VoIP: Getting Better All the Time

Although Voice over IP technology is maturing, enterprises are having difficulty properly planning the introduction of VoIP and IP telephony. Gartner proposes a five-layered approach.

Gartner has been perhaps the harshest critic of the development of Voice over IP (VoIP): While the direction made strategic sense, it was clear to us that vendors were overhyping the capabilities of a rather immature technology. Additionally, even in the recent past, VoIP simply did not have compelling business benefits for most enterprise applications. In a real sense, criticism by us and potential users has paid off: VoIP is entering the “Slope of Enlightenment” on the Gartner Hype Cycle. The technology is maturing, and the strategic drivers are changing — making the business value more clear. Users are faced with another problem: how to properly plan for VoIP and IP telephony — which are not the same thing.

In the articles in this Flashlight, Gartner defines a five-layered approach to the subject; the articles highlight on key developments on each of the layers, shown as follows:

- Advanced IP telephony applications
- IP telephony integration with business processes and workflow
- IP telephony
- VoIP-enabled infrastructure
- VoIP-capable networks

In particular, we devote substantial attention to what has been missing in this area for a long time: a cohesive discussion of the applications that VoIP and IP telephony enhance.

We hope that this Flashlight will provide you a sound basis to begin planning implementation of VoIP.

Featured Research

“Business Value Drives VoIP and IP-Telephony Layering” — Vendors, stakeholders, technology and evolution rates deliver complete business value. By Bernard Elliot

“Voice Over IP: WAN Considerations” — Managed, enhanced WANs are for mainstream voice communications. By Jay Pultz

“How to Assess the Case for Voice Over IP Services” — Organizations should consider the savings, features and call quality that these services bring, rather than focusing on the technology. By Katja Ruud
“Network Assessments for VoIP Help Improve Service” — Enterprises must distinguish between traditional voice services and VoIP. **By David Neil**

“VoIP Security Behind the Firewall” — VPNs can be used where appropriate. **By John Girard and Andy Rolf**

“SIP Will Make Significant Inroads by the End of 2006” — Session Initiation Protocol will likely be preferred over VoIP. **By Richard Costello**

“A Product Survey of SIP ‘Softphones’ “ — Full multiplatform interoperability with softphones seems unlikely. **By Richard Costello**

“IP Contact Center Considerations and Timelines” — Enterprises must select the IP contact center that meets their road map. **By Drew Kraus**

“Vendors Must Exploit IP to Achieve Contact Center Sales” — Vendors must identify how IP technology migration relates to scalability, performance, ease of integration and management. **By Terry Wright**

“Don't Rely on Voice Over Internet for Teleworkers” — Voice over Internet will not replace the public switched telephone network for voice calls. **By Stephen Blood**

“IP Telephony Can Revolutionize Business Communications” — Enterprises must rethink how they used voice applications. **By Bob Hafner**

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