



BEST FEATURE IN IT JOURNALISM

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Srikanth R P won the PoleStar Award for 2009 for his article, 'How Unified Communications is transforming India Inc.', which appeared in Networking Computing.

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With more than 13 years of experience to his credit, Srikanth's core expertise has been in writing about the business of Information Technology. He has headed the editorial operations of the Mumbai bureau of Express Computer, one of India's leading IT magazines, where he was responsible for conceptualizing and creating a robust editorial plan that accurately captured the pulse of existing industry and technology trends.

Srikanth has also been associated with Patni Computer Systems, India's 7th largest IT services company by revenues. In Patni, he was a key member of the communications and thought leadership team responsible for creating a compelling value proposition for his organization, through focused written communications such as books, articles and whitepapers. After Patni, Srikanth was associated with Capgemini India Consulting Private Limited, one of the world's premier IT consulting companies in a Marketing and Communications role.

How Unified Communications is transforming India Inc

Srikanth RP

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Telepresence

Telemedicine

Customer Interaction

Project Collaboration

Tele-banking

Education

Research & Development

Proposal Management

DIRECTORY SERVICE

MOBILITY

How Unified Communications is transforming India Inc.

Forced into taking action by a recessionary environment, Indian businesses are using the transformative power of Unified Communications for multiple activities such as R&D, large deal pursuits, proposal management and even for customer interactions

BY SRIKANTH RP

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WHEN HEAVY RAINS LASHED MUMBAI IN JULY 14 THIS YEAR, A THOUGHT raced through the mind of Gopal Redkar, a senior sales manager working in one of India's top five software services firms. Last year, during the same period, Redkar lost out on a potential big sales deal. The reason—crucial inputs from experts, required for responding to a Request for Proposal (RFP), were delayed since the experts were held up in traffic due to the heavy rains.

However, unlike last year, Redkar today has a self-assured smile running across his lips. The reason behind Redkar's confidence—a Unified Communications (UC) system that has transformed the way his function works. With Redkar's IT team having unified traditional phones, IP phones, e-mail and Instant Messaging (IM) systems, the team can contact domain experts, wherever they are located, by using any device.

Today, even if he is stuck in traffic, Redkar remains uncuffed. He pulls out his smartphone from his pocket and quickly checks if the domain experts are available online. He discovers that the healthcare domain expert, whom he was counting on for putting together the proposal, has an out-of-office status. Using the same smartphone, Redkar immediately queries the HR database of his company, to check for similar domain experts. On finding one expert who is online but in a different time zone, Redkar contacts him via chat. Having received confirmation of the expert's availability, Redkar proceeds to share his proposal with him. The proposal is also being simultaneously viewed by his other colleagues scattered in different locations, using their smartphones or laptops. What follows is a collaborative interaction, where the expert guides the team and points out changes using a whiteboard. This allows each member to highlight changes in the proposal, and make instant modifications. The whole interaction is set up in a couple of hours.

A year ago, without the UC system, Redkar would have probably exchanged numerous e-mails, spent more than a week to locate the right domain expert, and then probably another week to actually contact him. Today, everyone in the ecosystem is a click or call away. Welcome to the new world of UC, where functions are independent of devices and everyone is accessible. UC has a strong impact in a global context, since organizations can unite people across different time zones, and crunch timelines by a huge percentage. The result—a significant boost in productivity and efficiency.

UC IS A CONCEPT/STRATEGY, NOT A PRODUCT

Unlike the perception of most vendors and analysts, UC is a portfolio of components/solutions and not merely a product. Benjamin Green, UC&C Solutions Manager, Asia Pacific, Verizon Business, agrees: "UC is a not a product,

but a concept or a strategy. It is a set of tools that brings together disparate or previously separated communications and collaboration systems into a unified architecture." These include communication media such as voice services (telephony and audio conferencing), video services (video conferencing, desktop conferencing, and telepresence), and data services (web conferencing, IM, and e-mail).

The beauty of UC is that people are not tied down to devices or applications. "A person could seamlessly move from IM to e-mail to a video chat, which could be integrated into the application that this person is working on," says Shivasankar K, Country Manager, LifeSize (India). Shivasankar says that the intelligence in the UC system will enable messages to be routed based on policies set by the user. For example, if you wish to make a video call to a person in a UC environment, and this person is not available to take the call, then this call could be routed to the individual's cell phone. If this is also not answered, it could be routed as a voice mail to the person's inbox.

The true essence of UC lies in providing a unified experience and in removing the complexity of the multiple modes of communication channels. Vinod K, Director-Unified Communications, Avaya GlobalConnect, explains this perspective by comparing UC to a utility bill payment mechanism. "A good comparison would be how most of us do our utility bill payments from a single account via the web instead of taking four bills and going to the nearest utility organization payment counter to make these payments," concurs Vinod.

"UC is a philosophy which unifies all means of communication, instead of working in silos. By breaking these silos, UC tools bring in a synergy that allows organizations to free the communication from the device," says Minhaj Zia, National Sales Manager, Unified Communications, Cisco India & SAARC.

Depending upon the size of the organization, the adop-



MURALIKRISHNA K, VP AND HEAD, COMPUTERS & COMMUNICATION DIVISION, INFOSYS TECHNOLOGIES

"The virtual team concept is a reality today, as based on the presence information, we are able to initiate collaboration from any application or device"

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tion of UC tools can begin in different phases. For example, compared to a large enterprise, SMBs will start small, taking baby steps before they are fully confident of the ROI. Sarish K B, Research Analyst - Gartner, agrees: "In India, many organizations in both the SMB segments and large enterprises are considering IP telephony as the stepping stone for their future UC investment plans."

Once confident of ROI, organizations gradually start expanding. "A few years ago, UC meant only 'voice.' Then it evolved into messaging. Now, more critically, as the demand for cost savings go up and the call for green technology gets louder, video has been thrown into the mix," opines Dinesh Sehgal, Regional Director, India, Tandberg.

RECESSIONARY ENVIRONMENT POWERS UC ADOPTION

With travel budgets being slashed drastically, most Indian organizations have accelerated their adoption of UC technologies. "The economic crisis has had a positive impact on the adoption of UC tools. The requirements of organi-

zations in the current economic situation and the features that UC tools offer, namely reducing costs while simultaneously improving productivity, mirror each other. UC can be integrated with critical business processes and business applications which can result in faster service delivery to customers," says Sivarama Krishnan, Executive Director, Performance Improvement, PricewaterhouseCoopers. Krishnan says that UC tools have become popular, as it has allowed organizations to expand operations without incurring additional expenditure on infrastructure. Organizations have also been able to cut down on the telephony and conferencing costs by replacing the dial-in services with IP based capabilities.

As most UC solution deployments yield a fast ROI, Indian enterprises have started adopting UC tools on a fast scale. Says Michael Yu, Director, Network Solutions Group, TSG, APJ, HP, "Unified communications solutions yield cost savings that can enable investment in areas that significantly change business processes to achieve better productivity and customer satisfaction. For example, savings from travel expenses through unified communications

TELEPRESENCE SIGNALS THE DEATH OF DISTANCE

With new technologies such as Telepresence offering high-definition visual video and audio, many Indian enterprises today are actively using Telepresence—primarily due to the rapid ROI. Says Anshul Dhillon, Senior Marketing Manager - India & SAARC, Polycom, "Cut one business trip for a few employees who travel across Asia, or to the US or Europe, and you have paid for a Telepresence system." Dhillon says that travel savings are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to Telepresence ROI. Besides savings on travel, enterprises save valuable time which translates to ROI in as little as one month. In addition, critical and urgent meetings across several geographies can be held at a short notice.

The strong growth of Telepresence solutions can also be seen in the increasing number of Telepresence installations across the country. A case in point is HP, with its Telepresence solution called 'Halo.' "In India, we have in excess of 20 HP Halo installations, where our customers are gaining positive benefits in communicating with their international offices, while reducing travel and increasing productivity," says Pramod Deshmukh, Country Manager for Data Center and Network Solutions Group, HP India Sales.

Seeing a huge opportunity, service providers such as Tata Communications and Tata Teleservices (in collaboration with IBM) have launched public Telepresence rooms, which can be used by enterprises on a pay-per-use basis. Using Telepresence solutions from Cisco, Tata Communications has already launched public rooms in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Gurgaon. Similarly, Tata Teleservices (Maharashtra) has launched Telepresence solutions across Mumbai, Maharashtra and Goa.

Most Telepresence rooms are specifically designed to give the impression of a real-life meeting experience. "Designed



Shash Gaurish, PricewaterhouseCoopers

with special premium lighting and features, the room creates an immersive effect that gives the impression that participants are actually sitting across the table, even if they are half way across the globe. Over the last few months in particular, Indian enterprises which have existing video conferencing endpoints, have been looking at adopting a Telepresence solution to complete the experience," explains Dinesh Sehgal, Regional Director, India, Tandberg.

In India, the adoption levels are gradually picking up, as business centers add rooms with Telepresence capabilities. For example, Cable & Wireless recently signed a deal worth approximately £32 million over five years, in which Polycom's Telepresence video conferencing suites will be established at Regus' global business centers across the world's business capitals, including Mumbai. This will provide Regus' business executives with a genuine alternative to executive travel.

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can now be invested in Telepresence solutions, which can, in turn, be used for customer meetings, and new product introductions to drive further cost savings." In essence, a trickle of adoption has now turned into a flood—as a couple of travel trips saved by deploying UC tools, can more than adequately compensate for the investments made in purchasing these UC tools.

As more Indian organizations go global, UC tools are fast becoming crucial in connecting effectively with the parent organization. "The combination of mobility solutions and applications enhanced with UC-based communication capabilities is diminishing the need for in-person meetings. Visual collaboration technologies are being viewed as business enablers in this tough economic scenario, as a tool for business continuity and for managing a dispersed workforce, customers, and partners," says Arshul Dhillon, Senior Marketing Manager - India & SAARC, Polycom.

Most organizations today have distributed workforces scattered across the globe. While earlier collaboration between these teams was a challenging task, today UC tools ensure that every employee is just a click away. "The unified interface means that employees can access information no matter where this is held, at any time, on any device, thereby allowing the mobile workforce to have continued access to information, whether individuals are at home, on-site or at work," opines Samanta Das, MD, Cable & Wireless India.

UC also brings in the much needed agility and flexibility that are imperative for any company to succeed in an extremely competitive environment. "One of the challenges businesses face today is the flexible alignment of resources to support projects. Presence capabilities in many UC solutions will provide an exciting opportunity for team members to be assigned to projects based on their availability," says Sudhir Narang, MD, British Telecom India. Narang says that by analyzing information related to presence, organizations can drive greater efficiencies and higher utilization of resource pools.

To encourage SMBs to adopt UC solutions, vendors are trying out innovative strategies. For example, Nortel has launched a UC solution created using open source technologies. Says Dhananjay Ganjoo, Vice President Enterprise, Nortel, Asia, "The Software Communication Server (SCS), is targeted at small and medium businesses, and allows enterprises to deploy a full-fledged UC solution by buying standard industry shelf hardware and handsets." Ganjoo says that this open source solution will be apt for enterprises who do not want to be locked into proprietary hardware, and want to build custom communication solutions that address their specific business requirements. Ganjoo claims that this product is being widely accepted



ARVIND TAWDE, SENIOR VP AND CIO, MAHINDRA & MAHINDRA

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in the market since no additional hardware or application centric licenses are required.

FACILITATING CREATION OF VIRTUAL TEAMS

The best example of how UC can contribute to an organization's efficiencies, can be seen in the case of Wipro Technologies. Wipro is India's number three IT software services firm in terms of revenues. Being an IT services company with geographically dispersed teams, Wipro uses UC tools to collaborate on projects. Today, such dispersed teams can conduct web-based meetings, share desktops, and collaborate for presentations. These meetings are possible due to an infrastructure which ensures that users have the latest online presence information on all team members and partners. The scale of usage is immense, with an average of 30,000 users who daily log on to the IM. Traditionally, these users would have sent e-mails or used voice-based calls to collaborate.

Taking this concept further, Wipro is now creating a 'People Supply Chain' model that allows the creation of virtual teams. Typically, IT professionals travel from one city to another based on the location of the project. What if these professionals could work together in a collaborative way in the form of a virtual team? Laxman Badiga, CIO, Wipro Technologies, believes that this concept will change the cost dynamics and efficiencies of outsourcing. With a virtual team concept enabled by a UC system, professionals do not need to relocate and the organization saves a significant amount of costs incurred in travel and relocation expenses. "The objective is to have the capability to tap the expertise and skills of people, wherever they are located—in small towns or in established cities—and connect them with a platform that facilitates creation of virtual teams. The impact on the industry will be huge since it will allow talent to be tapped at will, and without any geographical hindrances," emphasizes Badiga. Thanks to UC, Wipro has been able to save close to 100 trips per

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year for piloted projects, with approximate savings of USD 2.5 million. Apart from the cost savings, Wipro has succeeded in paving the way for a new delivery model which demonstrates the truly transformative power of UC.

Similarly, Infosys, India's number two software services company in terms of revenue, is using the power of UC to increase employee productivity. The firm uses IP telephony extensively, sees clear benefits through ease in communications between co-workers across locations.

"A unified interface for multiple channels of communication and collaboration has helped us to significantly improve employee productivity significantly as co-workers can be reached at the first try. The virtual team concept is a reality today, since based on the presence information, we are able to initiate collaboration from any application or device" says Muralikrishna K, VP and Head, Computers & Communication Division, Infosys Technologies. Depending on the location of the user, intelligent cost-based routing techniques can be used to initiate collaboration. For example, if a person is traveling abroad, he can be reached through calls routed through the public Internet, instead of using the normal route of the mobile phone.

With multiple teams spread across the globe, software services firms are natural adopters of UC tools, since it gives them the capability to cut down unnecessary conversation. While cost savings from telecom and travel are certain, the most important benefit is the reduction in

time taken to effectively communicate with colleagues. Besides reducing costs, since employees can easily connect with each other, there is an improvement in employee productivity. "Knowledge workers with access to information and collaboration tools can have a direct impact on organizational performance: from reduced time-to-market for new products, to faster decision-making and reactions to market changes," says Benjamin Green, UC&C Solutions Manager, Asia Pacific, Verizon Business.

The presence indicator is a huge plus, as employees can be contacted depending on the presence status they have set. "Our UC systems have been connected to the employees' Outlook Calendar. An individual can therefore check into the calendar about the availability of the person he needs to contact and thereby the decision-making process is eased," says N Nataraj, CIO, Hexaware Technologies.

For organizations with a global presence, an effective collaboration tool is a must and this is where UC systems can make a big impact. Says Arvind Jawde, Senior VP and CIO, Mahindra & Mahindra, "Though e-mail is a good communication tool, it falls short because of its lack of ability to facilitate real-time collaboration. Hence a lot of decisions invariably get delayed. Enabling real-time collaboration by deploying Microsoft Office Communication Server (OCS) has aided faster decision making and resulted in increased employee productivity," Jawde says that post deployment of Microsoft OCS, there has been a significant reduction in e-mail trails, follow-up mails and

WHO IS USING UC FOR WHAT?

COMPANY	USAGE
Wipro	Uses UC tools for collaborating on projects, interacting with customers and partners, knowledge acquisition, customer interfacing engagement, virtual trainings and leadership meetings
Infosys	UC tools are being used in design and architecture reviews, in large deal pursuits and for co-creating Intellectual Property using its large distributed workforce. Using the same platform, Infosys holds virtual meetings for activities related to cross-functional initiatives and discussions related to regional and global sales activities
Mahindra & Mahindra	Uses UC tools in the areas of remote training, getting real-time updates from regional offices and for improving collaboration especially in the area of R&D
Barry-Wehmiller International Resources	Uses UC tools for quicker problem resolution, to quickly locate global experts across locations without any delays
Patel Engineering	UC tools are used for interviewing candidates remotely, and for sharing presentations and training-related activities
Vedanta Aluminium	Uses a UC system to monitor sites in remote locations
Dolphin Group of Hotels	UC systems are used by the MD to do live reviews with senior management staff across different locations
Obeetee	Uses UC to participate virtually in trade fairs abroad

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reminder mails. Going through fewer e-mails daily has also enabled employees to tackle important issues appropriately, thus increasing an employee's productive output. Today, Microsoft OCS has been deployed for more than 6,000 employees who can now collaborate using any medium (computer, laptop, PDA, IP phone, fax, e-mail, voice, video or chat).

Besides using IM, employees in the Mahindra & Mahindra Group today conduct group chats for opinions or approvals. As the OCS is tightly integrated with the mailing system and the Intranet platform, the presence indicator is seen throughout in Outlook, Word and Intranet sites of Mahindra & Mahindra. This has drastically reduced the time taken for tasks—especially tasks where multiple levels of approvals are needed.

Online presence is a killer feature in Unified Communication tools, and when applied correctly, can significantly impact the productivity of employees. "As communication technologies are combined with productivity applications such as Microsoft Word, enterprises can expect a surge in their productivity levels," says Amit Mehta, Director - Unified Communications, Microsoft India. Mehta cites the example of an employee working in the R&D lab of a pharmaceutical company, who can reach out to other colleagues while collaborating on a document. As the status or presence information of an employee is continuously updated within Microsoft Word, Excel or other applications—enterprise workers can reach fellow colleagues via voice, video, or IM.

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

With its ability to facilitate real-time collaboration, enterprises are now looking at using UC tools to transform their business functions. At Infosys, UC tools are being used in design and architecture reviews, in large deal pursuits and for co-creating Intellectual Property using its large distributed workforce. Using the same platform, Infosys holds virtual meetings for activities related to cross functional initiatives and discussions related to regional and global sales activities.

With current restrictions on travel, UC can be used effectively to deepen relationships with key customers. For example, Wipro has created an 'Extended Work Environment,' which it uses to collaborate with partners and customers. "More than ten customers are already on this network, and this allows us to establish instant communication with customers," says Vikas Srivastava, VP, Technology Infrastructure Services, Wipro Infotech. While UC has been used primarily for slashing travel costs, in Wipro's case, UC tools have been well integrated into business processes. "We use UC tools for knowledge acquisition, customer interfacing engagements, virtual trainings



CHANDRASEKHAR BALASUBRAMANIAM, COUNTRY MANAGER-INFRASTRUCTURE RISK MANAGEMENT SERVICES, IBM INDIA

"With integrated systems, you can log in from any desk from any location across the globe, and your extension number will get assigned to the phone on your desk"

and leadership meetings," says Srivastava. UC can play a pivotal role in the sales function too, as members of the sales team can immediately communicate with domain experts, and take effective decisions.

In the future, as more and more applications are embedded with collaborative capabilities, the associated impact is expected to be huge. For example, if the inventory of a particular product falls below a certain level, the production system which is tightly integrated with the UC system can shoot off an alert via multiple delivery channels—via an automated voice alert to the phone, a text message to a mobile number, or by using a simple fax.

At the Mahindra & Mahindra Group, some of the effective usages by different departments have been in the areas of remote training, getting real-time updates from regional offices and for improving collaboration especially in the area of R&D. The advantage of using a UC system can be seen from the fact that today, the corporate IT team based in Worli, Mumbai, conducts remote application training for users at Rudrapur (Uttarakhand) and Zaheerabad (Andhra Pradesh). The trainer interacts with the remote participants using UC tools.



ANSHUL DHINGRA, SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER - INDIA & SAARC, POLYCOM

"Combining mobility solutions and applications enhanced with UC-based communication capabilities diminishes the need for in-person meetings"

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UC INDUSTRY IMPACT

COMPANY	USAGE
Telemedicine: 	Remote populations can benefit from mobile clinics that use a wireless broadband connection to deliver expert advice from doctors located anywhere in the world.
Customer interaction: 	UC tools provide the knowledge worker with tools such as the 'presence' indicator, which help in quickly identifying which domain expert is available to efficiently complete the call.
Project Collaboration: 	Using UC, geographically dispersed teams can conduct web-based meetings, share desktops and collaborate for presentations.
Education: 	The availability of good teachers in remote villages is always a big challenge. UC tools can fill this vacuum, by having one subject matter expert or teacher in one location, and simulating live virtual classrooms in hundreds of other locations.

Barry Wehmiller International Resources (BWIR), a firm focused in the domain of engineering solutions, and operating across more than 20 different countries, uses a combination of Webex and Microsoft NetMeeting to reach out to the best domain experts in the company. Says Ramesh Santhanam, GM, IT, BWIR, "Today, our ability to resolve a problem is quicker, since we can reach out to an appropriate expert quickly across locations, without any delays."

Today, robust communication links have made distance irrelevant, and this is being used by Indian organizations to effectively address real-life challenges. For example, Patel Engineering, a firm in the domain of infrastructure development, faced a huge issue in interviewing candidates based in remote locations. The firm now uses a solution from a firm called PeopleLink Corporate Solutions, which has helped it interview candidates from out-station remote locations. Says T.L. Sharma, Assistant General Manager, Patel Engineering, "We used to lose out on good candidates as we could not interview them on time. Today, we can not only interview candidates remotely, but can also use the same system for sharing presentations for training-related activities." More importantly, the system has helped the company reduce the time taken for interviewing candidates from a week to a single day.

The transformative power of UC means that the solution can be leveraged across multiple domains. For example, Vijay Textiles uses a UC solution from PeopleLink to share designs and stock reports across all its regional branches. In the case of Dolphin Hotels, its Managing

Director uses the PeopleLink solution to do live reviews with the senior management.

One of the best examples of how a UC solution can help an enterprise go beyond established boundaries can be seen in the case of Obeetee, a manufacturer of carpets, located in the rural hinterland of Mirzapur, in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The firm used a UC based solution from LifeSize to participate virtually in a trade fair based in Atlanta. The solution allowed the firm to connect directly to its headquarters in Mirzapur, India and simultaneously with its factory and production units while offering a fully immersive high-definition experience to the customer in Atlanta. Simply by using a public Internet connection, readily available at the booth at the trade show in



SIVARAMA KRISHNAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT, PwC

"UC can be integrated with critical business processes and business applications resulting in faster service delivery to customers"

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Atlanta, sales executives at Obectee were able to give existing and potential customers a hands-on experience of their products.

When seen in the context of segments such as the financial services industry, the impact of UC tools can be huge. Whenever new products are launched, most financial services firms find it difficult to service customers adequately, due to the unavailability of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs). With the help of UC tools, SMEs can be based in one central location and still deliver the same level of desired customer experience, as they would have done, when based locally. Explains Zia of Cisco, "While physically SMEs cannot be everywhere, virtually they can be at any location with the help of UC tools. In essence, you can have virtual banking SMEs situated at the bank's headquarters or at a central level." Zia says that the same concept can be applied to any other industry. For example, any company which has a global presence can use the power of UC tools to standardize the release of products across different countries.

A WORLD OF VIRTUAL OFFICES AND VIRTUAL PARTICIPATIONS

As a large number of organizations are today open to allowing their employees to work from home, the concept of a 'virtual office' is picking up gradually. In this context, UC technologies can play a pivotal role, as employees can join a videoconference, or initiate a conversation in a secure way—all from the comfort of their home. Says Dinesh Sehgal, Regional Director, India, Tandberg, "In today's business environment, it is not about where you work from, but the results you deliver. It is now essential that employees have access to real-time communication technologies."

As the adoption of UC technologies continue to accelerate at a fast pace, old concepts are gradually getting replaced by new ones. For example, typically, the extension on the desk phone is tied down to the location of the desk. Traditionally, when employees change their desk or location, they change extensions. However, with the advent of UC technologies, your extension can be carried to the place you work. "With integrated systems, today you can log in from any desk, from any location across the globe, and your extension number will pop up and get assigned to the phone on your desk. In short, your extension number will follow you, wherever you work. This is the true essence of IP," says Chandrasekhar Balasubramanian, Country Manager - Infrastructure Risk Management Services, IBM India. This can prove to be extremely useful especially for organizations that have a global presence and where employees frequently travel between locations.

The growing acceptance of virtual or teleworkers has prompted vendors such as Cisco to launch a virtual office



DAMANJEET KAUR, DIRECTOR, MARKETING AND MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS, PEOPLELINK CORPORATE SOLUTIONS

"Using such solutions, families can participate virtually in live marriages and family functions from anywhere in the world"

solution which allows organizations to provide the same level of connectivity and features seen in a typical office network to home workers. Says V C Gopalratnam, VP (IT) and CIO, Cisco India, "As connectivity links get stable and more bandwidth becomes available, virtual office solutions can totally transform the efficiency and productivity of enterprises." To enable effective collaboration, Cisco has even provided its employees with soft phones installed on desktops and laptops, which can be used to initiate conversations with colleagues.

In the future, as UC technologies evolve to a point where they become more affordable, their usage will become more common even in homes. "There is a very big untapped potential market for using UC as a service for home users. Using such solutions, families can participate virtually in live marriages and family functions from anywhere in the world," opines Damanjeet Kaur, Director, Marketing and Media Communications, PeopleLink Corporate Solutions. The same concept can be extended for holding annual board meetings or shareholder meets.

In essence, UC technologies are truly groundbreaking in nature, and can be applied to any industry. For example, in the future, a UC system can intelligently help you chart your route. By interfacing with the messaging system, the UC system can check your Outlook Calendar and note that you have an appointment at 10 am. However, as it checks the weather report (from a weather website), traffic congestion (via Google maps), and your location coordinates (using information from the nearest cellphone tower), it interprets that you will be late for your appointment. Accordingly, it sends you an alert early in the morning, advancing the time that you would have normally taken to leave from your home. As one can see, when multiple systems are unified, the impact can be truly transformative in nature. ■

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