NEWS AND VIEWS ON REAL-TIME UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Either holiday season is lingering way past its time, or the general fears about a recession are causing a depression in conferencing & collaboration news. Whatever the cause, the news wires have been pretty empty the past two weeks

As always, please feel free to forward this newsletter to your colleagues. To be added to our FREE automated email distribution list, simply visit www.wainhouse.com/bulletin.

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News in Brief

- The Talkshoe service has a new software release out that makes it easier for users (and their friends) to talk together. Now there's no need to sign-up or download, so even non-members can call in to talk or text chat with just on click. Talkshoe is an unusual application of conferencing technologies that allows anyone to “host his own talk show” or as Ed Sullivan used to say, “talk shoe.” The service supports up to 250 people on phones and computers talking, text chatting, and listening.

- Web conferencing and collaboration solutions provider InterCall, a subsidiary of West Corp., has launched InterCall Web Meeting platform, a new, simple, web-based conferencing solution incorporating web, video, and audio conferencing capabilities. The new portal lets users communicate via video link with just one click. InterCall is adding this service to its existing solutions that include Microsoft Live Meeting and the WebEx Business Suite.

- Arkadin, a global provider of audio and web conferencing services, has launched services in India, Arkadin ConferIndia, through a partnership with ConferIndia.

- WebEx (now part of Cisco) announced that WebEx PCNow, an on-demand, remote-access service has extended its support to include the Apple Macintosh. The service now supports PC-to-PC, PC-to-Mac, Mac-to-PC and Mac-to-Mac connections. Mac users can register for a free 30-day trial.

- Creative Labs introduced inPerson at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in Vegas. The press release reads like something from the 1980s. “Imagine having seven meetings on seven continents in seven hours, and everyone wants you to be there. With Creative inPerson, you can join a board meeting in Geneva, a one-on-one in Africa, and your child's birthday party in California while you're stuck in the airport in Australia,” etc, etc. It can even reduce your carbon footprint! The $700 wireless device sports a 7” screen and can connect to a large flat panel, TV, or projector for “video presence.” With a monthly service plan you get free inPerson Conferencing with any other inPerson or with anyone with a PC with a web camera and Creative inPerson for PC software. Four-way multipoint is an optional service cost.

- Sony videoconferencing has signed up UUNET as a reseller for the Kenyan market.
iLinc Communications, based in Phoenix, Ariz., has added what the company calls the “Green Meter” to its web conferencing software. The Green Meter measures the amount of carbon that would have been emitted had the user opted to travel to a meeting site as opposed to using conferencing technologies. According to iLinc, the Green Meter detects the locations of the people who are attending a web meeting using their IP address and measures the distance between meeting participants and the meeting leader. Doing so provides a measure of the exact amount of eliminated travel. Using an algorithm that recognizes what method of travel would have been used, including cars, small aircrafts and large aircrafts, the Green Meter generates a CO2 emissions savings amount for both the web meeting leader and a composite number of the organization. You can’t make this stuff up.

Canada-based Telus has achieved both the Cisco TelePresence Connection Certification and the Cisco TelePresence Authorized Technology Provider Certification.

Canada-based MTS Allstream, a unit of Winnipeg-based telecom company Manitoba Tel, has acquired ICU Technologies Inc., a Toronto firm that provides videoconferencing technology and services.

Canada-based SMART Technologies made a series of announcements last week of interest to the education market. The SMART Board 685 interactive whiteboard features a 16:10 aspect ratio and measures 87 inches on the diagonal. The products offers an expansion slot on the pen tray and comes with the company’s Notebook collaborative learning software. The 600i interactive whiteboard system is a second generation system that combines the SMART Board 680 interactive whiteboard with a new Unifi 45 projector. The Unifi 45 projector offers a brighter image and true color quality and has a collapsible boom to protect the sytem from damage. The control panel below the whiteboard allows teachers to turn the entire system on with one button. SMART Touch is a new set of features for interactive whiteboards, tables, or walls. SMART Wall is a DViT technology-equipped frame that transforms any flat vertical surface space into a touch-sensitive interactive surface and supports up to 130 inches on the diagonal. SMART Table provides an interactive surface for students to share information and manipulate digital content.

Wainhouse Research has released a new product evaluation document, part of our continuing coverage of products in the videoconferencing space. Check out our writup on the Emblaze-VCON xPoint videoconferencing system.

8x8 has introduced the Packet8 Virtual Office Tango Video Terminal Adapter (VTA), a desktop videoconferencing solution that enhances the functionality of the Packet8 Virtual Office hosted iPBX phone system, now in use by over 10,000 U.S. based small businesses.
Tango replaces the Broadband Phone Adapter that normally connects to the Virtual Office business class speakerphone and a business’ high speed Internet network. The portable device uses a built-in, high resolution 5” LCD color screen and 180 degree rotating CCD camera to deliver advanced full-motion video at up to 30 frames per second along with audio and supports 3-way calling. The device costs $100-$150; there is no additional monthly subscriber fee.

- TANDBERG has released a new version of the Content Server software.
- A new company, Minneapolis-based VideoLive Conferences, is offering videoconferencing to help small businesses confront rising gas and travel costs. VideoLive Conferences offers unlimited audio and video web conferencing for an affordable $79 dollars a month for up to 10 guests. According to the company, the solution is simple to use, has full featured collaboration tools, and automatically installs itself in less than 3 minutes. And it’s free for guests. Where have we seen this before?
- IBM Lotus Sametime Unyte version 8.1 has been released. Included in this release is expanded browser support (including Firefox and Safari) for application sharing, optimization of application sharing performance (new compression), and improvements in the chat feature. Win98 is no longer supported!
- Avistar concluded a financing round of $7 million of convertible debt, led by Leucadia National Corporation. Five of Avistar’s seven directors were among the other investors who contributed $3 million of the total.
- Wainhouse Research’s WebMetrics 2H 2007 survey finds that enterprises are wrestling with mobility as a future application area conferencing and collaboration. Almost half of 175 respondents state they are likely to attempt to use IM on smartphones in the next 18 months (streaming video to was similar); two out of five expect to use web conferencing with smartphones. An executive summary and order form are available at www.wainhouse.com/webmetrics. Panel prizewinners include Tony G, Hunter New England (Australia) Area Health Service ($500 Amazon certificate): Gregg B, CSC (8GB Apple iPod touch); and Eileen F, FCE, Steve F, OSI Transcription, George H, The Mitre Corporation, Ish B, Caltrans, and Mark H, Friedman, Billings, Ramsey Group (all of whom won $50 Amazon certificates).
- HearMe, a provider of web-based videoconferencing and collaboration solutions, is partnering with Auric Technology to integrate its desktop videoconferencing into Auric's new contact manager, OctopusCity.com.

Point Nine via Telepresence

Richard Norris, richard@wainhouse.com

We have reserved six telepresence suites courtesy of Cisco and will use these on 26-February to host a half day Point Nine session with the topic Telepresence: Can you speed business processes and reduce your carbon footprint? If you can make it to Boston, New York, Atlanta, Washington DC, London, or Amsterdam visit www.wainhouse.com/point9 to reserve your place. These sessions are definitely capacity limited, so reserve your place early. Starting time will be 8:00 in the North American time zone and 13:00 and 14:00 in London and Amsterdam respectively. Contact Richard Norris, richard@wainhouse.com, if you would like to sponsor this very unusual session demonstrating the power of telepresence in sales, marketing, HR, and other business processes.
Berlin Collaboration Summit Update (8-10 April)

Our fourth annual Wainhouse Research Collaboration Summit is set once again for Berlin at the 5-star Steigenberger Hotel. Continuing our tradition of trying to cover all things conferencing and collaboration related, this year’s conference will include in-depth sessions on 1) the latest trends and applications of videoconferencing and telepresence; 2) issues impacting service providers, particularly with the growing interest in unified communications services and desktop video hosted applications; and 3) the real impact of IP telephony and unified collaborative applications and how enterprises can avoid the minefields of these emerging solutions.

Our featured speaker list this year will include six presentations from WR analysts, multiple end users telling their tales of videoconferencing and telepresence, two new ventures in the service provider space, experts on unified communications, and more. Stay tuned for additional details. Visit www.wainhouse.com/berlin08 for the complete story on this international conference.

The registration web page is now live. Don’t miss this opportunity to hear what’s happening with presence and IM, telephony-based conferencing and collaboration, mobile solutions, and high-definition video and telepresence. Network with your peers and with industry experts.

In addition to our conference, the 2008 program will feature in-depth workshops plus several hours of exhibit hall demos.

The Berlin Collaboration Summit has a limited number of sponsorship opportunities remaining - contact Sara Fargo, sfargo@wainhouse.com.

People & Places

DRV, Craig Lamb, James Strover, Emma Joggers, Steve Holmes (left to right, and formerly of NIAD Communications). The Swindon UK office is the latest in DRV’s expansion; with other offices located in London, Newquay, Birmingham, New York, Chicago, Houston, Amman and Singapore.

Arkadin ConferIndia, Pankaj Gupta, Managing Director

Glowpoint, Jonathan Brust, VP Marketing and Business Development, Mary Friel, Territory Director of Sales for the Northeast Region, Dave Moore, Territory Director, Larry Smagacz, Territory Director.