

Save time, save money, improve efficiency

A Voice over IP system delivers benefits unique to a unified environment



Voice over IP (VoIP) not only offers a new method of making and receiving phone calls, but also opens corporations up to implementing a system of unified communications which connects voice, e-mail, data, instant messaging (IM) and video- and phone conferencing—allowing employees and clients to work from any location and time zone around the world. These services, which convert voice and data into IP packets that flow across a controlled network, are becoming increasingly popular across Canada and the U.S.

Companies which have implemented VoIP have experienced significant cost

advantages, as one service provider now manages all communication systems and maintenance. But costs aside, VoIP also delivers facilitated work flow and increased flexibility of work hours and locations. Communicating over an IP network makes it possible for employees who may be sitting at a desk to answer cellphone calls, receive e-mail containing voice mail messages and pick up the desk phone to contact other employees on the same network.

VoIP tools are made by many vendors, and include Microsoft's Live Communications Server (LCS) and Office Communicator 2007. Global Crossing, a

Microsoft customer which provides telecommunications services over a worldwide, integrated IP-based network, found these tools helped it implement what it calls unified work: "the right people at the right time for the right tasks."

Global Crossing combined Microsoft's services with its existing corporate directory, PeopleFinder, allowing employees to not only locate coworkers but also determine whether and how they were available to chat. As a time saving device, the company found LCS allowed technicians to use IM to converse with other staff members, for example. In 2006, Global Crossing added LCS to the existing provisioning and network inventory system. Now when an exception occurs, the company says the person resolving the issue can see who was responsible for performing the work steps before and after. The new system has improved cycle times by a reported 75 per cent, reduced response time by 80 per cent and delivered staffing efficiencies.

Knowing where managers and employees are and how they can be reached provides a significant competitive advantage and subsequently customer and consumer benefit. But according to the experts on the following pages, corporations are just beginning to realize the true benefits of communicating over an IP network. Convergence is allowing corporations to change their business processes by facilitating the generation and sharing of information, and in a world where time is money and patience is dwindling, VoIP services allow corporations to improve the speed and efficiency of their communications both internally and externally.

Understanding the human infrastructure

How simplifying communications enables connections



Julija Noskova is a senior marketing manager with Allstream

Ever try to reach a colleague urgently by telephone only to hear back days later via e-mail? We work closely with other people and rely on technology to keep us connected, yet often the very technology that is meant to help us ends up hindering communication.

Think of our everyday work and social relationships as human infrastructure. Just as cities have roads and electrical grids, and computer networks are based on vast arrays of servers and switches, the same principle applies to businesses—people and human interactions empower the innovation and processes that make businesses work. So that whenever we meet face to face, talk on the phone, or send and receive e-mail and text messages, we're part of the human infrastructure.

The irony, however, is that, despite more avenues of communication than ever, we can be downright impossible to reach, particularly in the world of work. When we need to talk, we get voice mail. E-mail piles up by the hundred-score, often going unanswered. People have more communication devices, accounts and passwords than they can handle, yet we're never sure where to find them. Technology is overloading our human infrastructure, blasting it with multiple avenues of communication and undermining the very productivity and competitiveness our modern-day networking tools are supposed to help us achieve.

"If you were to look at this as a network of highways, you'd have about 10 different roads leading to a single destination," says Julija Noskova, senior marketing manager with Allstream. "Because there are so many ways that information can get to a particular individual, communication often gets muddled."

The ability to quickly connect with key stakeholders is an important part of any business. Speedy customer service and problem resolution is a crucial competitive advantage that streamlines the business process in industries as diverse as finance, health care, education, manufacturing etc.

For example, the financial services sector illustrates this clearly. Loan applications can be excruciatingly slow and cumbersome, partly because numerous parties are involved, but also because these parties take longer than they should conveying information back and forth. Branch and call centre staff can't always reach product representatives when customers are on the phone, customer interaction records aren't always fully available for account representatives, and applications often contain information from multiple sources, resulting in errors and unnecessary duplication.

Allstream offers an answer to this daunting problem with our Unified Communications suite of solutions. Through the use of next-generation tools like unified messaging, presence, IM, teleworking and mobility, communications are seamlessly integrated onto a single platform. Unified Communications takes fragmented networking and communications technologies and moves them to a single device that can be used anywhere, anytime.

"The answer to all these challenges is not more technology, but a smarter, more innovative way of using technology to unify and optimize the web of interactions," Noskova explains.

With real-time collaboration tools, banks can shorten the loan application process from days to hours, cutting costs and increasing the volume of business. In education and profes-



sional development, videoconferencing systems can enable distance learning. Clothing stores can install IP telephony in fitting rooms so shoppers can interact with store personnel while trying on merchandise. Virtual contact centres can serve as a focal point for customers of all kinds.

Working with Allstream Unified Communications, people can collaborate effectively, regardless of where they happen to be. Noskova says the benefits of Unified Communications include improved customer experience, greater productivity, lower costs and improved business processes.

"So many different organizations can use unified communications in so many different ways. It's not just for employees. It's also for your partners, your customers, anyone you need to contact. Unified communications optimize your human infrastructure, making people more productive and companies more competitive."

For more information, visit us at www.allstream.com or call 1-888-454-0844.

IT'S ABOUT

DRIVING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

In a world where borders no longer exist, collaboration and mobility are essential tools for your business to remain competitive. They ensure that everyone - employees, customers, suppliers, and partners - have a secure, reliable and effective way to communicate with one another - from anywhere, at any time, and any device.

Allstream's powerful Unified Communications suite of solutions allows you to integrate all of your communication applications and gives you access to productivity tools such as unified messaging, presence, IM, file sharing, audio/video conferencing, teleworking and mobility. With solutions that include business consulting, network and security assessments, telephony hardware, applications, integration, connectivity, and maintenance services, we can ensure our solutions meet your business challenges.

Employing an experienced and dedicated workforce, award-winning innovative technology, national presence and superior delivery capabilities, our world-class suite of telecom services and solutions will help you drive individual, team and business productivity, while improving customer service and lowering costs.

Thousands of companies have already benefited from the Allstream difference. Call us today to find out how our solutions can help your business grow.

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Converged networks deliver converged business functionality

Voice, e-mail, IM, video and Web conferencing: one network, one interface



Stéphane Boisvert is President of the Bell Enterprise Group

As Voice over IP (VoIP) becomes an increasingly mainstream technology deployed across the business world, organizations are just beginning to realize the benefits of an IP network. “VoIP is not the endgame but rather a means to increased productivity through unified messaging and collaboration,” says Stéphane Boisvert, President,

Bell Enterprise Group.

What’s important for businesses to remember is that the voice application is just one of many on a converged IP network. “The real phenomenon here,” he says, “is that people are integrating their voice and data networks faster than they ever have before.”

The most basic collaborative technology, says Boisvert, is combining all of your communications—e-mail, IM, phone and data—on one platform. The next step would be taking non-real-time messaging and marrying it with real-time communications such as video and Web conferencing. Now, with major partnerships between Bell, Nortel and Microsoft, you can have people across different geographies and time zones working together through an IP network using a variety of media simultaneously.

“It is possible to conduct a Web conference and collaborative think-tank session while working on documents and exchanging data—all through one application,” he says.

Consumer and business tech

One significant development that Boisvert often discusses with clients is the fact that this is the first time in history that consumer technology is often more advanced than that used in the



business world. “In the old days you would graduate from university and go to a job that would teach you how to use the technology you needed to do your work,” he says. “Today, kids are prepared to collaborate and work in a virtual world in more ways than the business world allows them.”

This is the first generation of kids who are weaned on the Internet using Facebook and IM and exchanging data and video quite seamlessly, he says. In order for corporations to attract and retain this talent they must have the appropriate tools in place. “We’ve never had a generation better prepared to work with technology,” he says, “but now we in the industry aren’t prepared to exploit that potential.”

As businesses continue to evolve, so too does the way we work, communicate and create content. This technology makes these processes faster and simple.

IP expertise

But the complexity of deploying VoIP and related services requires personnel

with specialized IT experience—something that Bell, as Canada’s leading VoIP provider, is more than equipped to deliver.

With more than 1,000 on-staff IT professionals, Bell is able to assess, design, build, grow and manage a corporation’s IP network based on the company’s preferences and strategy.

“Once it’s all in place our customers can focus on running their business without worrying about operating their own mini IT shop,” says Boisvert. “They rely on our skill to monitor the network and provide around-the-clock technical support.”

Because most companies aren’t yet taking full advantage of all the IP features available to them, Bell also ensures that an investment in VoIP is future-proof, giving the customer the opportunity to evolve and expand their services over time.

For more information, visit us at <http://www.bell.ca/enterprise/>

Truly unified communications

Moving to one number consolidates communications and delivers significant efficiency



Amir Hameed is Director of Software and Application Sales for Avaya Canada

Avaya and its parent companies have provided business telephony solutions for more than 100 years, but it has only been in the past five years or so that many customers have begun making the shift to Voice over IP (VoIP) and IP telephony, explains Amir Hameed, Director of Software and Application Sales for Avaya Canada.

According to Hameed, simply switching from a traditional phone system to an IP system only delivers part of the potential benefit. The real advantages come from unified communications—the convergence of real-time and non-real-time business communications applications.

One example of the benefits of unified communications that many corporations are now starting to realize can be seen in Hameed's own daily commute to Avaya's head-office in Markham, Ontario. "For two hours a day my car becomes my office," he indicates. Because his car is Bluetooth enabled, Hameed uses his cellphone to dial his Avaya speech-access number and employs verbal commands to access his voicemail, calendar appointments, and e-mail, which is recited aloud. "Everyone loves their BlackBerry but checking your e-mail while driving on the highway can be a very risky endeavour." Instead, Hameed simply says "read my e-mail messages" or "read my urgent messages" and the system responds accordingly. Because Avaya's IP system is compatible with a number of different Microsoft and IBM platforms, Hameed can also make calls to any of his Outlook contacts simply by say-

ing the name aloud. "I can also make real-time conference calls through the same voice activation feature."

One number

Tools such as the extension-to-cellular feature ensure that employees are connected wherever they are. "When I give out my business card, I only have one unified number. That means if someone's trying to reach me, they'll first be directed to my desk and if I don't pick up, the call is automatically linked to my cellular device. I can also transfer seamlessly back to my deskphone mid-call if I return to my office." Avaya's services also give users access to the top 20 of their business phone features including call forwarding and three-way-calling on any brand of cellphone. "We want you to have one experience irrespective of what device you're using," explains Hameed.

Not only does unified communications allow for business continuity and more responsive customer service, it also accounts for significant savings in communications expenses. For example, Avaya worked with the Honda Formula 1 team to provide connectivity to the drivers, engineers and designers who work and travel across various locations around the world. Avaya simplified their communications by providing IP phones, softphones as well as connecting Nokia cellular devices to the existing IP network. Today, team members can be accessed through one number. "They've seen a 30 per cent savings in communications costs," said Hameed. "So it's not just a matter of providing you with more goodies but justifying technology with a solid business case as well."

Is your company unified?

- 1 When I need to quickly conference colleagues together, does it take 15 minutes just to get to "Is everyone here?"
- 2 When I need to contact my colleagues, do I know if they're available or how to best reach them?
- 3 Can I use just one contact number for business, and never miss a single call?
- 4 When I travel on business, is it like my desk phone is right there with me?
- 5 If my desk phone rings at the end of the day, am I usually stuck in the office for another hour?

Finally, it is important to realize that Avaya can integrate with corporate software from companies including Microsoft and IBM, bringing the uniqueness of Avaya's telephony solutions to the enterprise. "We want to be the engine behind the click. With an Avaya softphone on your PC, all you have to do is click to connect to your business and realize the ultimate advantage of truly collaborative communications.

Visit Avaya Canada's Web site at www.avaya.com to discover if your answers mean your company is ready to streamline its communications.

Unified Communications delivers both functionality and efficiency

Radiant's nationwide voice-optimized private network ties in all the benefits of modern IP systems



Adrian Byram is the Executive Vice President and CTO of Radiant Communications

Many organizations do not yet realize that updating their current phone system may give them a competitive business advantage. While replacing a functioning landline may seem unnecessary, the services and convenience associated with Voice over IP (VoIP) or a Unified Communications system can be instrumental in improving the quality and efficiency of an organization's communications.

in improving the quality and efficiency of an organization's communications.

"Unified Communications provides an affordable digital voice solution that ties together every data and voice communication element in an organization or multi-location business," said Adrian Byram, Executive Vice President and CTO of Radiant Communications. "You

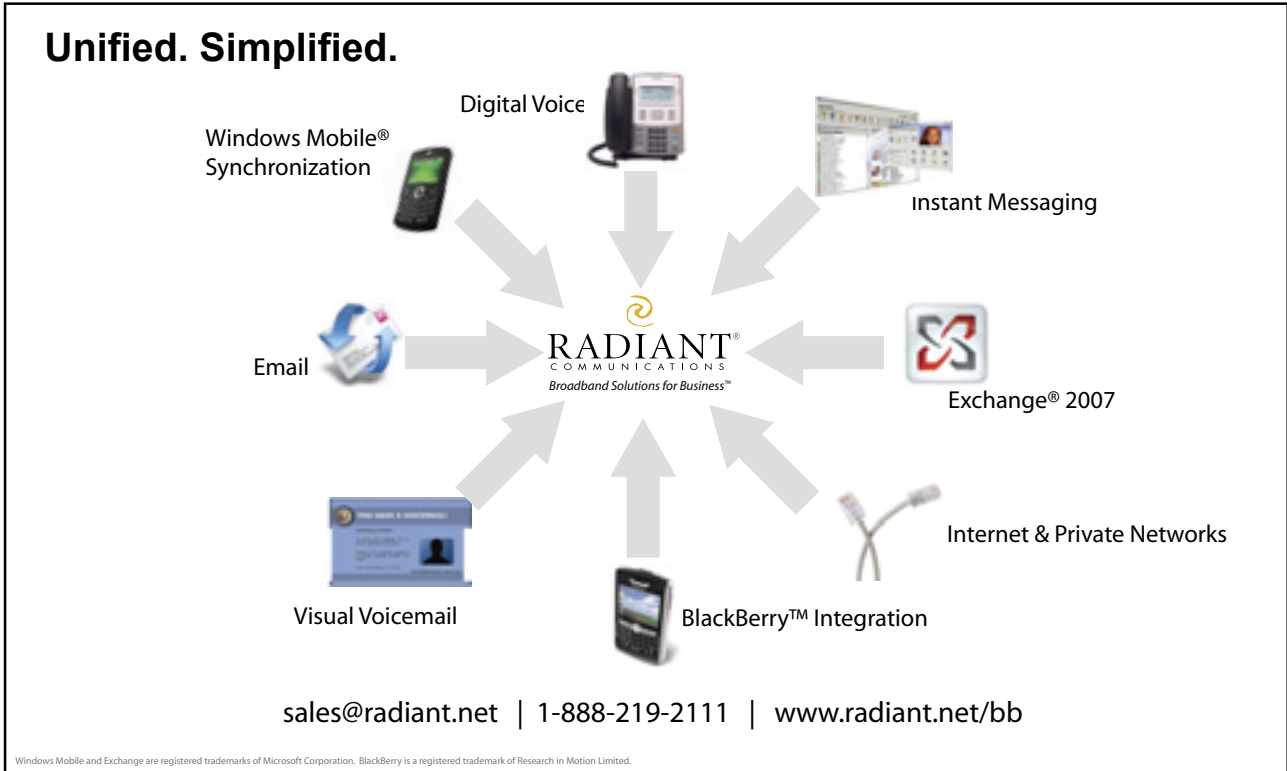
can have a phone on your desk or a program running on your computer that mimics a phone, and you can take that with you wherever you go. The system converts everything into Internet Protocol (IP) packets which flow over Radiant's private backbone network."

What makes Radiant unique is its Canadian footprint—a nationwide voice-optimized private network with broadband data connections into all 10 provinces.

For an organization with locations across the country and road warriors who spend time away from the office, VoIP communications provides an unprecedented level of continuity. "Your voicemail messages are transferred to your email, which you can then retrieve instantaneously on your Blackberry; phone calls to your desk can be directly

transferred to your cell phone; calls can be transferred within an organization, even across the country, through a four-digit extension; and employees can see the status of their colleagues—whether they are in the office and active, on the telephone or out of the office—on their computer screens." For businesses and road warriors this means more efficient communications, higher quality and more accurate customer service, and huge cost and time savings. "Having a single source for voice and data communications also means more predictable monthly bills, around the clock technical support and improved security and quality control," Byram said.

For more information, visit us at www.radiant.net or call 1-888-219-2111.



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