this conference with a unique blend of BC/DR solutions. By balancing your time between conference sessions and visits to the exhibits, you will have the opportunity to both gain knowledge of new solutions and discuss your specific BC/DR requirements with some of the most knowledgeable industry experts.

To get the most out of any project, a game plan is critical, and your plan for ITEXPO is no exception. Begin by visiting [www.tmcnet.com](#) and going to the ITEXPO link. Review the list of conference topics and prioritize the sessions that are of greatest interest. Ideally, you will be able to attend ITEXPO for all three conference days; but, if you cannot, select the days that include the sessions at the top of your priority sheet.

Next, do the same with the exhibitor list. By clicking on the name of the exhibitor, you will be directly connected to its Web site so you can gather information quickly. Do not hesitate to contact any company that you feel is mission critical to your project to schedule an appointment with at ITEXPO. You need to manage your time wisely to get the most from the event.

Start today, as ITEXPO is approaching quickly, and you don't want to miss this opportunity to jump start your BC/DR planning project. See you there. **IT**

Max Schroeder is the senior vice president of [FaxCore Inc.](#) ([www.faxcore.com](#)) and managing director of the DPCF.

Rich Tehrani is the CEO and group editor-in-chief at [TMC](#), and conference chairman of ITEXPO.

E911 Watch

By Nick Maier



Bringing E911 to Enterprise Wi-Fi Networks

Many enterprises are adopting Wi-Fi networks to enhance the productivity of their employees and their business. Beyond merely providing access to the network and the Internet for laptops, Wi-Fi networks now support a wide variety of applications including voice, asset tracking, security and telemetry.

The health care and retail verticals have been among the first movers to deploy voice over Wi-Fi to enable mobility throughout the network and enhance staff productivity. In a hospital environment, everything from messaging, patient monitoring, reporting and patient flow can be improved when staff can communicate with each other from anywhere in the building.

Out on the retail floor, a salesperson can use the technology to check inventory, place an order and complete the check-out process, all while working the sales floor and serving customers.

Along with all its benefits, the increased mobility made possible by enterprise VoWi-Fi carries significant implications to

workplace safety. Determining the specific location of a nomadic caller should they dial 911 from a Wi-Fi phone can be especially challenging. Beyond the safety implications, failure to provide E911 protection to users on Wi-Fi networks raises legal and liability issues – especially in states with E911 regulations.

Fortunately, solutions are beginning to emerge. Leading Wi-Fi network providers including Cisco and Aruba have developed robust application programming interfaces that allow third-party software vendors to integrate their applications with the Wi-Fi network's control software. These APIs make it possible to add E911 protection through special software that can track Wi-Fi phones in real-time and provide emergency responders with their specific location in the event of a 911 call.

Enterprises can now deploy Wi-Fi handsets with confidence knowing that the E911 issue can be solved in an automated, integrated manner. **IT**

Nick Maier is senior vice president of [RedSky Technologies](#) ([www.redskyE911.com](#)).

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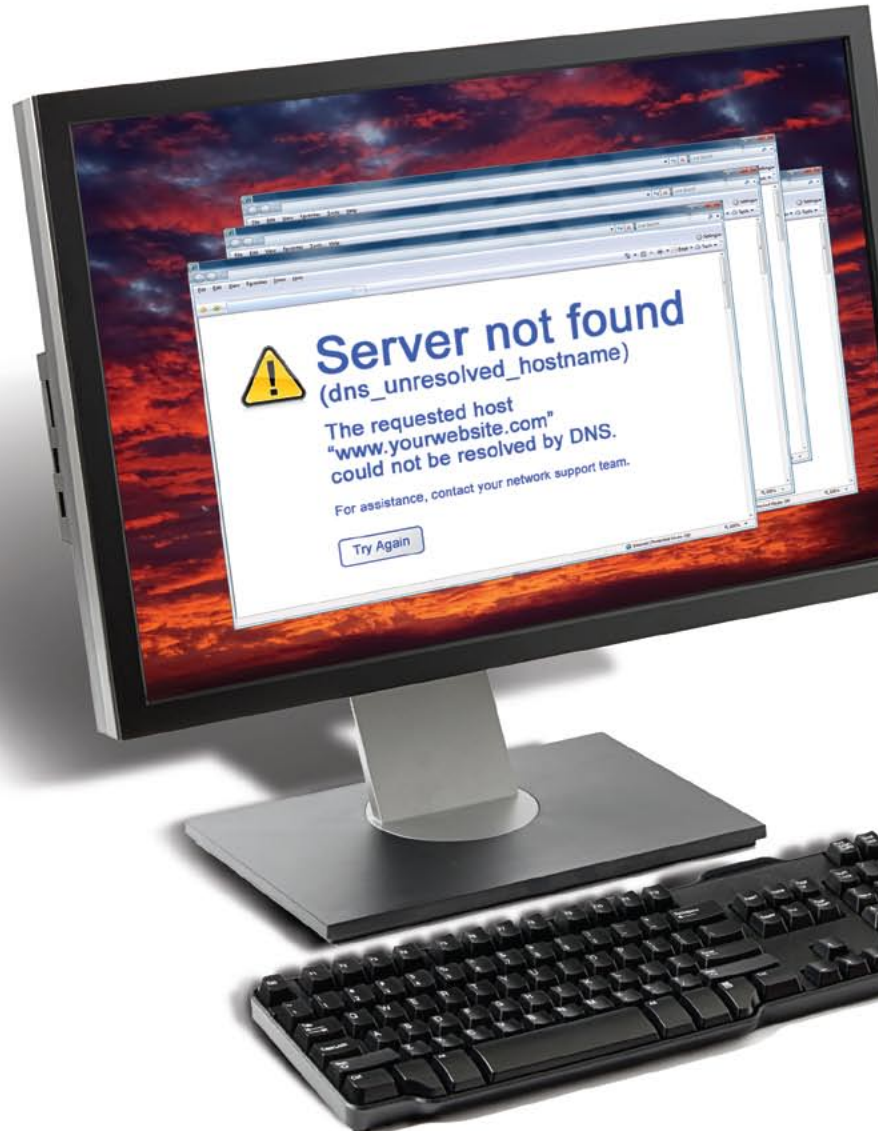
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By Vince Connors

SIP Trunking and the Enterprise Network Edge

Enterprise media gateways have matured over the years from simple toll bypass devices that enabled cheap long-distance calling to elements that enable a wide variety of solutions within hybrid network infrastructures. One of these solutions is SIP trunking.

SIP trunking is a service offered by ITSPs allowing the extension of VoIP connectivity beyond the enterprise and, in parallel, to the data connectivity requirements. It's essentially a concurrent call routed over the IP backbone of the ITSP. With this converged voice and data service, SIP trunks offer huge costs savings for the enterprise, eliminating the need for PSTN lines and delivering a fast ROI for the switchover. Enterprises can order call paths based on needs, and these can be added or removed easily as circumstances change.

Moving to SIP trunks requires connecting the internal network and PBX to the SIP trunk, using a SIP-aware border element. Sounds straightforward, doesn't it? In reality, a few factors complicate the situation. First, the majority of enterprises' premises don't have SIP-enabled PBXs: on-premises PBXs are still mostly legacy TDM PBXs. For these, a gateway function is required to convert the SIP

trunk messages to TDM messages that are recognized by the PBX. Second, for premises-based PBXs that support a SIP interface, there are often interoperability issues with the SIP trunk due to varying implementations of the SIP specification. For these, again, a gateway function is required to perform the SIP-to-SIP mediation. Third, for situations in which the SIP trunk can communicate directly with the on-premises equipment, it's usually desirable to have a demarcation point between the enterprise network and the service provider's network.

Dialogic is developing the Dialogic BorderNet 500 Gateway, which will enable the connection of virtually any type of network trunk, (PSTN trunk or SIP trunk), with virtually any premises-based PBX (legacy TDM, hybrid or IP). The BorderNet 500 Gateway also will provide the required security functions to establish a demarcation point between the enterprise network edge and the service provider network. A field trial started in July, with general availability slated for the third quarter of this year. **IT**

Vince Connors is product line manager for gateway products at Dialogic Corp.

Tech Score

By Jeff Hudgins



Next-Generation ATCA, Meet the SIEM Market

As of about a year ago, more than 10 million U.S. residents had been victimized by identity theft alone, and that number is increasing by approximately one victim every second.

Enterprise Security Information and Event Management, or SIEM, applications from companies like **NetWitness** and Trustwave promise the intelligence and forensics needed to better secure our nation's critical networks.

What is stopping us from mobilizing these intelligence-based threat capture and cybersecurity management systems in a meaningful way? For one, advanced SIEM systems operated by well-trained network information analysts need a highly available, scalable and redundant network infrastructure capable of automating real-time analytics. Most national security and government networked systems cannot accommodate the command and control analytics needed to activate a true security management system. Until critical networks are upgraded, their otherwise static network monitoring and data logging applications will remain insufficient.

Developing a dedicated, real-time system to monitor critical network assets requires deep packet inspection. Multi-core scalability and leveraging the sheer number of CPU cores available today are key to maximizing the performance of DPI-based

security management. Legacy SIEM architectures can scale from 10,000 to 15,000 events per second, but today's security market and regulatory requirements demand the capture of 100,000 events per second or more.

Do those requirements sound familiar? They should, because the recently released ATCA multi-core CPU blades based upon **Intel's** Xeon 5600 processors offer six cores per processor to satisfy SIEM's scalability demands. New platform solutions like the **RadiSys** ATCA-7220, a dual OCTEON packet processing AdvancedTCA blade, are ideal for implementing DPI. This blade contains an on-board 10GE switch that acts as a smart front-end for its OCTEON processors. This allows independent resetting of the OCTEON processing complexes for fault isolation, off-loading and augmenting the OCTEON data path processing software, and it provides flexible data flow options.

Real-time access to the critical data needed to manage threats will be more attainable as the **AdvancedTCA** architecture transitions from 10G to 40G later this year. As packet rates increase, having 40G bandwidth will help reduce the unwanted latencies for deep packet processing and finally begin to align security forces with real-time management. **IT**

Jeff Hudgins is vice president of product management at NEI Inc. (www.nei.com).



Introducing the **IP-PBX Global Online Community**

If you are in the market looking to purchase a new phone system, chances are you'll be looking at an IP PBX. The IP PBX market has been growing steadily, which means there are a plethora of choices and options. And, with all the choices you face, it can get quite confusing.

The **IP PBX Global Online Community** is an excellent resource for companies and individuals who are facing the difficult decision of purchasing a new phone system. This community features breaking news, in-depth feature articles, case studies, links to white papers and webinars... all the information you need if you are charged with learning about the current state of the market and making a purchasing decision.

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By Hunter Newby



The Limitations of Capacity

Unlimited-use communications services have been with us for many years.

- In 1997 several ISPs were offering T-1s of unlimited Internet access for just under \$2000 per month. Today 1.5mbps will cost you about \$1.50 wholesale on a gigabit Ethernet circuit.
- In 1998 several CLECs offered DS-3s of unlimited call termination in certain LATAs for \$5000 per month. Today, call termination to the entire 1+ can be had for less.
- In 2001 [Vonage](#) was founded introducing flat-rate residential calling over the public Internet for \$19.95 per month.
- In 2003 [Skype](#) was founded. It is free, supports video and now works on mobile devices.
- In 2007 several major wireless carriers were offering unlimited monthly voice plans for \$100 per month. These plans are now below \$50.

Communications services were becoming less expensive because they were riding on infrastructure that was in place and largely paid for (or written down in bankruptcies). As a result, the United States experienced a period of major growth and prosperity, and the world became a smaller place. Since then the prices have continued to drop due to competition and demand, but there is at least one exception – AT&T's data plan for the iPhone and iPad.

From the AT&T announcement:

"AT&T, the U.S. smartphone leader, today introduced new wireless data plans that make it more affordable for more people to enjoy the benefits of the mobile Internet. Customers can pick the new data plan that best meets their needs – either a \$15 per month entry plan or a \$25 per month plan with 10 times more data. Current smartphone customers are not required to switch to the new plans, but can choose to do so without a contract extension."

This is very interesting, curious and requires some explanation.

Why would AT&T do this?

The Apple devices have been incredibly popular, and the AT&T network has had a very difficult time keeping up. The amount of capital that AT&T must spend to upgrade its wireless transport network to support the customer demand exceeds what it would like to spend in the timeframe required. To slow the curve of the hockey stick, it introduced a new rate structure that makes users be more aware of what they're doing since there is a penalty for doing too much. If the users use too much, they must pay more, which then helps AT&T fund the necessary network investment from within the wireless unit – versus taking it all from the core transport side.

How can it do this?

Simple, AT&T has an exclusive contract with Apple. There is no competition. Since it is the only network that currently works

with these desirable devices AT&T can change whatever it wants. It is a delicate balance though. If it charges too much, it may have an impact on Apple sales and therefore its monthly subscriptions. If it doesn't charge enough, its own success will consume it.

Inherent in the Apple devices is the App Store. This is truly the competitive advantage over all other devices. Yes, the Apple devices are cool and easy to use, but they have their limits. The fact is that the application developers have a liquid market to create, market, sell and deliver in the App Store. Others are trying to compete, but it is very difficult to un-seed this incumbent.

One thing is clear, for the USA to be competitive in the world we must have this infrastructure, and it must be unlimited use – eventually.

The wireless network becomes just transport, so it is not so fancy, but it is essential. In the near future the Apple devices will work on other networks; and, of course, they will inter-operate, so the exclusive lock will be broken. It is unclear how long AT&T will keep the metered data plan in place, but for sure once there is network competition for the Apple devices the first one to go back to flat-rate, unlimited use will win the customers; and then it is back to the race to the bottom.

The issue rests in how to finance the necessary network construction. The end users need it, so they will be the ones to pay for it ultimately. It is a function of time, money and demand. Fiber-to-the-tower is incredibly necessary for all of these wonderful apps to work. [Hulu](#) and [Slingbox](#) to the mobile device are reality today, but only where the network connections will support them. These apps and many others, such as [Skype](#) Video on mobile, are here now, but not everywhere.

Managing the network build out process across the entire USA is no easy task. One thing is clear, for the USA to be competitive in the world we must have this infrastructure, and it must be unlimited use – eventually. This is the evolutionary path of every other major U.S. communications service and what currently exists in many other countries around the world today. Anything else would be very limiting. **IT**

Hunter Newby is CEO of Allied Fiber (www.alliedfiber.com).

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On TMCnet



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ITS Targets Financial Vertical with HFC Deal

Excuse the pun, but the channel just keeps changing.

While everybody and their brother used to be an agent, in recent years there's been significant consolidation within the channel. For example, Verizon, which used to have 1,600 agents, now has under 90, notes Keith Muller, CEO and founder of master telecommunications agent Interactive Telecom Solutions Inc.

That said, those channel organizations that remain seem to be working particularly hard to differentiate themselves both with their agents and with end customers. ITS, which specializes in telecom optimization for large to mid-size business, is a perfect example of this trend.

One of the recent moves eight-year-old ITS made to differentiate itself in the marketplace was to form a partnership with Hudson Fiber Network, which offers financial services companies ultra low-latency connectivity across the shortest distance fiber routes. HFN focuses on buy-side and sell-side customers as well as pre- and post-trade service providers.

"ITS understands agents want to expand their offerings to include this important vertical," says Muller. "As trade volume increases, trading infrastructure must deliver increasing data volumes with the lowest latency possible. This is key in providing financial customers with a leading edge. With this relation-

ship, we are building our portfolio of offerings and enabling our agent partners to expand their customer base."

Muller says the relationship with HFN is sure to increase ITS sales in the financial vertical, which he says is not a saturated market by a long shot and which requires special know-how and relationships to penetrate.

"We think it's a very unique relationship, and it's an exclusive relationship for two years," he says of the HFN deal, adding that handing off the lead early is a good strategy in this case.

Overall, Muller says, ITS agents tend to focus on referrals. The company's 10 direct sales reps are also "quasi" channel managers, he adds, so they can be very "hands on" in the process.

At the same time, ITS is helping its 250 agent partners get their hands on the information they need to help manage their accounts and the commissions related to them.

The company has a homegrown portal through which agents can check on the status circuit provisioning, their own commissions and more.

"Certainly the portal has been a big innovation for us and helped us manage our agents and manage our customers," says Muller. **IT**

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By Peter Radizeski



Net-Head Part III: An Agent's Head in the Clouds

The buzz is all about the cloud.

Cloud communications. Cloud computing. Virtualization.

For the Bell-head, this is outside normal telecom. Right? Telecom doesn't touch servers, switches, SANs.

Cloud computing is a step removed from collocation. Whereby collocation is about space, power and connectivity, cloud computing is about servers, storage, real-time applications, data integrity, technical skills and management. It's the outsourcing of applications from your IT department. What is Google Apps and hosted e-mail but cloud computing?

The players in the cloud space are not telcos surprisingly. Google, Amazon and Microsoft lead this field. These companies have mass computing infrastructure that has proven to be resilient. It was a smart move by Jeff Bezos to leverage Amazon's computing power for different streams of revenue. And that's what the traditional telecom agent has to do: start thinking about varying streams of income.

There's talk of the PSTN going away. A countdown clock on T1 sales. Where is the your revenue going to come from?

Hosted PBX and conferencing are ways that voice is sold as an application now. What is the cloud anyway but an application that resides in a data center with high availability and access from many points? As we have seen with the iPhone and Android, people will buy and use apps. It just has to be easy for them to download, install and use them. The cloud makes it easier for smaller organizations to leverage apps affordably.

Customers will expect the agent to provide much more than quotes. The agent will be required to explain the advantages of one cloud provider over another. Security, redundancy, expertise, compliance and certifications will be one indicator. The big factor will be if the cloud provider is a good fit for the customer's overall needs. As the trusted advisor, it will be your job to determine that – or at least provide the appropriate information so that the prospect can make an informed decision. **IT**

Peter Radizeski is head of telecom consulting agency RAD-INFO Inc. (<http://rad-info.net/c/>).

The Channel & AGENT NEWS

<http://tmcnet.com/32360.1>

Kapsch Takes GENBAND to Europe

Voice equipment and services supplier (and the subject of this issue's cover story) **GENBAND** has joined forces with Kapsch CarrierCom AG in a bid to address the European market. Kapsch CarrierCom will act as a European reseller and a system integration partner for GENBAND.

www.genband.com
www.kapsch.net

<http://tmcnet.com/32361.1>

Terrapin to Sell iCore Solutions

iCore Networks, which provides voice over private Internet services, has partnered with **Terrapin Solutions**, a cloud services master agency. As a result, iCore's solutions are available and sold through Terrapin's network of agents. Stephen Canton, CEO of iCore, tells INTERNET TELEPHONY that iCore has as its customers such major companies as **Accenture**, Lumber Liquidators, and The National Wildlife Federation. He adds that iCore also is working on introducing video on the mobile handset, which it expects to launch in the first quarter of next year.

www.icore.com
www.terrapin-solutions.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32362.1>

SHI to Sell ACT Services

ACT Conferencing, a global provider of corporate audio conferencing, videoconferencing and Web conferencing services, has added SHI to its expanding list of channel partners. A \$3 billion global provider of information technology products and services, SHI is headquartered in Piscataway, N.J., with offices located throughout the world. SHI as part of the pact will resell ACT's ReadyConnect audio and Web conferencing services in the U.S. with plans to expand internationally.

www.actconferencing.com
www.shi.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32363.1>

EarthSearch Taps ETS for LogiBoxx Effort

EarthSearch Communications International Inc. has selected Efficient Transportation Solutions of Canada as a channel partner. ETS was established in September 2009 to address the market demands for less pollution from mobile sources, lesser fuel expenses and transport efficiency. The

partnership results in the provision of LogiBoxx, a device that leverages GPS and RFID technologies to provide logistics managers and operations centers with real-time data to accurately monitor the locations of all tagged assets, vehicles and personnel.

www.earthsearch.com
<http://etransportationsolutions.com>

<http://tmcnet.com/32364.1>

Prepaid Texas Outfit Aims to Expand

Everybody's Phone Company Inc. in the past year has secured reseller agreements with AT&T and Verizon, positioning the company to offer prepaid local telephone service to the thousands of credit-disadvantaged individuals and families in Texas. The company traditionally has sold to the residential market in the greater Houston area. As it obtains additional regulatory approval to sell outside of Texas, however, Everybody's Phone Company anticipates it will quickly ramp up its sales and earnings potential.

www.everybodysphonecompany.com

By Jay Krauser

IT Virtualization Can Help Channel Address Business Customers' Requirements

Information technology is making an inevitable shift toward newer computing models that will drastically change our traditional approach to developing, deploying and running enterprise applications. IT virtualization enables many of these newer concepts that promise better scalability, performance and reliability across the organization.

While IT virtualization offers a number of benefits in its own right, it is not a simple point-and-click process. For this reason, dealers and value-added resellers of IT and communications technologies should leverage data center virtualization services to guide customers through the challenges of implementation, improving network efficiency and maximizing savings.

IT organizations began considering virtualization strategies a few years ago to rectify challenges like server spending and energy consumption within the data center. With last year's economic downturn, companies were motivated by the cost-saving benefits to migrate sooner than they had initially planned. For the most part, enterprises and SMBs alike first virtualize storage, servers and network capacity for the cost savings associated with network consolidation. Virtualization reduces server hardware, energy costs and possibly real estate space, offering a quicker ROI from capital investments. It also enhances disaster recovery, speeds server and storage provisioning, and helps the enterprise reduce its data center footprint.

Beyond the cost savings from consolidation, virtualization enables organizations to be more nimble. IT infrastructure evolves as business needs change. Over time, companies end up with a hodge-podge of incompatible, complex systems that hinder their ability to respond to new challenges. Because virtualization abstracts the boundaries of these physical resources, companies can build IT solutions that better facilitate – and optimize – management and operational processes. This results in faster response to changing business conditions within the company and the market and helps the business grow.

Virtualization ultimately prepares the enterprise for future technology trends. With the IT market moving toward software-based communications, virtualization enables concepts like software-as-a-service and cloud computing. These technologies are predicted to have an even greater impact on the enterprise, creating newer delivery models with fewer risks, reduced costs and shorter lead times to new services.

The virtualization process requires IT organizations to have the experience for analysis, requisition and optimization. For SMBs and other organizations that lack the internal resources and/or expertise, channel partners should recommend IT

virtualization services to provide customers a greater depth of knowledge and expertise. IT vendors now offer a complete range of virtualization services to address a number of issues like performance, backup, application compatibility and licensing policies. Virtualization services improve execution and help IT organizations to:

- create a customized, methodical implementation strategy and roadmap designed to achieve strategic ends and ensure return on investment along the way;
- apply best practices to avoid costly mistakes once systems are in production;
- support to ensure higher value return on capital investment; and
- leverage on-site knowledge transfer and customized documentation for continued efficiency.

For SMBs and other organizations that lack the internal resources and/or expertise, channel partners should recommend IT virtualization services to provide customers a greater depth of knowledge and expertise.

Virtualization delivers significant cost efficiencies and agility to the enterprise. As IT infrastructure and operations evolve, virtualization also builds a solid foundation for future technology trends. To ensure that virtualization initiatives are a success, companies must consider the impact on performance, backup and applications. By recommending IT virtualization services, channel partners can help customers address unique challenges before they arise and drive enhanced ROI. **IT**

Jay Krauser is general manager and senior technology strategist for NEC Corp. of America (www.necam.com).

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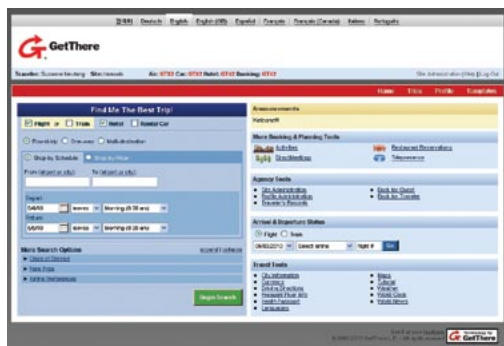
Telco Takes Storage to the Cloud

Verizon Cloud Storage is a new pay-as-you-go service from the telco. The service became available in the U.S. and 16 countries around the globe beginning in July.

www.verizon.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32369.1>

Tata, GetThere Collaborate on Telepresence



GetThere, a travel and collaboration management solution provider, is partnering with India communications provider Tata Communications to offer public and private telepresence rooms. The new collaboration will offer GetThere customers access to Tata Communications' network of public telepresence rooms around the globe.

www.getthere.com

<http://tatacommunications-ts.com>

<http://tmcnet.com/32371.1>

LGFCU Taps ATCOM

ATCOM Business Telecom Solutions has completed a VoIP deployment for Local Government Federal Credit Union after being selected via a competitive bid process. LGFCU is a not-for-profit, member-owned financial cooperative established to serve the financial needs of local government employees, elected officials, volunteers and their families. Officials with ATCOM say that LGFCU's requirements include full unified messaging, contact center reporting and management, teleworking, enterprise voice recording, softphone technology and fax services.

www.atcombts.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32372.1>

Research Firm: PBX Revenues Drop as Move to IP Continues

Dell'Oro Group says PBX market revenues will continue to weaken in 2010 despite

a rebound in line shipments, because the market is heavily weighted toward Europe and transactions relying on the Euro. The research firm estimates that a 10 percent decline in the Euro could remove more than \$20 million in the PBX market revenues each quarter this year. The firm's report finds that vendors continue to move their installed bases to IP lines. It says the top eight vendors in the space, which include Aastra, Alcatel-Lucent, Avaya, Cisco, Mitel, NEC, ShoreTel and Siemens, accounted for 80 percent of IP line shipments throughout the quarter.

www.delloro.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32373.1>

Hosted IP PBX Gets Upgraded

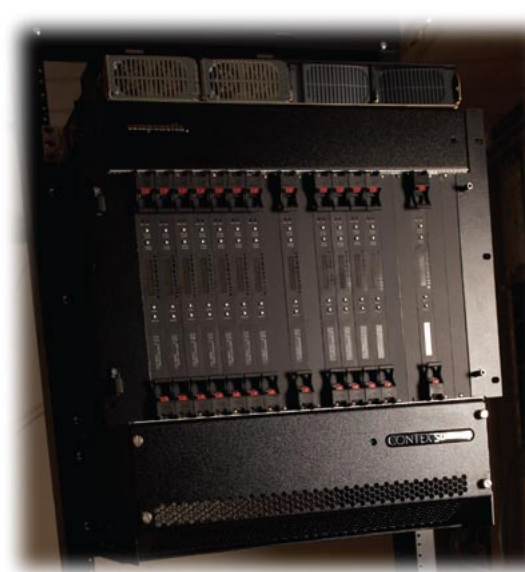
PackNet, a business VoIP provider, has unveiled a new version of the Metis fully-hosted IP PBX system. It now offers a holistic approach to call management

with the following features – call routing, call recording, IVR, inbound/outbound call management, fax to e-mail, number provisioning, and online billing and rate management.

www.pack-net.co.uk

<http://tmcnet.com/32370.1>

Compunetix VoIP Employed by KPN



KPN, a provider of telecommunications services, has added Compunetix's VoIP to its Context summit-based public service conferencing offer. KPN uses Context summit

collaboration media processors with both VoIP and public switched telephone network calls on the same system without the use of external gateways. Voice calls maintain the reliability and quality of service. KPN uses Compunetix Context summits for reservation-less and event conferencing services.

www.compunetix.com

www.kpn.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32374.1>

Convergent, NET Outfit Red Wing

Network Equipment Technologies, a provider of network VoIP solutions to enterprises and government agencies, and Convergent, a Minnesota-based provider of Microsoft unified communications, have successfully implemented NET's VX Series VoIP unified communications solution for Red Wing Shoe Co.

www.convergentnet.com

www.net.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32375.1>

SIP Trunking Joins the Appia Service Lineup

Appia Communications, a provider of network and managed communication services for enterprises, now offers SIP trunking. With this new addition, Appia aims to offer more options to its consumers and more flexibility to its reseller partners.

www.appiaservices.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32376.1>

Telco Puts Mobile Users on the A-List

AT&T has extended its popular A-List feature to its enterprise mobility customers, spanning small, medium and large-size businesses. AT&T's A-List delivers unlimited mobile calling to and from up to 10 "VIP" domestic phone numbers from any U.S.

carrier without any additional cost per line on qualified individual or pooled plans, or per group on qualified group rate plans.

www.att.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32381.1>

Administration Plans for Wireless Broadband Auctions

President Obama has announced plans to make 500MHz of additional spectrum available for wireless broadband. If this 10-year new spectrum plan comes to fruition, it would double the spectrum of the wireless industry, which would be able to bid for the spectrum in upcoming auctions. The FCC intends to pry about 120MHz of that from TV stations, which it hopes will hand over excess spectrum for a share of funds from the auction, which could raise tens of billions of dollars. A good amount of the rest of the spectrum is expected to come from the federal government itself. That is likely to include the Department of Defense, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Federal Aviation Administration.

www.whitehouse.gov

<http://tmcnet.com/32382.1>

Frontier Taps ADTRAN for Access



ADTRAN this summer announced several customer wins with its Total Access 5000 product, including one with Frontier Communications Corp. Kevin Morgan of ADTRAN's marketing department says the company expects to make at least 25 more customer announcements in the near future. The ADTRAN Total Access 5000 is a multi-service access and aggregation platform that enables service providers to support a wide variety of services – whether copper-

or fiber-based, legacy or next-generation – from a single product.

www.adtran.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32383.1>

Merger Partners Invite Speakeasy to the Party

Just a little more than two months after Covad Communications Co. and MegaPath Inc. announced their intentions to merge, the companies revealed plans to take the combo up a notch by bringing Speakeasy into the fold. The deal with Speakeasy, now a Best Buy company, is expected to close this quarter. Financial terms of the planned transaction were not disclosed.

www.covad.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32384.1>

Telco Lowers Barrier to FiOS

Verizon Communications is taking the risk out of signing on for FiOS Internet and television service. If after a month customers decide FiOS isn't for them,

they can cancel with no fees. But Verizon could stand to lose big if customers don't stick around, as it reportedly costs the company \$1,350 to install FiOS at a new customer's home.

www.verizon.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32386.1>

Telco Sues Google

Frontier Communications Corp is suing Google in an effort to stop it from offering a service that gives users one phone number connecting

their home, work and cell phones. The telco says Google Voice infringes on a Frontier patent.

www.frontier.com

www.google.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32387.1>

Content Will Reshape Mobile Business

Mobile subscriber growth is well below 10 percent in many markets, according to PricewaterhouseCoopers. It's reaching the point where nearly every person already has mobile

service, which means companies cannot continue to grow by adding new subscribers (at least not within a single market), or without buying market share by acquiring competitors. But mobile Internet subscriptions are growing at a 40 percent five-year compound annual growth, with mobile advertising growing between 15 percent and 20 percent in many markets. In other words, mobile data services growth is possible, based initially on access revenue. But even that will not be enough over the longer term.

www.pwc.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32385.1>

WAN Optimization Outfit Intros New Pricing



Expand Networks, which sells WAN optimization solutions for branch office consolidation and virtualization, has introduced a new pricing structure for service providers, telcos and public/private cloud providers. The company now offers a monthly subscription-based pay-as-you-sell model.

www.expand.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32388.1>

Angel.com, Qwest Team to Deliver iQ Contact Center

Qwest Communications has added Qwest iQ On Demand IVR service to its Qwest iQ Contact Center, call center suite of services. The company teamed up with Angel.com, a provider of enterprise-focused, cloud-based customer experience solutions, to offer this IVR solution, which is delivered via a software-as-a-service platform. A portal-based application development tool, this new product enables Qwest customers to create and manage automated contact management applications.

www.qwest.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32389.1>

Extension System Blazes New Trails

Carlson Wireless Technologies has released an expanded version of the Trailblazer Star Wireless Multipoint Data and PBX Extension System. Its flexible, integrated MUX technology, designed to meet the requirements of the utility and enterprise markets, now incorporates both carrier-class voice service and SCADA capabilities into one rugged easy-to-install enclosure. The TB-Star is also used extensively as a wireless PBX extension solution for voice.

www.carlsonwireless.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32390.1>

Sparkplug CEO: Wireless Broadband Service Provider Consolidation Expected



Fixed wireless broadband offers businesses some nice benefits, including access to areas not reached by fiber, fast turn-up times, and connectivity that's diverse from wireline. However, today, wireless broadband outfits that do business in just a handful of markets are limited in the scope of their offerings to customers, as well as in their financial prospects related to the investment community. Sparkplug CEO Michael Ruley expects that to change in the near future. "Is there a place for this technology? I definitely think there is – with scale," Ruley told INTERNET TELEPHONY during a June meeting in the wireless broadband service provider's Scottsdale, Ariz., office.

www.sparkplug.net

<http://tmcnet.com/32391.1>

India Closes 3G Spectrum Auction

The long-awaited auction of wireless spectrum in India finally happened.

The 3G auction by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India officially concluded on May 20. The state-run networks hope to have 3G in place within the next six months, although the arrival of new private sector players could speed this implementation. Notes REVE Systems' CEO M. Rezaul Hassan: "India is a hot telecom market as more than 600 million phone subscribers, and 20 million new users are added every month. For users in India, the launch of 3G will mean page views will be near instant and TV, online games, videos and music will be streamed so that the experience seems instant."

www.revesoft.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32392.1>

Telstra, NSN Test Extended-Range LTE

Australian telco Telstra and Nokia Siemens Networks have successfully conducted trials of next-generation mobile technology, achieving peak speeds of 100mbps downstream and 31mbps upstream over a distance of 75 kilometers. The extended-range field trial of LTE was conducted between Mount Hope and Mount Burrumboot in central Victoria.

www.nokiasiemensnetworks.com

www.telstra.com.au

<http://tmcnet.com/32393.1>

Wireless Operator Targets SMBs with Voice, Data



Airband Communications has a new suite of bundled voice and data offerings that provide enterprise-class communication services to Baltimore's small to mid-

size businesses. The services run over the company's fully owned, fixed wireless last-mile network, bypassing the wireline local loop, hence promising cost savings to customers.

www.airband.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32394.1>

E-Reader Price War Heats Up

A new price war for low-end e-readers could force Barnes & Noble and Amazon to rely more heavily on their profit from selling e-books, accelerate the shift of book sales to digital delivery, cut the profit out of the device market and, as is typical when prices are cut, expand the e-book market overall. The changes are the sort of unintended developments that cause adoption curves to deviate from linear growth projections. Barnes & Noble cut the price of its Nook e-reader to \$199 while Amazon.com immediately responded by slashing the price of its standard Kindle e-reader to \$189. Both models had been \$259.

<http://tmcnet.com/32395.1>

Esnatech Enables UC Among Various PBXs, the iPad

Two of the hottest things happening now in communications are the Apple iPad and unified communications. Now they're coming together in a new way through the introduction by

Esna Technologies Inc. of the Mobile Unified Communication Client software for the Apple iPad. The Esnatech software links a user's iPad to his or her office voice network to enable live communications, integrating enterprise presence, mobility, unified messaging, and

enterprise voice to mobile devices. It's available as a free download for a limited time from the Apple Apps Store.

www.esnatech.com



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Tues., July 27, 2010 • 2:00pm ET/11:00am PT

Five Steps to Cut VoIP Operational Support Costs and Boost VoIP ROI

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http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/Tone_06_01

Thurs., August 12, 2010 • 2:00pm EDT/1:00am PST

Cloud Communications for the Enterprise

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http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/onstate_05_01

Wed., Sept. 15, 2010 • 2:00pm ET/ 11:00am PT

The Best of Both Worlds: Legacy Handsets in a VoIP Environment

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http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/Transera_06_01

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IP Business Communication's Great Migration to the Cloud: Does a Hosted Offering Make Sense for Your Business?

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http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/InteractiveIntelligence_06_01/

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<http://tmcnet.com/33071.1>

Veramark Acquires Source Loop's Enterprise TEM and Consulting Businesses

Veramark Technologies, a provider of telecom expense management solutions, has acquired the enterprise TEM and consulting businesses of Source Loop, based in Alpharetta, Ga. Through this acquisition, Veramark gets the full suite of professional and managed services for enterprise-class TEM from Source Loop, including telecom cost elimination programs, telecom assessments, sourcing, audits, benchmarking, and network optimization, company officials say.

www.veramark.com

www.sourceloop.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33073.1>

QuickMin Helps Users to Fend Off Surprise Bills



While cell phone carriers like AT&T plan to end unlimited usage plans, consumers now have the ability to fend off overages and "gotchas." A new application called QuickMin claims to be the first of its kind to display leftover cell minutes on the application's badge. The first step toward taking control of cell phone charges is to avoid overages with QuickMin. According to company officials, QuickMin is pretty quick and easy to configure. Users have to merely input their phone numbers and enter a few carrier details. Every day, QuickMin's badge updates with the balance talk time. Also, the users can configure it for reminders which can be used to alert users when the minutes are below a specified threshold.

www.wildboom.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33072.1>

Enhancements to iPass Enterprise Mobility Services Announced

A broad set of enhancements to the iPass Open Mobile Platform was announced by iPass Inc., a provider of enterprise mobility services. With these enhancements, enterprises will be able to re-engineer mobility costs. This is possible with instant access to free Wi-Fi and real-time 3G control for least cost connection management. The enterprise will be given more flexibility to define and tailor its own mobility services with the new platform functionality. The needs of their global mobile workforce will be fit with a fully-customizable master connection manager.

www.ipass.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33074.1>

ETM: A New Generation of Telecom Expense Management

Enterprise telecommunications management solutions can help manage the communications environment. According to the white paper "Enterprise Telecommunications Management for the Network-Centric Organization," commissioned by Rivermine Software, a new breed of network-centric organization has emerged whose business processes and telecommunications networks are linked. The white paper notes that the accuracy and allocation of invoices for expense and contract management, which is the focus of current enterprise telecommunications management solutions, while still an important expense management tool, is no longer the most important issue for network-centric organizations.

www.rivermine.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33075.1>

Green Initiatives in Utilities Start with Telecom Lifecycle Management

With the number of different telecommunications solutions, vendors and contracts in use throughout larger enterprises, telecom lifecycle management is satisfying a growing demand to control costs. Interestingly, however, some TEM solutions providers do not

stop at managing telecom spend as they also provide utility expense management to help control electricity, gas, water and sewer charges. While traditionally there has been a limited ability to directly compare TEM and UEM, trends in corporate telecommunications and energy usage encourage similarities in the analyses of these expenses.

www.3spectrum.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33076.1>

Ultra-Mobile Device Adoption on the Rise Among Enterprises

Ultra-mobile devices have become a fad not only among common users but among enterprise customers also. The success of the Apple iPad confirms this trend; enterprise suppliers are increasingly using these devices for business use. ABI Research forecasts that worldwide UMD adoption is averaging 55 percent per year as businesses find many uses for ultra-mobile devices, a category which includes netbooks, smartbooks and mobile Internet devices, or MIDs.

www.abiresearch.com

www.cmbinfo.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33297.1>

Amtel's TIMS Platform Separates Mobile Download Charges in Telecom Billing



To help organizations manage their telecom billing in an efficient way, Amtel, a provider of cell phone expense management software platform, announced a new mobile expense platform that segregates mobile smart phone applications charges in corporate telecom billing. Amtel's award-winning Telecom Information Management System or "TIMS" platform is designed to provide an easy to manage application for tracking mobile phone expenses at an organization.

www.amtelnet.com

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Demand for Open Source and Standards-Based Solutions Moves Upward

The market demand for service availability has been growing quietly behind the scenes for more than a decade. In the past, service availability solutions typically were based on proprietary technologies, developed in-house for specific applications in telecommunications and other markets. However, recent activities in the marketplace indicate the growing adoption of open source solutions for service availability in next-generation networks.

Service availability implies a service is always available, regardless of hardware, software or user fault, and it is often taken for granted until downtime occurs. In today's world, we increasingly rely on computer-based services for critical aspects of our day-to-day lives, such as smartphones for business and personal communication, online banking and investing, and the growing presence of Web-based applications and services. While there is enormous technical complexity to make these services work, much like basic electricity and plumbing, we assume they will be available when we need them. When these services become unavailable, there can be a direct impact to our lives. As one example, consider the recent outages to Google Calendar and Twitter, affecting large numbers of users and generating negative press for the service providers.

Service Availability Forum is an organization working to develop technology standards to combat just such costly outages. SA Forum develops, publishes and promotes open specifications for service availability in carrier-grade and mission-critical systems. For nearly a decade, SA Forum has developed open specifications for service availability middleware, enabling systems to achieve five 9's (99.999 percent) uptime, with reductions in both planned and unplanned downtime. These specifications have resulted in multiple implementations of SA Forum middleware, including a growing focus on open source.

There are now robust open source implementations of the SA Forum specifications, along with commercial support from vendors. One example is the OpenHPI project, which implements the SA Forum's hardware platform interface. OpenHPI has an active development community and has been widely deployed through its inclusion in multiple Linux distributions. Another example is the Open Service Availability Framework, an implementation of the SA Forum's application interface specification.

We at the SA Forum recently witnessed several events that reflect acceleration of OpenSAF in the market. The first was a public statement by a major equipment manufacturer on



commercial adoption and deployment of SA Forum specifications when the OpenSAF Foundation announced [Ericsson's](#) deployment of OpenSAF technology in carrier networks. The next month, SA Forum member company GoAhead Software publicly announced its shift to an open source business model and commercial support of OpenSAF with the acquisition of the Aventellis Product Line from [Emerson](#) Network Power. These events are important, demonstrating that SA Forum implementations are ready for prime time, moving into real mission-critical deployments with commercial support available in the market.

We have all seen the benefits of standards-based software platforms, including enablement of an application development ecosystem, reduction of cost and risk, and acceleration of time to market. We have also seen these benefits with SA Forum specifications.

“We at the SA Forum recently witnessed several events that reflect acceleration of OpenSAF in the market.”

As a real example, a start-up company developing a carrier-grade system for telecom service providers needed to accelerate its time-to-market to have a field-deployable product within 12 months of the project start. The customer needed a high-performance, scalable solution, with a high degree of service availability to address system capacity requirements. One approach would have been for the customer to create its own middleware, but instead, it turned to Enea, a SA Forum member company. Enea provided standards-based middleware based on the SA Forum's AIS and HPI specifications, and another vendor supplied a standards-based hardware platform. The result was a smooth integration, resulting in a solution meeting or exceeding all schedule goals. The demo was ready in three months, and the selection of SA Forum-based middleware eliminated significant platform integration risks and reduced R&D integration costs by a factor of two.

With an understanding that standards-based solutions have benefit, the logical next question is – what are the benefits of open source implementations?

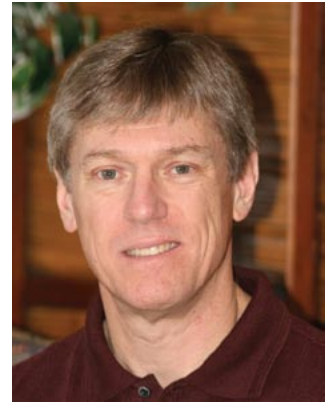
Over the years, we have seen a growing presence of open source technologies in very demanding environments. One obvious example is the Linux operating system, which has a very healthy development community and is being widely deployed across telecommunications, enterprise and other markets. A key factor in Linux's growing adoption is the availability of commercial support from companies like Red Hat, [Novell](#) and [WindRiver](#). Another example is the success of Java, with some open source implementations available such as the GlassFish and JBoss application servers.

The use of open source, standards-based technology has broad appeal and offers multiple commercial benefits. With a

dynamic marketplace, including acquisitions and technology shifts, standards-based solutions allow for increased interoperability and portability, while open source implementations help mitigate against vendor lock-in and single-supplier risks. Another benefit of using open source solutions is the ability of a company to directly influence and contribute to the technology – for a fraction of the cost to develop the full solution in-house, a company can invest modestly to contribute to open source technologies in areas that directly benefit its business goals. And finally, there is the simple fact that very robust open source technologies have been created with commercial, mission-critical product support offered by multiple vendors.

OpenSAF is one implementation of service availability middleware based on SA Forum specifications. OpenSAF was launched in January 2008, with a dedicated development community, multiple major releases and thousands of downloads. One of the keys to success of new open source solutions is to demonstrate adoption and deployment in real environments. This can be a challenge, since companies are often reluctant to publicize their technology choices. This is why the public announcement of Ericsson's deployment of OpenSAF is such an important event, demonstrating that SA Forum specifications can solve their service availability requirements and showing confidence that OpenSAF is a robust implementation.

Another success factor in adoption of open source solutions is the presence of commercial support. The nature of open source allows customers to directly support themselves, and there will be a segment of customers that choose this route. For example, an estimated 50 percent of all Linux deployments are self-supported, while the other 50 percent go through commercial vendors like



SA Forum's Alan Meyer

Red Hat. However, commercial support of open source solutions is a requirement for many customers and demonstrates the business viability of the technology. In the case of SA Forum middleware, the announcement of GoAhead Software as a provider of OpenSAF support is another important step in the growing deployments of SA Forum technologies.

With the momentum generated by these two major events in the service availability market, and the measurable benefits offered by open source and standards-based solutions, we are anticipating a continued uptick in deployments based on SA Forum specifications and a growing ecosystem of open source solutions. SA Forum has now developed a critical mass of specifications and continues to evolve these specifications based on feedback from middleware and application implementations from a broad range of markets. The organization is currently focusing on making its specifications even more accessible by providing educational resources on developing highly available applications using SA Forum-based middleware. **IT**

Alan Meyer is SA Forum (<http://saforum.org>) marketing work group chair, and director of telecom platform software at HP (www.hp.com).

<http://tmcnet.com/32400.1>

SkypeKit Now Available

Skype released SkypeKit, an open software development kit that will help developers integrate Skype calls, instant messaging, video chat and more into consumer electronics and computers. It's available for Linux, Mac and Windows.

www.skype.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32401.1>

Digium Unveils Switchvox Mobile

Switchvox Mobile applications for the iPhone and BlackBerry are now available from Digium, the Asterisk company. Designed to deliver advanced unified communications functionality to employees on the go, the applications are freely downloadable.

www.digium.com

<http://tmcnet.com/32402.1>

Linaro Effort Targets Linux Developers

IBM, Samsung Electronics and Texas Instruments have aligned on an effort called Linaro. The goal of the software engineering foundation is to create developer tools for Linux outfits so they can employ complex chips made by the group's founding members. Linaro expects to deliver new releases of software tools, kernel and middleware every six months.

www.ibm.com

www.samsung.com

www.ti.com

<http://tmcnet.com/33077.1>

Digium Launches Channel Certification Program

Digium Inc., the Asterisk Company, has

introduced the Digium Channel Certification program, enabling Digium channel partners to enhance their expertise in the business phone systems marketplace and increase their sales of Digium's unified communications and custom VoIP telephony solutions.

www.digium.com

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Consulting Firm Wins Sweet Deal

PenguinCRM, an India-based **SugarCRM** consulting company that provides wide range of Open source CRM related services, has bagged some annual turnkey projects for SugarCRM in developing countries like India, Singapore, Malaysia, etc.

www.penguincrm.com

www.sugarcrm.com



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Fueled By Nortel CVAS Deal, GENBAND Continues Its Ascent

If your mama ever read you *The Little Engine that Could*, the story of GENBAND may ring a bell. The latter tale goes something like this: Once upon a time there was a little company with \$2 million in sales and fewer than 100 employees. Through determination and hard work, it pushed and pushed to grow stronger and stronger, and it was able to overcome the \$40 million glass ceiling that holds back so many organizations. Leveraging both organic growth and a strong M&A effort to make it up the mountain, GENBAND went on to become a formidable presence in telecom, with \$800 million in expected pro forma revenue this year and 2,220 employees around the world.

But that's not the end of the story. The company is looking to do additional acquisitions, considering an IPO, working to achieve organic growth of 3 to 4 percent a year, and seeking to get to a 15 percent operating margin model by 2011.

GENBAND has done a number of acquisitions over the past few years. That includes purchasing NextPoint Networks in the fall of 2008, Tekelec's Switching Solutions Group in April 2007, Nokia Siemens Networks' Surpass IP trunking gateway product lines in April 2008, and both BayPackets Inc. and the Digital Central Office business of Siemens Networks LLC in late 2006. However, what really helped move GENBAND to the next level was its recent purchase of Nortel's Carrier VoIP and Application Solutions Business, a deal it closed on May 28.

"There aren't too many companies we can find that have gone from 80 people and a couple million dollars in sales to \$800 million and 2,200 people six years later," GENBAND President and CEO Charles D. Vogt tells INTERNET TELEPHONY. "What we just pulled off was pretty amazing when you think about it. Granted, we've taken GENBAND, even prior to Nortel, over the last several years and built it into a \$150 million business that's doing well."

"It's one thing to have the insight and the vision and all of that," he continues. "It's another thing to actually convince a pretty sophisticated board, a pretty sophisticated shareholder base, and then convince the largest bank in the world – JP-Morgan – to put up \$400 million for a company as small as we were to take on something so large."

Calling the deal transformational, Vogt says there hasn't been a comparable one in the 25 years he's been in the industry. "When we were a \$25 million [business], we acquired a \$100-



GENBAND President & CEO
Charles D. Vogt

million division out of Tekelec," he says. "Here, three years later, a \$150-million business is buying a \$650-million division out of bankruptcy."

Yet despite the scale of the Nortel deal, he adds, GENBAND already has done the bulk of the integration work needed to bring CVAS into the fold. Vogt says GENBAND had completed three out of the four main integration elements involved with the deal by its close date. The only thing that remains to be done on the integration front, he says, is to bring Nortel's legacy IT systems under GENBAND's next-generation Oracle system, which is used for sales, customer support and supply chain management.

"We had all of our product decisions, all of our people decisions, and all of the customer contracts and supplier agreements completely integrated and implemented the day we closed," he says, adding that others that acquired Nortel assets are still thinking about and working through their plans related to those deals.

GENBAND in late spring/early summer visited more than 100 customers to discuss the deal. In that same time frame it held various meetings to bring both new and existing employees around the world up to date on how it will impact operations. And in late June GENBAND publicly unveiled its product roadmap, while pressing the message that it's ready and able to offer end-to-end solutions to service providers of all sizes. The centerpiece of GENBAND's product portfolio is an IP plat-

form called GENiUS. With GENiUS, GENBAND executives explain, the company is delivering an open, standards-based architecture that will help carrier customers simplify their networks.

"GENiUS is an ATCA platform/chassis on top of which we have added our unique middleware, which is coming from CVAS," says Micaela Giuhart, vice president of product marketing with GENBAND. "This is a middleware in which they've invested tons of money to be really the premier middleware for this type of platform. [It] provides carrier-grade reliability, resiliency, redundancy, scalability."

The first products to be based on this new blade-based platform are the C20 (the softswitch from Nortel CVAS formerly called the CS 2000) and the S9 security gateway (which GENBAND introduced on an ATCA-based platform about a year ago, but which now has been adapted to run on the CVAS middleware). GENBAND expects to introduce additional products based on GENiUS over time.

"We will rapidly add the application blades as well as some call control blades," says Giuhart.

In addition to introducing the new GENiUS platform and the first products to employ it, GENBAND has renamed a number of products.

A wireless call continuity application formerly known as WMG 6000 is now called the A6. The Adaption Application Engine (aka A2E) has the new handle A2. Both products, which came from Nortel CVAS, will be hosted on GENiUS in the future. These products fall into GENBAND's A-Series.

As for the C-Series, in addition to the C20 news above, the Nortel CS 1500 now will be known as the C15. Meanwhile, the CS1600 product for rural markets is being renamed the C16.

"We really do have an enviable product portfolio that in the fixed mobile convergence world truly can offer what no one else is able to offer," says Vogt. "We can go in and do a true Class 4 and Class 5 CO modernization, where we can begin to decommission TDM switches around the world."

For IMS networks, both the C15 and C20 support access and media gateway control functions. The C3, meanwhile, supports IMS media gateway control functions. The C3 is GENBAND's call control platform and will come onto the Genius platform at a later date. That will complement nicely the capabilities of the C20, which is a full-size Class 5 softswitch, says Mehmet Balos, executive vice president and chief marketing officer with GENBAND. "As you know, we never touted our softswitch capabilities

officially or very aggressively because, remember, we sold to tier 1s through our OEM partners," says Balos. "Our media gateways became the best of breed" via GENBAND's partners like Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson and NSN. However, he adds, GENBAND's C3 softswitches are robust solutions that have been deployed widely by Leap Wireless and many others.

"There aren't too many companies we can find that have gone from 80 people and a couple million dollars in sales to \$800 million and 2,200 people six years later. What we just pulled off was pretty amazing when you think about it."

– GENBAND President and CEO Charles D. Vogt

"So we are very experienced at doing these end-to-end solutions," he emphasizes.

Vogt says one of the smartest things GENBAND ever did was to understand that the only way it would be truly successful at selling its technology was to enter into strategic partnerships with the big suppliers, which delivered its best-of-breed gateways as part of larger, integrated end-to-end solutions. Before the Nortel CVAS deal, when GENBAND had 40 sales people, 70 percent of GENBAND sales were fulfilled through a channel partner. But CVAS has given GENBAND global scale, independent of the technology, he says. As a result, GENBAND today has 250 sales people and more than 1,000 service employees, and Vogt expects 85 percent of that to come from direct sales this year.

"These were things that were very fundamental in our view as to how we were going to grow up, in order to not only control our own destiny, but to be able to scale the business," says Vogt.

GENBAND's flagship product, the G9 gateway, remains a key player in its new product strategy. It supports fixed, wireless and emerging solutions such as IMS voice and video transcoding as well as fixed mobile convergence. And the G9 product roadmap includes adding integrated session border control functionality, video, and enhancements to its existing high-definition voice capabilities. The G-Series also includes the G2 and G6 Universal Gateways as well as the former Nortel CVAS MG 9000 and MG 15000 media gateways.

The S-Series session border controller portfolio, meanwhile, covers the new GENiUS version of S9, which GENBAND says now provides the highest scalability in the market; the S2 Security Gateway, a building block of FMC solutions such as femtocells, and Wi-Fi-based mobile data offload and coverage solutions; the S3; and the SR3 session router products.

Not only does GENBAND have a well-rounded product portfolio, it also now brings to the market a strong, global professional service organization. Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson and Nokia Siemens Networks are the only other telecom equipment suppliers with comparable assets on that front, according to Balos. GENBAND's professional services include things like maintenance service as well as consultation around network topology, network optimization, capacity planning, disaster planning and more.

"So this is going to be a very important element as we're selling services to our tier 1" customers, he says, adding that the fact that GENBAND is supported by the leading bank, JPMorgan, gives big customers an added level of comfort.

"Definitely, we are more than capable of servicing large carriers ourselves directly at this time," Balos says.

With Nortel CVAS under its belt, GENBAND now calls 600 service providers around the globe its customers. That includes two-thirds of the world's largest service providers, including AT&T, [PAETEC](#) and Verizon.

"The one thing that we have to work really hard on is branding," says Vogt. That will include building its profile in areas of the world like Asia, which may not be familiar with GENBAND, he says.

While GENBAND expects to gain more of its revenues via direct sales going forward, Vogt says he also plans to maintain the company's close ties with its OEM partners.

"We have a very, very good relationship with all three of these companies, and they were very supportive in us acquiring Nortel," says Vogt.

He adds that IMS is all about convergence, so as carriers move to converge mobile and wireline, and as adoption of LTE and VoIP move forward, GENBAND will continue to be a very strategic partner for Alcatel-Lucent, Ericsson and NSN.

At the same time that GENBAND is moving forward with these alliances and finishing its integration with Nortel CVAS, the company is actively pursuing additional M&A opportunities.

"We're looking at a lot of things, and just because we're integrating a big business doesn't mean that you're not going to see us continue to be optimistic and trying to further opportunity while it's in front of us," says Vogt.

While GENBAND expects to gain more of its revenues via direct sales going forward, Vogt says he also plans to maintain the company's close ties with its OEM partners.

Of course, corporate development has long been a key piece of the GENBAND strategy. And Vogt says for every acquisition the company has executed there have been six or eight deals it has looked at that didn't come to fruition.

Vogt adds that one of the reasons GENBAND has been so successful with the acquisitions it has made is because "we stay inside the box." It will continue to do so; however, Vogt says that an acquisition of a company with ancillary technology, such as policy management, might make sense.

As has recently been noted by various media organizations, all of this build-up will also likely lead to a GENBAND IPO, which could come as early as next year.

"I think that is our natural exit," Vogt tells INTERNET TELEPHONY. "Whether that happens next year or the year after ... nobody's pressuring me. There's no shareholder, no board member, nobody on the management team. We're just trying to continue to grow this business, and I think there is a great opportunity for us to continue to consolidate this market."

I think I can. I think I can. **IT**

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Three-Screen Strategies

Who's Delivering Content Across TVs, Computers and Mobile Devices & How

If you're in the tech industry, or have someone living with you who's tech-savvy, you may already be enjoying Apple TV, Slingbox, or similar devices and services that offer multi-platform access to a variety of media when you want it, where you want it. You may also wonder why such terrific and affordable platforms aren't more widely used.

I know I feel that way about Apple TV. And Michael Wheeler, vice president of IP network for NTT America, who I interviewed for this story, and Hunter Newby, the CEO of Allied Fiber and author of the VoIPeering column for this magazine (see his July column on the subject), have similar sentiments about Slingbox.

Yet, for whatever reason, Apple and Sling Media Inc., at least initially, didn't put much effort into marketing these offers. As a result, the rest of the world may end up turning to companies like AT&T, EchoStar's DISH Network, Google and Verizon to empower them to enjoy and access content like music and videos across multiple devices, including computers, smartphones and televisions.

Digging on Apple TV and Slingbox

As I wrote in a recent posting on TMCnet, at a time when the telcos and cablecos were just talking about on-demand TV and three-screen strategies, Apple TV allowed my family and whoever else was willing to shell out a few hundred bucks to order movies (both standard- and high-definition) on demand, access [YouTube](#), look at photos, and play iTunes music and videos on the TV – and control it all with either an Apple TV remote control; a Mac computer; or an iPad, iPhone or iPod Touch. We bought Apple TV several years ago and still love the over-the-top service, which we use pretty much every day.

Wheeler of NTT America, meanwhile, is among the satisfied customers of Slingbox, which he says is “one of the more interesting three-screen [efforts].” He frequently travels for business, and Slingbox allows him to access TV programming remotely using his laptop or cell phone.

“I have my Slingbox attached to my TiVO at home, so time-shifted watching becomes part of that conversation fairly quickly, whether it's video on demand or just doing the recording yourself using a DVR experience,” he says. “You can access those things remotely, particularly remotely from around the world, and it's still a pretty positive experience when you're viewing it.”

Slingbox is a compelling application that can allow you to watch a sports match, a movie or other content while you're waiting at the airport for a flight, or at a hotel in Asia unable to sleep because of the time difference, he says.



The current Apple TV platform

Nonetheless, neither Apple TV nor Slingbox have yet to reach critical mass, so both are effectively blips on the three-screen landscape at this point. That could soon change, however.

Earlier this summer rumors circulated that Apple was planning an upgrade of Apple TV that would involve dropping the price to just \$99 (it sells for \$229 today), and ditching the current set-top box form factor and instead relying on the cloud for storage and a smaller device at the customer premises. But this speculation didn't play out as expected, as some reports indicated the unveiling of this revised product would take place at the Apple Worldwide Developers Conference in early June at the Moscone Center in San Francisco. That didn't happen.

However, there may still be hope. Another recent article, this one from TechNewsDaily, quotes Piper Jaffray senior research analyst Gene Munster saying: “Apple will produce a TV that includes everything: Wi-Fi, memory storage, [TiVo](#), Airport Extreme, Blu-ray, all built-in. Basically, you plug in your TV and everything is there. When we start hearing things about Apple projects, it's usually about three years away. We've been hearing about this for about a year now, so we think an Apple-branded TV is only two years away.”

Responding to an INTERNET TELEPHONY inquiry about a potential new Apple TV or related offer, an Apple spokesman said the company doesn't comment on rumors.

In the same piece, Munster notes that Apple CEO Steve Jobs recently commented on Apple TV, saying: “No one wants to buy a box. Ask TiVo, ask Roku, ask us... ask Google in a few months. The

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only way that's going to change is if you tear up the set-top box, give it a new UI, and get it in front of consumers in a way they're going to want it. The TV is going to lose in our eyes until there is a better go-to-market strategy... otherwise you're just making another TiVo."

DISHing Up Google TV and Project Canvas

Meanwhile, Sling Media and its parent, EchoStar Corp., and sister company DISH Networks have made some recent moves to expand their horizons.

DISH Network, EchoStar's DBS endeavor, in January announced a service called TV Everywhere that leverages technology from both Apple and Sling Media. The complete solution was expected to become available in the second quarter, which had yet to wind up at press time.

TV Everywhere from DISH Network provides customers with access to all their live and recorded programming on any connected laptop or mobile device anywhere in the world. The capability relies on the TV Everywhere Adapter; the ViP 922; the new DISH Network WiFi HD Monitor; and the DISH Remote Access App. The DISH Remote Access App also offers satellite TV customers the ability to transform an iPhone or iPod Touch into a remote control for televisions connected to compatible DISH Network receivers.

Then, in late June, Sling Media announced the availability of its SlingPlayer Mobile application for Android smartphones. The application, which sells for \$29.99, gives Android phone users easy access to their home TV experience anywhere they have mobile phone or Wi-Fi internet access.

That, of course, came a month after Google, the creator of the Android, joined forces with DISH and other partners to announce Google TV. The Google TV effort, based on Android and Chrome technologies, aims to merge traditional TV programming with the huge and varied array of content on the Web, and to allow users of the service to use a single interface to search for all of the above.

DISH and Google have been testing the service for more than a year with 400 DISH Network and Google users. The service, in which Adobe, Best Buy, Intel, Logitech and Sony, also are involved, is set to go commercial in the late fall.

Meanwhile, across the pond, a consortium called Project Canvas has taken shape, notes Martyn Davies, video marketing manager at Dialogic, which sells a video gateway called the Vision 1000. In what some see as a competitor to the coming Google TV, the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Five and a couple of ISPs have come together on the effort, which in June was approved by the BBC Trust, the governing body of the BBC.

As Davies of Dialogic notes, BBC was early to the market with over-the-top TV with its BBC iPlayer, which in three years went from zero to driving 20 percent of the U.K.'s video traffic. The player enables users that miss a TV program to watch it later over the Internet via a computer or mobile phone. Project Canvas now aims to apply this model to video on demand and IPTV. The goal is reportedly to deliver a standardized client this fall that would bring TV programming to mobile phones, PCs and Ethernet-connected TVs.

It should come as no surprise that the cable TV industry, too, is talking about three-screen strategies and the ability to deliver TV anywhere. A recent media report quoted Time Warner Cable CFO John Martin as saying that he "wouldn't be surprised" if 50 million homes could access some form of these services within the next 12 months.

Talking with the Telcos

However, it may be the telcos – in an effort to differentiate their relatively new TV services in a largely saturated market – that have been pushing the three-screen messaging the longest and the loudest. Of course, these strategies have until recently been separate TV, broadband/computer and mobile/cellular service strategies running on parallel tracks. But, with video now taking center stage for a variety of applications, their multiscreen strategies are now starting to come together.

For example, last spring, Verizon introduced the capability for customers of its fiber-to-the-home-based FiOS services to use select Verizon Wireless cell phones to program their DVRs remotely.

More recently, AT&T talked about its multi-screen strategy around the 2010 FIFA World Cup soccer tournament, for which it provided video and other content through its U-verse TV (including the ability to watch up to four ESPN channels featuring soccer at the same time) and Online services as well as to AT&T mobile phones.



The Slingbox



The Voice Peering Fabric ("VPF") is a private Internet that expands to major U.S. cities and abroad, uniting domestic and international telecom providers to bring the most secure and quality experience for the exchange of voice, video and data. It is a unique environment for enterprises and carriers to buy, sell and peer communications services on their own terms. Businesses now have control over and choices about their communications needs.

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RGB's Video Multiprocessing Gateway

"AT&T customers will have 64 live ESPN games available live on all three screens: the TV, PC and mobile device. We'll have up to two channels of live matches available on mobile, U-verse TV customers will be able to interact with and follow their favorite teams with our innovative 2010 FIFA World Cup app, and live coverage of all matches and exclusive bonus content is available for AT&T High Speed Internet customers," says Dan York, president of content at AT&T.

Of course, delivering content over multiple devices requires some processing of that video to ensure it is efficiently and properly formatted for the targeted endpoints. Companies like RGB Networks are addressing that challenge. In fact, in late June the network video processing company brought RipCode Inc. in the fold. RipCode, now part of RGB, was a privately held developer of solutions for mobile IP video. RGB is incorporating RipCode's technology into its Video Multiprocessing Gateway to enable video service providers to cost-effectively deliver services to their subscribers on TVs, PCs and mobile devices.

"As video service providers consolidate their head-ends and build converged delivery networks, they require highly reliable IP video solutions that scale efficiently across all subscriber devices," notes Jef Graham, CEO of RGB Networks. "With the integration of RipCode's mobile delivery technology into our modular, high-density Video Multiprocessing Gateway, RGB can offer a unified content delivery solution for TV, PCs and mobile in a scalable, carrier-class platform. We are already seeing tremendous interest in our multi-function VMG, and this bold move quickly takes our capabilities to the next level, providing a unique solution that directly satisfies our customers' requirements for three-screen delivery."

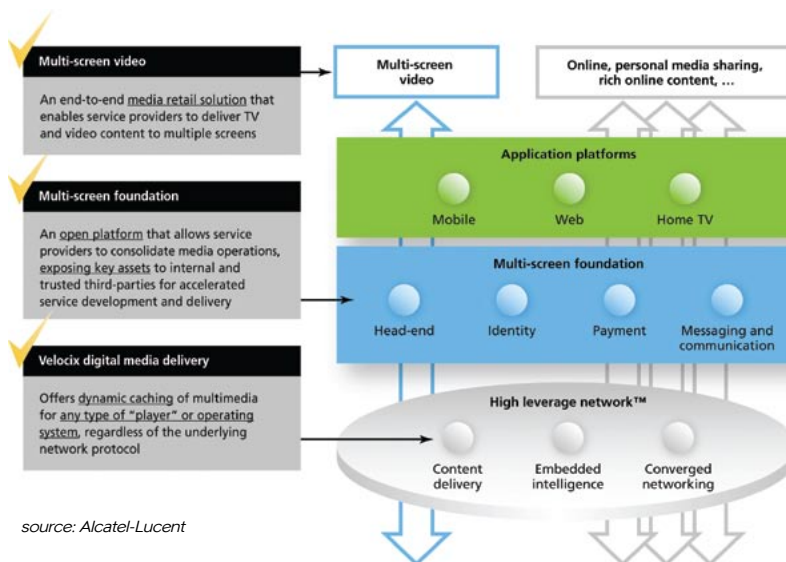
Juniper in April announced an acquisition along similar lines with its purchase of Ankeena. The latter company sold a Media Flow Director, which looks at available bandwidth and other factors to ensure a good user experience related to video or other rich media, regardless of the user endpoint.

Of course, while AT&T is enabling users to watch some of the same content over various screens, there doesn't seem to be any

real integration of the content itself from a user standpoint. However, many in the industry have been talking for some time about a future in which a user could start watching a program on his cell phone, for example, and then turn on his TV or computer to pick up the same program where it left off.

In fact, Alcatel Lucent at CTIA and IPTV World Forum in late March announced a solution that would enable service providers to do exactly that, notes Tom Fuerst, the company's senior director of multimedia solutions marketing. The product is called Multi-screen Video Solution, and it gives people access to live and time-shifted TV from any device. It also has a video bookmarking capability, so you can watch part of a show on one device and then switch, mid-stream, to another endpoint. Additionally, the solution can offer the user recommendations for content, a feature that Fuerst says service providers like the telcos are uniquely positioned to provide.

A feature of MVS called Mobile Smart Loading can preload a user's smartphone with content to which he or she has subscribed. That content might involve grabbing a show from the user's home DVR. But rather than bogging down the network and the handset at an inopportune time, the feature will download the content when there's ample bandwidth on the mobile network, possibly at night, so the handset is ready to go the next day.



source: Alcatel-Lucent

"Alcatel-Lucent's Multimedia Solutions and strategy help service providers leverage their existing assets in creative ways to introduce an entirely new set of services and associated revenue – a great example of our application enablement vision in action. These solutions build on our strengths in IPTV, mobility and content delivery to bring our customers – and their subscribers – a consistent multimedia experience on every screen," says Kenneth Frank, president of Alcatel-Lucent's Solutions activities. "We are creating new opportunities for everyone in the digital media value chain by providing a foundation on which new multimedia services and content can be offered to consumers quickly and easily, based on market demand." **IT**

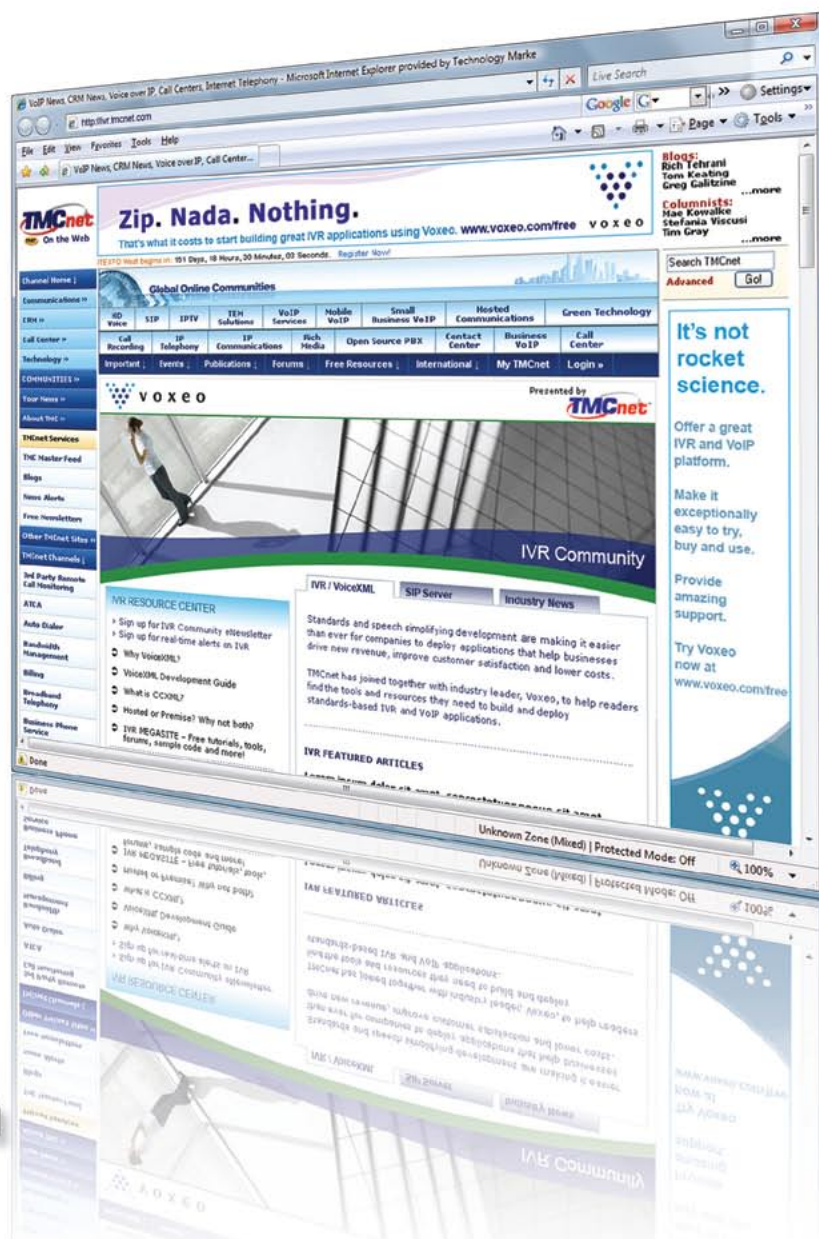


Introducing the Global IVR Community

Evolving standards and speech technologies are driving the business case for companies to deploy new speech applications to create additional revenue streams, increase customer satisfaction, and trim costs. Voxeo's IVR Global Online Community on TMCnet is the industry destination for tools, information, and resources for building and deploying enhanced IVR and VoIP applications.

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A Look at Multimedia Phones

And Why This Time They're Really Going to Take Off

Multimedia phones that deliver voice and video, and promise better productivity and third-party application integration, are starting to make a noticeable appearance in the marketplace. And although the emergence (or some might say re-emergence) of such devices may be inspired in part by the success of the iPhone, INTERNET TELEPHONY sources tell us that these new multimedia phones are unique from the iconic product given they typically are pretty affordable relative to their capabilities and lifecycles, are always on and don't require users to recharge them.

"The media phone market, for both businesses and consumers, seems poised to take off with a number of communications vendors introducing new media phones this year for the home or office," says Sandra M. Gustavsen an analyst at T3i Group LLC. "While one can see the many benefits in combining a telephone with video and Internet content, the phone's price will be a key factor in our current economy."

Grandstream's GXV3140

Among the new school of multimedia phones is the GXV3140 IP Multimedia Phone from Grandstream.

The 3140, which became available about a year ago and sells for \$249, targets both business and residential applications. It marries Web and social multimedia applications with IP video and voice calling, and comes with an integrated browser for one-touch access to Web sites. And it includes a 4.3-inch 480x272 digital color LCD and 1.3M pixel camera with privacy shutter, a full-duplex speakerphone, support for nine languages, and peripheral support including TV-Out, USB, SD and more.

Among the more recent capabilities added to the SIP-based device is support for Skype.

"What it means is you have a phone that you can essentially hook up to any IP service provider out there... and you can have your Skype contacts and be able to make calls in a unified way," says Khris Kendrick, senior director of business development at Grandstream.

The device also has a built-in MCU to enable multipoint videoconferencing.

And Kendrick adds that Grandstream's video surveillance devices can be accessed remotely using the 3140.

"There's going to be little distinction between some of these iPads and some of the Google tablets and the [multimedia] phones that will come out," says Kendrick. "They all will look the same—bigger, brighter displays, video is going to be a part of it."

While there is clearly a strong market for the iPad and iPhone, Kendrick says: "Some folks will want expensive/ iconic gear. Other folks will want stuff that's always on and always ready to go."

WorldGate's Ojo Vision

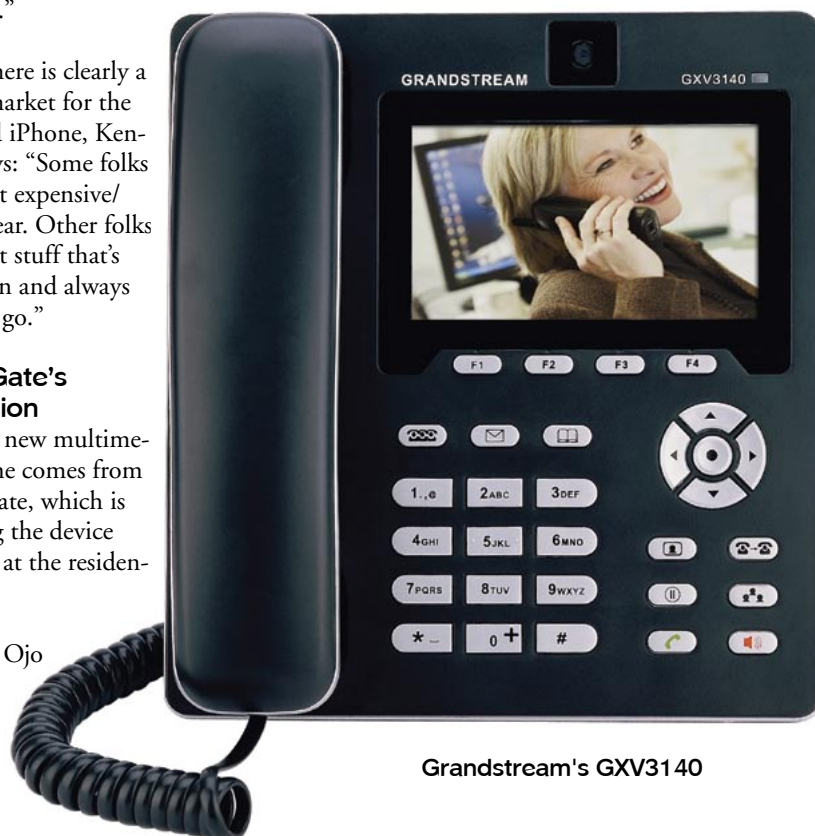
Another new multimedia phone comes from WorldGate, which is targeting the device squarely at the residential user.

The \$99 Ojo Vision includes a 7-inch screen that

displays full-screen video, and can be used for videoconferencing or as a digital picture frame, if you plug a camera into it. (In the future, WorldGate expects to bring other video Web services, such as multimedia advertising, home control features and the like, to the device.) And users can plug their existing phones into the Ojo Vision for additional handsets in the house.

The device runs on a TI DaVinci dual core chip to deliver very high-quality audio and video, and it can adjust encoding based on the available bandwidth.

"Everybody is familiar with their Skype experiences and even seeing video streamed over their mobile phones, and they've almost become tolerant of their audio becoming unsynched from the picture, or there are dropouts in the audio, or a lot of jitter or blocks running across the picture," says WorldGate CEO George Daddis. "It does not occur on our phone."



Grandstream's GXV3140



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Polycom's VWX1500



To deliver a consistently high user experience, Daddis says WorldGate has elected to deliver the Ojo Vision as part of a turnkey solution that also includes services, which will be generally available for \$29.99 per month starting in the third or fourth quarter of this year.

"We will sell the complete package to any kind of marketing or direct sales firm or any agent working on our behalf who would like a recurring revenue business but doesn't have any experience in telephony," he says. "We offer a complete network, billing package, product fulfillment – everything you need, literally, from stem to stern."

Polycom's VWX 1500

While WorldGate is focused exclusively at the residential set, Polycom is all business. And the latter company entered the business media phone space a little over a year ago with its VWX 1500.

Tim Yankey, senior director of product marketing at Polycom, explains that this product brings technology business-grade telephony and video with a unique application platform.

The VWX 1500, which is list priced starting at \$1,099, comes bundled with several applications including the Polycom Productivity Suite, which enables users to initiate and control audio conference calls from the device's screen and record calls locally using a flash drive in the phone's USB port. Users can access a free Web service, called My Info Portal, to receive content such as local weather reports and other personalized information when the screen would otherwise be idle. It also features an open API and micro-

browser that enable third-party application developers to integrate with it business applications such as unified communications, customer relationship management, and appointment management systems. The always-on, touch-screen user interface includes a menu screen on which developers can place icons for users to locate and start their applications.

And now the device can talk both SIP and H.323, which of course allows it to communicate with both SIP and H.323 endpoints.

"The reception to this product has been fantastic," Yankee says, adding that the device has been embraced by businesses of various sizes, as well as by service providers leveraging it to deliver unified communications to the SMBs.

snom's 870

Another leading business device company, snom, also plays in the multimedia phone space.



snom 870

Its top-of-the-line product is a 12-line phone with a color touch screen, one-button access to chosen URLs, and application integration capabilities that lists for just \$349.

The company touts the 870's well-arranged address book, which makes sure that each caller can be quickly identified; its integration with Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 via snom's special firmware; and its wideband audio with silence suppression and voice activity detection features.

"Our phones all do XML, so the next step in this is we are going to see applications flow to the IP desk phone like the 870," says Mike Storella, snom's director of business development for the Americas. "That's where the value-add is for an IP phone

is to have business applications. I don't see many applications, interestingly enough, like the iPhone model; it's more about IT guys and telco guys saying 'Oh, I can help my company out by getting integrated back-room operations to the phone or the desktop.'"

Storella adds that the company also offers a side car device, called the snom Vision, which includes the 16 buttons and its own screen, that was designed to work with 821 and 870. It's aimed for use by receptionists or others, like management personnel, who control or want to be able to watch activity on the communications system.

Now's the Time

So what's happening now that signals such multimedia desktop or countertop devices are finally ready for mass acceptance? We've all been hearing about the potential of videophones for years. In fact, WorldGate's Daddis mentions that AT&T unveiled the first videophone at the World's Fair back in the 1960s.

According to Daddis, such devices are close to reaching a tipping point now because broadband access is widespread, the cost points for such devices have come within reach of more users, high-tech types are putting a new focus on ease-of-use in this area, and there's a strong desire for many of the applications these products can deliver.

The fact that residential and business users also have become very comfortable with video through their mobile phones, laptops and table computers might also be a contributing factor.

"We anticipate that within [four] years, nearly 10 million business media phones will be shipped worldwide, generating more than U.S. \$3 billion in annual revenue. They are a key to the future of the IP PBX business," says Keith Nissen, principal analyst at In-Stat.

IT



WorldGate's Ojo Vision

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DIRECTLY TO PAYMENT PROCESSORS
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IT COSTS

Lowering the Transport Cost of Mobile Internet Traffic

Mobile Internet traffic is growing like crazy. We all know it. That fact led the first slide in every presentation at an optical conference I recently attended. Service providers can no longer build networks following strategies used in the past.

Let's move beyond the statistics and talk about what service providers can do to change the way they transport all that traffic and actually lower the cost per bit in the process.

Packet optical transport is the answer.

Networks must scale to meet customer demand for reliable, efficient services. But network planning is always forecast-driven. The only 100 percent, fool-proof thing about forecasts is that they are always wrong.

Plus, even with the migration to 2G/3G/LTE under way, SONET/SDH is not going away anytime soon. Service providers need to get the most out of the networks they have while building for the future.

Time to Break with Tradition

Many times, providers add DWDM to networks to alleviate fiber exhaust. Service providers also deploy DWDM/ROADM to add more flexibility to their transport solutions. ROADM makes it easy to add and drop wavelengths where needed without planning ahead or re-engineering the network.

The flexibility and redundancy of the DWDM/ROADM architecture is great and can reduce construction costs versus traditional switch router interconnection. But, ultimately, this traditional network design results in under-used pipes, which make networks more expensive to run. It's time to rethink how networks are built in order to lower the overall cost of operating them.

New Thinking, Better Networks

By integrating packet optical transport with ROADM, service providers still gain the flexibility for their transport networks that's inherent in the technology, and can often help reduce overall capital expenses. The savings come from aggregation in the transport networks. I'm not talking about replacing routers. Rather, merely aggregating services to fewer interfaces on the routers.

Packet optical products enable large and small service providers to offer higher capacity at a lower cost per bit and support

SONET/SDH and Ethernet transport.

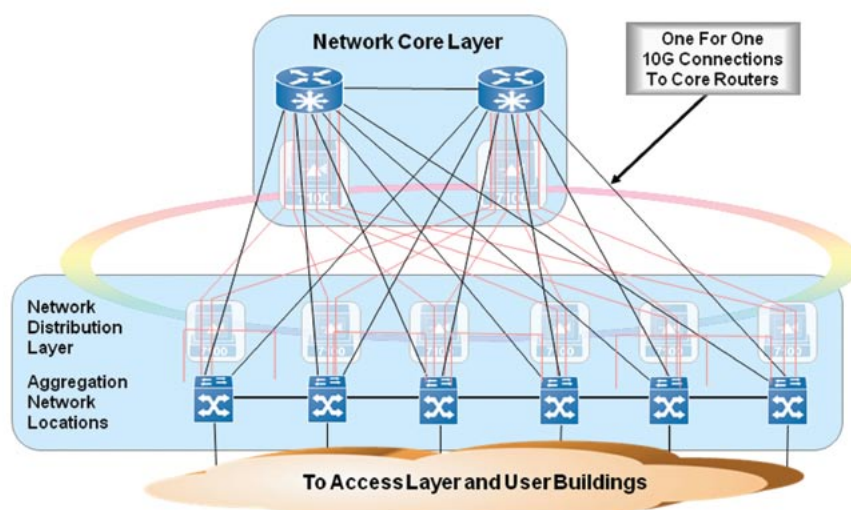
As networks evolve to Ethernet, adding packet optical transport platforms can initially provide scale to existing infrastructure assets. Equally important is the ability to aggregate Ethernet services from the edge of the network to a single aggregated 1GbE to 10GbE. Existing SONET/SDH can now support new services while taking advantage of the switching and performance monitoring capabilities of packet optical transport.

A packet optical transport solution adds an optical layer. It enables the deployment of all-packet solutions with the same scalability of TDM networks. And, as Ethernet technologies advance and MPLS-TP standards evolve, service providers gain the advantages of connection-oriented Ethernet for better timing, management and performance monitoring.

Finally, the packet optical transport strong optical layer manages services at the wavelength level, keeping cost per bit transport at its lowest. And by integrating wavelength-level switching with aggregation of Layer 2 interfaces, the number of electronics and router ports in the network is greatly reduced. The result is significant capex savings, even in small networks.

The growing popularity of the mobile Internet is a game-changer. Service providers can no longer build networks following strategies used in the past. By changing network architectures to take advantage of packet optical transport, you'll have the flexibility to migrate to Ethernet when the time is right, while reducing cost per bit to its lowest possible level. **IT**

Bert Buescher is director of product management at [Tellabs](http://www.tellabs.com) (www.tellabs.com).



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INTERNET TELEPHONY Congratulates TMC Labs Innovation Awards Winners

This is the second part of our 11th installment of the TMC Labs Innovation Awards recognizing the truly unique and innovative products and services within the VoIP industry. Over the years, TMC Labs has recognized some remarkable achievements in the VoIP and telecom space. While the VoIP industry has certainly matured and perhaps products are not as unique as they were, say, five years ago, we still encounter products pushing the leading edge by offering better performance, a slight variation in features, or a more comprehensive all-on-one solution that eliminates the need for several disparate products.

Take for example, Phone Power. The company has in some ways copied the magicJack USB VoIP stick, but it put its own spin on it by offering twin phone numbers, which you can read about in that write-up below.

Choosing the most innovative products and services is always challenging, but TMC Labs carefully scrutinized each applicant and came up with the 15 most innovative companies. TMC Labs proudly bestows each of 15 companies with a TMC Labs Innovation Award.

As noted in our last issue, details surrounding these awards are being published in two parts to accommodate our in-depth write-ups for the winners. The complete winners list is being published in both issues; however, we offered detailed write-ups in alphabetical order beginning with AccessLine Communications and ending with Hatteras Networks last month. This time around, we start with Phone Power and end with [Transera](#) Communications.

Phone Power

www.phonepower.com

Phone Power VoIP Combo Pack

Phone Power offers a hosted VoIP service that is similar to magicJack due to its use of a USB stick for connecting a headset or regular telephone. There are some important distinctions though. The Phone Power VoIP Combo Pack includes both a two-line home telephone adapter with built-in router, as well as a USB travel adapter. The travel adapter has an embedded softphone, an RJ-11 phone jack for connection to a regular telephone, and a headset jack with an included headset.

What's unique is that both devices work with the same telephone number. So customers can have two separate lines at home but receive calls with either device. And when they travel, the small USB travel adapter allows them to make and



receive calls with their phone number anywhere in the world that has a broadband connection.

Thus, the customer has the home adapter always connected at home, and/or the USB travel adapter plugged in while travelling. Both devices register to the Phone Power softswitch platform. NAT Traversal is handled by redundant Acme Packet Net-Net 4500 controllers. Phone Power explains: "As far as we are aware, Phone Power is the first to offer one monthly service and one number, connected to both a home and travel solution. We are also the first to offer a USB travel adapter that boasts both telephone (RJ-11) and headset capability in one device." Some of the advanced features include selective call routing/call blocking, simultaneous ring, find me/follow-me, voicemail-to-e-mail, and fax-to-e-mail.

PIKA Technologies Inc.

www.pikatech.com

GSM Module for PIKA WARP Appliance for Asterisk
The GSM module is the newest addition to the PIKA WARP appliance connectivity options. It provides GSM connectivity out of the box, allowing resellers and service providers to build a telephony application (IP PBX, notification system, etc.) with integrated GSM gateway functionality. The WARP appliance is the first PBX development platform with integrated GSM connectivity. There are many GSM gateway offerings, [Asterisk](#) based IP PBX's and Asterisk hardware/appliances, but none that offer the customizability that the WARP appliance does, with GSM included.

PIKA tells TMC Labs: "Our competitors in the PBX platform market include board vendors who sell only one component of the PC-based IP PBX solution. There are GSM gateway competitors who sell standalone gateways that integrate with a PBX. The PIKA WARP appliance integrates the boards (PSTN connectivity options), Linux, Asterisk and FreePBX, and a GSM gateway into a single, small unit which means ease of in-

younified

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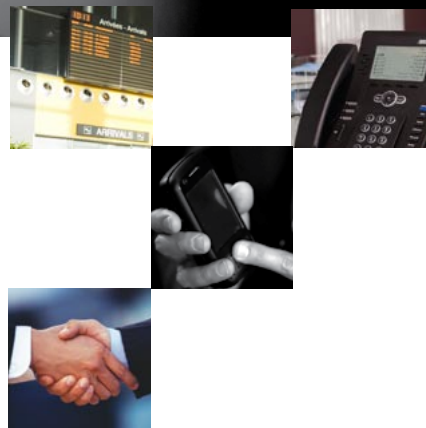


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- Increase workforce efficiency and response time
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Polycom Inc.

www.polycom.com

Polycom HDX Series featuring H.264 High Profile H.264 High Profile (H.264/AVC) is a new standards-based video compression technology that reduces the bandwidth requirements for high-definition telepresence and standard-definition video-conferencing by as much as 50 percent, representing substantial network bandwidth cost savings for customers. H.264 High Profile was initially developed by the ITU-T Video Coding Experts Group together with the ISO/IEC Moving Picture Experts Group and is used in such applications as Blu-ray discs, videos from YouTube and iTunes, direct broadcast satellite television service, and cable television services.

Polycom claims to be the first to adopt this new standard and embed it into Polycom video endpoints and infrastructure to lower the bandwidth requirements for HD and SD video/telepresence calls. Polycom has implemented H.264 High Profile initially across its Polycom HDX room telepresence system portfolio (6000, 7000, 8000 and 9000 series), and will also implement it on its video bridging infrastructure (RMX line) and immersive telepresence systems (RPX, TPX, ATX lines) and recording, streaming and digital signage products, providing customers with a comprehensive solution.

Polycom explains to TMC Labs: “Polycom offers the HD and SD video quality for various resolutions and frame rates at up to 50 percent less than competitors like [Tandberg](#) and LifeSize, and even greater savings against Cisco, which uses less efficient, proprietary coding technology. When customers deploy larger numbers of telepresence and videoconferencing systems across their network, the bandwidth and associated cost savings offered by Polycom compared to the competition are significant.”

The H.264 High Profile technology complements existing Polycom technology to offer enhanced performance. For example, H.264 High Profile in conjunction with Polycom Lost Packet Recovery technology (forward error correction) allows customers to experience greater quality and a consistently high-quality experience over lower bandwidth and across best-effort networks, where packet loss and network congestion may occur. Polycom explains: “This is significant, as competitive systems from Tandberg and LifeSize will deliver significantly degraded video quality starting at 1 percent packet loss, and systems from Cisco can drop video calls altogether at less than 1 percent of packet loss. In contrast, Polycom systems deliver near-perfect video quality at up to 5 percent packet loss and continue delivering good video quality at up to 10 percent packet loss.”

Radware

www.radware.com

Content Inspection Director (CID)

Content Inspection Director (CID), Radware’s transparent smart redirection and dynamic policy enforcement device, lets

carriers extend a full set of managed content security services to customers including anti-virus, anti-SPAM, URL filtering, Web application firewalls and parental control. CID enables the seamless deployment of best-of-breed content inspection tools with self-provisioning (RADIUS-based) and scalability across wireline and wireless networks. With CID, carriers can effectively support the delivery of high-performance, customized value-added subscriber content inspection services for business and residential customers.

Supporting up to 16gbps of throughput capacity, it delivers wire-speed deep packet inspection while sustaining multi-gigabit throughputs. CID eliminates service bottlenecks across best-of-breed content inspection tools ensuring carrier-grade availability and service continuity. By intelligently managing content inspection operations and enabling policy-based, service flow customization, CID supports advanced, value-added managed content security.

[Radware](#) claims to be the first in the industry to release a dedicated appliance in the application switching market for content filtering inspection and scanning in high-performance environments. Leveraging its security and content inspection controls, CID enables enterprises to define inspection requirements and flow management, allowing users to define the specific security tool to handle each type of traffic, user and content. It has been tested for interoperability with Aladdin, Forum Systems, [McAfee](#), Symantec, Teros, and Trend Micro.

Importantly, CID blends the capabilities of an application switch with those of a DPI device, in one integrated solution. User QoE and service provider visibility and control are improved, enabling enhanced tiered billing capabilities and new network monetization opportunities. CID additionally employs techniques for wireline load balancing (with support for MAC-less devices), application acceleration (compression, caching, SSL offloading), flexible policy enforcement point, bandwidth management and traffic shaping, header enrichment and modification, active/passive redundancy, high VAS availability, device logging, AAA integration, and more.

REVE Systems (S) Pte. Ltd.

www.itelmobiledialer.com

iTel Mobile Call Back Dialer

iTel Mobile Callback Dialer was launched in January this year to target call-back service providers. A lightweight 100kb application, it improves the user experience vastly for a user of a call-back service from a mobile phone. This is a mobile application, which when downloaded in the mobile phone automates the entire call-back process, making it very easy for the end user to use call-back services. For the call-back service provider, this mobile application helps increase minutes of usage, as it is able to detect intelligently all long-distance calls and route them over the call-back platform (with an opt-in from the end user).

Call-back dialing can be complex – requiring long phone numbers and PINs, which can be misdialed or forgotten. This mobile application, when downloaded on the phone, is configured (one time) with the user’s PIN/account number. Thereafter it integrates with the phone book of the mobile handset. So the consumer just chooses the number from his or

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Attendees come to discover how social media can provide a more complete view and understanding of customers... boosting retention, increasing sales and improving profitability.

Here is a just sample of the topics that will be covered at the SocialCRM Expo:

- Why The Social Channel
- Social Channel Applications
- Social Challenges
- Integrating Social With Other Channels
- Enabling At-Home Agents
- Automating Customer Interactions
- IVVR and the Video-Enabled Contact Center
- The Work at Home Model for Customer Contacts
- Speech Analytics Trends in Contact Centers
- Hosted Contact Center Solutions

Who Will Attend?

- Enterprise Contact Center Management Across All Vertical Markets
- Outsourced Contact Center Management
- Influential Marketing Executives
- Resellers and VARs



For more information, please contact Maureen Gambino at 203-852-6800 Ext. 109 or mgambino@tmcnet.com

her phone book and dials (just like a regular mobile call). iTel Mobile Call Back Dialer senses the international long-distance calls and either prompts the user to choose between the regular mobile service or call-back service – or if the user has chosen to route all international calls over the call-back platform, routes the calls automatically to the call-back service provider.

When the call back from the service provider comes in, the dialer auto-intercepts the call and fast dials the destination number of the called party. The end user holds while the call connects – which is much faster than the regular manual process. Even if there is a line busy or any other error, the consumer just repeats the process by choosing the redial button. iTel Mobile Call Back Dialer integrates with phonebook memory of the mobile phone and stores all the necessary information like PIN, access code and user platform preference. So when the consumer makes a call from the mobile phone, based on the consumer preference stored and the destination number, the application automatically routes the call to the call-back service provider's access number. When the call back comes in to the consumers mobile, it also auto-intercepts the call, fast dials the destination number, and helps connect the call much faster than the regular experience.

SIP Print LLC **www.sipprint.com**

SIP Print

SIP Print is a pure SIP-based call recording appliance that is geared toward the SMB for those in the SIP/VoIP telephony market. SIP Print sits on the network and captures the VoIP RTP traffic. All it requires is a port mirroring switch so the SIP Print appliance can passively listen for VoIP RTP packets and record them to the hard drive. Access to the recordings is via an easy to use Web browser.

According to SIP Print: "SIP Print was first to market a pure SIP-based call recording appliance, and we are the first to deliver this product to the SMB market at a price for all to afford. We are also the first to have a redundant SIP recording appliance at an affordable price as well, and with the release of the Express we are first to market for the very small business model of 15 users or under." SIP Print is now certified to capture and record several VoIP codecs including G729, G722 (HD), and G723. The company claims it is the first to market HD recording.

Speedflow Communications **www.speedflow.com**

Mediacore

Mediacore is an integrated solution for VoIP network management. It features a Class 4 softswitch, dynamic routing engine, billing, and QoS control instruments. Mediacore is comprised of routing and billing modules that allows it to tackle all VoIP business processes. Mediacore is offered either as an integrated software solution or as separate modules (softswitch, VoIP billing, routing engine, guardian). The distinct advantage is that Mediacore's modules are compatible with most of various solutions available on the market.

Speedflow Communications explains: "Due to the modular structure and unique proprietary routing algorithms, Mediacore is highly efficient when serving high peaks of traffic. Billing and routing engines can work together either with Speedflow's softswitch alone or routing at the same time [with] media gateways from the different vendors. This architecture helps creating unprecedented reliability and performance in [the] SME market."

Mediacore softswitch efficiency is more than 300 calls per second, which allows it to process more than a million calls per hour on a single server. The company claims this makes it the highest performance, per server, on a market. Speedflow also espouses its friendly support, though TMC Labs did not verify that claim. It has strong reporting features. A combination of reports generated by the billing system and guardian recommendations creates proactive work flow for routing and NOC engineers as well as outstanding performance for sales and account managers.

The company claims interconnection performance is three to five times more efficient than its main competitor. Importantly, only open source products are used in Mediacore system. It uses a Linux OS with PostgreSQL Database and Java-based Web interface. This allows for high efficiency, security, unique flexibility and the possibility of Mediacore system development.

Transera Communications **www.transerainc.com**

Seratel

Transera's virtual contact center software, Seratel, intelligently connects global callers and agents. Seratel runs in the cloud to help high-volume contact centers face constantly shifting demands for agent resources, manage multiple outsourcers and locations more effectively, and eliminate exorbitant capital expenditure outlays. Seratel includes a full suite of functionality for call centers such as global call queuing, intelligent call routing, and centralized monitoring and reporting. The software enables businesses to deploy a feature-rich call center with agents located anywhere in the world. A browser, a phone and an Internet connection are all that an agent needs.

Seratel also ensures callers consistently reach the most effective agents and that call centers obtain a single centralized view of their call center performance and operations. The software allows call flows to be reconfigured on the fly based on urgent business demands or spikes in volume.

The company leverages SIP to enable the Seratel application to communicate with the underlying telephony elements. Seratel's call routing capabilities allow enterprises to track the performance of their contact centers in real-time and deliver calls to sites and/or agents that are performing best. For example, for sales calls, Seratel Scorecard Routing will monitor metrics such as revenue per call, sales conversion rate, and/or abandonment rate, and send calls to the agents that are performing best based on these defined business parameters. This ability to adjust dynamically the routing in real-time based on business metrics is unique to Seratel. **IT**

Visit the Voice Quality Community

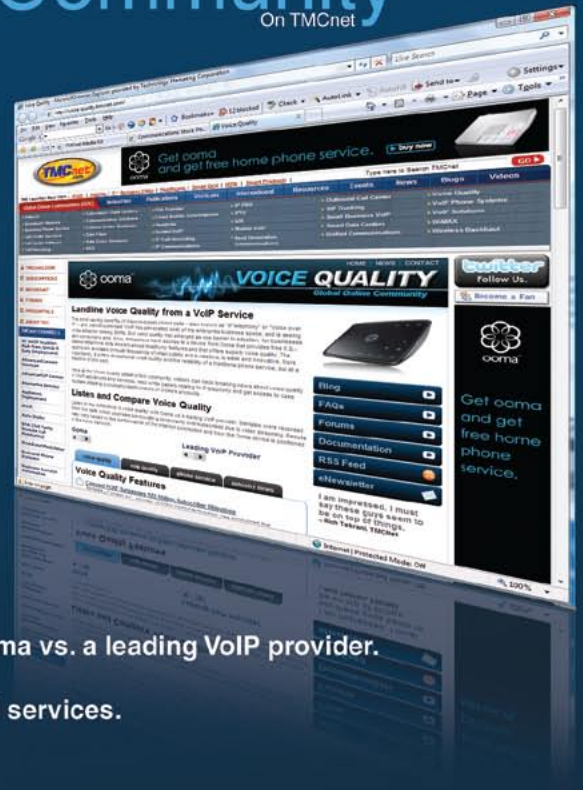
On TMCnet

While the cost-saving benefits of VoIP are well documented, voice quality has emerged as one barrier to adoption, for businesses and consumers alike. Now, consumers have access to a device from Ooma that provides free U.S.-based telephone calls and advanced telephony features for superb voice quality.

Ooma's appliance offers exceptional voice quality and the reliability of a traditional phone service, but at a fraction of the cost. You don't need a headset. You simply connect the device to your high-speed Internet and your existing phone, and that's it. You're ready to start calling and experience Ooma's great voice quality.

Community Features:

- Listen to recorded samples and compare voice quality with Ooma vs. a leading VoIP provider.
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By Erik Linask

Enterprise Social Media – What's all the Chatter About?

I suspect neither Biz Stone nor Mark Zuckerberg could have imagined the impact their services would have in a few short years (though, like any good entrepreneur, their hope was they would). But I expect if I asked every attendee at ITEXPO West in October (www.itexpo.com) if they have a Facebook account, the total number of negative responses would be a single-digit percentage.

So think about the tools you use as you communicate with your friends, think about the benefits of bringing those sharing and following and commenting features into your office environment. Now, you more than likely have some of your colleagues as Facebook friends, but while that offers some of the benefits, it also comes with its own challenges, not the least of which is separating your social from your business interactions.

I started on this topic in last month's issue, discussing the value of bringing elements of social media interactions into an enterprise context. I want to continue that theme this month, largely because in a recent trip to San Jose, our team met with 101 tech companies in three days, and the one topic that came up more than any other was social media. In addition, I want to point out that TMC has launched a new event, Social CRM EXPO (www.scrmexpo.com), which will be collocated with ITEXPO, focusing on the impact of social media on customer behavior, and why every business needs to have a social media strategy.

Indeed, many companies are already looking at social media as a mechanism for connecting more effectively with their customers. And they should. After all, the customer – more specifically, customer satisfaction – drives business success.

But, within any business, there are small networks of co-workers who have to regularly interact to achieve success on various projects. Until now, they have relied primarily on email for executing these initiatives. What services like Facebook have taught us is the immense value of the group mentality engendered by social media. Importantly, because all the information we require is pushed to us through these services, it takes very little effort to get updates on everything you need to know.

Even Salesforce.com CEO Marc Benioff says he starts each day on Facebook because it is a one-stop source for everything he cares about in his social life – and that's likely where the Chatter idea was born.

In fact, it's the same simplicity of sharing on which Salesforce.com built Chatter, as the company looked to bring the same transformation to the business environment that Facebook has delivered to the consumer market. Chatter,

according to Benioff, combines the best features of consumer social media applications, applying them to business collaboration, such that business activities are reflected in real-time in an easy-to-access format.

"It's the same idea as Facebook, where you follow workgroups, processes, and other business initiatives," concurs Robin Daniels, director of product marketing for Chatter. "It's not about just people connecting – there are a lot of solutions for that; it's also about the data and the objects connecting."

Now you're thinking, "But Salesforce.com is a CRM company." That's true, and Chatter with its social functionality obviously integrates into its CRM systems. But, it is also available for non-CRM users.

"This is really our first app that can be used by everyone," explained Daniels. "It really fired up the whole company, which is when we realized we had in front of us a truly enterprise-wide product."

The idea is that users need to have better, easier access to information without having to spend time searching for it, while providing a central data and document store. For instance, businesses can leverage Chatter to replace their corporate Intranets with a simpler, automatic method for updating the documents various users need to access. It also provides a tool for sharing large files – a fairly common need today, with the increased use of video and other multimedia files. We've all certainly had challenges emailing large files due to attachment size limitations. A social media application provides the ability to quickly and easily provide access to such data without creating a need for multiple versions stored on networks.

"Chatter is all about user empowerment," said Daniels. "They decide what they want to use, how they want to use it, and when."

Based on early returns, users are embracing that power – at the end of the beta stage, Salesforce had about 5,000 customers interested in Chatter and now have some 80,000 customers using it. According to Daniels, early feedback resulted in language he had never heard used to describe enterprise applications – words like, "mind-blowing," "revolutionary," "amazing," and, even "fun."

With results like that, it's easy to understand why Benioff asked, "Why isn't all enterprise software like Facebook?" The answer is that someday it just may be, if he has anything to say about it. But in the near term, the idea is that the features that have made social networking so popular can also increase the collaboration capabilities and overall productivity of entire businesses. Chatter is only the tip of the iceberg – enterprise social media is likely to become as popular as Facebook in the consumer space. **IT**



8x8, Inc.



Introducing the Small Business VoIP Online Community

Small business VoIP adoption is growing, largely because of the cost benefits, but the fact is that hosted VoIP services for small business, like 8x8's Virtual Office, provide much more than cost savings. The greater versatility of hosted VoIP system allows businesses to customize their telecommunications packages to meet their unique needs, but without requiring large up-front expenditures for equipment, installation, maintenance, or IT staff. For the latest news and information on VoIP services specifically designed for the small business market, visit the Small Business VoIP community on TMCnet, sponsored by 8x8. 8x8 Virtual Office is an affordable, robust and easy-to-manage phone solution with all the premium PBX features and functionality of a traditional telecom system.

On the Small Business VoIP Community, you'll find:

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- Free trials
- Free quotes
- Feature articles
- Case studies
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<http://reseller.tmcnet.com>

ADTRAN.....57
www.adtran.com/UC.SMB

Aptela..... 17
www.ap tela.com

**Broadvox /Broadvox IP Communications
 Community26, 51**
www.broadvox.com; <http://ipcommunications.tmcnet.com/>

The Business Solutions Community..... 15
<http://business-solutions.tmcnet.com>

Call Recording Global Online Community35
<http://call-recording.tmcnet.com>

**Contact Center Solutions Global
 Online Community.....55**
<http://callcenterinfo.tmcnet.com>

DIDXchange..... 66
www.didx.net

The DNS Zone21
<http://dns.tmcnet.com>

**Fixed Mobile Convergence Global
 Online Community.....39**
<http://fixed-mobile-convergence.tmcnet.com>

Grandstream/Channels Corner38
www.grandstream.com; www.tmcnet.com/channels

Hosted Unison from Intermedia.....29
www.intermedia.net/bigUC

Hosted VoIP Global Online Community..... 9
<http://hosted-voip.tmcnet.com>

Ingate Systems 13
www.ingate.com

IP-PBX Global Online Community23
<http://ip-pbx.tmcnet.com>

IP Telephony Community.....25
www.ip-telephony.tmcnet.com

IVR Global Online Community49
<http://ivr.tmcnet.com>

MPLS Resource Center53
<http://mpls.tmcnet.com>

**Next Generation Communications
 Online Community..... 43**
<http://next-generation-communications.tmcnet.com>

Panduit..... 11
www.panduit.com

Small Business VoIP Online Community63
<http://small-business-voip.tmcnet.com>

Snom Channel..... Inside Cover
www.snomchannel.com

SocialCRM Expo.....59
www.scrmexpo.com

Speedflow Communications65
www.speedflow.com

Stealth Communications47
www.thevpf.com

**Testing Wireless Networks Global
 Online Community..... 5**
<http://testing-wireless-networks.tmcnet.com>

**Unified Communications Global
 Online Community..... 45**
<http://unified-communications.tmcnet.com>

Voice Quality Global Online Community.....61
<http://voice-quality.tmcnet.com>

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Please contact: Greg Manhoff • 224-805-6294 • gmanhoff@att.net

My Profile and a few recommendations can also be found on the "LinkedIn" network.

Speedflow Communications presents exceptional range of carrier-grade products and solutions

Mediacore

Class 4 softswitch with native protocol and codec conversion designed to handle high peaks of traffic. For VoIP start-ups – we offer **softswitch for rent**.

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Speedflow Communications have focused on delivering quality services and products to the VoIP market since its inception in 2004.

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Head office:
1 Lumbley Street, Mayfair,
London W1K 6TT, UK
Phone: +44 203 0 265 765



Operation office: 8 Pastera str,
Office 2, Odessa, Ukraine, 65023
E-mail: info@speedflow.com
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