



## OPINION PIECE

Tellumat Telecoms

March, 2011

Page 1 of 2

### **Unified communications on the go**

#### **Smart mobile devices ensure powerful enterprise mobility at low cost**

BY BENNIE LANGENHOVEN, MANAGING EXECUTIVE, TELLUMAT COMMUNICATION SOLUTIONS\*

#### **Addict support**

It took the creative genius of an Apple to fulfill the prophecy, but the age of mobility is finally here, and it shows no signs of letting up on innovative surprises or promoting widespread addictive behaviour.

First, the iPhone rekindled the smartphone concept, brushing aside Symbian and to a lesser degree BlackBerry, and spawning formidable competition in the Android family of "Google" phones. Then the iPad resurrected tablets in similar fashion, and now this form factor is even slated to replace notebooks.

Nothing will ever be the same. Erstwhile enterprise mobility policies were one-vendor, restrictive affairs. Today, IT shops have little choice but to support all their iRobots, Android warriors and Crackberry addicts.

#### **Did UC spur mobility or vice versa?**

In response to the capitulation of IT under the might of mobile, vendors are introducing enterprise mobility solutions of all kinds, catering for an increasingly heterogeneous environment. These range from management consoles to unified communication (UC) solutions (voice, presence, conference and chat capabilities behind one interface), devices and applications.

Analysts have rushed to explain the sudden explosion in uptake and solutions. Research firm Frost & Sullivan says UC is the key. "Smartphones offer significant benefits [to enterprises and workers], especially when deployed to leverage UC," the firm notes in a recent white paper.

It's an interesting point – firstly and most obviously, it suggests that the maturation of UC has much to do with the sudden success of mobile. Secondly, it follows that mobility extends UC's benefits (collaboration, presence management, efficiency and productivity) beyond the hard-wired enterprise. It's a virtuous cycle, a chicken-and-egg situation that we needn't get to the bottom of, since the only really important thing for purposes of this article is that mobility and UC go hand-in-hand.

#### **All that, and it cuts costs**

But for all its benefits, there are considerable costs associated with mobility, most significantly cellular tariffs and charges, Frost & Sullivan adds.

Again, UC offers an answer – or rather, the Internet Protocol that UC solutions are based on, does. Frost & Sullivan explains that IP-based voice-over-Wi-Fi networks are a great alternative to cellular networks, helping enterprises lower costs without sacrificing quality.

"This is especially valuable in locations with poor cellular coverage (including conference centres and transit hubs), since Wi-Fi can be used for voice communications at no cost, bypassing high roaming charges," the firm notes.



## **OPINION PIECE**

Tellumat Telecoms

March, 2011

Page 2 of 2

### **Selecting a vendor**

So what must enterprises look for in a mobility vendor? "Once they decide to deploy a mobile UC solution, companies must select a provider that will offer a complete, reliable and secure solution, one that integrates well with the business's other UC applications," Frost & Sullivan continues.

Communication solutions incorporating a mobile UC solution should offer:

- Secure remote technology on a global basis
- Cell data, battery management and Wi-Fi handling capabilities
- Native mobile support that is platform-agnostic
- Full UC integration

In addition, users should also be able to move seamlessly from premises-based systems to cellular calls and back, without the caller or contact noticing the hand-off.

### **Leading the wave**

It is clear that when properly integrated into the enterprise, worker mobility has tremendous benefits, including the extension of UC functionality to a broad range of devices and platforms. However, mobility can run up enterprise communication cost, and this is where mobile UC comes in.

Converged communication solution providers that offer vendor-agnostic mobile support with full UC integration will lead the way in the adoption of this exciting new technology wave.

*\* Tellumat is the South African distributor of ShoreTel systems. ShoreTel recently acquired enterprise mobility leader Agito Networks, a development of which Frost & Sullivan has said: "Agito's unique location-aware, dual-mode telephony and mobile UC applications strengthen and bring differentiation to ShoreTel's mobility portfolio, and expand its range of solutions."*