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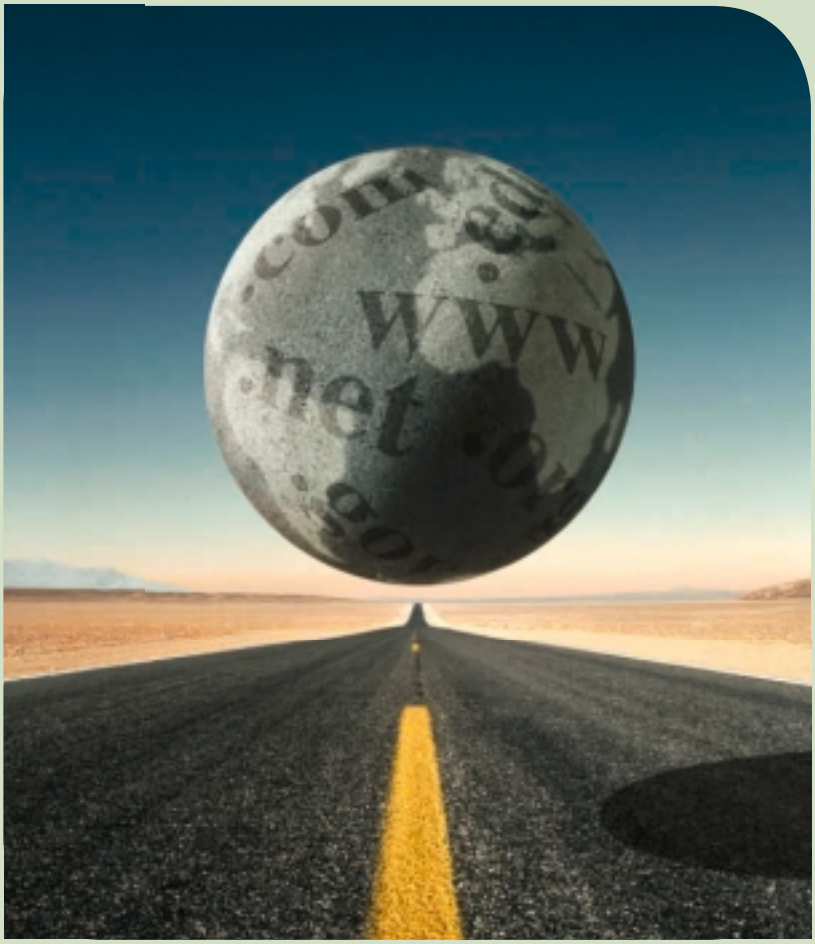
IP Telephony*

The vision of a truly mobile workforce comes to life



It's 9 a.m., Monday: Do you know where your employees are?

Chances are they're anywhere but at their desks. They could be working from a hotel room, at home, or from a branch office, in their cars or on planes en route to a meeting, roaming the corporate corridors on their way to a conference room, or off-site at a sales call or training seminar. Indeed, the very nature of work today has become highly mobile, and enterprises are no longer constrained by the four walls that make up the corporate headquarters.

When it comes to the U.S. workforce, it seems that hardly anybody's staying put these days. Market researcher IDC estimates that two thirds of the workforce will be considered mobile by next year, while In-Stat MDR forecasts that by 2008, the population of remote and or mobile employees will increase to 105 million, or more than 72% of the worker population.

With this dramatic rise in mobility, new challenges have been created to ensure that peripatetic professionals stay connected to each other and to essential, mission-critical corporate applications and information resources. Coming to the rescue are a host of new IP, or Internet Protocol-based, communications products and services that provide powerful solutions for this growing on-the-move workforce. Says communications guru Jeff Pulver, chairman and founder of pulvermedia, based in Melville, N.Y.: "IP telephony technology provides the means to extend the enterprise beyond its physical boundaries, giving mobile workers a new competitive edge."

According to Michael Antieri, group executive, product management, at AT&T Corp., in Bedminster, N.J.: "VoIP is adding a whole new level of productivity to the workforce. Because of the flexibility of VoIP, more calls are being answered. More work is getting done.

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It goes without saying, too, that enterprises become more agile when their employees are able to stay connected more effectively." Remote employees can leverage elements of their corporate communications

"VoIP is adding a whole new level of productivity to the workforce," says AT&T's Michael Antieri.

environment more effectively and utilize many of the features found in the office such as corporate directory listings, voice-mail applications, and call forwarding, though 911 capabilities may be limited for certain nomadic users.

The Phone System is the Network

VoIP services can be provided using a dedicated on-site IP PBX phone system, or by new network-based services, sometimes referred to as hosted communications. One such service, AT&T's Voice DNA, is the first service to be launched within the company's new Dynamic Network Applications (DNA) portfolio, providing enhanced features such as switch phones (mid-call move), personalized call handling, on-demand audio conferencing, and integration with Microsoft Office Outlook.

The service comes with a choice of calling plans (any distance and local), a full suite of comprehensive online management tools, personal portals for end users, and support for softphones as well as a number of IP phones.

AT&T's DNA is an integrated portfolio of network-based IP communications services designed to increase the productivity of business users while reducing the complexity of managing enterprise communications solutions. On a march to deliver integrated voice, video, conferencing, and messaging capabilities, this system is a harbinger of the next generation of converged business communications.

With AT&T DNA, enterprises should experience improved control and stronger cost management along with many new capabilities. Services within the DNA portfolio are unique in the personalized control they provide both to users and network administrators. Delivered through a unified online Web portal—AT&T BusinessDirect—the online tools are designed to be intuitive and thus easy to use. In addition, DNA services leverage AT&T's world-class IP-MPLS backbone, its application-aware networking environment, and its industry-leading VPN portfolio.

We can see you

One of the greatest enemies of productivity is wasted time. So by association, any business solution that more easily and quickly puts workers—especially mobile workers—in communication with one another and with the vital corporate information they need is an ally of productivity. HiPath OpenScape middleware from Siemens Communications Inc., in Boca Raton, Fla., aims at speedily synchronizing people and information and thereby expediting decision making. Cutting to the chase like this drives down the total cost of ownership of communications resources and drives up productivity.

Capable of working in any IP infrastructure environment, HiPath OpenScape knits together phones, video, voice mail, e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, calendaring, and conferencing services. Moreover, HiPath OpenScape integrates these fast-

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growing communications services into existing business processes and applications, achieving even greater productivity gains.

Working within the HiPath OpenScape environment, an employee can glance quickly at her contact list and see in real time the availability information of a particular contact—in his office, for instance, or at a meeting or lunch. Reaching that contact then becomes a one-step process, whether via phone, instant message, or e-mail. Need to caucus? With a single click, a HiPath OpenScape user can initiate a conference with team members and easily share documents. How about charts? A manager can launch a multi-media session by starting a Web conference with popular tools such as Microsoft's Live Meeting. Ample security has been integrated into HiPath OpenScape, including Microsoft.NET security features and support for standard security protocols such as Kerberos, TLS, and IPSec.

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—Jeff Pulver, pulvermedia

Out of Sight, Not Out of Touch

Through the power of IP-based communications solutions, today's mobile workers are empowered to go wherever their work takes them, while staying productive, in contact, and fully responsive to the needs of their company. From virtually anywhere in the world, workers can maintain seamless connectivity to corporate telephony and information resources. The concept of a fully distributed yet completely efficient enterprise has become a reality.

About the Author

Marc Robins is an internationally known expert in the field of IP telephony and emerging new IP communications technologies, with more than 24 years experience in the communications industry as a reporter and analyst, conference producer and publisher, and marketing executive and consultant. From 1998 to 2003, Marc served as vice president of publications and trade shows and group editorial director at TMC, publisher of the trade magazine *Internet Telephony*, and producer of the *Internet Telephony Conference & EXPO* trade shows, for which he also served as chief architect and conference co-chairman. Today, Marc runs an IP communications industry marketing firm, and has recently launched a new publishing company focused on providing definitive sources of information for prospective buyers of IP communications technology. For more information about Robins Consulting Group services, contact Marc at 718-548-7245 or e-mail robinsconsult@optonline.net.

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