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Cisco Releases Next-Gen Unified Communications

Continuing its push into the UC space, Cisco released a new version of its comprehensive software offering under a Unified Communications System Release 7.0, claiming in a briefing that the new release includes 800 enhancements. Highlights include 1) a Mobile Communicator extension of unified communications supporting dial via office, presence, and corporate directory look-up to mobile workers; 2) new time of day rules that enable mobile workers to easily adjust single number reach settings when they are traveling or do not wish to be disturbed; 3) MeetingPlace and WebEx integration to combine on-premises voice (MeetingPlace) with on-demand web conferencing (WebEx) from a single interface; 4) enhanced voice portal providing speech recognition for navigating through UC services. The new software also provides deeper integration with UC elements from both IBM and Microsoft including exchange of presence and IM between Cisco's Communicator and Microsoft Office Communicator and UC capabilities for Lotus Sametime. Cisco Unified Mobile Communicator now supports devices running Windows Mobile operating system, as well as Symbian and Blackberry operating systems.

Of particular interest to many WRB readers is the news related to Cisco Unified MeetingPlace 7.0. This Cisco application is now based on a new hardware architecture that unifies voice and video conferencing in a single media server appliance and increases scalability. With MeetingPlace 6.0, audio, video, and web conferencing ran on three separate platforms; the audio and video are now combined in one device; this makes adding video to any MeetingPlace meeting much easier (and less expensive); for example there is just one number to dial whether you are entering on audio or video. Although no announcement has yet been made, we suspect the new MeetingPlace hardware platform is based on Radvision technology.

In a separate but related announcement, Cisco introduced WebEx Connect, not to be confused in any way with WebEx itself. WebEx Connect is 1) a "software as a service" platform which Cisco positions as the next generation of hosted services and closely related to Web 2.0 and mashups. Connect is also 2) a collaboration platform based on open standards and APIs to provide subscribers with IM (AIM Pro today, Jabber acquisition eventually), email (Postpath acquisition eventually), virtual team collaboration with document management, and customizable widgets (including voice, video, web) for team-specific functions. With multiple device support, Connect will also serve for inter-company communications like supply chain management.

Finally, to complete the tri-fecta, Cisco announced the TelePresence Expert on Demand solution, a video application that integrates the immersive video solution into the contact center for high-value, in-branch customer service and the ability to summon expertise directly from a Cisco TelePresence meeting.

Here's What I Think: Cisco is clearly focused on three development areas that will affect the future of everyone in conferencing and collaboration. One is collaboration itself, with a host of solutions falling under the Unified Communications moniker; the second is video and

telepresence, with Cisco now offering a wide range of video capabilities spanning the desktop-to-immersive-telepresence spectrum; and the third being virtual worlds, from which we will hear much more later. While maintaining its emphasis on embedding UC functions deep within “the network,” Cisco clearly sees the world has evolved from the early days of PC LAN and Internet through the broadband and mobility stage and is now entering the “collaborative ecosystem” stage. The company is putting its reputation and significant R&D resources into making this ecosystem a business reality for itself and for any customers who will listen. An interesting point to ponder is how this changes the competitive landscape. In the old days Cisco competed with other switch/router companies; in the past decade it has taken on the PBX establishment and now has a very commanding market position in telephony, especially in North America. The company’s relationship with Avaya, Nortel, Siemens, etc. is well understood: they are direct competitors. In the Unified Communications space things are a lot more confusing. The company is clearly a direct Microsoft competitor (and now that OCS is taking on telephony functions the gloves are coming off), but is being forced by customers (as is the case for Microsoft too we would venture) to cooperate and interoperate with Microsoft’s solutions. As far as IBM goes, the relationship is even more murky, some might say distorted. The two companies clearly have overlapping solutions (hence competition) in Presence, IM, and web conferencing as well as in upcoming SaaS offerings for small business, but Cisco has gone out on the deep end providing Sametime integration (hence cooperation). IBM resells Cisco UC gear and telepresence solutions. And IBM and Cisco both refer to their relationship as strategic. Can this last? We don’t know; but probably yes. What we do know is that Cisco is very serious about unified communications (and video too). Stay tuned for further analysis of this evolving story.

Final thought: Telepresence aside, Cisco is starting to look like a software company.

Tandberg Intros Next-Gen Telepresence Solutions



Tandberg unveiled its much anticipated next generation telepresence system, dubbed the T3, a big sister to the T1 system announced a few months ago. While we haven’t seen T3 in actual operation yet, it is clear that T3 will deliver an ‘across the table’ meeting experience. And since T3 is based on the company’s industry standard 1080p codec, the C90, interoperability with other standards-compliant video systems is a given. Tandberg’s T3 announcement was accompanied by a new telepresence server (MCU) and a new certified services portfolio.

Tandberg's development team, including a social anthropologist, collaborated with customer groups to evaluate preferred designs, colors and room set-ups to optimize the user experience. Blue walls the color of the Nordic sky and specialized room lighting create a natural appearance, and warm wood walls, aluminum and glass provide an exclusive finish. When you look at all the details, you understand that Tandberg went to extreme lengths to maximize the room design elements.

T3 product basics include 1080p, 65" LCD panels, cameras mounted upside down above each monitor to maximize eye contact, and of course wideband spatial audio. Table mounted touch screens add a new touch – they are used for both data collaboration and system control.

The Tandberg Telepresence T3 will ship in January 2009. US list price is \$299K

Tandberg Total Service is delivered by a partner network of people, processes and equipment to offer customers one globally available, yet locally synchronized solution. Tandberg's comprehensive certification program for managed service providers requires the availability of fully managed or hosted global services from dedicated Video Network Operation Centers. Certified suppliers will also provide concierge services, web and telephone reservations, help desk support, and proactive testing and monitoring before, during and after meetings.

The Tandberg Telepresence Server (TTS 8710) is a next-generation MCU designed to support a variety of telepresence viewing modes as well as interoperate with any type of standards-compliant video system. TTS, based on Codian technology, supports up to 6 Mbps for each screen in the conference, and allows systems with varying capabilities on different networks with different bandwidths to join into the same telepresence meeting.

Five different telepresence viewing modes are available, mixing elements of continuous presence and voice activated switching in a novel and useful manner. The result is that users have a choice on how they want to view the meeting. TTS users can select their preferred mode and, for connecting standards-compliant videoconferencing systems, the server intelligently determines the best mode to establish the highest quality connection. TTS will be available in January, 2009. The form factor is a blade that fits inside a Tandberg Codian chassis. Each blade supports up to 16 screens (or codecs) and has a list price of \$320K or \$20K per screen (read port). Up to nine blades are possible within a single chassis, sold separately.



Here's What I Think: (again, sight unseen). T3 is really a second-generation system that will occupy a high end position in Tandberg's videoconferencing/telepresence total solution. There is a combination here of flexibility and level of integration that sets a new standard for the industry. T3 can be dropped into an existing conference room with or without the futuristic wall treatments developed by Tandberg – note the blue walls in the photo are Tandberg-developed panels that include a special sound treatment; the blue wall is also visible behind the images of the remote participants, adding a nice "same room" effect. Unlike Experia, which we suspect will die a quiet death, the T3 uses Tandberg-developed touch screens for collaboration rather than an underneath-mounted extra LCD for data display. While the T3 lists for about \$100K more than Experia, users get much larger displays (65" vs. 50") and 1080p video as well as a whole new user experience. In addition, the UI is reportedly iPhone-like and provides an easy-to-use interface to both the T3 and the telepresence server. We believe there is real value here.

The telepresence server, while expensive, brings a lot of value to the telepresence party. TTS takes Codian's any bandwidth, any resolution, any video or audio codec universal transcoding architecture to a new level, providing support not only for T3-to-T3 multipoint calls, but also for T3-to-single codec systems. Viewing modes include a variety of voice switched and continuous presence schemes that span the telepresence to videoconferencing spectrum and give users a

choice on how they want to view the session. The result is that HD and SD video participants have an optimized view of the telepresence session without compromising the view of the telepresence users themselves. While we might criticize Tandberg for calling the T1700 MXP a telepresence system, a moniker which we believe denigrates the concept of telepresence and intentionally blurs the line between Tandberg's telepresence and HD videoconferencing systems, we have to admit that the company's line up of T3, T1, C90 codec, and the Tandberg telepresence server is an awesome offering that supports high quality audio and video, life-size images, and proper image context – the essence of real telepresence.

⇒ [WR Forums: TANDBERG announced T3](#)

News in Brief

- Emblaze-VCON is now offering an unusual videoconferencing bundle. For \$10,000 customers will receive a 24-port MCU (the company's VCBPro), 50 licenses for the vPoint HD personal videoconferencing software and the Media eXchange Manager (MXM) management platform. The MXM supports H.323 and SIP conferencing clients, provides ISDN gateway functionality, and the ability to configure, monitor, manage, upgrade and enforce company conferencing policies (and bandwidth management) on any videoconferencing client in an organization. Full video telephony features include: follow-me, forward when busy, no answer, pick-up, easy dialing to systems outside the organization and directory listing. In an unrelated announcement, Emblaze released a new version of the xPoint room system that now includes embedded MCU and session recording, storing, and streaming capabilities.
- Konftel has launched the Konftel 300IP, a SIP-based conference phone that makes it possible to make local five-way calls and ring pre-programmed groups, as well as record and store calls on a memory card. The phone is equipped with Konftel's patented OmniSound 2.0 sound technology (wideband). Expansion microphones, a wireless headset and an external PA system can also be connected to the Konftel 300IP for very large meeting rooms.
- Compunetix announced that the CONTEX Summit media processor has passed the extensive Level 3 Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) Voice Certification Program assuring customers interoperability and consistent quality of service.
- ClearOne introduced MAX IP Response Point, a tabletop conferencing system for users of Microsoft's small business phone system. Launched by Microsoft in March of 2007, Response Point is a small business Internet Protocol (IP) phone system that supports both VoIP and traditional analog phone lines and includes a voice-activated user interface. Currently, the Response Point system runs on hardware available from Aastra, D-Link, and Quanta. The MAX IP Response Point telephone is compatible with all three hardware systems.
- Plans are shaping up for the 2008 Polycom User Group (PUG) annual conference set to take place Oct 19-22 at Disney's Contemporary Resort in Florida. One of the featured presentations this year will be a daring look into what videoconferencing might be like in the year 2020, twelve years off into the future. This session, presented by WR's own Andrew W. Davis, will take a leap into the future and consider what technology shifts might be coming down the pike and how they would affect enterprise communications and work in general. Video guru Ira Weinstein will be presenting in a separate session on Driving Adoption in the Enterprise. The opening session of the conference has been classified top secret by the PUG Department of Homeland Security. Details at pug.com.



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- The [IMTC is planning a forum event](#) on November 12-13 at the St. Regis Hotel across the street from the Moscone Center in San Francisco. IMTC will be giving two key significant awards at the event. One is a Leadership Award to Gary Sullivan, Microsoft; the second one is a group award for the H.323 pioneers - Martin Euchner, Glen Freundlich, Paul Jones, Markku Korpi, Dr. Vineet Kumar, Mike Nilsson, Dr. Jörg Ott, Mark Reid, Sasha Ruditsky, Dale Skran, Gary Thom, Jim Toga, and the VocalTec team - for their key pioneering contributions to H.323. Most of the award recipients plan to attend the forum, so it the event will also be a reunion and a time to reminisce about the good old days.
- Trapeze Networks and Agito Networks announced certified interoperability between Trapeze Networks' line of NonStop Wireless networking equipment and Agito Networks' RoamAnywhere enterprise fixed mobile convergence solution.

Conferencing & Collaboration Event Calendar	
WHEN & WHERE	WHAT & WHO
19-22 October, Orlando, FL	PUG Annual Conference (Polycom User Group)
27 October, Boston, MA	Wainhouse Research CSP Summit
18 November, Andover MA - Chicago - NY - Washington DC	Point 9 User Forum: Selecting a Conferencing Managed Service Provider
5 November, Munich - Paris - Slough UK	Point 9 User Forum: Selecting a Conferencing Managed Service Provider
12-13 November, San Francisco, CA	IMTC Forum
22-23 April, 2009, Berlin, Germany	WR Collaboration Futures Summit

New WR Market Assessment of Worldwide Collaboration Services

In 2008 the worldwide audio/web/video services market is forecast to grow 13% in revenue to over \$5.5B and 22% in audio conferencing minutes to nearly 60B. With the release of the North American 2008 CSP Forecast and Provider Review, as well as the companion North American Addressable CSP Market study, WR completes a 2x3 series of studies which offers analysis of 20 local CSP markets in the North America, Europe, and Asia Pacific.



The 2008 Forecast and Provider Review studies offers details on 20 local markets including audio minutes, revenue, and average sales price, web conferencing and video bridging revenue, as well as over 40 provider reviews for each region and local provider ranking by service type. In addition, each market is forecast from 2008 through 2012 by service type.

The 2008 Addressable CSP Market studies seek to compare the 2008 forecast (probable) to the total possible market opportunity for 2008. As an example, just 13% of the Norwegian audio conferencing market has been penetrated, representing a \$184M *unaddressed* opportunity for 2008. Each of the 20 local markets has been assessed based on current market sizing, labor data, telecom infrastructure and use, and key economic factors. This study is indispensable for CSPs when determining in which local markets they should invest for growth.

All of these reports are available individually or bundled as regional companions (Forecast & Addressable studies together). In addition, they can be purchased by the bundle by title (all regions Forecast or all regions Addressable studies). Please contact Client Services Manager Sara Fargo at sfargo@wainhouse.com or +1 781 934 6165 for details.

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Wainhouse Research CSP Summit – 27 October, Boston



Wainhouse Research will host its 6th annual **CSP Summit in Boston on Monday, the 27th of October**. The conference exclusively focuses on the needs of collaboration & conferencing service providers (CSPs) and their partners. This year's theme, *Positioning Collaboration Services for Strategic Value*, will focus on critical topics such as what FUSF (Federal Universal Service Fee) means to the industry, addressing the increase in telecom fraud, the emergence of Enterprise Social Networking, Unified Communications and VoIP, new services, and market growth. Sponsors Compunetix, IBM, Pactolus, RadiSys Polycom, Upswing 360, and Vidyo will also contribute to the discussion, sharing their company's experience and knowledge of various hot topics relating to the industry.

In addition, while the subject of fraud will be covered during the Summit, an in-depth discussion and dialog will be held on the morning of Tuesday, 28 October for those interested in exploring possible solutions to this industry wide problem.

The CSP Summit and the Telecom Fraud Subconference discussion will be held at the Hilton Boston Logan Airport Hotel. For additional details, including registration and the meeting agenda please visit www.wainhouse.com/cspsummit. Register early – this event sold out last year. Register before October 13th and save \$100 off the regular \$595 registration fee.

Featured Session: Do Not Try This at Home! Unified Communications Are Catching On: How You Can Make it Easier

Speaker: Marisa Viveros, Vice President, Global Leader for Converged Communications, Integrated Communications Services, IBM



Ms. Viveros is a Vice President at IBM Corporation, leading IBM Converged Communications Services. In her role, she is responsible for creating service projects which address the near and long-term growth opportunities in the unified communications market. In addition, Ms. Viveros defines strategic directions and oversees marketing & sales for this market segment. Ms. Viveros will discuss her groups experience in planning, designing, and deploying Unified Communications for clients.



Letters

Dear Andrew: We would like to correct a few of points in the paragraph on ConferenceMe and Movi you wrote in the [WRB Vol 9 issue #26](#) (September 23 2008). 1) Unlike what the write-up suggests, the next release of Movi is not a Java-based client; it is actually a native Windows application that is centrally deployed and managed with TMS + VCS. 2) You stated that ConferenceMe can receive content but cannot send. This is actually incorrect; along with the ability to receive content from the TANDBERG Codian bridge, the UI has a button that minimizes the camera video from the PC and shares the desktop. The H.323 endpoints will see it just like they would see H.239 content. 3) The next generation of Movi will have the ability to receive content at the time of release in Q1. The ability to send content is planned for a following release. 4) Of course, as with any product under development, roadmap information is subject to change. And finally, 5) ConferenceMe is independent of TMS and TMS is not required, as is implied in your original article.

Tolga Sakman, Head of Industry Relations, TANDBERG

Dear Andrew: Most, but not all, of the telepresence platforms and high definition video conference systems being shipped today have a serious but initially unobvious problem that very few people know about. The problem is that to varying degrees they have end-to-end delay that severely impairs the ability of participants to engage in the kind of spirited, highly interactive debate and dialog that is so powerful and useful in face-to-face interactions. But, the problem isn't apparent in the orderly conversation that typically occurs in vendors' demonstrations.

Therefore, I submit that it is important for your readers – the video communications and collaboration experts in business, government and industry – to take a leadership role in ensuring that the key decision makers in the purchase of such systems experience the latency impacts of the vendor offering(s) they are considering. This can be done by convincing the decision makers to engage in a spirited, highly interactive discussion with colleagues at an intercontinental location [because the latency problem is distance sensitive]. Then, to the extent they find the conversational impairments objectionable, there are options for resolving the problem, explained at the end of this letter.

What do I mean by spirited, highly interactive dialog and why is it important? Envision a conversation between two professional people in the same room on a topic that they both know a great deal about and have areas of agreement and disagreement over. They exhibit both energy and passion when they discuss this particular topic and – in collegially constructive ways – they interrupt each other from time to time. Further, scholars in the social science of communication and psychology as well as leadership coaches to the captains of industry tell us that this kind of dialog is highly valued. Quoting respected leadership coach and author Debra Benton: “Important face-to-face discussions among senior management get quite spirited and highly interactive. It is critical that any technological alternative to executive face-to-face meetings enables the participants to engage with the real-time back and forth. Anything less hinders effective communication.”

We also know from solid experience with satellite-based services that 250 milliseconds of one-way latency wreaks havoc with spirited conversation. And, most terrestrial telepresence and HD video conferencing systems have about that much one-way latency for connections between, for example, the US West coast to Europe or India, where one-way delay is defined as being from mouth to ear/eye, consisting of image acquisition & display delays, aggregate signal processing delays of originating and received endpoints and the IP network delay of a top tier carrier.

In closing, my company has been studying the latency issue for several years and, if needed, can assist clients in measuring the end-to-end delay on the vendor system they find objectionable as well as the latency of offerings from other vendors we can identify that they may want to consider. In this regard, our work is vendor-agnostic and we have no financial relationships with any of the vendors. Our role is that of an advocate for end users to assist clients in maximizing the effectiveness of telepresence and HD video conferencing as collaboration tools.

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