

Polycom & Microsoft Renew Vows

While some of us might have the impression that we've been flooded by a series of announcements in the past year around a Polycom-Microsoft strategic partnership, Communication Server-compatibility for Polycom VoIP phones, and/or "breakthrough" video integration with OCS 2007 and Microsoft Exchange, truth is that the two companies recently signed a multi-year global agreement to deliver integrated end-to-end UC solutions. What makes this agreement different? Two things on the surface. 1) It involves high level executives on both sides of the equation (see photo). 2) It appears to span product development, field sales and sales support resources, corporate marketing, business development, and channel partner strategies.



Andy Miller and Gurdeep Singh Pall

Here's What I Think: While there have been a series of point announcements here, including Polycom's CX phones working with CS14, Microsoft turning over the RoundTable beast to become Polycom's CX5000, and the two companies putting their support behind the UCIF, reading into this announcement carefully you can detect a new level of intensity, supported of course by the photograph above and by claims by both companies that a new governance model is in place for this partnership that makes it different from other partnerships.

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The two companies are promising tight cooperation on future products, including a new Roundtable (perhaps less beastly), room systems (as well as telepresence and desktop video solutions) optimized to work with Microsoft's future UC platforms. In addition, both companies are pledging dedicated sales and marketing resources (and cross training) to drive integrated Polycom-Microsoft solutions into the channels (both existing channels and new channels) and into the market.

Heads Up #1. An early sign of whether this "new strategic relationship" is working will be whether or not the two companies put each other's solutions into their executive briefing centers and demo rooms. Give this six months and then let me know what you find when you visit your local demo center.

Heads Up #2. Every ninth word coming out of both marketing machines is "interoperability" but no-one seems to have a definition of what this means. Interoperability from the Microsoft perspective appears to designate "it works with OCS" and the goal appears to be having video "interoperability" that extends from telepresence to desktop.

Bottom line: Partnerships (Microsoft-Polycom) are rarely as potent as ownership (Cisco-Tandberg) and partnerships indeed do tend to fray over time for a variety of reasons. But it's tempting to believe this time it's different, because:

- a. This appears to be the first time such high level execs have inked the deal. We think it has Andy Miller's stamp on it.
- b. Both companies appear to be putting in significant resources, including skilled senior management people and go-to-market experts.
- c. The Cisco threat is stronger than ever. And while both Polycom and Microsoft have to co-exist with Cisco and cooperate with Cisco at the customer sites, the relationships are increasingly competitive, and more likely to turn nasty. As they say in the Middle East, the enemy of my enemy is my friend.
- d. As customers look for real end-to-end solutions that span products and services, the Polycom-Microsoft alliance has another great story to tell based on the Microsoft-HP alliance. Can they pull all this together?

⇒ [WR Forum: Polycom & Microsoft Renew Vows](#)

Introducing one of the WR Bulletin Sponsors

Haeden Bridge is one of the leading Korean providers of rich media video and web conferencing software platforms. Intended for systems integrators, TOMMS FACTORY Enterprise 2010 is a family of solutions that supports up to HD videoconferencing and telepresence or webinar modes for rich media communications. All of these solutions – from the desktop to Telepresence – are designed to run on broadband networks. Haeden Bridge works with leading Korean system integrators including the recently merged Samsung SDS/Networks, Hyundai BS&C, LG CNS, and SK Broadband and as well as service providers such as Korea Telecom and Scartel in Russia to offer converged video services over Wimax. The TOMMS FACTORY platform is designed for a Windows environment and utilizes Microsoft's DirectShow multimedia framework; the company is currently working with Microsoft APAC to integrate its product into OCS for a fuller-featured video offering .

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Wave Goodbye to Google Wave?

Andy Nilssen, andyn@wainhouse.com

Opting to send the message through a low-key “Update on Google Wave” blog post, Google announced that it is pulling the plug on the stand-alone version of the service, effective sometime after the end of 2010. Citing lower-than-would-have-liked user adoption, Google added that the central parts of the code and the protocols that “have driven many of Wave’s innovations” remain available as open source so that innovation can continue to live on.

Here’s What Andy Thinks: There has been quite a bit of bandwidth already consumed with many theories as to why Wave didn’t succeed. I agree with most of the sentiment around a) Wave being too hard to use, b) Being a bucket of raw technology thrown into the consumer space by a bunch of engineers, c) Users were basically left to figure out what to do with it. A big flag should be waved (pun intended) when the only way to try and figure out what a new offering does is to watch the company’s 60+ minute video.

But my observations go beyond this. I agree with the underlying premise that e-mail is antiquated, and the notion that something built on the “Wave Federation Protocol” (WFP) could somehow supersede email has appeal. Both IM and social networking have displaced part (but not all) of the reasons we use email. But, despite the potential, Google did not develop nor position Wave as a replacement for Gmail or anything else – Wave was yet another stand-alone thing. And, with the advent of IM and social networking, the last thing we need is one more thing to learn and use. Could an easy-to-use offering be built that could replace one (or more) of the tools we already use – but with richer collaboration capabilities? A tool that (because it is built on top of WFP) could interoperate with offerings from other suppliers? If this sounds appealing, take a look at Novell Pulse, SAP StreamWork, and other enterprise-oriented solutions that are being built on the WFP. While Wave-the-Google-consumer-thing may be a failed experiment, I think there is a good chance the commercially-targeted ripples built on the WFP will return stronger.

⇒ [WR Forum: Wave Goodbye & the Future of WFP](#)

News in Brief

- Did You Miss the Wainhouse Research Summit in Boston? Then check out [the webcast archives provided by Stream57](#).
- omNovia Technologies, a provider of online meetings and webinars, has announced the availability of their multilingual web conferencing platform that allows companies to host web conferences in a variety of languages simultaneously. With this unique feature, customers can conduct one single virtual meeting with multilingual channels, instead of spending time and money to hold different online meetings for each language required. As attendees log in, they are given the option to choose from available language channels. For each channel, a local language translator is required who would listen to the audio stream coming from the main room and then simultaneously translate it for the attendees on the channel who hear only the translated audio. Other room features such as chat and slides are displayed in the language of their choice.
- Our friends at Talk and Vision (now 51% owned by KPN) have made claims to being the first operator in Benelux to be appointed a Polycom Platinum Partner.

- Media5 Corporation announced that the Mediatrix line of VoIP Gateways has been qualified for interoperability with Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 R2.

- WebEx has enhanced the webcam video features on its free “WebEx Meet beta” web conferencing service. Dubbed Active Talker, the video window automatically switches to the person that is speaking. Sound familiar? When used with the WebEx Theatre Mode, the active speaker gains a larger portion of the screen while others are relegated to smaller thumbnails. Did we mention that the service is free?

WebEx Meet’s “Theatre Mode”



- Glowpoint announced Q2 revenues of \$7.264M, up from \$6.945M one year earlier. The 4.6% overall annual growth reflects revenue growth in subscription services balanced by a decline in non-core revenues (ISDN bridging, etc). For the quarter and for the first half of the year, Glowpoint had an operating loss as well as a net loss and ended the quarter with about \$1.8M in cash and an accumulated deficit on the balance sheet of \$163.8M. In an unrelated announcement, Glowpoint has joined the Unified Communications Interoperability Forum (UCIF).

Comments: This has to be one of the longest running stories in the videoconferencing industry. Glowpoint has put together an impressive VNOC and managed service for videoconferencing users, some happy customers we know about, a new B2B exchange service, and several solid partners on technology, go-to-market, and network partnership levels. So the question remains, why is the company still stuck at the \$25-30M revenue run rate?

- LifeSize has achieved JITC certification for its videoconferencing systems and Networker gateway product.

People & Places

- Wainhouse Research is pleased to announce the addition of Jan Zanetis as Senior Analyst and Consultant. Jan will be joining Alan Greenberg in the Distance Education and e-Learning Practice. She is a career educator with 20 years experience in the primary / secondary classroom, 5 years as the Director of the Vanderbilt University Virtual School and 5 years as the Market Manager for Education at TANDBERG. She has co-written two books that focus on distance learning and has contributed several articles in various education journals. Jan currently sits on the Board of Directors at the U. S. Distance Learning Association and serves as Vice President of the Tennessee Distance Learning Association. Her home base is Nashville, TN; she can be reached at jan@wainhouse.com.



Conferencing & Collaboration Events

When & Where	Who & What
October 3-6, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	VCI-G annual conference
October 12, Boston, MA	Wainhouse Research CSP Summit - North America (now taking registrations ; save \$100 before Sept 21)

Letters:

Andrew...just wanted to say thanks for making the Summit available for those of us who have had our travel budget frozen. I have received the newsletter for 10 years or so I guess...but really appreciated the video stream from the Summit. While some of the talk didn't necessarily relate to those of us in healthcare, I still found certain sessions interesting, informative...and just sort of felt like I was in a group that I could relate to...thanks again. Gene.reich@avera.org

Andrew: I'd like to get my mitts on that bloody Osama bloody Bin bloody Laden. Have you suffered business travel lately? It's over priced, over sold, and over rated. Anybody remember the good ol' days – jumbo jets, ambling through airports, the upgrade utopia? Today, it's sardine seating, bye-bye bags, and connection chaos. And yes, we're literally shoeless... Yes, I understand that I don't have a seat assignment and that's why I'm getting a center seat, again – but how did everybody else on the flight get a seat assignment? If you sent my bag to Killeen, Texas from Dulles, how is it that I don't have a confirmed seat on the flight from Dallas to Killeen? How did you manage to lose my bag when I had to check it at the gate? I heard that John Foster Dulles' family is actively petitioning Congress to have its family name chemically removed from the airport. I beg your pardon? No please, please don't threaten to route me through O'Hare – I'll work on my attitude. What's this got to do with IT you ask? This is an open plea to the videoconferencing guys – Cisco, Polycom, HP, Apple, not to mention the telcos. Make it work, make it easy, and make it cheap. Get us off the road. This flight is long overdue.... sokeeffe@meritalk.com

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