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Nokia's Game Plan

I had the pleasure of traveling to Barcelona in February for the Mobile World Congress show. And I couldn't help but notice that Nokia was mentioned again and again at the event.

As you probably already understand, it was not always discussed in a positive light. The company, once a leader in terms of cell phone innovation, has now taken a backseat to Apple and even other consumer electronics companies, which are quickly churning out exciting new products.

However, Nokia seems to be trying to change all that, as the company's new President and CEO Stephen Elop signaled during his multiple appearances at the world's largest wireless confab.

The most high profile move Nokia has made this year is to partner with Microsoft. At Mobile World Congress, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer used his keynote speech to discuss the deal, and he introduced Stephen Elop to talk about it as well.

The relationship involves the two companies working together to create mobile products and services and, somewhat surprisingly, will have Nokia adopting Windows Phone as its principal smartphone strategy.

But the partnership goes further still. Nokia will help Microsoft expand the Windows Phone to more geographies, market segments and price points as part of the relationship. Its operator billing agreements are supposed to make it easier for consumers to buy Nokia Windows Phone services in countries where credit cards are not commonly used. Nokia Maps, its search services and devices will be integrated with Bing and Microsoft adCenter. And Microsoft development tools will be leveraged to create applications for Nokia Windows Phones.

Also of note is that the companies will combine their app stores.

"The world is turning from a battle of devices to a war of ecosystems," Elop quite rightly said during his comments at the show.

And these two companies – both of which bring to the table global reach and distribution, big names and many other assets – are joining forces in this important new battle.

At a joint news conference announcing the partnership in London, Ballmer said: "Ecosystems thrive when fueled by speed, innovation and scale. The partnership announced today provides incredible scale, vast expertise in hardware and software innovation and a proven ability to execute."

Elop at the same event commented: "Today, developers, operators and consumers want compelling mobile products, which include not only the device, but the software, services, applications and customer support that make a great experience. Nokia and Microsoft will combine our strengths to deliver an ecosystem with unrivalled global reach and scale. It's now a three-horse race."

In his own keynote at Mobile World Congress, Elop spent his time talking about how Nokia aims to bring wireless to those in the world that have not yet made the connection.

He said that 80 percent of the world's population is within cellular range, but only 20 percent are connected to the Internet.

"We can change that," he said.

Elop went on to say that Nokia wants to "bring the next billion online" and "connect the unconnected."

He talked about Nokia's most affordable handsets, and he mentioned that Nokia aims to expand its Nokia Money and Nokia Lifetools, among other applications, to the low end of the market. In discussing the Nokia Money banking application, he noted that 1 billion people have a phone, but not a bank account.

Given that mobile service providers and handset outfits have pretty much saturated the market at this point, it makes sense they would look far and wide in their quest for growth. It can also be a good place for a company that is under competitive pressure from new devices like the iPhone and the iPad.

However, the barriers to both beating Apple, and to making a good business by selling product to the most remote and poor in the world, are high. **IT**

Is Facebook Becoming the Internet?

In the past, I have discussed the concept of splinternet (a term Forrester researchers say I may have invented), where the Internet splinters into app stores and websites such as Facebook – a world where developers have to spend their time constantly optimizing their content for platform after platform.

For example, to be a successful developer today you have to build an iPhone app as well as one for Android and BlackBerry – then perhaps a PC app, a Mac app, a web version, a Facebook app and perhaps a version for gaming consoles such as Xbox, and you should consider building a widget for a number of the TV manufacturers out there.

But as Facebook has grown in power and influence, it is becoming a more important slice of the pie and, as such, developers are looking to it as a platform to start developing on first. Certainly Zynga – the company behind Facebook games such as FarmVille and CityVille – being worth about $10 billion hasn't put a dent in this idea. But it isn't just the developers moving to Facebook. One newspaper, Rockville Central, has decided to move all of its content to the social networking site and cease putting fresh content on its own site entirely.

As Facebook has grown in power and influence, it is becoming a more important slice of the pie and, as such, developers are looking to it as a platform to start developing on first.

Erik Ledbetter, a Facebook user, was a bit concerned about the move, mentioning he uses Facebook but doesn't like to have a news source intertwined with his friend updates because his mental space is now being intruded upon. This is an interesting point because I have a mix of friends, relatives and business contacts on the social networking site, and I generally post mostly work-related content – meaning my non-work connections have to deal with the same issue each day. Sorry about that.

But getting back to the paper: If you publish exclusively on Facebook, your costs go down a bit, as you don't have to deal with the web hosting side of the business. But the cost to manage a site isn't so high – and here is the interesting part of the story. Rockville Central is not only getting a revenue share on any advertisements, but it is refunding money to advertisers who have already spent money on the site. This is according to founder and publisher Brad Rourke, who told me this today via – you guessed it – Facebook.

I asked the company what the largest benefit of moving to Facebook has been, and I haven't heard back yet. But it makes you wonder if all the publicity around this move won't prompt the social networking company to use the newspaper as an example – promote it, start a revenue share business and then aggressively court other media companies to move exclusively to the platform as well.

So the question worth asking is: Will more news sources move to Facebook as their platform of choice, forgoing their own websites? Moreover, will we see more content sites left behind having to deal with HTML in favor of simply posting on this ubiquitous social network? And if so, does Facebook's dominance and ability to wield power in ways that can crush other companies it doesn't like become more of a concern than even Google? IT

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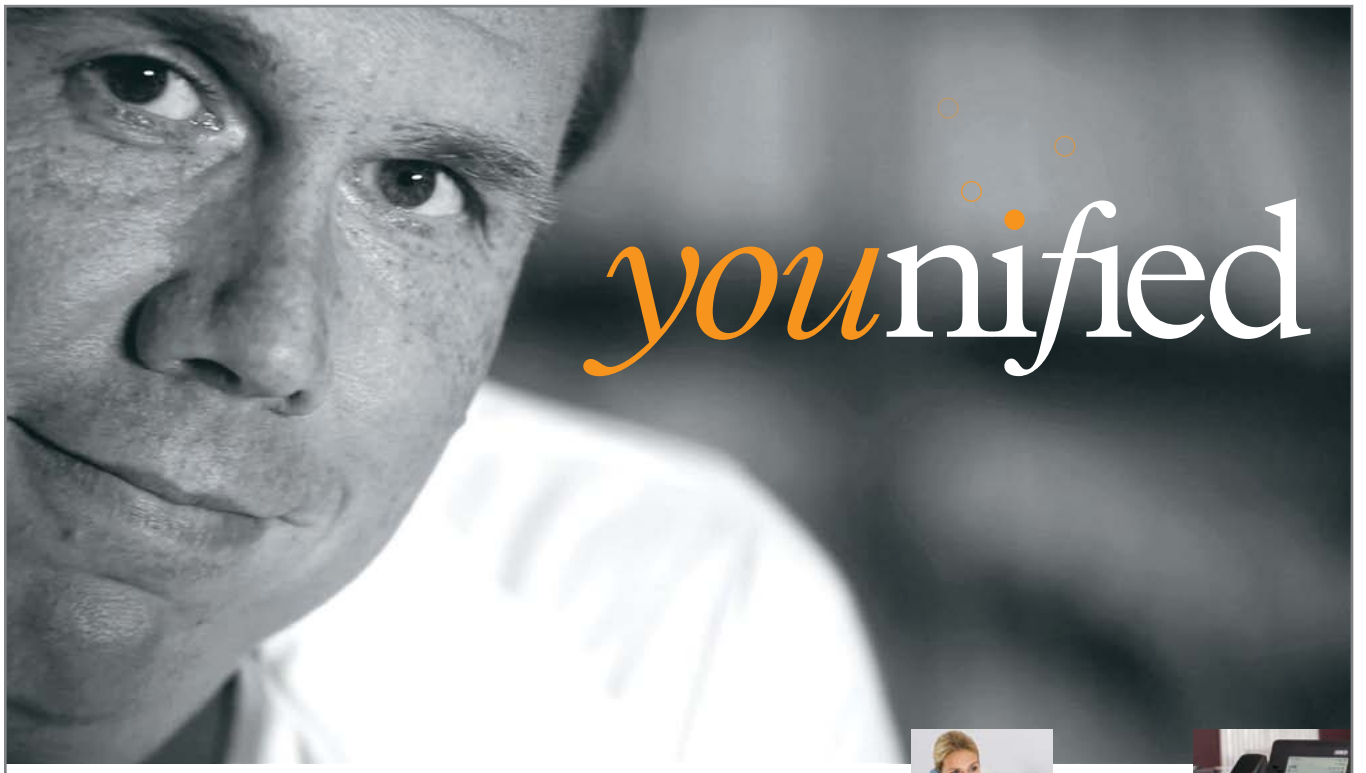

My NetVanta® UC Story.

My name is Paul Lipscomb. I am a pediatrician and I became a doctor to help people. One of my biggest challenges is being accessible to patients not only during normal office hours but for after-hour emergencies. When an emergency call comes in it can be as simple as a concerned parent needing reassurance, or it can be something critical when seconds matter.
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The NetVanta UC system also allows me to operate without the expensive "after hours" answering service. I can now say I can save lives and save money at the same time. NetVanta UC helps me and my patients sleep better at night.

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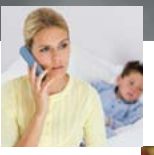

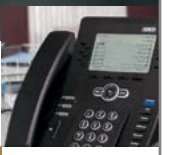

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By Angela Tuzzo

How Montage Companies is Using Hosted VoIP Internationally

In this technology charged economy, it's important for small organizations that want to scale their businesses to implement technology services and resources that will help them grow. Implementing hosted technologies, like VoIP and other hosted unified communications solutions, helps streamline a business to become faster and more efficient for both customers and employees.

A hosted VoIP solution from Alteva is doing just that for The Montage Companies.

The Montage Companies is an international group of education, technology and diversity consulting entities serving education, corporate and government clients. Their four sub divisions include Montage Diversity (diversity consulting, training, and staffing), Montage Education (educational services), Montage Technology (web design, software training, telecommunications and IT procurement/network services), and Montage Jamaica (a social entrepreneurship venture created to enhance education and technology resources on the Island of Jamaica).

It started out as a small, agile company that moved around a lot and needed a solution that would make the company appear larger. That required the flexibility of a phone system that would allow employees to represent themselves as if they were calling from the home office and not an off-site location. Most importantly, the company needed a cost-efficient solution that would not incur large expenses.

Enter Alteva's hosted VoIP. The solution allows Montage's employ-

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ees to telecommute seamlessly and keep business running as usual without incurring extra costs – either by working from home or an off-site location – as long as they have a laptop and Internet connection. Montage has anywhere access to e-mail, voicemail and documents, enabling employees to be as mobile as they need to be.

For example, if a customer calls one of the Montage employees' office lines, they will be unable to recognize that Montage's employees are working from a remote location since in-bound callers will not change their calling patterns. The call automatically is routed to a person's home or mobile line. Since the system offers number portability, associates could actually bring their phones with them and use them at whatever locations they want that has an Internet port – but still appear as if they are working from the office, and at no additional toll charge. The scalability of the solution enabled the company to grow even in small increments by adding one or two phones to the system at a time.

"As a small business, Alteva's hosted VoIP provided us with a corporate eye to the world," says Stephan Reeves, CEO and president of Montage Companies. "It was very easy to add on and scale our services as we built out each of our locations. As long as we had our hardware, all we had to do was plug in a new IP phone, and the configurations were already applied by Alteva in advance."

Today, Montage has offices across the U.S. and in Jamaica with a lot of phone communication between them. By utilizing hosted VoIP, it can keep costs down with low international usage rates while providing business-class communications. Additionally, hosted VoIP offers excellent telecommunications survivability and disaster recovery capabilities to the hurricane-prone island.

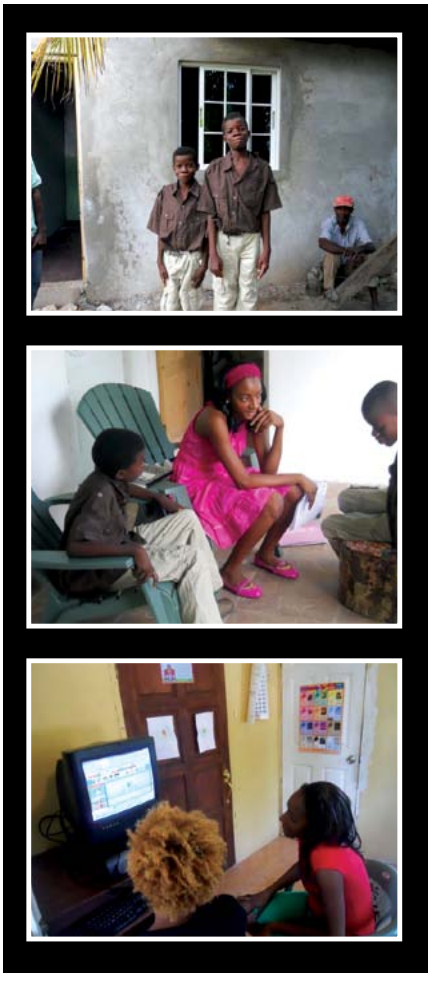
The company currently is undergoing testing at its Jamaican location utilizing hosted VoIP at a Cyber School setup in Old Harbor, Jamaica, consisting of one teacher and two students. The goal of the school is to create a model that can roll out on a larger scale in communities across the island so each student can use computer-based resources to supplement his or her learning. In just six to seven months, students have shown incredible improvements, having started at a sub-kindergarten level to currently a third- or fourth-grade level.

The teacher at the Cyber School is using hosted VoIP to communicate with Montage's headquarters in Philadelphia. Associates hold typical conversations with the teacher about day-to-day processes, receive daily updates on the school and its students, and walk the teacher through professional development and training of the online resources.

"With offices across the U.S. and internationally, we are able to communicate in the way that we want to as a small but growing organization, and Alteva helped us to keep our costs way down in terms of daily communication with our teacher in Jamaica," says Reeves. "We have e-mail capabilities, but sometimes you just need to have a conversation with someone in real time. Our team is able to communicate effectively, and we're not shy to pick up the phone and make a call because it's not going to be a cost hindrance to us."

Outside of Alteva it would have cost Montage an estimated $10,000 for Jamaica toll calls over the past year, but now it is able to keep costs down and actually eliminate international charges using the Internet as the mode of transport. Reeves estimates a savings of more than $600 to $700 per month since the implementation of the Alteva hosted VoIP solution on the domestic side of the business, with the savings in regards to the Jamaica location an additional $8,000.

When applications are delivered from the cloud, the solutions promise quicker time for deployment, and they are far easier to manage and monitor. While it might be easier for a Fortune 500 company to maintain its own cloud, a small business can leverage a solution that is more cost effective by going hosted – letting someone else handle the implementation, the maintenance and any future upgrades.



Above are photos of the Cyber School in Jamaica.

As for Montage, the company is in the process of launching a pilot program with Alteva to implement another application from its UC solution set, Microsoft OCS, an integrated voice/video/instant message/desktop sharing collaboration and communication tool. Since having added three new consultants (in Connecticut, Delaware and Florida) to its roster, Montage will be using the system to conduct internal meetings, training and webinars. The system should help to provide increased collaboration and reduce the need to travel for training. **IT**

Angela Tuzzo is in media relations with MRB Public Relations (www.mrb-pr.com).

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By Anthony Christie

IPv4 Isn't Dead Yet, But Don't Make Any Long-Term Plans

Despite the sky is falling messaging currently being circulated about the depletion of IPv4 addresses, the issue is not as black and white as it may appear.

While concerns about IPv4 address depletion are warranted, the transition to IPv6 is likely to go on for at least another year. Even so, you need to get on board because this affects everything that touches the Internet, and a successful migration to IPv6 requires proper planning.

Soon, ISPs and carriers will begin filling requests for new IP addresses exclusively with IPv6. This means that new servers, switches, firewalls and other network infrastructure will need to be IPv6 compliant. Websites that interface with IPv6 networks will need to ensure they perform and provide your customers with the same experience that they get on IPv4 networks. This is like your cable TV company delivering both standard and HDTV programming. Eventually, broadcasters will grow weary of the expense of running two parallel networks, and you will have to buy that HD-capable TV.

We just exhausted 4.3 billion possible 32-bit IPv4 addresses. No one thought we'd use them up, but they are all deployed now. IPv6 addresses are 128-bit numbers, so the number of possible addresses jumps to 340 trillion trillion trillion.

Do we need this many addresses?

In the future, not only will the number of people connecting to the network increase, but each of us will possess more devices that need to be connected – more smartphones, tablets and e-book readers; appliances such as refrigerators, televisions and alarm clocks; and even my daughter's clothes might have IP addresses. Military strategists foresee the day when every single asset in the field – humans as well as weapons – will have an IP address. Additionally, 4G wireless rollouts will send many more address-hungry wireless devices into the field.

Why act now?

The lack of a sense of urgency many may be feeling about transitioning is justified by the following delaying tactics, which so far have worked well, but which have inherent problems.

Network Address Translation

Many rely on network address translation to prolong the life of IPv4. It allows one outside IP address to be shared among a number of computers and other devices, but it is tough to set up peer-to-peer connections; intermediate routing devices introduce complexity, points of failure and communication delays; and NAT can obscure useful information, such as the general physical location of a person on the Internet who might want local services.

In addition, NAT does not support multiple applications running over a single connection, negating the benefits of IP convergence. Inbound connections, such as file-sharing applications or VoIP, require special attention. Operating servers from within a NAT environment is particularly awkward. While NAT's low cost makes the system attractive, it comes with management expenses of its own – especially for ISPs and carriers managing large numbers of devices connecting to the Internet.

Tunneling

Where network hardware does not adequately support IPv6 traffic, IT pros rely on tunneling, a technique in which IPv6 packets can be placed within IPv4 wrappers to pass through networks without a problem. Addresses are transformed from IPv4 to IPv6 by adding leading zeroes. However, this makes it more likely that bits of information will get dropped, and in the long term, you will invest more and more resources in an aging network while missing out on new applications and services.

Trading Markets

And, of course, there are those who hope that hoarded IPv4 address space will still be available through some sort of new trading market model or from companies sitting on unused assets. While there are still unused IPv4 addresses, you will have to find them and get them transferred into your name. Supply and demand will make these IPv4 addresses increasingly expensive.

IPv6 is Just Better

By greatly expanding address space, IPv6 not only ensures plenty of addresses for everyone, it allows enterprises to reduce the cost of managing internal address space; it simplifies network designs while allowing for easier remote configuration; it provides better security and authentication; and it allows for much larger data packets. This larger address space will open the door to a new generation of devices. It also provides an improved degree of connectivity where individuals will be able to interact directly with devices anywhere on the network, i.e., anywhere in the world.

What You Can Do

The most important thing is to understand that IPv6 is coming and to be prepared for it. Make sure you choose a network provider that operates a dual-stack network. A dual-stack network has the ability to route IPv6 and IPv4 side by side on the network, so that your wide area network or Internet connection behaves as an IPv4 and IPv6 path simultaneously. Network operators do this for their customers because it allows the customer to test a fully-functioning IPv6 implementation without turning off any of their old IPv4 setup. This also allows the customer to retain access to the parts of the Internet that have not yet transitioned to IPv6.

If your equipment is not IPv6-capable today, make a minimal investment to get some IPv6-capable equipment, come up with an addressing plan, your architecture, your design, and test with a dual-stack network provider to make sure it is going to meet your specifications.

As noted above, you have a little more time to make the switch from IPv4 to IPv6, but don't put your enterprise in jeopardy by delaying further. Preparing now is easier than trying to catch up later. IT

Anthony Christie is chief technology and information officer at Global Crossing (www.globalcrossing.com).

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By Alan Murphy

Virtual Admins are Masters of all Trades

When virtualization began to spread through the enterprise as a production tool, the first challenge IT had to address was the breadth of technology disruptions. Virtualizing server resources impacts every part of the data center: servers, operating systems, networking, storage, physical architecture – basically every part of corporate IT is touched when virtualization moves in. The next challenge was more personal: bringing the existing IT staff up to speed on managing the expanded coverage lines, or in some cases bringing in new staff versed in virtualization. Either way, IT was dealing with something new: de-segmentation.

Unlike existing technologies in the data center, which are typically segmented by physical location, function, and management group, virtualization isn't an evolutionary update like moving from 100mbps to gigabit Ethernet. Virtualization is a revolutionary change in how we design and build data centers. Call it what you'd like – greenfield, rip and replace, nuke and pave – but for better or worse this revolutionary change steamrolled its way into IT, and the expertise of IT staff must adapt to meet this revolution.

IT has to move from vertically segmenting roles and responsibilities by siloed function to a horizontal resource model, but that's not always an easy transition. Virtual administrators need to be experts on each piece of vertical technology first; as virtualization impacts servers, storage, and the network, IT administrators need to be able to manage and understand each of these pieces as well. Virtualization administrators are being asked to be super-administrators. That's a tall order.

Most IT administrators have grown up in a particular technology that has become their area of expertise.

System administrators start in the OS world, dealing with users, permissions, system images, scripts – all of the stuff that systems need to function. When the systems plug into the network, that's where the network administrators come in. They start with running cable, building patch panels, adding VLANs to switches, and eventually moving up to LAN and WAN architecture, but they seldom touch storage.

Storage architects deal with file systems, quotas, iSCSI connections and permissions, LUNs, heads, platters, and fiber channel, but often dictate how systems use storage rather than vice versa.

Each silo has its own technology needs and experts to address and manage those needs. Virtual platforms blow all of that out of the water.

Provisioning one new virtual machine touches host servers, multiple operating systems, the network, virtual storage, physical storage, security, and management. These are technologies that already need to be in place before that virtual machine can be provisioned. In the case of agile provisioning or a cloud infrastructure those technologies must be able to support dynamic scaling – they not only have to be configured to work but also configured to grow. Storage administrators are accustomed to capacity planning, for example, but do they know how to plan for a cloud bursting event, and more importantly do they know how their virtual platform will manage this burst on their storage network?

While researching the security risks of virtual platforms about four years ago, I was struck by how much virtualization demands of administrators. They have to be well-versed in all aspects of IT.

But surprisingly, security is one area of virtual expertise that I think is still lacking. It appears that most of the work being done with security and virtualization today is on the network side, segmenting traffic between virtual machines and host servers and keeping private data private. That focus should be applauded; there's no question that securing the data path is a primary consideration for shared services and cloud computing. But the complexity in which secure segmented networks are implemented and managed in virtual platforms is daunting to anyone but a virtual network expert. This is where network administrators are being asked to step up their game and start dealing with virtual security tools from each vendor and for any external cloud provider IT may be using. This step up model is being repeated for servers and storage, where those administrators are coming up to speed on complex implementations on- and off-premises as well.

We're just now getting to a point where administrators are growing up with virtualization. It's going to take a few years before we see administrators who started in the diversified world of virtual resource management. Companies like VMware are helping escalate that process through certification and training – they realize they're introducing a new architecture model in the data center and they want to help IT departments be successful. Until we reach a point where virtual data centers are commonplace, however, please recognize your virtual system administrators, their amazing talents, and how they're being asked to stretch their limits. Their job is leaps and bounds more complicated than it was for those of us who grew up in the pre-virtualization world. IT

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

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Disaster Preparedness

By Rich Tehrani & Max Schroeder

Taxes, Monopoly and April Fools' Day

Rules of the Game
Monopoly Tax Rules – Estimate your tax at $200 or pay 10 percent of total worth to the bank as a penalty. "Go to Jail" usually means visiting.
IRS Tax Rules – Estimates and penalties also apply. "Go to Jail" does not mean visiting.
Disaster Tax Rules – Disaster could result in ending business operations, but a DR plan could be your "Get Out of Jail Free" card.

A business continuity/DR plan or plan upgrade may not be at the top of an organization's priority list so budgetary approval can sometimes be a challenge. Strangely, this approach goes counter to the fundamental goal of a BC/DR plan – company survival. Fortunately, April is a good time for a BC/DR plan review. It is still early in the year, so some budgetary resources are usually available.

Conveniently, today's advancements in technology have also made the cost of implementing BC/DR plans much more affordable. Plus, your organization may already have several BC/DR components in place. The next step will be to inventory these components. Make a checklist starting with VoIP, FoIP, VMware, Hyper-V, hosted services, employees with home offices, unified communications and SaaS applications that are in place or about to be implemented.

Next, define what business requirements senior management considers absolutely critical for your organization's survival, such as revenue preservation, customer retention and regulatory compliance. Presenting this list to management and getting their agreement is the first step in receiving overall plan approval.

The next step is gap control. Determine if the checklist components meet all the critical requirements. If not, list what changes or additional components are necessary to fill the gaps. Make sure you look at any hosted services such as VoIP, FoIP and SaaS. They can have the shortest time to delivery and may also be the least expensive options. You can also refer to our December 2010 column "Needed - Another Y2K Threat" for some ideas.

The month began on April Fools' Day. Don't let it end with you being April's fool. Get started on your plan now. IT

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

Rich Tehrani is CEO and group editor-in-chief at TMC, and conference chairman of ITEXPO.

Regulation Watch

By William B. Wilhelm and Jeffrey R. Strenkowski

FCC Considers Intercarrier Compensation Reform for VoIP Providers

On Feb. 9, the FCC released a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking requesting comment on a proposed thorough overhaul of the Universal Service Fund distribution mechanism and intercarrier compensation at the federal, state, and local level. Under the FCC's proposal, USF distribution would be shifted from voice to broadband, a move that will indirectly affect the VoIP industry in years to come. More immediately, the FCC also proposes to rework the intercarrier compensation system with a particular immediate focus on setting compensation rates for VoIP traffic.

In raising this issue, the FCC states that it "has never addressed whether interconnected VoIP is subject to intercarrier compensation rules, and if so, the applicable rate for such traffic," and acknowledges that this indecision has resulted in billing disputes and uncertainty in the industry.

The FCC initially proposes to only address "interconnected" VoIP traffic, but asks for comment on whether other types of VoIP traffic should be included. The NPRM then asks for comment on compensation structure and timing for imposing such obligations on VoIP providers, "administrability" (such as how would carriers identify VoIP traffic subject to a VoIP-specific rate), legal authority to adopt a specific rate, the impact this decision may have on existing agreements between service providers, and a number of other issues. The commission is considering adopting either a "bill and keep" mechanism or a separate VoIP-specific rate such as $0.0007 per minute of traffic. The commission will also consider whether to classify VoIP as either a telecommunications or information service.

This far-reaching proceeding will be significant to VoIP providers and the industry at large. Through this proceeding the FCC may significantly alter the regulatory and financial obligations of VoIP providers for years to come. 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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Ask the SIP Trunk Expert

By Joel Maloff

SIP Trunking in Latin America and Europe

The American VoIP and SIP trunking services market grew by 40.1 percent in users and 22.3 percent in revenues in 2009, with revenues expected to hit $3.9 billion by 2016, according to Frost and Sullivan. Such gaudy reports might cause us to extrapolate this to all regions of the world. Nothing could be further from the truth!

SIP trunking will grow internationally, but with impediments. The driver in the U.S. has been reduction of telecommunications costs. Estimates assert savings of 35 percent to 70 percent based on reducing PRI fixed costs, toll charges, and carrier's fees. These are U.S.-centric and not the same internationally. In addition, broadband Internet access in the U.S. is taken for granted. That is not true elsewhere in the world.

In Latin America, the highest percentage for broadband availability is in Chile with 17 percent! Without broadband, SIP trunking is a problem. Conditions are changing however. Broadband penetration will nearly double across Latin America, from 7 percent in 2010 to 12 percent by 2015, according to January 2011 data from Research and Markets. As a result, ITSPs in Chile are expecting the demand for SIP trunks to double in 2011.

Beyond broadband Internet, there are other issues. Regulators have been slow to address the evolution of VoIP, and they retain archaic rules inhibiting the use of these services. For example, in Argentina, a softphone on a laptop with a Buenos Aires telephone number is technically illegal if used anywhere other than Buenos Aires! Regulations are changing, but it will be years.

Cost savings may not be available internationally. In some cases, major telcos require a minimum charge service agreement for business. Reducing costs is useless if the business still must pay the carrier regardless. In other instances, major carriers have dropped their rates so low that SIP trunking may offer little savings.

The dominant carriers in each country have greater control than in the U.S. They can constrain competition unless forced by government. A truly competitive VoIP environment is not prevalent in many parts of the world. This too will change in time. SIP trunking will become dominant for voice communications worldwide, but it will happen more slowly than in the U.S. IT

Joel Maloff is founder of Maloff NetResults (www.maloffnetresults.com).

E911 Watch

By Nick Maier

Is 'Close Enough' OK in a 911 Emergency?

This month I'd like you to consider the unthinkable for a moment: Let's say you're having a heart attack while working and need an ambulance. You reach for the phone and dial 911. You can't speak but the dispatcher can see an address on her screen and sends help.

If your company doesn't manage E911 location information, that address might be the main billing address for your company's account. Would that be enough for paramedics to find you in time?

Even if your company manages E911 location information with the help of administrative personnel maintaining PS-ALI accounts or some third-party software products, the information could be inaccurate and help could be delayed.

How can that be, you ask? Manual updates are generally sent as part of an administrative workflow and, given how stretched many admins are these days, updates could be batched and handled infrequently. Many third-party E911 software products can automate the process of updating an organization's location records, but they only send updates a few times a day to the PS-ALI databases used by dispatchers. And, on top of it all, the PS-ALI databases typically have a 24-hour delay in posting location record changes.

The tremendous mobility made possible by IP, Wi-Fi and SIP technologies also exacerbate the risk of not being able to find a 911 caller in need. Here are two situations in which I'd rather not have my life depend on old information:

What if you use a Wi-Fi handset in your enterprise and carry it with you from meeting to meeting? Your location can constantly change, rendering polled location data meaningless.

What if you're traveling and using a softphone loaded on your laptop? You disconnect from the corporate network and leave your hotel, headed for the branch office. When you arrive, you re-connect with the corporate network. Should you call 911 before your location information is updated, paramedics could be dispatched to your hotel.

Real-time location information updates offer the best E911 protection for everyone using your enterprise network. It's that simple. IT

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

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By Hunter Newby

The Why of Broadband

Even with all of the investment and development of broadband communications infrastructure going on around the world today, it still seems that some people are not sure what the end results will be, or actually produce in terms of gains in productivity, output, etc. Knowing what the output will be is the why anyone would input investment. Beyond the why is the how. That piece gets a lot easier once the fire is lit, but there are many challenges in building the exact right thing to deliver on the vision.

Starting with the why, a recent study conducted by e-North Carolina and SNG for the state of North Carolina has produced some of the most meaningful and concrete information and examples of why there must be an investment made in to broadband communications infrastructure.

Here's an excerpt from the study:
e-NC and SNG announced today the findings of a comprehensive study of residents and businesses in the state of North Carolina. In all, 30,000 households and 70,000 businesses and organizations were surveyed to uncover utilization of broadband and e-solutions statewide, with 1,492 households and 6,266 businesses and organizations responding.

A recent study conducted by e-North Carolina and SNG for the state of North Carolina has produced some of the most meaningful and concrete information and examples of why there must be an investment made in to broadband communications infrastructure.

The SNG study, conducted between February and October 2010, revealed the potential of broadband for competitiveness and economic opportunity:

- Nearly one in five (18 percent) **of new jobs were created** as a direct result of broadband Internet. Small businesses (less than 20 employees) are especially dependent on broadband Internet as 28 percent of new jobs in that sector are attributed to using the Internet.
- More than half of all businesses (54 percent) said that they **would not be in business** if they did not have broadband while two in five (41 percent) **would have to relocate** if broadband was not available in their community.
- The number of households either currently **running** (31 percent) or planning to run **a business from their home** in the next twelve months (14 percent) is **nearly half** (45 percent) of North Carolina's broadband households.
- Even more broadband households are either now using (41 percent) or planning to use (24 percent) broadband to sell items online. That's nearly two-thirds (65 percent) of broadband households **using it to at least supplement their income.**
- Most (85 percent) of home-based businesses said that broadband was **essential to their business.**

"We see in these findings how important broadband is to creating new jobs and improving quality of life in North Carolina," says Michael Curri, president of SNG. "We now have the data that shows why it is so critical to promote broadband infrastructure along with adoption in North Carolina. E-NC has been and continues to be a leader in this field in making sure that North Carolina captures the benefits of broadband in the years ahead."

By employing e-strategies on multiple fronts, North Carolina will be poised to further leverage broadband for job development and economic growth.

"Findings show thirty-nine percent of households say they would likely relocate if broadband was not available, while 55 percent of organizations say broadband is essential for staying where they are," says Jane Patterson, executive director of e-NC. "These numbers illustrate why it is important for all of us to continue to address the issue of broadband expansion in North Carolina. The e-NC Authority will continue to work with all providers to encourage greater broadband coverage across the state. We will also place a special focus on working with small businesses to show how they can increase their revenue potential through use of the Internet."

What a great report! There are so many different pieces of information, but the answers tell the story of the questions that were

asked and what the motivations of the state were to ask them. North Carolina's primary motivation, and really that of any state, country, etc., is to protect the tax base by maintaining and even increasing the value, attraction and magnetic strength of the land.

If the actual percentages in each bullet are put aside, as we can assume that the responses from other states would be the same, the truth comes out about the hopes and fears of the state.

The fear is the bad side, of course.
• New job creation is not only as a result of broadband Internet access, but also a requirement for the job.
• Home businesses heavily rely on broadband Internet access.
• If there was no broadband Internet access, the people and businesses would leave.
• If they leave so goes the tax revenue and then the value of the land.

The hope is the good side and rationale for investment.
• People and businesses with broadband Internet access will stay where they are.
• Once a business is in operation it is disinclined to move.
• All of this increases the tax base.

This insight into the thought process of the state is a key indicator as to what motivates it and keeps its managers up at night. It is very encouraging to see the way being paved by these thought leaders.

Ensuring that it's built properly so that everyone is competitively served – and that it is built by competent people with a real design plan and clear, honest intensions – is another story. To be clear, broadband is a very vague term. It should be noted that the true meaning or assumed definition of broadband is in fact broadband Internet access. This is somewhat tedious to say, but necessary to avoid having states, communities, etc., build broadband networks that are not connected to anything at all. They will have accomplished the goal of building a broadband network, but not what everyone actually expects, which is a broadband Internet network. Having several thousand homes connected with 100 megabits each that all goes to a 45-megabit DS3 to the public Internet does not do anyone much good.

In a practical sense every place is the same, so the truth about these statistics is that broadband Internet access is the key weapon in the war that is beginning between towns, counties, states and countries around the world right now. It is not too dissimilar to having proper roads, electricity and running water. These are the basics, and so now too is broadband Internet access. The winners will be the ones that put their energy and will in to building the proper infrastructure to support the new economy. IT

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

Viewpoint: Voice of the Customer

By Elaine Cascio

Are You Using Data to Create Great Customer Advocates?

Many companies have more internal data than they use, plus they have access to lots of public data sources that can help them provide compelling experiences. So why aren't we using data to create better, smarter customer interactions? Often, customer professionals are overwhelmed by too much data, or find that data is in silos that prevent them from understanding the full customer relationship.

Successful companies consider data to be an important corporate asset, enabling them to act strategically and nimbly. They harness and integrate data across the organization. And once they harness the data, they use it to empower agents and systems and to provide intelligent, compelling customer experiences across all channels. They analyze data for insights, patterns, and actionable information to create meaningful and ongoing conversations with customers. The goal? To connect with customers on emotional as well as practical levels.

Here are some guidelines for using data in customer centric ways:

- Use data in ways that support your customer experience strategy and are in line with associated self service design, processes, agent training and tools.
- Identify data and databases that help you craft an ideal customer experience – these may be found inside your company, or there may be public databases that you can use to create smarter interactions.
- Make sure the data you use is relevant and customer-centric; high quality, current and accurate; presented logically; channel-appropriate; seamless and consistent across channel; and dynamic and real-time.

In my next column, we'll discuss the three keys to create a compelling customer experience: History, Memory and Knowledge. IT

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

Tech Score

By Jeff Hudgins

Trust in the Cloud

Recent surveys show that more than half of company employees accessed social networks via mobile devices at least once per day at work and for more than an hour per week. And with the recent WikiLeaks drama, it's no wonder that in a recent study by IDC, over 70 percent of respondents are concerned about security in the cloud. One option might be to put policies in place that control or limit access, but the problem is much of today's business is conducted through mobile devices and social networks in the cloud. With fewer resources and a growing number of security threats, creating trust in the cloud is a serious challenge.

But technology providers are quickly developing software and hardware-based solutions to improve access and control in 2011. For example, software developers are updating cloud-based identity and access management applications to secure mobile devices. Mobile user attributes and identity are vetted to allow access to authorized data. In addition, mobile tokens are gaining acceptance as a method to store credentials and prevent unauthorized access. And just like in the old "Mission Impossible" days, when unauthorized access is detected, new applications can launch a poison pill to the device and render it completely useless.

When data is stored and moved into the cloud, cloud providers are enhancing their encryption policies to protect all information without impacting performance. They are integrating the latest acceleration technology along with microprocessors that have greater encryption performance.

Low-level software is also viewed as highly unprotected and new technology from hardware manufacturers helps protect against low-level attacks where malware is attempting to take control.

Intel Trusted Execution Technology is a hardware solution that validates the behavior of key components within a server. The system checks the consistency in behaviors and configurations against a "known good" sequence. Using this verified benchmark, the system can assess whether any attempts to alter or tamper with the launch time environment have been made. This hardware-based approach provides a foundation on which a trusted cloud-based solution can be built to better protect against attacks.

So what's the final score? Trust in the cloud will improve ten-fold over the next year as the most sensitive workloads are prioritized to the most secure software and hardware devices. IT

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

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CLEAR PATH

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By Peter Radizeski

How to Sell DIA

When you propose a 1.5mbps (T1) circuit for $400, some prospects will look at you like you are crazy. DSL is 3 mbps or 6 mbps. Cable modem is from 7 mbps to 50 mbps. FTTH offerings can be 25 mbps, 50 mbps or even 100 mbps. How can 1.5 mbps work for more?

One thing you must do in the sales process is point out that broadband is best effort without a service level agreement. T1 DIA is a hardy, reliable circuit that is dedicated bandwidth. No "up to" – but dedicated 1.5 mbps up and down. I don't think enough buyers understand that difference.

The other thing that most prospects haven't grasped is how pervasive the Internet has become to their businesses. Collaboration software, web conferencing, SaaS, CRM, office apps, e-mail, EMR, hosted PBX, UC and so much more are all housed in the cloud and can only be accessed via an Internet pipe.

The cloud is about the high availability of data. However, that means that the business needs a highly reliable pipe with a minimum bandwidth measure. You don't get that with broadband in many places.

When a business migrates applications to the cloud, it may not have increased the bandwidth coming into the office. There are studies that talk about the bandwidth flood due to social networks and video in offices. Have companies carefully calculated the amount of bandwidth that adding videoconferencing or WebEx or Citrix or Google Apps will require? One aspect of SaaS is that local traffic (software on your computer) becomes Internet traffic. The bandwidth requirements of a business keep increasing.

As agents, we have to improve our sales skills, including asking better questions of the prospects. One reason to ask better questions is to disqualify prospects fast to spend your valuable time with prospects who are interested – prospects that will allow you to ask questions about how they utilize applications and data and the Internet in their business.

What is the cost to that business owner if its best effort broadband goes down? IT

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

The Channel & AGENT NEWS

http://tmcnet.com/58684.1

Hare Named Channel Chief

eGestalt Technologies, a provider of information technology security, governance, risk management and compliance solutions for small to mid-size organizations, has announced that its vice president of worldwide sales, Jim Hare, has been named a channel chief by the Everything Channel's CRN. Channel chiefs are leaders in creating effective channel programs for solution providers. They consistently defend, promote and execute effective channel partner programs and strategies. In August 2010, eGestalt launched its channel friendly Managed Compliance Provider program for service providers including value-added resellers, managed services providers and managed security providers.

www.egestalt.com

http://tmcnet.com/58657.1

Vantage Taps Carousel for Avaya Solution

Carousel Industries, a provider of data networking and converged communications, has signed an agreement with Vantage Healthcare Network to install a multi-site communications and messaging solution centered on the Avaya Aura unified communications architecture. The $3 million multi-site implementation begins with Saint Vincent Health System in Erie and will be completed by April 2011. Saint Vincent Health System, the largest hospital of the 12 Vantage Healthcare Network owner members, will act as the hub for the network facilities. The network includes more than 1,700 participating physicians throughout western Pennsylvania.

www.avaya.com

www.carouselindustries.com

http://tmcnet.com/58685.1

Gellos to Oversee MegaPath Sales

MegaPath Inc., a provider of managed data, voice, and security services in North America, has appointed Chris Gellos senior vice president of sales. In this role, he will oversee the strategic direction and management of the company's direct and channel sales operations. A telecommunications veteran with more than 20 years experience, Gellos brings to MegaPath a proven track record of building high performing sales organizations in both direct and channel sales. Prior to his new role, Gellos served as vice president of sales at Speakeasy.

www.megapath.com

http://tmcnet.com/58686.1

Five Join Magor

Magor Communications has added five new firms to its global channel partner network. This announcement has expanded worldwide access to its Magor TeleCollaboration visual collaboration product line that integrates advanced data collaboration capabilities into a peer-to-peer, high-definition videoconferencing experience. Magor's advanced collaboration capabilities allow permitted participants to see, control and edit shared files and documents in real time. This means that users can conduct working visual collaboration sessions that allow them to make decisions, get work done and produce results more quickly. This technology also leverages flexible video compression processes that can adapt in real time to varying network conditions and end user behavior.

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New AIA Release Reduces Complexity

Oracle Application Integration Architecture Release 3.1 is a comprehensive update with pre-built integrations based on and certified for Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g. AIA Release 3.1 provides a predefined architecture that helps reduce complexity, accelerating delivery of enterprise-class integration solutions, and offering pre-built integrations across all major Oracle applications, including support for newer versions of these applications. "Oracle Application Integration Architecture (AIA) has made a huge positive impact on our business. We could not scale the business nor provide the level of service without the seamless integration of the Oracle E-Business Suite and Oracle's Agile Product Lifecycle Management," says Michael Higgins, senior vice president of Advanced Innovations. "The introduction of AIA Process Integration Packs certified for Oracle Fusion Middleware 11g in the new Oracle AIA release 3.1 will make our lives even easier as we continue to deploy Oracle's business applications and middleware technologies as our IT platform."

www.oracle.com

http://tmcnet.com/58651.1

Intel to Build $5B Arizona Site

A new $5 billion chip manufacturing facility in Chandler, Ariz., has been planned by semiconductor giant Intel Corp. The new factory, designated Fab 42, will be the most advanced, high-volume semiconductor manufacturing facility in the world, according to the company. Intel President and CEO Paul Otellini announced plans for the investment during a visit by President Barack Obama at an Intel facility in Hillsboro, Ore.

www.intel.com

http://tmcnet.com/58650.1

Obama Ups Support for Supercomputing

With R&D investment shrinking, the U.S. has been losing its leadership position as other nations continue to make rapid progress in science and technology. China overtook the U.S. in the computing race with the introduction of the fastest supercomputer last October. To bring the U.S. back on track, the Obama administration's 2012 budget calls for an increase in funding for exascale supercomputing. The $126 million earmark is a significantly higher allocation than in the last budget, which offered only $24 million for supercomputing.

http://tmcnet.com/58652.1

Notebooks from HP are Ready for Action

HP has launched a new line of business notebooks with aluminum-alloy hinges, cast titanium-alloy display latches and the HP DisplaySafe frame. New products included in the line are the HP EliteBook 8460p and 8560p notebooks, which have an aerospace-inspired HP DuraCase that meets military-standard testing specs. The HP ProBook 6360b, 6460b and 6560b notebooks, meanwhile, have flexibility in processor, graphics and battery technology. And the HP ProBook s-series 4230s, 4330s, 4430s, 4530s and 4730s notebooks meet the needs of small- and mid-size businesses.

www.hp.com

http://tmcnet.com/58654.1

Medical Center Reaps Savings

Maryland's Peninsula Regional Medical Center is deriving significant benefits from AeroScout's Asset Tracking and Temperature Monitoring solutions. AeroScout's Real-Time Location System is helping the medical center track and manage thousands of pieces of critical, temperature-sensitive equipment and to ensure that they are at safe temperature levels. As a result, the facility has been able to save $250,000 on infusion pumps alone.

www.aeroscout.com

http://tmcnet.com/58655.1

MigraX Wins IP-Only Business

IP-Only has chosen MigraX as a key supplier of VoIP hardware solutions. MigraX will deliver VoIP gateway hardware from the Patton Smartnode 4960 series as well as support services for the units. Patton gateways enable organizations to realize the many benefits of IP telephony without the expense and trouble of installing new telephones, switchboards, or other telephony hardware. Serving as a bridge between PRI and SIP switching infrastructures, SmartNode connects existing PBX hardware with an IP network, such as the Internet.

www.ip-only.se

http://tmcnet.com/58664.1

Enterprises Dig SIP Trunking

A survey of IT decision makers at enterprises shows that a little more than one-third of the respondents are implementing SIP trunking services "in a substantial manner" and "56 percent plan to increase their investments in this technology in 2011." The survey involved 138 business executives who have authority to make decisions on telecommunications. It was conducted by Voice Report.

www.thevoicereport.com

http://tmcnet.com/58666.1

Sonus Embraces HD Communications

Sonus Networks has announced support for several key HD codecs to allow for seamless interconnection of different HD endpoints and services. This will be available in software updates to Sonus' GSX9000 High-Density Media Gateway, NBS5200 Network Border Switch, and PSX products. HD voice promises to change the consumer experience with VoIP communication by offering clear, vibrant and life-like conversations.

www.sonusnet.com

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Available to view on-demand in the TMCnet Webinar Archives:
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To learn more about TMCnet Online Communities or this special Webinar, contact Anna Ritchie at aritchie@tmcnet.com or call 203-852-6800 x 107.

View the FREE Archived Webinar: http://www.tmcnet.com/webinar/tmcnet/tmcnet-Building-Communities-Online.htm

http://tmcnet.com/58709.1

Sonus Beats Q4 Estimates

Sonus Networks reported fourth quarter EPS of $0.04, beating consensus estimates for a loss of $0.01 per share. Revenues for the quarter were up 21 percent year-over-year to $83 million, well above consensus estimates of $65 million. The company expects total revenues of between $265 million and $285 million for 2011, above consensus estimates of $257 million.

www.sonusnet.com

http://tmcnet.com/58659.1

VoIP Company Makes a Dash for It

Bandwidth.com, a nationwide supplier of VoIP network services to Voice 2.0 innovators such as Skype, Pinger, and others, has acquired dash Carrier Services, a North American-based provider of tier one emergency services and wholesale carrier voice solutions. The deal was all-cash, and the combined company is now projected to generate over $100 million in revenues this year. The acquisition provides Bandwidth.com with a definitive competitive edge, as it will now tightly couple additional advanced services, such as E911 calling, with its core voice and SMS offerings to deliver a stronger experience for customers who would otherwise need to cobble together these services in much less efficient ways. It's also noteworthy given that emergency services like 911 calling for VoIP are eventually going to be a regulatory requirement.

www.bandwidth.com

http://tmcnet.com/58662.1

Analyst: More Education Needed on Ultra-fast Broadband

"Service providers must articulate the benefits of ultra-fast broadband clearly to consumers if they are to stimulate significant take-up of the services at a price premium," says Martin Scott, Analysys Mason senior analyst. Many consumers are unsure about the benefit of ultra-fast broadband services, Scott notes. About 24 percent of the European broadband packages tracked in the most recent pricing study offered access speeds of 30mbps or more in the fourth quarter of 2010. But uptake of such services is not as robust as some might have predicted.

www.analysysmason.com

http://tmcnet.com/58663.1

Huawei Wins Suit Against Motorola

Reminding us once again that one thing giant technology companies like to do almost as much as innovate is to sue each other, Chinese telecom manufacturer Huawei won a preliminary injunction from a U.S. federal court in Chicago barring Japanese telecom manufacturer Motorola from transferring business secrets in a planned deal with Nokia Siemens Networks. Motorola is selling for $1.2 billion its network equipment business to Finnish-German telecom giant Nokia Siemens Networks. The order by the federal judge prohibits Motorola, which is a vendor of Huawei equipment, from transferring any confidential information about the Chinese company pending resolution of the dispute. Huawei filed the lawsuit early this year.

www.huawei.com
www.motorola.com
www.nokiasiemensnetworks.com

http://tmcnet.com/58669.1

GENBAND Intros Mobile Optimization Line

In an effort to more intelligently manage network utilization and optimize the customer experience by relieving signaling overload caused by smart devices and mobile data congestion in the RAN, GENBAND has introduced its P Series Mobile Edge Optimization Suite. The Mobile Edge Optimization Suite is an enhancement to the company's P Series portfolio of traffic and policy management solutions. The GENBAND P Series portfolio is an ATCA-based solution encompassing network and management platforms.

www.genband.com

http://tmcnet.com/58670.1

Subscriber Data Management Uptake Grows for Tekelec

Tekelec's subscriber data management products have crossed the 225 million subscriber license mark. The company recently added three new tier 1 operators in the United States, India and Brazil to hit this new high. Tekelec's Subscriber Data Management product family allows users to consolidate and manage cross-domain subscriber data – location, network authentication, access preferences, services, identities and presence – as a single logical profile.

www.tekelec.com

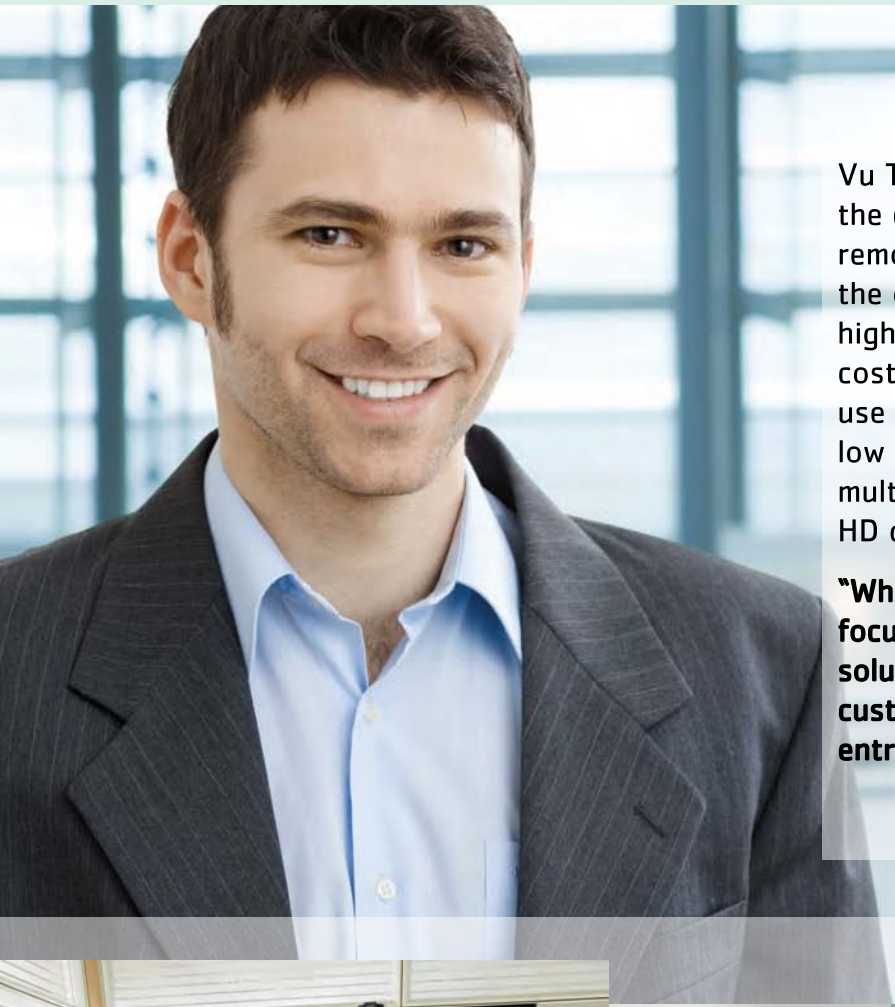
http://tmcnet.com/58675.1

SEC Seeks Info on Social Networking

Recently, the Securities and Exchange Commission sent a document request list to investment advisers to examine how they use social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr, according to a compliance alert posted on the website of ACA Compliance Group. The SEC is searching for information about how advisory firms retain records of employees' use of social media. This includes non-business use of social media and networking sites, according to ACA. The SEC has also asked advisers to provide documentation for any third-party use of social media that is maintained by the adviser.

http://sec.gov/
http://tmcnet.com/58679.1

High Definition
video conferencing
on Low Bandwidth



Vu TelePresence allows your business to gain the convenience and efficiency of conducting remote meetings, reviews, and interviews from the office or boardroom – with the realism of higher-end video conferencing systems that cost 3 to 5 times the price. About as easy to use as instant messenging, Vu operates across low bandwidth environments. It's available for multiple room size options, while maintaining HD quality images and sound.

"While other companies in the industry are focused on scaling down their large enterprise solutions to fit a different market, Vu is a customized solution specifically made for entrepreneurs and SMB professionals."

– Vu CEO Devita Saraf

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www.vutelepresence.com

http://tmcnet.com/58676.1

NFC Poised to Take Off in U.S.

According to Yankee Group analyst Nick Holland, near field communications tags will take smartphone capabilities to a whole new level. Of course, industry leaders have been talking about NFC for years, hoping to turn smartphones into electronic wallets. To date, nothing much has happened, however, except in Hong Kong and Japan where the technology has been implemented for mass-transit ticketing. That appears to be changing, however; as NFC chips are becoming cheaper and more accessible, millions of phones are expected to be equipped with this technology and in consumer hands in the U.S. and Europe before the end of 2011.

www.yankeegroup.com

http://tmcnet.com/58658.1

Microsoft Adds Personnel in China

In an effort to boost its presence in China's fast-growing smartphone market and strengthen its cloud computing and Internet search capabilities, Microsoft Corp. has announced plans to increase its research and development staff in China by around 10 percent this year. Ya-Qin Zhang, chairman of Microsoft's Asia-Pacific R&D Group, says the company will add between 300 and 400 R&D staff in mainland China, adding to the approximately 3,000 people already working there. Microsoft will also add 600 to 700 staff members in other parts of Asia, including Hong Kong, Australia and Korea. The company has a global research staff of 30,000.

www.microsoft.com

http://tmcnet.com/58661.1

Tablet Is in the Works

Sony Ericsson has confirmed its plans to deliver a tablet in the near future. The Sony tablet reportedly will be a PlayStation-enabled device known internally as the S1. Sony's tablet is said to be a 9.4-inch device that will be PlayStation certified and part of the PlayStation Suite, a program that enables the buying and playing of PlayStation games on Android phones and tablets. The tablet includes Qriocity integration, Sony PS games, and the Bravia Media Remote. An Endgadget report indicates that the Wi-Fi version of the tablet will be released in September for $599.

www.sonyericsson.com

http://tmcnet.com/58660.1

Xoom Arrives

The new Android 3.0-powered Motorola Xoom tablet for Verizon Wireless' network is now available. The Xoom is one of the first few devices to run Android 3.0 Honeycomb.

www.motorola.com
www.verizonwireless.com

http://tmcnet.com/58667.1

Bluetooth Has Good Prospects in Health Care Vertical

Shipments of Bluetooth-enabled devices in the industrial/medical segment are expected to see a compound annual growth rate that will approach 85 percent between 2009 and 2014, according to In-Stat, an independent research agency. "The health and wellness market represents a new and relatively untapped opportunity for Bluetooth, particularly Bluetooth LE," says Brian O'Rourke, principal analyst at In-Stat. Bluetooth Low Energy is a feature of Bluetooth 4.0 wireless radio technology aimed at new, principally low-power and low-latency, applications for wireless devices within a short range (up to 50 meters/160 feet).

www.in-stat.com

http://tmcnet.com/58668.1

Tablets May be Next for vPro

Intel's vPro platform combines hardware and software to manage and secure PCs through wired and wireless networks. The vPro platform is presently available only for PCs and low-end servers. However, businesses today are widely adopting tablets, so that could be what's next for the product. "The company has been requested several times for vPro capabilities to be in companion devices beyond just PCs," says Lisa Watts, director for ecosystem development for Intel Systems, in a statement. "We're trying to make a balance between security of the data and the device itself."

www.intel.com

http://tmcnet.com/58671.1

WLAN Chipsets See Good Growth

With Wi-Fi functionality becoming a standard feature in a host of consumer electronics, shipments of wireless local area network chipsets are estimated to double in 2011, according to market watcher new IHS iSuppli. Shipments of WLAN chipsets are projected to reach 738.9 million units this year, up a resounding 101.5 percent from 366.8 million units in 2010. The market research firm predicts that shipment of the chipsets will rise to exceed 1 billion units next year and then hit more than 2 billion units by 2014.

www.isuppli.com

http://tmcnet.com/58673.1

Base Station on Chip Introduced

Freescale Semiconductor has launched an integrated base station-on-chip portfolio built on heterogeneous multi-core technology. The new QorIQ Qonverge portfolio, according to company officials, will revolutionize the wireless equipment market. The base station integrates communications processing, digital signal processing and wireless acceleration technologies into a system-on-chip that is optimized for femtocell, picocell, metrocell and macrocell base stations. To develop this QorIQ portfolio, Freescale partnered with Aricent, whose LTE eNodeB reference framework has been optimized for Freescale QorIQ platform of communications processors.

www.aricent.com
www.freescale.com

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http://tmcnet.com/58691.1

Ovum Forecasts Investment Growth

As the economy is coming out of its economic slowdown globally, telco investment will return to growth in 2011, according to a report from Ovum. The report called, "What are Telcos Buying from their Suppliers" is part of a Research and Markets offering. According to the report, next-generation access will gain momentum, while managed network services growth is set to continue as the model matures. Emerging markets will concentrate on BSS development, while OSS, BI and data management are key investment areas for telcos in mature markets.

www.ovumkc.com

http://tmcnet.com/58689.1

Work Begins on Research Reports

AOTMP officials say they're collecting data for the first of two 2011 State of the Industry series research reports: TEM & WMM Supplier Services – Enterprise Satisfaction Ratings of 16 Fixed & Mobile Management Activities. Suppliers will be rated by enterprises. Performance ranks will be established in each of the 16 core activity areas. "Our expansion of the groundbreaking State of the Industry Series into enterprise satisfaction across 16 fixed and mobile telecom management activities will deliver the precise information enterprises need to make informed decisions about TEM and WMM Suppliers," says Timothy C. Colwell, senior vice president of global performance management at AOTMP.

www.aotmp.com

http://tmcnet.com/58690.1

Middle Eastern Carrier Taps Subex

Subex, a provider of operations and business support systems for telecom service providers, has completed implementation of its Revenue Operations Center Fraud Management solution for a wireless operator in the Middle East. The OSS/BSS company is also offering its ROC Revenue Assurance solution to the wireless operator. Both solutions are provided to the customer via a managed services model. The Subex ROC Fraud Management solution helps operators remove known fraud, uncover new fraud patterns, minimize fraud run time, augment internal controls and support fraud management process improvement.

www.subexworld.com

http://tmcnet.com/58692.1

Summit for Focus on TEM

The Center for Communications Management Information, a provider of telecom rate and data information and applications, and Voice Report, a free, online information service for enterprise communications technology professionals, recently announced the opening of the Telecom Expense Management National Summit 2011. The 7th annual Telecom Expense Management National Summit will be held on May 23 and 24 at The Madison hotel in Washington, D.C. The Summit will feature an exhibit area, the TEM Expo, where enterprise attendees can see and compare the latest expense management solution from top tier providers.

www.ccmi.com

http://tmcnet.com/58693.1

Veramark Turns the Corner

Announcing an increase in revenues, Veramark Technologies has released financial results for its fourth quarter ended Dec. 31, 2010. Compared with a net loss of $68,000, or $0.01 per share for the same quarter of 2009, Veramark's net income for the fourth quarter was $208,000, or $0.02 per diluted share. Veramark's provides telecom expense management services. "We have remained focused on our strategy of transforming Veramark into a world-class provider of telecom expense management solutions," says Tony Mazzullo, CEO and president of Veramark. "It has been gratifying to see the hard work and dedication of the entire Veramark team translate into our first full year of profitability since 2005."

www.veramark.com

http://tmcnet.com/58694.1

Telicost-Mobile App Launches

Anomalous Networks has announced the launch of Telicost-Mobile App for the BlackBerry PlayBook tablet. According to Anomalous Networks CEO Dan Rudich, the BlackBerry PlayBook combined with the company's Telicost-Mobile Real-Time Telecom Expense Management solution will provide a powerful tool for companies to quickly get a pulse on telecom expenses such as international roaming, projected data plan overages, SMS abuse, and the like. The application provides easy-to-use, real-time reports and alerts that can be run directly from the large BlackBerry PlayBook screen. From these reports, customers can gain in-depth business intelligence to manage telecom budgets and eliminate bill shock, company officials say.

www.anomalousnetworks.com

http://tmcnet.com/58695.1

Dell Gets Into TEM

The very technologies that make companies' lives easier – laptops, smartphones and tablets – are also the same devices that have great power to destory, particularly when a security breach occurs. Dell Services announced that it will be introducing a comprehensive line of services and solutions to help companies enjoy the benefits of mobile collaboration and computing while ensuring mobile security. Bundled in Dell's new Enterprise Mobility Services is a portfolio of hardware, software and communications technologies and service solutions, including telecom expense management – a best practice approach to manage voice, data, wireless, international roaming and VoIP spending.

www.dell.com

The Call Recording
Global Online Community

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http://call-recording.tmcnet.com

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By Prashanth Adiga and Gokul Krishnan

VoIP Test Solutions

Is It Time for Them to Jump on the Open Source Bandwagon?

It is an open secret that the first choice of any new OEM or service provider in VoIP product or service rollout would be to use open source tools. The myth, though, is that the usage is restricted to new entrants, while established service providers prefer the variety of commercial products that are available in the market. While the significant role that open source tools played in making VoIP a reality cannot be undermined, what is still open to debate is whether they have compromised short-term cost benefits, time to market and flexibility with long-term product/service strategy and rollout.

However, the number of VoIP-based open source tools available speaks volumes about their popularity. On the flip side though, it can be argued that it has resulted in the problem of plenty, thereby resulting in confusion about the apt tool. Once the appropriate tool is identified, there is no denying the fact about its usefulness across different cycles, including production-related troubleshooting and root cause analysis.

Business Needs

Of course, service providers have varying business requirements depending on carrier and enterprise needs. The business need that drives carriers is the scale of their deployments, which are typically large. For enterprises, the services offered through VoIP, unified communications and contact center solutions, determine the success criteria.

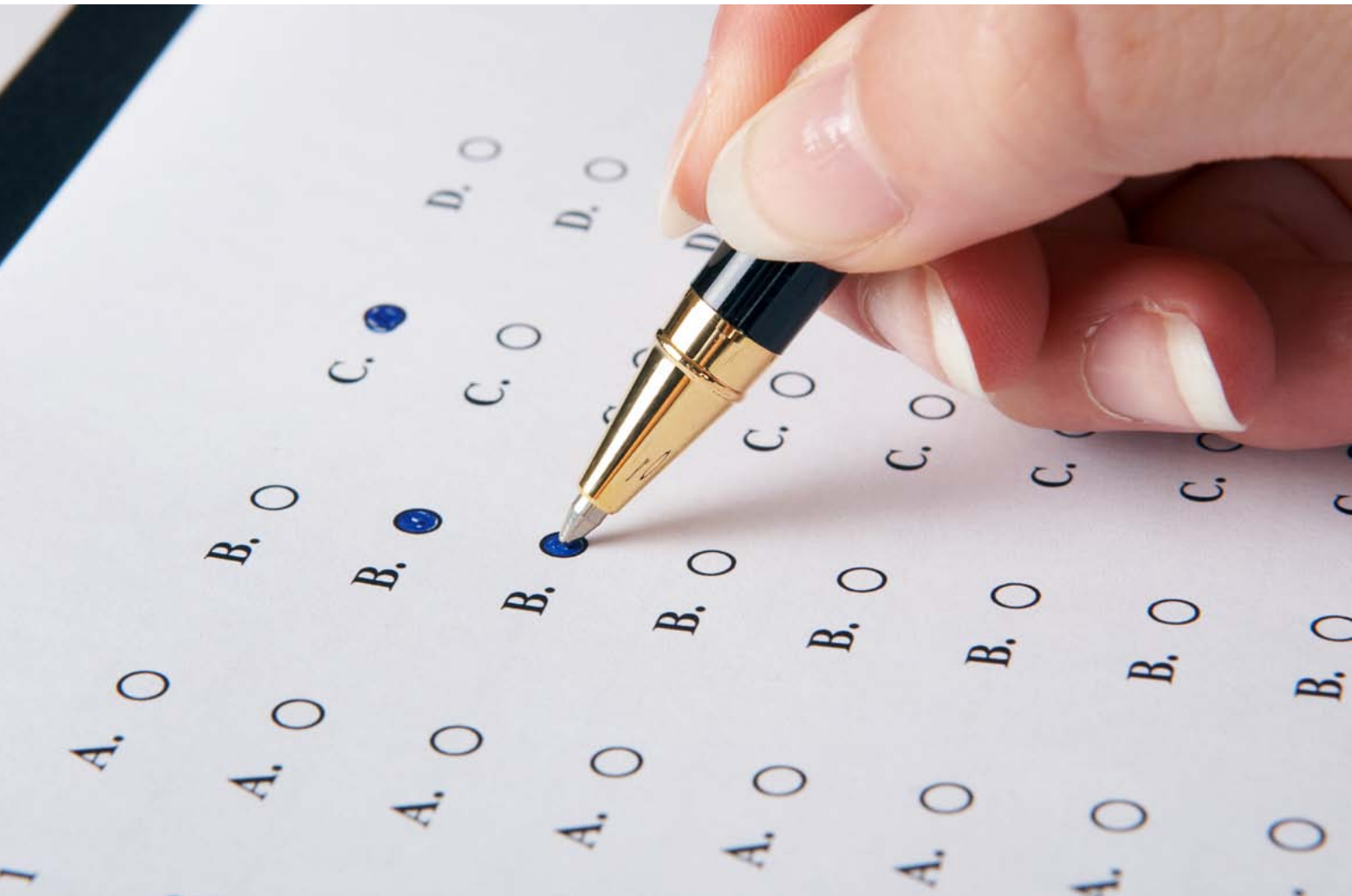
But the all-important question that needs to be answered is: What exactly differentiates these tools? You might be surprised.

Judgment on a tool can be based on a number of factors such as:

- type of tool: performance, feature, analysis;
- platforms supported: Windows, Linux, Mac, Solaris/SunOS;
- user interface: CLI, GUI; and
- ease of automation: automatable, not automatable.

Classification can also be done based on factors such as:

- language used to create tool: C, C++, Python, Java, PHP;



Transforming your communications begins with keeping up to date with the latest communications trends and breaking industry news.

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- Optimum ways to provide differentiated end user experience
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Learn more at
http://next-generation-communications.tmcnet.com
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Gokul Krishnan

- media support: RTP support or no media support;
- transport options: UDP, TCP, TLS;
- support for simulating complex scenarios like three-way call, call forward, call waiting and answer; and
- support for tones and announcements: DTMF, hook flash, fax tone support, announcement support (IVR / stored media playback).

In addition to the above factors, tool selection also can depend on whether the tool can be used to validate only certain types of VoIP elements like client/server/proxy, or, if it can be used to validate VoIP network as a whole. Some open source tools are tuned for elements like servers and load balancers. Others are powerful enough and cater to the whole gamut of VoIP devices. Usage of such tools eliminates the need to deploy multiple tools for validation of the entire VoIP architecture.

The importance of ease of use cannot be underestimated either, as the industry is filled with testers with varying capabilities. While a section of testers would be comfortable executing complex commands and creating scripts for best usage of the tool, another group would be happy to use a well-exposed GUI in which all user interactions are very clear.

Tool Usage Across Industries

The choice of tools also varies based on whether they are being used by a service provider or an OEM.

Service providers have never hesitated to invest in commercial products, but the outlook on open source tools has certainly changed. A popular strategy in the market is to buy licenses for a limited number of ports/channels from commercial vendors and load the system under test with open source tools like SIPp.

As an example, say a gateway or switch with peak capacity of 8,000 voice channels needs to be tested for voice quality. Instead of buying licenses for the entire 8,000 channels for speech quality measurement from a commercial vendor, licenses can be obtained for just 23 (one T1) or 30 (one E1) channels. The remaining 7,977/7,970 channels of the system under test can still be loaded by using SIPp. This results in a very cost-effective test environment without compromising on the quality of test output.

Simulation of the production environment in their labs is crucial for service providers. This includes conditions like high network traffic resulting in packet loss, network delay and jitter. There are tools such as NistNet, which can simulate these network conditions, thereby adding real-world feel to testing. It goes without saying that testing would be incomplete without such tools.

The biggest challenge for OEMs is that no matter how exhaustive their test coverage is, it still cannot address the numerous ways in which their product would be used by service providers. No OEM would ever replicate all service provider architectures in its labs. However, there is a continuous endeavor in plugging the holes in all their testing. When issues are reported from service providers, which are most often specific to their environment, it would be easier for vendors to simulate those conditions by using the right diagnostic tools. Tools like SIPp could also be used to tweak the signaling packets/headers, thereby generating conditions that are seen by service providers in the markets.

Power of Open Source Tools

Many open source tools have a modular, extensible architecture, with limited functionality in core and optional modules or user

Prashanth Adiga

created plug-ins to do the rest. This is helpful when new standards are released, as the tools make it easier to enhance the core library for validation of new scenarios.

Open source also provides a good platform on which to create new applications via protocol stacks and libraries, which can be easily ported to different platforms.

Apart from aiding the functional and load testing needs, the automation capabilities of a tool is critical too. Many open source tools provide GUI as well as CLI interfaces for the usage. The CLI, when supported, gives a platform for automation engineers to programmatically start, stop and invoke call features. For example, users can create a simple library using a scripting language such as TCL/Perl wherein an open source tool such as SIPp can be remotely controlled. There can be methods created that can collect the call logs and even parse through them for validation.

Many vendors or service providers also use open source PBXs, which can be used to simulate many features available in proprietary PBX systems. Asterisk is a typical example, which has many features including voice mail, conference calling, interactive voice response (telephone menus), and automatic call distribution. Another example is OpenPBX, which is an easy to install and configure PBX software platform that can simulate a small to medium business scenario. A complete messaging solution with voicemail, fax, e-mail pager, DTMF command shell and text-to-speech support can be created by using VOCP.

Considering the complete VoIP ecosystem, there are additional tools like BSDRadius, which is an open source RADIUS server targeted for use in voice over IP applications. Freeside provides an open source billing, ticketing and account administration package for Internet service providers that now includes support for VoIP CDR rating and billing.

Vendors also have used numerous tools like PROTOS to check for vulnerability and ensure standard conformance. Tools dealing with security have been highly successful, given the onus on secure systems and networks.

Given all the great things about these open source tools, does it mean that they have bulldozed commercial vendors and lead in terms of market share? Surprisingly, the answer is still no. The following limitations have played a major role:

- Support for these tools is lacking, when compared to what is offered by commercial vendors.
- Some tools are not automation friendly, and given the investment that most of the industry leaders have made on building their automation strategy and libraries, this is a huge limitation.
- Media support is limited for most of the tools. While they are very capable on the signaling front, lack of media (RTP) support has forced organizations to look at commercial vendors.
- There is scope for improvement on the compatibility aspect with different operating systems.

In summary, commercial tools attract the test community with a packaged test solution, address specialized needs like speech-quality measurements, and provide good support for the issues faced. Open source tools have found a space for themselves due to flexibility, cost effectiveness and ease of use. Never before did testers enjoy so many options. IT

Prashanth Adiga and Gokul Krishnan are senior project managers for the engineering services business unit at Infosys Technologies Ltd. (www.infosys.com).

Open Source News

http://tmcnet.com/58680.1

OrecX Introduces Open Source Recording Channel

The Open Source Recording Channel, sponsored by OrecX, has been launched as the newest addition to the TMCnet channel program. The Open Source Recording Channel promotes an array of solutions available from OrecX. In addition, visitors can find valuable resources such as product guides, testimonials, feature articles and industry news.

http://www.tmcnet.com/channels/open-source-recording/

http://tmcnet.com/58665.1

SSOA Helps UC Scale

eZuce has introduced a SIP-based service-oriented architecture for agile and scalable communication enablement. The new open communication system is designed to deliver the best user experience for enterprises leveraging eZuce's SIP Services Oriented Architecture. SSOA represents an architecture designed for a scalable and modern unified communications system. It optimally uses available resources given its load-sharing redundancy.

www.ezuce.com

http://tmcnet.com/58681.1

Open Source, Call Recording Advance

Call monitoring and recording platforms have improved by leaps and bounds since their adoption in the call center sphere. Among the many improvements, development and open sourced software have given much needed control to those employing these options. This is more important than ever because the constant technological advancements of online and phone commerce have put call monitoring and recording solutions under more scrutiny than ever before. Among the benefits, open source recording suites allow onsite developers to reconfigure call monitoring methods as needed, giving them the flexibility to meet impending compliance standards.

http://tmcnet.com/58682.1

Oreka Tapped by InterMedi@

InterMedi@ Marketing is a direct marketing and information technology resource company specializing in what company officials say is end-to-end e-commerce, sales and customer relationship management. The company has approximately 2,000 employees, and six call center locations with over a thousand agent positions. The company's call center environment features extensive use of open source applications, and the inbound/outbound calling/dialing is performed by several Asterisk PBXs and VICIDIAL dialer engines with MySQL, Apache Tomcat and GNU Linux for database and browser interface functionality. Oreka TR's open source core meant that Intermedi@ could do advanced evaluation and make sure it was technically viable before committing to use Oreka for VoIP recording on Asterisk and VICIDIAL.

http://oreka.sourceforge.net/

http://tmcnet.com/58683.1

New Pro Account Offers Subscription-Based Model

Vaadin Ltd., the company behind the popular open source Vaadin Framework, has announced the availability of Vaadin Pro Account. The new offering is a subscription to a set of commercial tools, components and support to complement and speed up the use of the free framework. "Open source is a norm in the core frameworks that Java developers use today. With the permissive Apache license, companies get a guaranteed control over the technologies they depend on. Vendors are still needed as a backup, to resolve problems and to speed up development with additional tooling. With the fully free Vaadin Framework complemented by the new commercial Vaadin Pro Account, we can now offer the best of the both worlds without stepping on the toes of our wonderful open source community," explains Joonas Lehtinen, CEO of Vaadin.

www.vaadin.com

By Paula Bernier

Speedflow Puts the Pedal to the Metal

Hits MediaCore Benchmore, Integrates Interfaces & Builds Channel

Softswitch company Speedflow is now readying the 100th service provider installation of its MediaCore product and, as of the writing of this article in late February, had seen five sales in the last 14 days for its CallMax solution.

Speedflow's CEO Vladimir Ellis

But it wasn't a direct route that brought the company to where it is now. In fact, Speedflow got its start in a completely different aspect of the voice business: as a call shop.

CEO, founder and owner Vladimir Ellis explains that Speedflow started life as an organization that created public locations where students could visit to place affordable calls to friends and family abroad.

Then a chain of events happened that led Speedflow on the path to become a softswitch provider.

About three years ago, Ellis and his crew began looking for new infrastructure to support the Speedflow business. The company tested solutions from a variety of companies, including Acme Packet, GENBAND, and many others. Then Ellis met a man during a flight, and that gentleman was part of a group that was working on a softswitch solution. This chance meeting led Speedflow to hire that team of individuals and, ultimately, completely alter its business focus from being a call shop service provider to delivering infrastructure for other service providers.

Today Speedflow sells the CallMax Class 5 and MediaCore Class 4 softswitches, its two main products, as well as VoIP-oriented accounting, back office support and billing solutions.

The company had about $15 million in revenue last year. And it has more than 600 customers. That includes tier 1 national and global carriers, ISPs, residential VoIP providers and corporate network operators.

While there are plenty of softswitch solutions out in the market, Ellis says what makes the Speedflow offer unique is its ease of use and flexibility.

The solutions don't require service providers to get too deep into infrastructure, he says. Speedflow makes its products easy to use by delivering a web-based interface to its service provider customers. Through this interface,

service providers get just as much reporting information as they require. They also can use the interface to create as many service plans as they require, and to support multiple dealership trees. That's important both for regional service providers that might not have the resources for big in-house sales staffs, as well as for very large, national or international companies like AT&T, which Ellis says sells 35 percent direct and the other 55 percent through a network of dealers.

Up until now, Speedflow has had separate service provider interfaces for its CallMax and MediaCore products. But that's set to change in short order. Ellis says the company is in the process of combining web interfaces for CallMax and MediaCore.

Why? Because, Ellis says, service providers want to create interconnections with multiple other service providers so they can terminate traffic anywhere. With one point of control, it just makes it easier for service providers to do that, and it lowers operating expenses in the process, because it requires fewer engineers to be involved in such provisioning and less training to learn how to do that provisioning, he says.

Speedflow expects to have a single interface for the CallMax and MediaCore solutions as of late September. This integration will be reflected in new software available as part of CallMax and MediaCore customers' regular maintenance upgrades.

At the same time that Speedflow is working to bring together its service provider interfaces for the softswitch products, the company is creating a chain of regional agents to expand its distribution opportunities. As of late February, the organization relied exclusively on direct sales. But Speedflow is building a channel to broaden its sales and was in the process earlier this year of signing on new partners in the Emirates, Singapore and elsewhere. IT

The Speedflow Product Line

- **MediaCore:** This carrier-grade Class 4 softswitch has a dynamic routing mechanism, integrated billing, revenue assurance system Guardian, and transcoding.
- **CallMax:** This proprietary Linux-based multifunctional Class 5 softswitch offers a wide range of available services and advanced billing tools.
- **AccuCore:** This is an ERP system for VoIP with sophisticated accounting and financial analysis software.
- **Pay-n-Get:** This processing system provides instant payments and prepaid codes distribution.
- **MobiGlobe:** Available as a white-label solution for VoIP providers, this add on makes VoIP calls available from mobile phones, resulting in significant cost savings on international calls.

media5 corporation

By Paula Bernier

Small Service Providers – Competing Amongst Giants

In these tough economic times small service providers are finding it harder than ever to remain competitive with the giants. Many have been swallowed up, or their client base has dried up as tier 1 service providers grab what little territory is left. Recently, we sat down with Philippe Babin, general manager at Media5 Corp., to discuss the changing role of the small service providers and the solutions that Media5 has put forward to address this interesting marketplace.

We have seen a few big shakeups in telecom over the last few years, how can a small service provider survive today?

Babin: Smaller service providers can compete with national service providers by offering better service and tailored offerings. What they lack in network reach and brand awareness, smaller service providers can make up for by offering a range of value-added services. Smaller providers need to specialize and focus on offering unique services to businesses.

Instead of offering a one-size-fits-all solution, the provider needs to evaluate the company's voice, data and Internet access needs, and offer targeted service packages to handle the business customer's growing needs at a reasonable price point. Everyday small service providers are looking for ways to enhance their portfolios with new products and services, to make them competitive and give them a winning edge.

Media5 is known for working with a large number of service providers. How can it help the smaller service providers?

Babin: We are pretty fortunate, we have worked closely with a variety of different service providers worldwide for over 10 years, and we feel that we understand the unique needs that small providers face versus the tier 1 providers. They need to differentiate and offer the latest technology in a package to support their market. That is why we are pleased to introduce the Mediatrix iPBX Series, a solution that is specifically designed for the small service provider.

Tell us about the Mediatrix iPBX Series.

Babin: The Mediatrix iPBX Series is a unique solution for service providers deploying distributed telephony services for small to medium-size enterprises that require rich feature sets, reliability, professional support services and attractive pricing expectations. Currently we have available the Mediatrix 4108iPBX, which is a cost-effective solution for service providers that want to offer an integrated on-premises telephony system for enterprises with five to 25 users. It offers a fully featured IP PBX based on the proven Asterisk application including voice mail, conference bridge, IVR, as well as supplementary services including call forward, call transfer, third-party conference, do not disturb and call detail record and also supports the full feature set of the award-winning Mediatrix 4100 Series. The Mediatrix iPBX offers strong reliability with 200.000 hours MTBF. It also offers an industry-leading three years standard warranty and optional seven years extended warranty. The 4108iPBX consumes18W, which is only 20 percent of the power consumption of a standard PC.

Do you see the small service provider becoming obsolete?

Babin: No not at all. The market still has plenty of room for everyone, and I do not see that changing for the foreseeable future. Small service providers in particular face the challenge of finding the right equipment to provide hosted or distributed services, manage multiple suppliers for each separate solution, and train technicians to support different hardware platforms.

In the past the results were not always cost effective, and there was always the question of compatibility and the ability of the solution to grow as the company grows. Now with solutions like the Mediatrix iPBX, service providers have a cost-effective VoIP and IP PBX product from a unique and reliable partner, Media5. There is something comforting about hearing that the little guy still has a chance to succeed. Unlike a tier 1 that can deploy nationally across a large base, smaller service providers have to focus on their end users, ensuring that they have both the solutions and tools in place to support their clients from economic recovery to sustainable growth. IT

To learn more about Media5 Corp. and its line of leading VoIP solutions and services including the new Mediatrix iPBX Series, please visit http://www.media5corp.com/en/ip-pbx or sales@media5corp.com.

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By Paula Bernier

Tablets in the Enterprise

How These New Devices Are Changing the Face of Business Communications

If you already have a tablet, you probably love the big screen and ease of use it delivers, not to mention the bragging rights you have as a result of owning the latest, greatest and most coveted consumer electronics device currently on the market. If you don't have one, chances are good that you're considering buying one, or at least dreaming about it. But while the tablet is definitely considered a fun new gadget, many users are enjoying this tool for a lot more than watching movies and playing games. Increasingly, the tablet is becoming an important tool for business.

John Herrema, senior vice president of corporate strategy technology at Good Technology, which provides medium and large enterprises with servers that enable secure access to messaging systems, address books, calendars, contacts, and the Internet, says in the fourth quarter more than 20 percent of his company's activations were on iPads, up from zero in May of 2010.

"So enterprise end customers are rapidly embracing and adopting these devices," he says, adding that one in four devices that Good currently activates are tablets. Next year, he adds, Good expects tablets to account for 30 percent of its activations.

The Forecast

Whether the purchase is for personal, work or a combination of uses, tablets are seeing strong growth in sales.

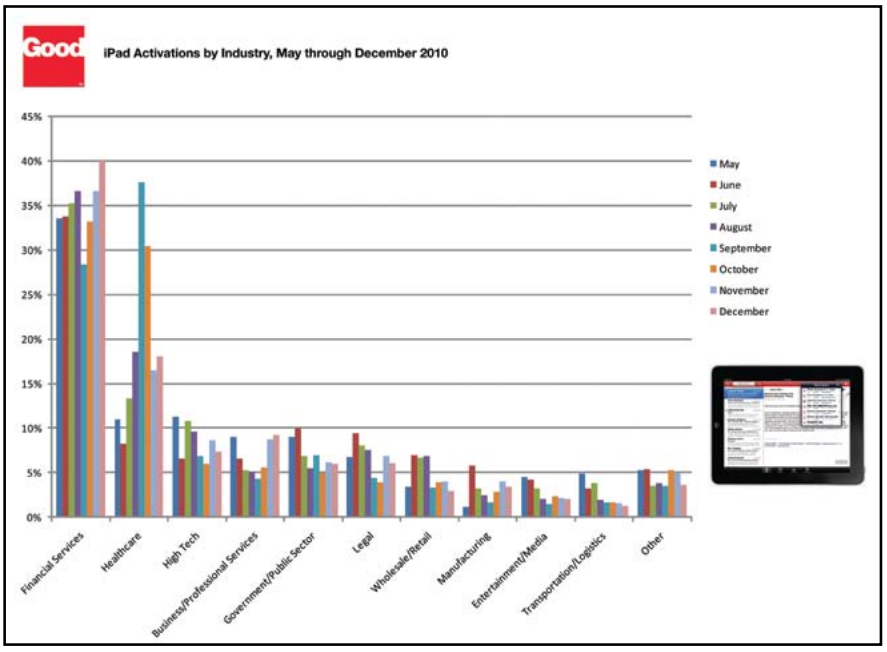
About 10.3 million tablets flew off the shelves in the U.S. last year, according to Forrester Research, which recently more than doubled its long-term sales forecast for these devices.

The firm now expects tablet sales of 24.1 million units this year. In the following four years Forrester Research says we should see somewhere in the neighborhood of 35.1 million, 39.8 million, 42.3 million and then 44 million units sold.

The Yankee Group predicts that the tablet market will reach $45.9 billion by 2014.

Goldman, meanwhile, expects tablets to grow 224 percent in 2011. That's compared to a paltry 6 percent growth rate in the overall PC market, according to the company, which says that tablets are cannibalizing the notebook market.

It should come as no surprise that the iPad – the Apple device that resurrected the tablet and turned it into a mass market phenomenon – rules the roost. According to ABI Research, the iPad accounted for 4.2 million of the 4.5 million tablets in the third quarter of 2010. Reports indicate that the only other tablet on the market last year that rung up significant sales was the Samsung Galaxy Tab.



The Competition

Fast forward two quarters and a month and you can see that many consumer electronics companies have brought new tablets to market, or are readying to do so.

Research in Motion, which rocked the business communications market years ago with the introduction of the BlackBerry, now sells a line of tablets under the name PlayBook. And the company announced two new tablet models, supporting LTE and HSPA+ wireless broadband, in February at Mobile World Congress.

The products allow for real-time multitasking, offer symmetrical multiprocessing, support Adobe Flash and HD multimedia, and include advanced security features and out-of-the-box enterprise support.

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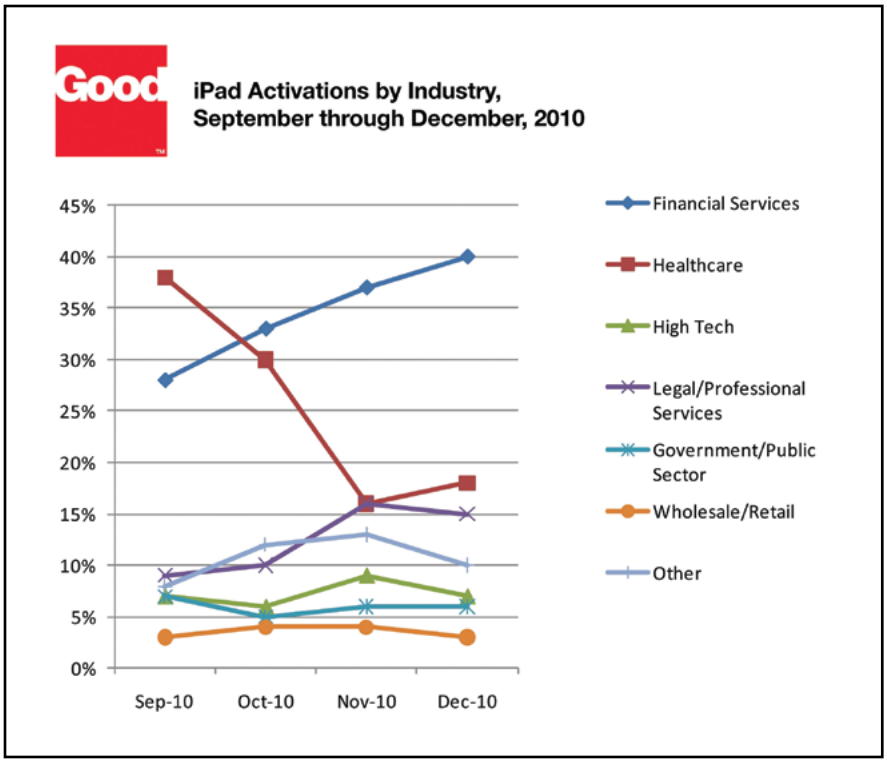

"The BlackBerry PlayBook tablet is already being widely recognized for its superior performance, rich web experience, enterprise readiness and deep support for web standards and open development tools. We are now building on the BlackBerry PlayBook's many advantages with support for additional 4G networks that will allow enhanced business opportunities for carriers and developers and unparalleled mobile experiences for users," says Mike Lazaridis, President and Co-CEO at Research in Motion.

The widely anticipated Xoom tablet from Motorola Mobility Inc. also has recently come onto the market. This is the first Android tablet based on Google's new Honeycomb operating system, which was designed specifically for tablet implementations.

The Xoom has been lauded for its very responsive touch screen and HDMI output for computer and TV viewing. Some have criticized the device, however, for its lack of support for Flash video, complicated user interface and the lack of strong apps for its OS.

Motorola Mobility had not released sales numbers for the device as of press time, but CEO Sanjay Jha was been quoted as saying that Xoom sales were off to a good start a week following the product's release.

Meanwhile, Cisco Systems Inc., which doesn't seem to overlook any opportunity on the communications solutions front, is planning to come out with a tablet as well.

At the Consumer Electronics Show in January, Cisco announced plans for a 4G version of the Cisco Cius tablet for use on the Verizon Wireless LTE network. The new device, slated for availability starting this spring, seems to be squarely aimed at business users.

"Enterprises have come to know they can rely on Cisco and Verizon Wireless to put the business communication and collaboration tools they need in their hands," says Janet Schijns, vice president of the business solutions group at Verizon Wireless. "Together we're taking the next step with the combination of the Cisco Cius mobile collaboration tablet and Verizon Wireless' 4G LTE network. Collaboration delivered over 4G LTE will be a whole new level of access for enterprise users."

Steve Slattery, vice president and general manager for the IP communications business unit at Cisco, adds: "Knowledge workers are no longer tethered to a desk, and they require mobile devices to enable communications, collaboration and a computing solution in a form factor that is sanctioned by the IT organization. The Cisco Cius, running on the Verizon Wireless 4G LTE network, addresses just that and is optimized to deliver a superior experience for business productivity." Of course, this is just a small selection of the vendors and tablets now on the market.

The Applications

So exactly how are business people using tablets today, and how are they expected to leverage them in the future?

A ChangeWave survey of 1,641 business IT buyers indicates that 73 percent business users leverage their tablets to check e-mail and access the Internet. Forty six percent use them for sales support and 45 percent leverage tablets to do presentations for customers.

The survey goes on to say that 7 percent of those polled indicated their company provides workers with tablets; 14 percent of those surveyed planned to buy tablets during the first quarter of 2011; 78 percent of them planned to buy iPads; and of those that already had tablets, 82 percent of them own iPads.

It's not surprising that most workers use tablets in the same way as they would use a laptop. But the touch screens, high-quality visual experiences and more user-friendly form factors of tablets also make them a nice match for use while presenting to potential clients on the floor of a trade show, while moving room to room within a hospital, or, really, anyplace where employees are on the move and need an easy to use and lightweight tool to enter and access information.

Some businesses also are considering leveraging tablets to heighten the experiences of their customers.

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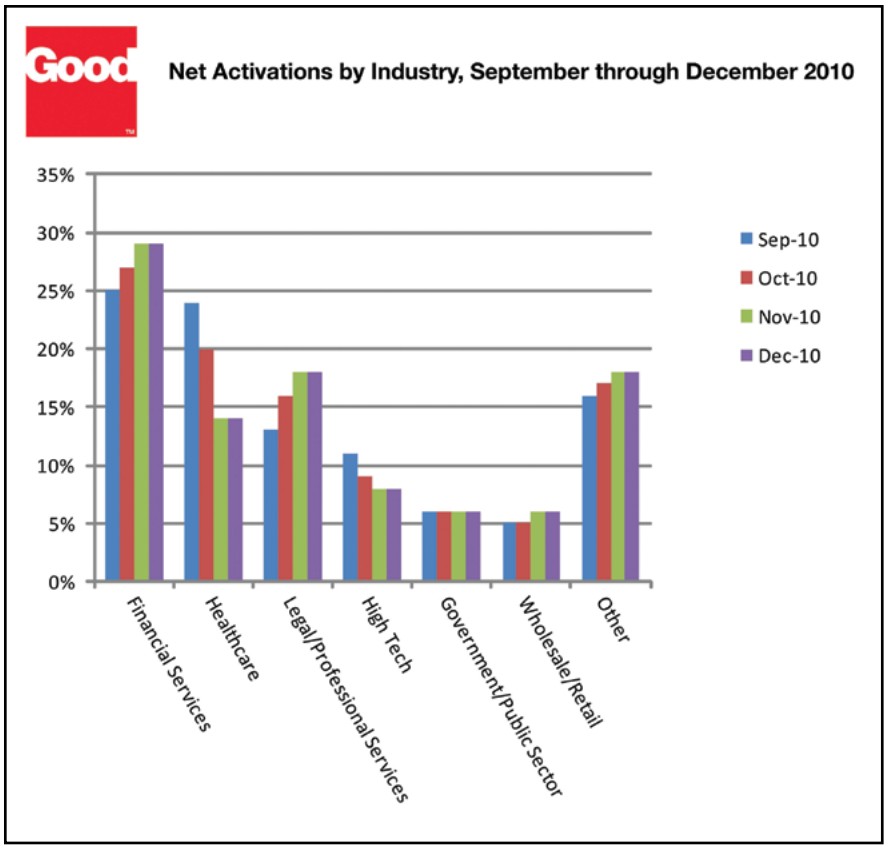


For example, Research in Motion has talked about the idea of a hotel providing PlayBooks to guests, so those customers won't have to lug their laptops during their visits. At the same time, the tablet could serve as a means through which the hotel could provide information about its services to the guests.

In announcing the Cius/Verizon Wireless 4G news, Praveen Akkiraju, senior vice president and general manager at the service routing technology group at Cisco, discussed how the collaboration would enable enterprises and small and medium-sized businesses to create innovative services such as "next-generation video-enabled ATMs and shop-in-a-box retail solutions."

The Challenges

Herrema of Good says that the smartphone got businesses thinking about new applications. With tablets, the desire to create new apps, including business-focused applications, is only accelerating.

The tablet, he says, is expected to spur the creation and adoption of more vertically-focused apps, such as nurse charting, pharmaceutical presentations for doctors and the like. Herrema goes on to say that while he doesn't believe the tablet will necessarily replace the laptop, many workers may leave their laptops behind and carry just a tablet on their travels.

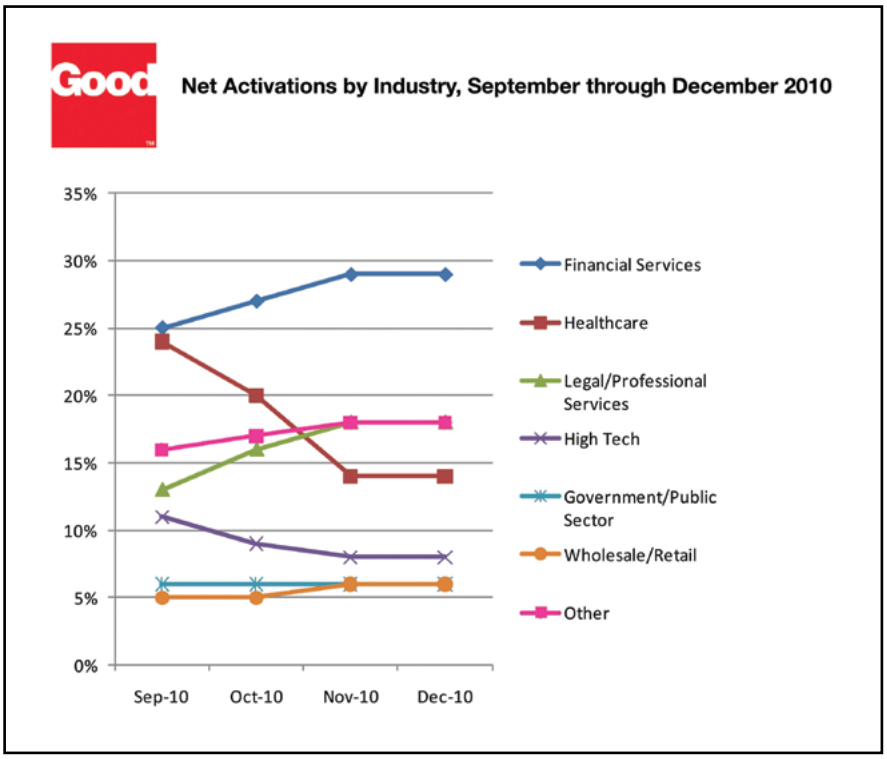
Because the tablet's form factor is better suited for mobile use and for document review, he adds, that heightens the need not just for security but also to understand the behavior of the apps themselves so end users don't inadvertently create loss scenarios by using apps that can move data beyond the enterprise's control.

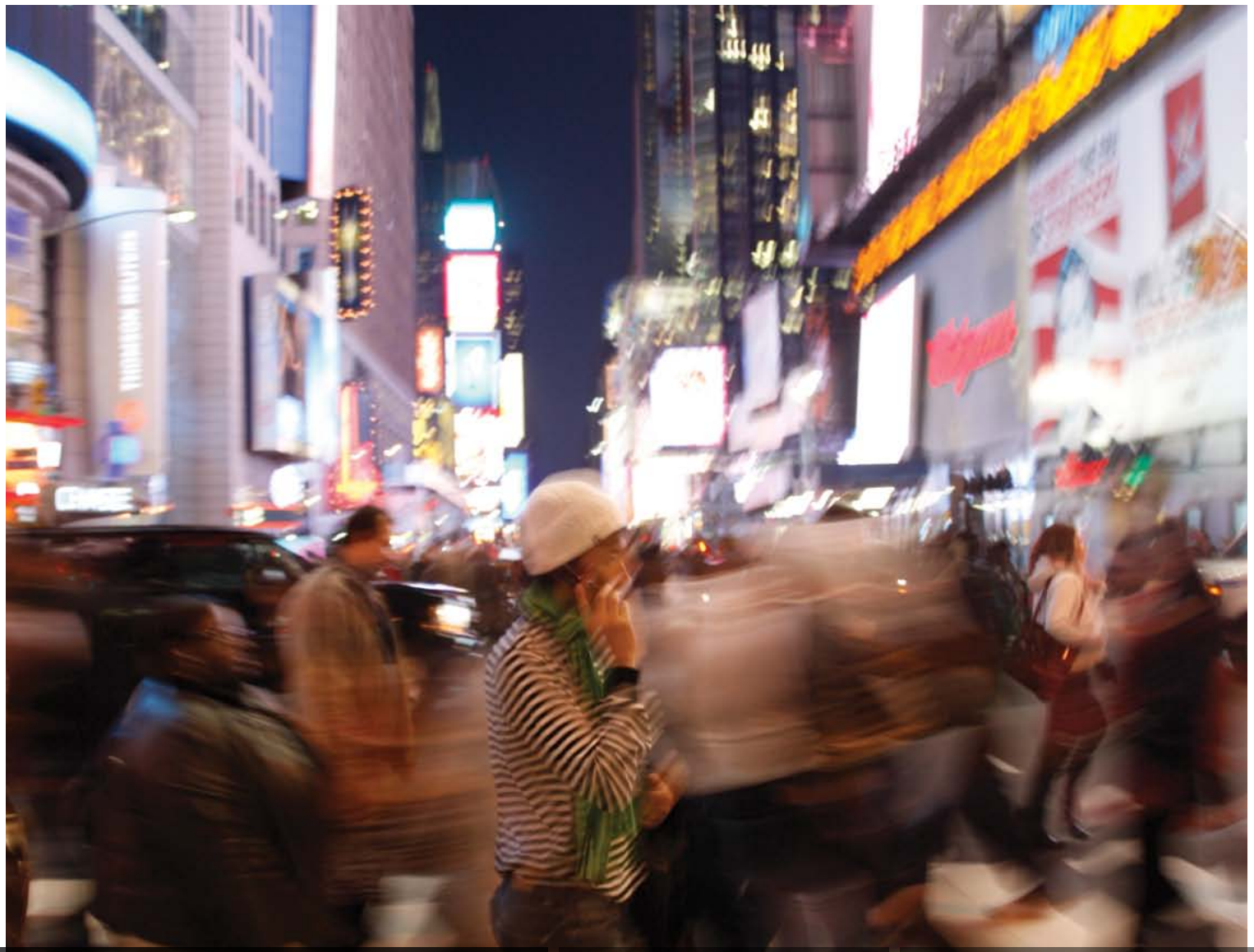
"If you don't have a strategy to specifically control that, data will move off into the wild," he says, noting the need for application-level policy and controls.

Wilson Craig, director of marketing communications for Aruba Networks, adds that tablets are one of the main device types contributing to the bring-your-own-device trend that corporate network managers have to deal with today.

"Employee-owned devices gaining access to the corporate network present new security risks, and a potential network management and help desk burden that are difficult to quantify but clearly significant," he says.

"The point is that in order to make tablets (and other mobile devices) a useful tool for the enterprise, companies need to adjust their approach to network building and planning," he says. IT





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By Paula Bernier

Cloud Offerings Enable Videoconferencing to Scale

Videoconferencing, like so many other services these days, is now moving to the cloud. In the span of just a few weeks, BroadSoft, Verizon and Vidyo announced cloud-based videoconferencing offerings.

Supporting videoconferencing within the cloud makes perfect sense given the growing use of the service by people not just in specially equipped rooms, but also via desktop and mobile devices and applications, says Young-Sae Song, vice president of product marketing of Vidyo.

He adds that the introduction of VidyoRouter Cloud Edition is the most important announcement the company has made since it was established. The appliance supports videoconferencing as a cloud service in any network.

Today the majority of videoconferencing happens via room-based videoconferencing systems, but with the introduction and popularization of videoconferencing services from Google, Skype and many others, and more desktop-based videoconferencing tools coming on to the market, moving to the cloud is a pretty attractive option, according to Song. Indeed, Gartner projects that by 2015, 200 million corporate desktop endpoints will be installed.

"VidyoRouter Cloud Edition is our response to the steady increase of globalized enterprises and the growing demand from service providers who offer video communication and collaboration," says Ofer Shapiro, CEO and co-founder of Vidyo. "As video communication becomes more pervasive on laptops, smartphones and tablets, the demands placed upon the videoconferencing infrastructure will grow exponentially and require a solution that supports thousands of concurrently connected endpoints. Legacy MCU-based systems cannot support this scale and have a cost structure that is prohibitive for widespread deployment. VidyoRouter Cloud Edition directly addresses these business problems, and reduces the amortized per user cost from dollars to just cents per minute. Compared to immersive telepresence, an organization can enable 3,000 employees with Vidyo's personal telepresence for the cost of one telepresence room build out."

Offering videoconferencing from the cloud can allow network operators (whether they be telcos or other service providers, or enterprise network managers) to scale the number and types of endpoints that can be supported, Song says, adding that this really redefines the financial model of videoconferencing.

Traditional videoconferencing set ups usually involve MCUs, he adds. But Song says the Vidyo solution doesn't include an MCU. Instead, it relies on video routers, which optimize bandwidth and ensure video quality. These routers take in video streams and look at the endpoints involved and the types of networks they're on and let through the appropriate amount of video traffic based on all that.

Today only 20 percent of U.S. offices are addressable by fiber, yet workers who want to videoconference from home, while traveling, or at branch or other locations need to be supported. So VidyoRouter proactively monitors video quality, resolution, frame rate, etc., and if a problem with quality is detected, it will reduce video traffic to address that. Rather than compressing video, however, the Vidyo technology simply removes some of the details of the video.

"Instead of requiring the network to adapt to the video we're sending, it's adapting the video to the network," says Song. "It's a very different approach to our competitors."

The Vidyo routers run on 1RU servers, and don't require custom hardware or ASICs, which Song says results in them being a fairly cost-effective solution. He claims that the Vidyo solutions are often 90 percent less expensive than Cisco or Polycom videoconferencing solutions.

One of the potential challenges of creating a cloud solution is ensuring that video can traverse firewalls. To address that,

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Vidyo allows for the creation of a universal calling directory to which companies can subscribe to interconnect with others for video calls.

As for BroadSoft, that company has introduced BroadCloud Video, an HD, always-on videoconferencing service that can be accessed from desktop, telepresence and mobile environments.

"BroadCloud Video is designed to enable our service provider customers to offer a cost-effective, high-definition videoconferencing service to businesses of all sizes, but we believe the pricing structure and minimal support requirements will be particularly attractive to mid-size businesses that are currently underserved by today's videoconferencing technology options," says Michael Tessler, president and CEO of BroadSoft. "The goal of BroadCloud Video is to accelerate the adoption of videoconferencing, which we believe will improve the productivity of businesses by allowing users to seamlessly connect, collaborate and engage."

The service supports standards-based desktop and room telepresence systems at up-to HD video quality and connection via SIP, H.323 and H.320. It is always on, is priced based on usage and offers a single dial-in number and host PIN for all meetings.

Meanwhile, in early February, Verizon introduced Unified Communications & Collaboration-as-a-Service, which it says is one of the industry's first cloud-based commercial UC&C offerings. It allows for seamless call transfers from fixed to mobile phones and the use of presence related to instant messaging, and to initiate audio, web and intra-company videoconference calls both in and out of the office.

"We're putting our leadership in cloud, UC&C and mobility to work for our customers," says Farooq Muzaffar, vice president of enterprise network and communications solutions with Verizon. "It's all part of our 'everything-as-a-service' strategy to help our customers achieve better business outcomes by making information and collaboration available virtually anywhere, anytime."

The new offerings will be available to U.S. customers this spring.

The state of West Virginia is an early user of the solution, which leverages Cisco and Verizon technologies.

Verizon later this year plans to roll out a hybrid offering – also based on a per-seat subscription model – for customers that want both a dedicated environment and a cloud- and premises-based solution. IT

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By Paula Bernier

The Oracle of Service Brokers

Lee Talks Infrastructure with INTERNET TELEPHONY

The service broker has become an important new component of today's public network infrastructure. Here, INTERNET TELEPHONY's Paula Bernier talks with Ken Lee, director of worldwide product marketing for service delivery platform and unified communications for the Oracle Communications Global Business Unit, about what this new network element does and why it's meaningful for service providers and their customers.

What is a service broker?

Lee: A network element that efficiently manages service interaction and composition, resides between the service layer and the converging network, and is traditionally decoupled from the core switch and the service execution or service creation environment.

Is this a new product category? When did it arise and why?

Lee: Yes, this is a relatively new product category. The traditional suppliers of legacy IN systems, the network equipment providers, have been reluctant to deliver service brokers because they promote a fundamental shift in how IN services are implemented and delivered. This category has been in existence for at least eight to 10 years, but only gained significant traction five to six years ago, in part due to legacy IN system end of lifes, adoption of IMS, and the need to integrate IN-IMS service capabilities going forward.

Did some industry organization – like 3GPP, the IETF, etc. – define the service broker?

Lee: There are no standards bodies defining service brokers. Organizations like 3GPP have specified one use case for a service broker called a SCIM, or service capability interaction manager, in the context of IMS as a service orchestration engine between multiple IMS application servers. There are also industry consortia such as the Service Broker Forum. But the protocols and languages on which service brokers have been implemented have been developed by standards bodies such as ETSI, IETF, 3GPP, OMA, W3C, and JCP, among others.

Who's using service brokers for what applications today?

Lee: Fixed and mobile operators have deployed, and continue to actively deploy, service brokers to implement solutions such as IN replacement/migration, IN-to-IN and IN-to-IMS mediation, and service orchestration (aka SCIM). Service brokers provide the protocol mediation and orchestration function, and application servers are used in conjunction with service brokers to implement the IN and IMS applications which are required. Operators are using service brokers to consolidate and re-implement existing legacy prepaid charging and online charging systems on an open, standards-based platform. This is the so-called next-generation IN approach to IN replacement/migration.

How does Oracle expect service brokers to evolve over time and address additional applications?

Lee: We expect the main use cases for service brokers to remain in the domain of providing an open, standards-based approach to implementing IN-to-IN, fixed-mobile, and IN-to-IMS migration/mediation solutions. This will include the migration, or replacement, of existing IN applications, such as prepaid, VPN, local number portability, home zone, etc., from a closed, proprietary platform to one based on open, industry-standard platforms such as Java. In addition to these existing primary use cases, we believe that service brokers will gradually evolve to more natively support policy management, online charging, and subscriber data management solutions. As more and more fixed and mobile operators look for quality of service solutions based on policy control and personalized services using subscriber profile information dispersed across multiple networks, the service broker's ability for network connectivity and mediation becomes a core capability.

What does Oracle offer in the way of a service broker?

Lee: Oracle Communications Service Broker is the service broker component of the Oracle Communications Service Delivery product family. Oracle Communications Service Broker allows network operators to replicate existing services with reduced development time and cost using latest application server technologies and platforms. To reduce development and deployment times, it includes a comprehensive set of productized interworking modules that implement intelligent network state-machines as well as network timers and adverse scenario handling for each supported network interface. This removes the complexity of application development for legacy networks allowing the developer to focus on the application functionality rather than network protocol interworking. Oracle Communications Service Broker enables a broader base of Java and IT developers to replicate services currently running on the legacy IN platforms as well as develop new services on open standards-based IT technologies, including Oracle Communications Converged Application Server, by removing the network complexities associated with traditional communications infrastructure. IT

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By Paula Bernier

Policy Exchange Controllers Address LTE Carrier Requirements

Service providers' new push to implement and execute policy within their networks has given rise to a new category of infrastructure some are calling the policy exchange controller.

"Yankee Group believes that policy exchange controllers are essential building blocks in the all-IP world of LTE and IMS," says Brian Partridge, vice president of network research with Yankee Group. "Acme Packet is taking advantage of its IMS border control leadership and IP signaling expertise to define a new product category and launch a compelling solution to help service providers successfully grow their next-generation networks."

Acme Packet earlier this year unveiled its Net-Net Policy Director, a product that controls the flow of policy within a service provider network or between different carrier networks.

Kevin Mitchell, director of solutions marketing, explains that the product, which was designed for LTE and IMS networks, is involved in authentication, authorization, mobility location, QoS, charging and other network functions. It's not a policy server or a deep packet inspection engine, he adds; rather, a policy exchange controller addresses interoperability and security issues, enabling policy flow to take place.

"It's basically an SBC for Diameter," says Mitchell of Acme Packet, which is best known for its session border controller solutions.

Roaming is the initial application for which policy exchange controllers are likely to be used, Mitchell says. For this application, the policy exchange controller would secure the Diameter signaling border between visited and home service providers so roaming subscribers can access both data and voice services. These devices also enable IPX carriers and roaming hubs to deliver multilateral LTE roaming services, according to Acme Packet.

Policy aggregation and federated service delivery are the other two key applications in which policy exchange controllers are expected to play a role.

For policy aggregation, Acme Packet says, policy exchange controllers help simplify the connections needed – and allow for multi-vendor interoperability – between the many network elements in LTE and IMS networks. That includes network elements such as the home subscriber server, policy charging and rules function, and mobility management entity.

As for federated service delivery, policy exchange controllers facilitate policy exchange between a network transport provider and a service provider, such as a mobile virtual network operator or over-the-top/cloud provider. That can enable revenue-sharing business models, notes Acme Packet.

"As LTE and IMS networks grow in number and subscribers, Diameter-based policy exchange will become instrumental to service provider profits," says Seamus Hourihan, vice president of marketing and product management with Acme Packet. "Acme Packet is taking the lead in defining the policy exchange controller requirements and extending session border control to new networks and new protocols with the Net-Net Policy Director."

Acme Packet declined to provide pricing information on the Net-Net Policy Director, which is now in customer labs and expected to be commercially available in volume starting this summer.

Of course, Tekelec is another company that plays in the policy space, with its RAN-aware policy management and mobile video solutions that combine the Camiant Policy Management product with the Performance Intelligence Center and the Subscriber Data Management solution.

The radio access network solution gives operators the real-time performance and subscriber intelligence to enable them to adjust network and subscriber policies based on traffic conditions.

"This year mobile operators are focused on service innovation to accelerate revenue growth and in particular, optimize their networks for mobile video," says Susie Kim Riley, Tekelec's chief marketing officer. "Dynamic policy management combined with real-time network and subscriber intelligence will be critical for operators looking to improve network performance and offer personalized services to their subscribers."

Randy Fuller, director of strategic marketing, says that many of the major service providers already are using Tekelec's policy management products today. And Tekelec's tools can let service providers decide what they want to look at in the network as it relates to subscribers and other service and network parameters.

"Tekelec has all the pieces to do true congestion-based policy control," Fuller says.

He adds that the company is currently in trials in the Latin America and Europe with the solution, which he says is the first of its kind. IT

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By Paula Bernier

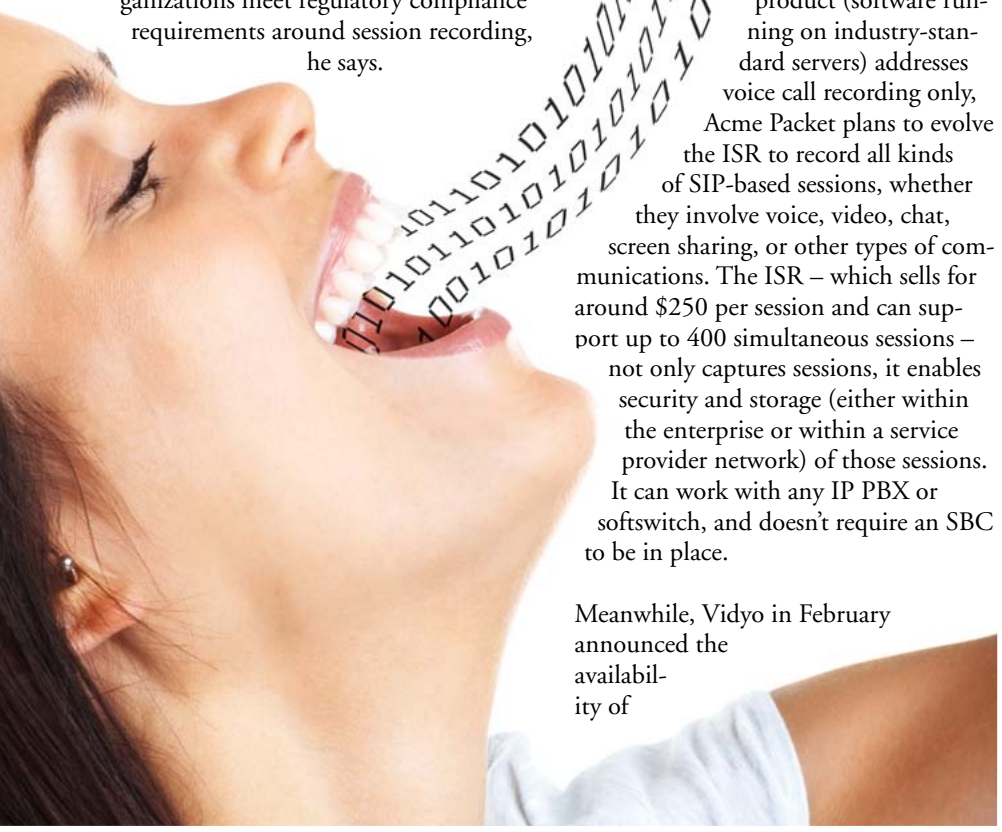
New Entrants Join the Call Recording Space

Call recording traditionally has been something of a niche business in which specialty recording companies have played. But in recent months the call recording space has seen some new entrants that come at this space from various angles.

Two new entrants to this space include service border controller leader Acme Packet and innovative video solution provider Vidyo Inc.

Acme Packet earlier this year announced the rebranding of the session recorder it got through a recent acquisition. What is now known as the Net-Net Interactive Session Recorder, or ISR, is a product that Acme Packet acquired via its purchase of NewFound Communications in January.

The ISR is not aimed at contact centers, as are some traditional recording solutions, says Steve Collins, Acme Packet vice president of marketing. Rather, it's meant to help businesses and other organizations meet regulatory compliance requirements around session recording, he says.



Collins goes on to note that in the U.K. there are new regulations requiring that all mobile calls by securities traders must be recorded. A natural place to do that kind of recording, he adds, is within the service provider network. Acme Packet envisions service providers hanging the ISR off their SIP trunks to deliver call recording services from the cloud. Indeed, several major U.S. service providers today leverage the NewFound solution, he adds.

Although the current product (software running on industry-standard servers) addresses voice call recording only, Acme Packet plans to evolve the ISR to record all kinds of SIP-based sessions, whether they involve voice, video, chat, screen sharing, or other types of communications. The ISR – which sells for around $250 per session and can support up to 400 simultaneous sessions – not only captures sessions, it enables security and storage (either within the enterprise or within a service provider network) of those sessions. It can work with any IP PBX or softswitch, and doesn't require an SBC to be in place.

Meanwhile, Vidyo in February announced the availability of the VidyoReplay appliance. This tool is aimed to allow easy-to-use webcasting and recording for the Vidyo solution. It enables large numbers of users to watch a Vidyo conference via web browser, either in real time or later.

"Here at ASU's School of Life Sciences, students are participating in high-quality Vidyo exchanges with Smithsonian Institution scientists and researchers located in the jungles of Panama," says Charles Kazilek, director of technology integration and outreach at the School of Life Sciences at Arizona State University. "With VidyoReplay we can now capture these valuable interactions to use as an educational resource for larger groups of students to view and learn from; it enhances the learning experience for our faculty and students, alike. The Vidyo system transforms typical mediated classrooms on campus into real-time, research and learning environments."

Ofer Shapiro, Vidyo's co-founder and CEO, adds: "VidyoReplay extends Vidyo's ability to connect disparate endpoints to deliver low-cost, HD multipoint videoconferences and now allows users to capture this content for future off-line viewing, anytime and anyplace. Our customers in education, health care, legal services, and the enterprise are finding VidyoReplay a 'must have' tool for a variety of different purposes – lowering expenses, generating revenues, collaborating efficiently across time zones, sharing information with large audiences and providing value-added services to their client base. The ability to easily and affordably record and broadcast high-quality Vidyo conferences is another reason that so many organizations are embracing Vidyo technology and products."

Recording is also a key focus of companies such as OrecX, which recently introduced the Open Source Recording Channel on TMCnet. The Open Source Recording Channel promotes an array of solutions available from OrecX. In

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And, as discussed in the July issue of INTERNET TELEPHONY, Aspect with release 6.6. of Unified IP has bolstered its recording capabilities with improved recording archiving, security and encryption. This allows companies to record interactions while complying with regulations, such as support for outbound recording in multiple locations.

"The new additions to Aspect's Unified IP platform address some of the key issues for contact centers," says Aphrodite Brinsmead, analyst of customer interaction technologies at Ovum. "These tools enable enterprises to simplify business processes and gain more control over distributed contact centers. Aspect continues to differentiate itself in a competitive contact center industry by focusing on unified communications and its partnership with Microsoft."

Andy Bezaitis, senior vice president of product management at Aspect, adds that the company uses direct customer feedback to ensure it's not delivering technology for technology's sake, but actually providing capabilities that will deliver significant benefits to organizations.

http://tmcnet.com/58680.1

OrecX Introduces Open Source Recording Channel

The Open Source Recording Channel, sponsored by OrecX, has been launched as the newest addition to the TMCnet channel program. The Open Source Recording Channel promotes an array of solutions available from OrecX. In addition, visitors can find valuable resources such as product guides, testimonials, feature articles and industry news.

"Being able to deploy the solution quicker is very important, as well as delivering innovations that enable our customers to operate in a highly regulated and competitive environment," says Bezaitis. "Our focus is on ensuring that our customers have the solution they need when they need it…."

Other call recording trends include the move to support HD audio and multilingual support, say SIP Print CEO Donald C. Palmer and CTO Jonathan Fuld.

SIP Print last year released a G.722 high-definition version of its call recording solution. The company also recently came out with support for the G.729 codec, which got the company into the carrier side of the business, and G.723. IT

Strategic Solutions series

The Hosted VoIP Supplement

Strategic Solutions Series

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Enabling Whole Enterprise IP Communications

By Paula Bernier

A Look at the Hosted VoIP Market

Demand for hosted VoIP services remains on the upswing as businesses continue to see the appeal of outsourcing their communications in an effort to drive down costs and allow them to focus on their core competencies rather than on managing infrastructure and applications.

"From our IP PBX survey, it appears that businesses are increasingly embracing a hosted services model, as their capacity needs will depend on how robust the economic recovery is, and hosted services allow them to more easily ramp their capacity needs up and down without a huge cash layout for equipment," noted Infonetics Research analyst Matthias Machowinski in releasing a study on the market at this time last year.

According to some estimates, hosted IP communications can be deployed at a 30 percent lower cost of ownership than an on-site IP PBX solution and can increase enterprise productivity by $500 per employee, per year.

Competition in the hosted VoIP and UC market is intense, according to ABI Research, but service providers are differentiating themselves by building on their service provisioning and integration capabilities, quality of service, service bundling, and price.

The firm in September forecast that the VoIP services space – which it categorizes as including VoIP integrated access, SIP trunking, hosted IP PBX/IP Centrex and managed IP PBX services – will double within five years. If that happens as expected, this market opportunity will surmount $20 billion by 2015.

What's more, forecasts point to a 13 percent compound annual growth rate in revenues and a 19.6 percent CAGR in lines between 2010 and 2015. This is despite growing competition from low-cost providers and market price pressures.

Meanwhile, Infonetics Research reports that service provider revenue from residential/SOHO and business VoIP services increased 20 percent between 2008 and 2009, to $41.6 billion, IP connectivity services are the fastest growing segment of the business VoIP services market, followed by hosted VoIP and unified communication services and managed IP PBX services, according to the research house.

"The trend of companies outsourcing their communications infrastructure has taken off in earnest, as enterprise decision-makers look for cost savings without having to compromise on features and functionality," says ABI Research senior analyst Subha Rama.

The move by businesses to replace legacy phone systems is driving much of the growth in hosted VoIP. And it's not just small and medium businesses that are embracing hosted VoIP. Organizations adopting this outsourced model run the gamut from very small businesses to very large, multi-location organizations.

"Even large businesses that traditionally shied away from hosted services for mission-critical communications are deploying hybrid models, [and] experimenting with hosted services in smaller doses," says Rama of ABI Research.

Indeed, because large companies also tend to be widely distributed – with several branch offices and sometimes telecommuters – hosted VoIP makes perfect sense. That's because it can enable all those locations to be served from the cloud easily, affordably and consistently.

To elaborate on that last point, hosted VoIP solutions can enable employees to work remotely and still have the same calling functionality (including the ability to transfer calls between extensions, for example) and business caller ID appearances as they would were they all in the same physical location.

"Hosted IP telephony platforms have come a long way over the past 10 years and can provide flexibility, risk avoidance and economic scalability for enterprises looking to implement advanced IP communications capabilities," says Elka Popova of Frost & Sullivan. "According to our research, hosted IP telecommunications deployments have been embraced most by enterprises with a variety of geographically-dispersed locations such as government, education and retail organizations."

By David Byrd and Frank Grillo

Unified Communications as a Service

Whether replacing an aging communications system or purchasing a new one, businesses need and want a communications system that does everything their current PBX does, while also delivering the cost savings, productivity improvement and future applications support of voice over IP. However, the complexity and costs required to build and maintain a VoIP communications system, particularly one that supports SIP trunking, are leading an increasing number of organizations to completely outsource their communications services to technology service providers such as Cypress Communications and Internet telephony service providers such as Broadvox.

The outsourced solutions that technology service providers and Internet telephony service providers offer range from basic, shrink-wrapped hosted VoIP solutions to full unified communications-as-a-service solutions. UCaaS solutions extend hosted VoIP by including unified communications functionality such as Outlook integration, collaboration, instant messaging, videoconferencing, HD voice, softphones and real-time presence. As an outsourced solution, UCaaS requires little oversight from an IT management team and therefore enables reallocation of IT budget and personnel resources to create the greatest business growth and value. With a UCaaS solution, an SMB or enterprise can leverage world class, state of the art communication services without the complex implementation effort required to build a premises-based solution.

In contracting for a UCaaS solution, users lease the communications services and some or all of the equipment, avoiding paying upfront capital expenses. While frequent acquisitions of upgrades and replacements may be acceptable for lower cost items like laptops, cell phones or even SIP phones, this approach is not practical for the capital intensive technology of VoIP/IP PBX infrastructures. The concern over such a large expenditure can make many SMBs and enterprises cautious about making communications capital investments. However, UCaaS customized solutions allow businesses to shift the technology risk to the technology service provider (whose business model spreads the risk across its customer base and time) while still being able to enjoy the productivity and efficiency benefits of unified communications.

Hosted VoIP services remove the need for equipment from the business site and the day-to-day management responsibilities, which are handled by the vendor (in some cases MAC activity is shared between the client and the technology service provider). UCaaS, similar in concept to software as a service, or SaaS, represents the virtualization of the IP PBX. As the newest and most innovative of the hosted applications solutions, UCaaS includes a full complement of unified communications functionality. In the UCaaS paradigm, the PBX is cloud based and delivers the same level of availability and quality expected from Internet telephony service providers, like 24x7x365 network monitoring, clear sound and exceptional service and support. Like other hosted service models, businesses outsource the equipment to the cloud, paying for usage instead of ownership.

In the new pricing paradigm proposed by Broadvox, technology service providers will separate the communications usage from the number of seat licenses required to support the business. This split can result in additional cost savings of nearly 60 percent over previous hosted PBX pricing models. However, the average business should see a more modest improvement of 30 percent. These savings are a result of the separation of the price per extension license fee from local and long-distance calling charges, as businesses with a high number of extensions but low usage will pay less than businesses with the same number of extensions but with higher usage. This minimizes the cost of seldom-used phones in conference rooms, kitchens, warehouses or reception areas.

Bundled services typically includes LAN and WAN, security, routers, integrated access (voice and data), local and long-distance voice services, voicemail, VoIP technology infrastructure and advanced PBX functionality (the handset is optional). In the UCaaS paradigm, a single vendor is contracted for the entire spectrum of communication needs of the business, including video calling, web collaboration, chat, real-time presence and unified messaging.

While technology innovation brings many positives to the table, rapid technology advances bring about product obsolescence in a very short amount of time. With the advent of mobile computing, smartphones, video and many more new technologies, products today typically have much shorter life cycles – as short as two years. However, UCaaS absorbs this risk by continuously upgrading the equipment and software, keeping businesses current with the latest in VoIP and unified communications functionality.

UCaaS as offered by Broadvox and Cypress is the future for virtual or hosted VoIP solutions.

David Byrd is executive vice president of sales and marketing at Broadvox. Frank Grillo is executive vice president of implementation, support and product marketing at Cypress Communications.

GO!VBX Sets New Pricing Model for Hosted PBX Services and Now includes Unified Communications

If you're looking for a hosted PBX service provider that will outfit your business with a full array of features and functionality at an affordable price, be sure to consider Broadvox and Cypress Communications. GO!VBX establishes a new business model in pricing for hosted PBX service.

The average cost per extension typically is about 60 percent less than what competitors charge for comparable services. Broadvox is able to deliver such low pricing by separating the price of the per extension license fee from local and long-distance calling charges.

That means organizations with a high number of extensions but low usage pay less than those with the same number of extensions but with higher usage. And with GO!VBX, customers aren't required to pay for usage from seldom-used phones in areas like conference rooms, kitchens, warehouses or reception areas.

"The majority of providers out there, the way they're pricing their product it's per seat with the included voice calling, regardless of how many calls your entire domain can make at any given time," Broadvox and Cypress CEO, President and founder Andre Temnorod says. "We separate voice and hosted PBX; we take the voice out of each seat."

That gives customers the flexibility to vary how many calls they can make in and out of the PBX.

"If you take as an example a current PBX deployment, you pay for the PBX, for the phones, and then you also pay for a certain number of PSTN trunks," Temnorod explains. "We try to emulate the same model, so this way when customers are making the decision to move from a traditional PSTN PRI/PBX model into the hosted model they can still calculate their savings – how much they're going to save on a monthly basis for moving their on-premises-based PBX to a hosted platform, and how much they're going to save by moving their PRIs into the SIP trunks."

GO!VBX delivers business IP PBX features with IP phones as the only purchase requirement. The service scales from five to 1,000 extensions and is suitable for both small and medium businesses, and enterprises. It can be used to deliver PBX services to the entire organization, regional offices, branch locations and to telecommuting workers. Whatever the customer size or implementation, however, GO!VBX delivers a full-featured Unified Communications solution including Outlook integration, collaboration, instant messaging, fixed-to-mobile convergence, videoconferencing, soft phones and real-time presence.

GO!VBX can be ordered with any of the GO!SIP Products; GO!Local for unlimited local calling; GO!Anywhere for unlimited local and long-distance calling in the U.S. and Canada; GO!Domestic for bundled minutes of long-distance and toll-free calling; and GO!Broadband for DSL, T1, Ethernet or DS3 connectivity.

Gartner recently named Cypress Communications as among the select companies in the Visionaries quadrant of the Gartner Magic Quadrant for Unified Communications as a Service, North America report. Daniel O'Connell and Bern Elliot of Gartner wrote that vendors in the Visionaries quadrant "demonstrate a clear understanding of the UCaaS market and offer a strong and differentiating approach to one or more core areas."

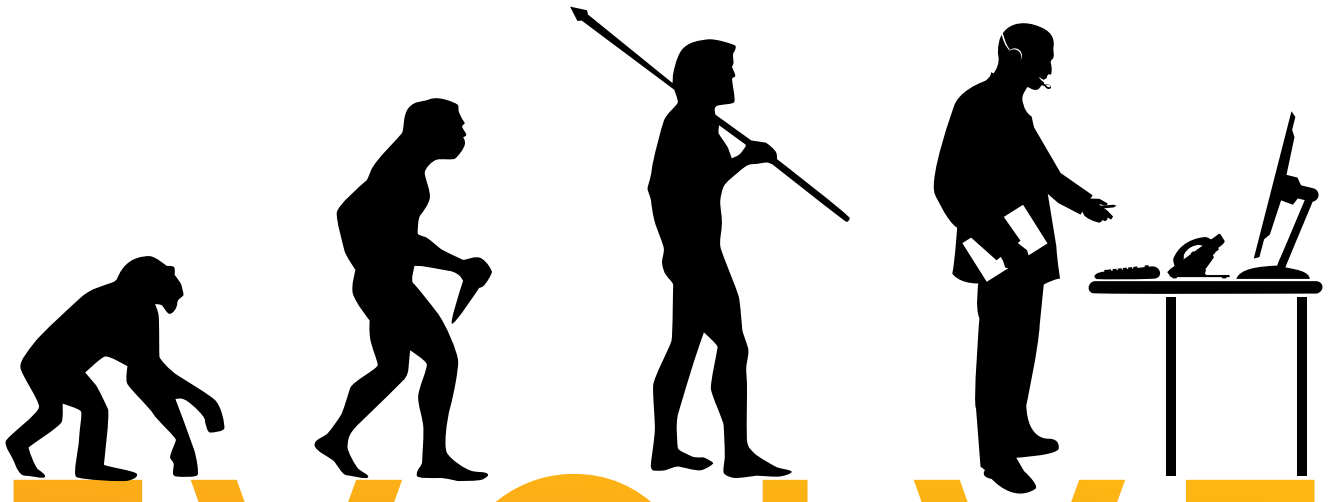
Brent Kelly, senior analyst and partner at Wainhouse Research, meanwhile, comments that: "The merger between Broadvox and Cypress combines complementary product portfolios well-suited to compete in today's emerging unified communications marketplace." He adds that the combined company offers "a broader range of services that spans carriers, premises-based tools, and hosted UC for SMB and enterprise customers."

In addition to a comprehensive set of PBX features, businesses that subscribe to GO!VBX get access to a user-friendly administrative portal. Tenant managers can use this to set user permissions for each user and administrator, and can do things via the portal like set music on hold. The administrator level within the portal allows for the assignment of permissions for each end user of each tenant.

That enables businesses to more easily control their services and MACs as needed. But Broadvox and Cypress are always close at hand for their customers, from the initial service turn up to throughout the life of the organization's contract.

"When a customer is going through a turn-up process, in a few cases with VoIP things don't work from the get-go," Temnorod says. "It requires engineers to get involved and do things like packet captures, trying to figure out a customer set up, how the customer is sending us packets, what type of information they have inside of those packets.

"But our engineers have been at this for many years, and they're capable of helping customers with difficult problems," he continues. "I've seen other providers simply give up. We do not give up on our customers."



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By Paula Bernier

XO Communications Business Services

XO Enterprise Cloud Communications

Enabling Businesses to Adopt Affordable, Whole Enterprise IP Communications

Businesses everywhere are working to achieve ever-higher levels of operational efficiency while at the same time keeping capital expenses at a minimum. While many of those organizations understand the productivity and cost benefits that a move to IP and unified communications could deliver, concerns about upfront costs and how such a change could impact opex can be significant roadblocks to moving ahead on such initiatives.

However, there is a solution that can enable your organization to overcome these barriers and advance on the communications front. It's called XO Enterprise Cloud Communications.

This new offer from XO Communications allows businesses of all sizes to enjoy a wide range of IP telephony features, including local and long-distance calling, enterprise-wide HD voice and video services, and more – and without the burden of buying and managing new phones, hardware or software. Instead, all required infrastructure is provided as part of the cloud-based service.

The network infrastructure that delivers all this IP communications capability is housed, managed and maintained by XO Communications. That means your business doesn't have to deal with the headaches and human resources costs of managing all of this internally.

What's more, businesses like yours needn't be concerned about service costs. XO Enterprise Cloud Communications is sold based on a specified per-user pricing model.

"Our innovative, cloud-based enterprise IP communications platform will help businesses contain and reduce capital expenditures at a time when budgets are tight, while giving them the ability to introduce new productivity-enhancing communications capabilities that future-proof their networks and corresponding investments," says Mike Toplisek, chief marketing officer for XO Business Services at XO Communications.

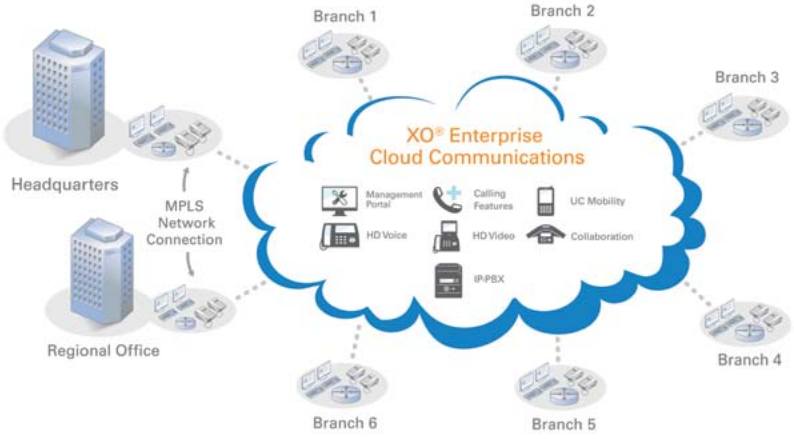
XO Enterprise Cloud Communications includes IP telephony and unified communications applications; free local and site-to-site calling within the enterprise; long-distance calling plans; enterprise-wide HD voice and HD video; MPLS IP-VPN network services; and business continuity capabilities. All of the above have attached to them robust service level agreements.

Also as part of the offering, businesses can select from IP phone sets from Cisco and Polycom. XO Enterprise Cloud Communications also includes access to a web portal to enable business customers to manage services for each of their locations and to do their own quality of service monitoring, if they so choose.

And it's a tested and proven offer that addresses the needs of organizations of various sizes.

"XO Enterprise Cloud Communications represents the next evolution of our award-winning IP communications portfolio, which today supports 30,000 business customers and more than one million end users," says Mike Toplisek. "This solution is ideal for mid-market businesses and larger enterprises with distributed operations by helping them solve important business issues of controlling costs, improving employee productivity and increasing their competitiveness in the market."

Toplisek adds that businesses with multiple locations of varying sizes typically have a wide range of different telephony infrastructures that not only inhibit efficient and seamless communications but also the integration of telephony infrastructures with applications that enable unified communications. By delivering a single, cloud-based IP/UC communications solution across the enterprise, XO Enterprise Cloud Communications lowers organizations' overhead costs while clearing the barriers that once stood in the way of truly seamless, whole-enterprise unified communications.



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The New World of Collaboration

By Erik Linask

One of the key drivers of business success is the degree to which employees are encouraged to collaborate. In fact, the ability to collaborate effectively can be the difference between a world-class organization and an also-ran. Collaboration not only helps in developing best-in-class strategies and ideas, but it also creates a sense of camaraderie and ownership among team members.

It's easy when all your employees sit under one roof. But, with the growth of distributed workforces, collaboration becomes as much a technology question as a corporate mantra. For multi-site businesses or those with remote workers, collaboration requires an investment in technology that will enable a convenient collaborative environment (that's not to imply that single-location businesses would not benefit from the same technologies).

I recently had a chance to talk to Ron Burns, CTO at ProtonMedia, which has developed a tool to drive collaboration in enterprise environments. The product, called ProtoSphere, is a 3D virtual environment that can be used to enhance sales calls, corporate meetings, training and educational exercises, or one-on-one meetings.

"Where people have typically made a call from a conference room, we have made the call the room," explains Burns. "Instead of meetings being based on scheduled times, we are enabling persistent collaboration."

The idea is that every time you dial into a call, you enter into a virtual environment, instantly adding the ability to share information, data, and documents with your colleagues, partners, or customers. Certainly, there are a number of very good content sharing systems available today, but the virtual environment adds the personal presence that gives the feeling of closer interactivity. Despite the advances in communication technology, there still is no substitute for face-to-face communication, and the avatar-based experience delivered by ProtoSphere adds that element to the experience.

I'm not 100 percent sold on the idea, but I do believe in collaboration as a facilitator of success, and ProtoSphere has a number of easy-to-use features that make collaboration simple and allow users to leverage those features they find most useful at any time. Some of my favorite features include:

- 3D data visualization, which was developed initially for displaying medial imagery, but can be used to display any kind of data table, including the ability to sort and filter data on the fly;
- search capability for indentifying any stored content, including documents and blogs, which can then be shared with other participants on a presentation board;
- moving between conference calls/rooms while leaving the legacy of your communications in the original room;
- text chat, gesturing, and customizable avatars, creating a uniquely personalized experience; and
- integrated social network profiles.

Burns says the company will also add a webcam option in the future, and is also in talks with telepresence vendors to integrate high-end videoconferencing to the solution.

But even with voice and text communication, virtual collaboration settings offer an enhanced meeting experience for a wide range of applications, ranging from daily one-on-one meetings to larger virtual conference sessions and classrooms. (It can support auditorium-style presentations for up to 250 participants.)

In fact, results from a user experience survey indicate that 100 percent of respondents said they would attend another ProtoSphere event. That figure speaks for itself.

Virtual environments are still in their early stages, though there are several similar solutions already on the market (though my experience is Protoshpere is extremely user friendly), and it will take some time before they become mainstream. However, forward-thinking businesses looking to enhance their internal and external collaboration capabilities will quickly realize the benefits from their investments.

Once users begin using the platform, they will quickly find its features can be leveraged in many daily activities, enabling them to develop closer, more personal relationships with colleagues, partners, and clients. For anyone interested in giving ProtoSphere a test drive, the company offers a trial download from its website, www.protonmedia.com. I encourage you to try it out.

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