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News & Views
on Unified Communications & Collaboration

Ramp Jumps into Live Video & SharePoint

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Streaming technology vendor **Ramp** this week said it is teaming with **Wowza Media Systems** to add live video capabilities to Ramp's enterprise streaming platform.

Ramp has optimized its new live video solution for tight integration with **Microsoft's SharePoint** application. Using the Ramp solution, SharePoint users will be able to schedule and initiate live video webcasts directly from the SharePoint interface.

The partners plan to make the live video solution available to a handful of customers on a trial basis, with commercial launch of the application to take place by the end of the year.

What Steve thinks: Consider this announcement as a coming-out party of sorts for Ramp as a seller of enterprise streaming technology platforms. The company has carved itself a niche as a purveyor of streaming video search capabilities. But you can't be a full-fledged enterprise platform without being able to support live video creation and distribution. The Wowza partnership gets Ramp into the business of enabling live streaming video.

And the style in which Ramp is implementing its live capabilities is worthy of notice. Through deep integration with SharePoint, Ramp positions itself as an undercover

engine powering live video applications that look and feel a lot like native SharePoint applications.

Certainly, many platform vendors will point out that they've had SharePoint integration in place for years. Indeed, some already are pushing beyond the frontiers of SharePoint. **Qumu**, for instance, just last month announced integration of its platform with **IBM's** Enterprise Content Management platform.

Whether it's the worlds of Microsoft, IBM or anyone else, though, the unspoken truth here is that the notion of "application integration" will mean different things to different vendors. To one, SharePoint integration implies the ability to share corporate directory information in a seamless manner. To others, this integration may mean that streaming capabilities are embedded throughout the SharePoint application. The net result though will be growing confusion for enterprise end users evaluating options for weaving streaming capabilities into their existing communications deployments. "Caveat emptor" is the watchword here. Streaming technology buyers will have varying needs for streaming / SharePoint integration. When investing in a streaming solution, those buyers need to ask some pointed questions about whether a specific vendor's definition of "SharePoint integration" will meet the needs of their organization.

It's a Wild Dell World

Alan D. Greenberg, agreenberg@wainhouse.com

Dell Corporation held its *Dell World* global customer event a few weeks ago in Austin, and while many may still think of Dell Corporation as the PC maker of yore, the company proved that it continues to reinvent itself as an end-to-end solutions provider. At a pre-event analyst / press conference, a clearly re-energized and enthusiastic **Michael Dell** appeared thrilled to celebrate one year of taking his namesake company private — with all the benefits afforded by not worrying about quarterly financial reports and the associated investor expectations. Throughout the event — during keynotes and smaller talks — he stressed that while the PC industry showed minimal growth, Dell is expanding rapidly, *and* that the company is the fastest growing integrated IT organization in the world. (He also took every opportunity to dig at HP and others

Dell's Kelli Hodges Showing off new Venue Tablet

that have announced break-ups and spin-offs over the past year.) All of this means that Dell it is touching on all the big trends: big data to analytics, network functions virtualization to management software, cloud to single-pane user experiences. Some boasts: #1 storage solutions provider 1H 2014; double-digit software revenue growth year-over-year; PC shipments grown worldwide by nearly 10% year-over-year (and a U.S. share of 24%, up 3.1% year-over-year even as HP and others have suffered). The company also showed off an updated set of *Venue 11 Pro 7000 Series* tablets, a "smart desk" workspace of the future, an *UltraSharp 27 Monitor,* enhancements to its *Dell Software Suite,* and new servers and storage systems that had Michael Dell as giddy as a racing enthusiast. Dell also introduced its focus on Network Functions Virtualization

(NFV), working with **Brocade** and **Intel** to help accelerate enterprise service delivery at the carrier edge.

Post Dell World, just this past week Dell announced the new *Unified Communications Command Suite* (UCCS), a scalable, data-driven platform for UC management. The Dell UC Command Suite is comprised of UCCS Analytics, including aggregated analytics and insights across Microsoft Exchange and Lync, streamlining the complexity of multiple-platform reporting, and UCCS Diagnostics, which features diagnostic capabilities that help administrators detect problems within the messaging environment by displaying activity of all messaging components in a single interface — including Exchange Server, Lync Server and Blackberry Enterprise Server — to quickly locate the root-cause of operational issues and assist in the resolution.

What Alan thinks: As an analyst I have been paying attention to Dell for a while because of its strength in education and training markets. Yes, those markets still buy lots of PC's. And they also buy lots of tablets, projection systems, lecture capture solutions, content management systems, whiteboards and the other piece parts that — dare I say it — a "solutions provider" may be well-positioned to deliver. As channel-focused as Dell says it has become, it also wants to function as a "super-duper sticky-to-its-customer integrated all-things IT shop." So with education as a major vertical, Dell was showcasing its *Chromebox for Meetings,* as well as a new and incredibly thin / light weight *Venue tablet* with multiple front-and rear-facing cameras I wrote about recently. Also on display was Dell's would-be **SMART / Promethean** buster, the $3,300 S520 *Dell Interactive Projector*. I wasn't aware Dell offered a short-throw interactive projector of this sort. The unit includes up to ten-point touch capability (using fingers, styluses, or traditional dry-erase pens) plus an 87-inch whiteboard. It also includes WiDi + Miracast and WiFi connectivity, positioning it for in-class / in-meeting-room sharing of content. (Miracast allows a portable device or computer to send up to 1080p video and 5.1 surround sound over direct Wi-Fi connection between two devices without involvement of a wireless router. The biggest negative is that it is limited to *Wi-Fi Direct*-supported devices, and thus cannot run over conventional Wi-Fi, wired Ethernet, or other networking technologies.) Meanwhile, the UC Command Suite shows Dell is playing in the UC sandbox. There is a lot more coming out of Dell, and it's fascinating to watch a company morph over the years as this company has done.

Dollar$ and $ense

Alan D. Greenberg

Avaya announced fourth Quarter and FY 2014 financial results, reporting revenue of $1.126 billion for Q4 and operating income of $62 million (non-GAAP operating income was $212 million). Total Q4 revenues were up quarter-to-quarter but down $43 million compared to Q4 2013. For the year, the company hit revenue of $4.371 billion. CEO Kevin Kennedy indicated he's seeing solid bookings and backlog and favorable demand. Down-sizing the discussion a bit, **SMART Technologies** reported Q2 2015 revenues of $113.4 million adjusted, $129.2 million GAAP, with net income of $5 million adjusted, or $12.2 million GAAP. With earnings via its education sales somewhat down, SMART is facing the same headwinds in education markets as everyone else: competition from spending on mobile technology and infrastructure. But the enterprise segment revenues are up a bit, the company remains within guidance for the year, and the $5 million net income shows it is managing (costs) to the realities of the marketplace. SMART also announced it is now shipping SMART *kapp* as of this past Monday. Others reporting results include **BroadSoft**, which reported that revenues were up 27% year-over-year to $54.6 million for Q3 2014, and a net loss of $2.3 million for the quarter. **Glowpoint** reported Q3 2014 results of $8 million, down 4% compared to Q3 2013. Net income was $198,000.

News in Brief

- You are about to get a bunch more people to call in your address book, *if* you are a **Microsoft Lync** user. In one of those shots heard round the world, and perhaps the biggest unification since *yin* and *yang* decided to partner up, Microsoft announced *Skype for Business*, the next version of *Lync*. This one is for the books, bridging the consumer-oriented universe of **Skype** with the enterprise-oriented universe of Lync. **Gurdeep Pall,** corporate vice president for Skype who returned to Microsoft's collaboration business to great fanfare only earlier this year, was the one who made the announcement. The next generation of Lync will include a new client experience, new server release, and updates to the service in *Office 365* that will be delivered in the first half of 2015. Skype for Business will bring together the familiar experience of Skype with the security, compliance, and control that businesses require from Lync. As Lync is today, Skype for Business will be a distinct client, server and service that will include familiar, consumer-grade Skype icons for calling, adding video and ending a call. It also will include what Microsoft calls the "call monitor" from Skype, which keeps an active call visible in a small window even when a user moves focus to another application, as well as the ability to access the Skype

user directory and be able to call any Skype user on any device. Skype is used by more than 300 million people for messaging, calling and sharing, according to Microsoft.
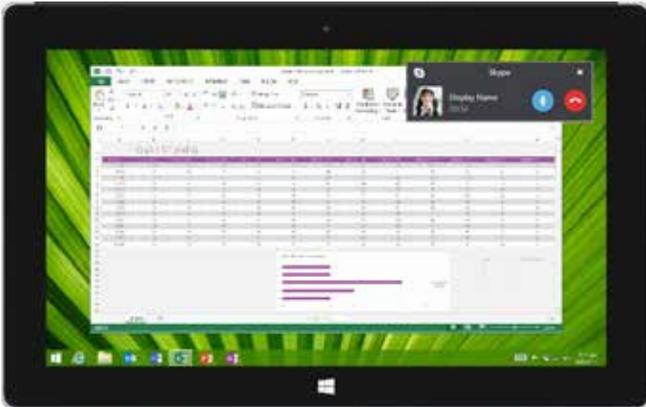
Skype for Business

- **Echo360** has closed an $18 million Series C growth equity round, co-led by **Duchossois Capital Management** and a private family office. The financing will be used to accelerate deployment of the recently launched *Echo360 Active Learning Platform,* a SaaS learning and analytics solution for higher education. Additional funding in the syndicate included **SWaN & Legend, CNF Investments,** and existing investor Steve Case's **Revolution Growth,** which last invested significantly during a Series B round in spring of 2012.

- **Fuze** announced some management changes that we mentioned last issue. Other news: an additional $9 million investment by **Hermes Growth Partners,** which assumed an operational role in the company through placement of Fuze's new leadership, and the company reportedly has exceeded the milestone of a million meeting minutes per work day, with users in over 100 countries. Former CEO David Obrand, interviewed this past May in the *Bulletin*, will continue to serve as a strategic advisor.

- Last week **Voxbone** announced the availability of its local (DID) telephone numbers in three rapidly-growing countries: Colombia, Turkey, and Malaysia. Now global Telcos, cloud communications providers, and enterprise contact centers can cost-effectively and reliably expand the reach of their communications services into these countries. Calls to Voxbone DID numbers

are delivered globally over a single SIP trunk, without customer capital investment and without traditional telecom-like lead times for provisioning. The company reported that the authorization process took time in each geography due to regulatory requirements, but that the net effect will result in long-term sustained services. This Voxbone announcement came on the heels of the unveiling of its relationship with **Telecom Italia Sparkle,** the international services arm of **Telecom Italia Group.**

- In a similar vein, **Twilio** has introduced a public beta of its new elastic SIP trunking service. Cloud-communications ISVs and geographically distributed enterprises can use *Twilio Elastic SIP Trunking* to scale their global PSTN connectivity on demand, with no long-term contracts or complex carrier negotiations. The Twilio service includes termination to most countries and local phone numbers in 50 countries, delivered by a resilient cloud architecture. **Lifesize** for one has adopted Twilio for its SIP trunking.

- **AGT** has introduced the *Alliance Service Suite*, a "three-practice service model of Design, Integration, and Management services" to enhance, grow, and "future-proof" an organization's collaborative environment. As part of the Alliance Service Suite launch, AGT announced multiple enhancements to its vendor-agnostic managed services portfolio. Formerly offering proactive monitoring and management tools for video conferencing endpoints, AGT has expanded its management capabilities to provide complete visibility of video conferencing and A/V infrastructure, including MCUs, endpoints, underlying infrastructure, and more. Hmm…AGT was doing this sort of management and monitoring 12 years ago, so it must be on to something. The offering provides visibility into technologies from the likes of **Cisco, Polycom, Crestron, Lifesize, AMX,** and others. Enhancements the company claims include more robust reporting functionality and the underlying technologies are Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC) certified, ensuring compliance with U.S. Department of Defense standards.

AGT Alliance Service Suite Model

- **Compunetix, Inc.,** provider of multipoint real-time collaboration solutions, has announced the official release of the *Summit Olympus* — its latest platform for massively scalable, feature-rich group communications. Summit Olympus is a modular media processing platform that provides optimized next gen hardware combined with conferencing software to empower cloud services and on-network deployments. The system's IP networking and VoIP / SIP technologies fully support wideband audio calls with Olympus HD Voice. The Olympus more than doubles the port capacity of its predecessors. It also includes encrypted voice capabilities, designed for upholding stringent security standards in mission critical environments. The Olympus features backward compatibility with legacy Summit software, meaning the APIs and UI will remain consistent. Port capacity is a 1:1 ratio whether utilizing standard (G.711) or high definition (G.722) audio.

- Singapore-based startup **Temasys** introduced its *Skylink* WebRTC-powered platform at the **Amazon Web Services re:Invent Startup Launch 2014** event. The third annual Startup Launch selected only five startups from across the globe to present. The company claims that with Skylink and the Skylink API, businesses and developers will get a set of tools and infrastructure needed to include WebRTC simply and easily into devices, applications, websites and browsers. Skylink is built entirely on AWS. Meanwhile, **GENBAND**, a developer of real-time communications software solutions, announced last week it is collaborating with Spain-based **QUOBIS**, a provider of carrier-class unified communications solutions, on the integration of QUOBIS's *SIPPO WebRTC Application Controller* with GENBAND's *SPiDR WebRTC Gateway solution*. These newly combined solutions are meant to help the two organizations address what most of us at WR agree is a growing demand from service providers and enterprises for real-time embedded communications.

- UK-based value-added distributor of security, UC, network infrastructure, and data center solutions **Westcon** and **Tely Labs** have reached a distribution agreement for the former to sell the latter throughout EMEA. Tely Labs also claims it has simplified its channel program to suit a broader reseller market, and that channel sales of the company's telyHD Pro have increased by 400 percent since January.

- Even as it continues to enhance its team workspace offering **Podio, Citrix** announced a few weeks ago new web services and app integration with *GoToMeeting Free* — a communications platform that provides users with video sync-ups. With GoToMeeting Free, companies can offer free video conferencing features, giving their customers the ability to instantly communicate with colleagues and friends anywhere in the world. The new functionality in GoToMeeting Free gives web developers an easier way to add video conferencing capabilities with "close to zero effort and no cost": Developers simply embed the meeting button into their website or app to give users the ability to launch a video conference with one touch. **Slack, Alfred,** and **LaunchBar** are the first companies to integrate with GoToMeeting Free.

- More than a dozen companies, including **Alcatel-Lucent, Cisco, Ustream, Wowza Media Systems** and **Yahoo!**, are forming an industry group called the **Streaming Video Alliance** to promote open standards and interoperability in the streaming industry. The effort appears to be mostly a marketing-driven exercise pushed by network caching optimizer **Qwilt**. WR is skeptical of this group's gravitas, primarily because — to our knowledge — participating companies are paying no fees to fund the alliance. And let's just say it's not a good sign that a streaming evangelization group doesn't bother to post any videos to its pubic promotional site at www.streamingvideoalliance.org.

- Ever think about how our industry calls for collaborative technologies *and* (what too often is missing) intelligence in our own behaviors as we use those technologies? Well we've stumbled upon a hungry little startup called **Do** that provides a hosted service for creating a visual timeline of a meeting's

Do Team Meeting Activities

focus, allowing its users to set agendas, track follow-up activities, and define outcomes. The product works like a shared canvas for each meeting, providing one place for notes, presentations, documents, and other collateral to "live together." Hmm…sounds like it may fall into the team workspace category. The company reports it is growing so fast it added 500 more customers using it for running meetings last month (now totaling 2,000) and is launching a new mobile app shortly.

- Before you go and dismiss **BlackBerry** to the "those that were important in the past but are no longer relevant" heap, we note that BlackBerry introduced *BBM Meetings* at its recent **Enterprise Event**. This service lets users set up a voice or video conferencing session

BBM Meetings

with multiple other users, supporting not only BlackBerry 10 devices but also iOS, Android mobile, and PCs and Macs running Windows and OS X. The host can change any BBM chat, multi-person or group chat, or BBM Voice call into a BBM Meeting with a single option, with up to 25 participants. Price point: $12.50 per host per month, and this includes IT admin support for named account owners.

- Remember **Xerox**? The company has invested an undisclosed amount in **HealthSpot**, a Dublin, Ohio-based telemedicine provider that sets up kiosks to connect patients with physicians. Xerox's investment will enable HealthSpot to ramp up its operations

Coming Soon to a Pharmacy Near You?

and deploy telehealth kiosks (video conferencing apparently included) for retail pharmacies, large employers, long-term care centers and emergency units across the U.S. over the next five years. The partnership will also combine HealthSpot's software platform with Xerox's business process services expertise. Xerox will act as Healthspot's exclusive cloud computing and business process services vendor, facilitating cloud hosting, access to electronic records and claims submission.

- Our final novel app of the month! Ever hear the one about why sharks don't eat lawyers? Answer: professional courtesy! But when you gotta find one, you gotta find one. California-based **Quicklegal** launched its platform about six weeks ago. You download an app that enables you to hold a video chat or audio-only call with an attorney at 15 minute intervals for $49 per 15 minute bloc. If you don't need a full 15 minutes, for $29 you may submit a question via email. Attorneys are pre-selected based on type of law practice. The app is available on the **Apple App** and **Google Play** stores. Lawyers are standing by now in California only, but the company says it expects to expand into nine more states soon.
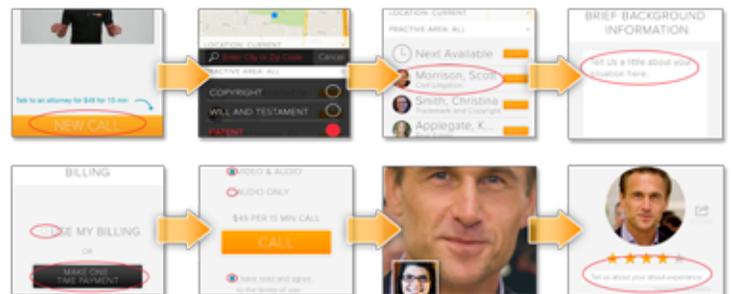
Quicklegal Steps

People & Places

Know someone in the industry who changed jobs? Jump into a new role yourself as vendor, end user, or channel partner? Email us at <u>wrb@wainhouse.com</u> to share the good news.

- 8x8, **Enzo Signore,** Chief Marketing Officer

- Cisco, **Jeremy Stubbs**, Workforce Experience Practice Advisor

Enzo Signore, 8x8

Jeremy Stubbs, Cisco

- Crestron, **Don Mastro**, Executive Director

- Dimension Data, **Paulo Coito**, Pre-Sales Consultant

- Echo360, **Dr. Bradley Fordham**, Chief Technology Officer

- FreeConferenceCall.com, **Robert Wise**, Executive VP of Corporate Development

- Panopto, **Rob Hughes**, VP, Sales

- SMART Technologies, **Jeff Lowe**, VP Marketing

Don Mastro, Crestron

Paulo Coito, Dimension Data

Dr. Bradley Fordham, Echo360

Bob Wise, FreeConference Call.com

Rob Hughes, Panopto

Jeff Lowe, SMART Technologies

Free WR Paper:
The VidyoWay Video Bridging Service

Launched in mid-2012, *VidyoWay* is a free, hosted video bridging service provided by industry disrupter **Vidyo**. VidyoWay provides users with 25-port virtual meeting rooms (VMRs) that support 1) group video systems (H.323, SIP, and Vidyo Room systems); 2) PC video users (H.323, SIP, and VidyoDesktop); and 3) mobile video users (iOS and Android). Given the compelling price point, the test team at WR decided to take this service for a quick test drive. Our goal was to determine whether this $0 / month service could, in fact, cover the video calling / bridging requirements of the typical enterprise. This research note has been sponsored by **Vidyo** for public distribution. Download here.

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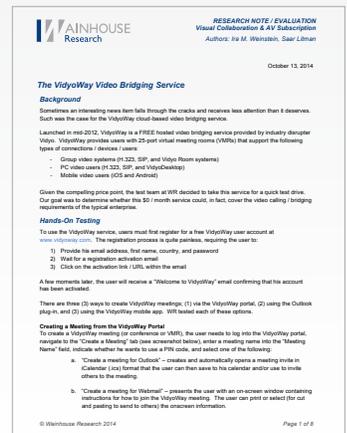
1:1 Michael Gotalsky, TrueConf, CEO

Andrew W. Davis, andrewwd@wainhouse.com

It's been more than two years since we interviewed **TrueConf** in the *WR Bulletin (#1316)*. The company last week released a new version of its client application for Windows, now on release 6.5.0 and which now supports desktop and other applications capture and sharing, along with a new interface and avatar support. Our focus here, given all of the ugly geopolitical developments surrounding Russia and the Ukraine, is to catch up with Michael with a couple of targeted, focused questions. WR: Remind the readers please, of what TrueConf is all about.

MG: TrueConf is the Russian developer of video conferencing solutions for business. We also translate this newsletter into Russian for our local market. We have ~100 full-time employees, many of whom telework using our technology of course. We develop hardware and software and focus on Russia and the CIS countries. We have a totally new UC&C product coming out early December, and hope to see the news in the English language WR.

WR: How much of your business is outside Russia?

MG: We split our sales teams and statistics by CIS boundaries because we sell directly to most of the CIS countries except the Ukraine, which is not part of the so-called "Customs Union." Russia is the largest (>90%) source of income in the CIS of course. 15% of our income was generated by outside-CIS countries during the first half of 2014. This figure is double that of 2013, but we don't expect that to continue since Q4 is a big quarter in Russia.

View of Donetsk from TrueConf Office Building

WR: The Ukraine-Russia situation is of course all over the news here. How is this situation affecting your business?

MG: Well, there are two aspects:

1) Economic issues, not political issues, significantly reduce our sales volume in Ukraine (10 times less compared to the first three quarters of 2013). Our distribution network in Ukraine is active and wasn't affected at all; we still deliver a lot of trial subscriptions which generate constant lead flow. However the deal closing ratio is just slightly above zero. Right now video conferencing is not a business critical solution for the local companies (like telephony) and the locals have pretty much stopped investing. I would assume the situation is the same for Cisco, Polycom, and the other vendors. The whole situation in Ukraine is horrifying on many human and other levels. On the other hand we are seeing very good results in Kazakhstan and Central Asia markets.

2) As you might remember we have an office in Donetsk, the center of much fighting, for web development, QA,

> What we see lately in government tenders is that Cisco network infrastructure is actively being replaced by Huawei solutions, so Huawei's position in Russia is expected to become even stronger. This also reflects a new trend set by our IT & Communications minister, Mr. Nikifirov, towards creation of alternative OS, database engines, and other critical software....We can even label these things as the start of a Cold War in IT.

support and marketing. The office is still open but only a few people remain in the city and visit our office on a daily basis. To help our team and to create safe conditions we've opened another two offices in Kharkiv and in Simferopol (Crimea). This happened over the summer. We are hiring mostly in Kharkiv now. In addition, some of our people moved to Moscow where the core team is located.

On the political side, another thing we'd like to mention is a software import replacement program initiated by the Russian government. Most probably it will prohibit non-Russian companies from competing in government IT purchases, including video conferencing solutions. The program will limit competition in the government sector (which is the largest of VC & UC sales, with 20% share based on our data) and significantly affect Microsoft / Cisco / Polycom / LifeSize sales in Russia in 2014-Q4 and 2015. What we see lately in government tenders is that Cisco network infrastructure is actively being replaced by **Huawei** solutions, so Huawei's position in Russia is expected to become even stronger. This also reflects a new trend set by our IT & Communications minister, Mr. Nikifirov, towards creation of alternative OS, database engines, and other critical software together with BRICS countries and China in the first place (to brake monopolies set by U.S. companies globally). We can even label these things as the start of a Cold War in IT.

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