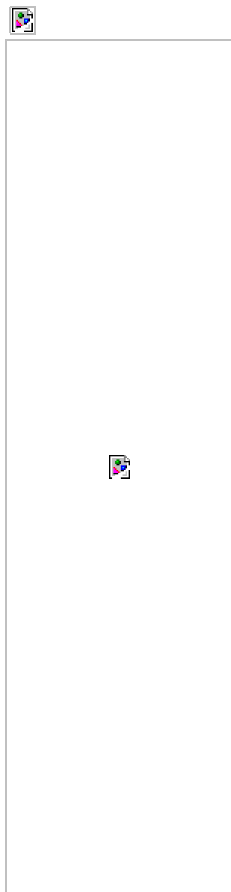


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VOIP and Telephony

An Explosive Year for VOIP

By: [Ellen Muraskin](#)

2004-11-25

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Opinion: Remember 2004 as the year that VOIP finally penetrated mass consumer consciousness, as friends in normal walks of life began to gain a dim awareness of the stuff I write about.

An Explosive Year for VOIP

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Remember 2004 as the year that VOIP finally penetrated mass consumer consciousness, as friends in normal walks of life began to gain a dim awareness of the stuff I write about.

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Give the lions share of credit to Vonage. Jeff Citrons ad budget bought him banners on such general-interest sites as CNN.com, as well as space on all of the techie online hangouts. Covad aired commercials for its hosted business VOIP on prime-time television.

Cable companies did likewise with their consumer VOIP (voice over IP) offerings, and even the traditional telcos—both regional Bells and the long-distance triumverate—were forced to follow suit this year, [igniting a consumer price war](#).

Perhaps equally important, [VOIP adapters started taking up shelf space](#) at stores such as Best Buy, Circuit City, Fryes Electronics and Staples, bundled together with service. Service providers also started marketing through e-tailers.

[Read a column here about industry moves to raise VOIP consciousness.](#)

Give credit, too, to the FCC (Federal Communications Commission), whose [hands-off policy on VOIP regulation](#) encouraged more providers to enter the marketplace, and early entrants to expand their networks. By now, we know that whatever regulation is to be imposed on VOIP will be decided at the federal level. But we still dont know exactly what those rules will be—or how much they will force prices to rise.

The major telecom vendors have pledged their compliance with the SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) signaling standard and continued on that road, with more and more beginning to implement the presence aspect of SIP into their phone systems.

This meant that PBX players, large and small, either built or OEMed servers that integrated buddy-status-conscious instant messaging with voice and video calling.

[Click here to read about a mobility and messaging add-on for the small-business PBX.](#)

[Microsofts VOIP announcement](#) early this fall drove the companys stake into the

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Power, and Cooling Costs

This calculator shows the cost of adding additional servers, including networking and power for both servers and cooling. It assumes energy costs of \$.1/Kw.

Number of Servers:

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Purchase Price:

Cooling Type:

Total cost (one year):

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ground of SIP-based communication. Although Redmond offers APIs to PBX vendors, those willing to use SIP endpoints (such as its "Istanbul" software client) have a virtual PBX in its LCS (Live Communication Server). Many vendors, including Toshiba, introduced new SIP phones.

3Com, Nortel, Avaya, Siemens, and even little Comdial all showed me their approaches to presence-aware interaction in 2004.

The difference in these products will lie in their emphases, whether conferencing-oriented for sales presentations, video-intensive for such things as telemedicine, or collaborative for dispersed teamwork around spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations.

The more video-intensive solutions and services, unsurprisingly, have come out of the video endpoint vendors: Polycom, Tandberg and Sony.

Next Page: Bringing together rich media.

Next: ' Rich Media Interaction ' >>>

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