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VOIP and Telephony

An Explosive Year for VOIP

By: Elen Muraskin
2004-11-25
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2. ' Rich Media Interaction '

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 - ' Rich Media Interaction '
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But the rich media interaction all seems to involve the following components: buddy-list actuation, whether for chat, voice or video; audio conferencing; point-to-point video, if only from common webcams; dual-control, shared applications; whiteboarding; real-time call screening; and soft extensions, suitable for laptop use through VPNs from the road.

Messaging functions, typically on an adjunct CPE (customer premises equipment) server, all will move to browser-based GUIs so they can be picked up anywhere. They will present voice, fax and e-mail messages in one inbox, with the mobility aspect giving "unified messaging" the respect it never got within the LAN.

All of these messaging and presence-aware functions also are being offered on a hosted model: We followed Covads acquisition of GoBeam this year, and with it, the launch of its enterprise VOIP service, which included provision and management of the T-1 last mile.

We reported on industry research that predicted a 45 percent growth in IP PBX sales for 2005. At the same time, we reported what we could ferret out on large-scale VOIP deployments that went bust, and on enterprise VOIP bets at record scales, both stories featuring Cisco's Call Manager IP PBX.

Interoperability between VOIP networks gained prominence as an issue, along with a new class of solutions for securing voice traffic across firewalls.

Finally, interest heated up in 2004 around the chance to use one phone, make one call and keep that call while switching between the public cellular telephone network and public or enterprise Wi-Fi VOIP.

SBC announced its plan to launch a combined Cingular/Wi-Fi network. On the enterprise CPE side, Motorola, Avaya and Proxim came out with a dual-mode phone for cell and Wi-Fi access.

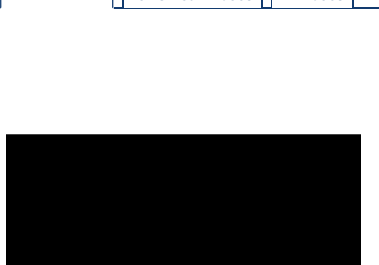
In sum, VOIP in 2004 greatly widened and secured its hold on the consumer market, served by new and incumbent companies. It gained more ground in the CPE market, as evidenced by the rise in IP PBX sales, especially among

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across two networks—one in multiple media via data, for authorized, authenticated partners and one via PSTN, for an unknown, untrusted public?

VOIP/Telecom Topic Center Editor [Ellen Muraskin](#) has been observing and illuminating the murky intersection of computer intelligence and telephony since 1993. She reaches for her VOIP line when the rain makes her POTS line buzz.

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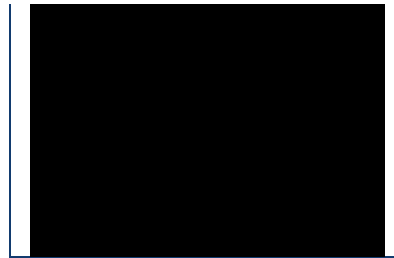
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