



Richard Dorey

## Think voice, not telephony

Richard Dorey, VP of Sales, EMEA at Metaswitch, argues that voice, far from having a limited life span, is thriving – albeit in different formats.

It's a question you probably ask yourself every day: is Simon Cowell's brain much use in telecoms innovation? You don't? But this is the man whose midas touch has taken plain old voice to new heights. The continuing stellar success of the X-Factor, Britain's Got Talent and other wannabe singer competitions has generated a whole lot of revenue from a centuries old profession. People have been singing forever; what has changed, is the packaging.

Rather than being dead, voice is as vibrant as ever. We can lament about the documented demise of telephony, how tomorrow's employees will project their interpersonal skills via their avatars, and how parents get the kids down for mealtimes by sending a text message. But while telephony might have the odd wobble, rumours of voice's demise are somewhat over-exaggerated.

If you're a phone company, especially a fixed line business, it must be hard to read the telecom obituaries, or at least accept the notion that voice is dying. But let me challenge that: what if the evolutionary cul-de-sac isn't speech, but just the telephone?

If you mentally 'Photoshop' out the image of a Bakelite telephone from communications services, how much of day-to-day conversation would actually disappear? Probably less than we fear.

People are talking over lots more things than they used to, which is good news. Intelligent things. Converged things. Things that have an SDK that allows YOU to come to the party. I'm talking about iPhones and Android, softphones and FaceTime, Playstation and Xbox, Facebook and MSN. Your job is to be part of the voice conversation, even if it's not telephony as we once knew it.

We've turned many of the death knells for telecom on their head. Are customers substituting wireless for wireline? Absolutely. But wait a minute – many mobile-only

subscribers were never destined to be your highest revenue-generating customers. And for those deserters that you really care about, applications exist that turn the mobile 'telephone' into a sophisticated control point for your wireline voice services. Much of the industry conversation still revolves around the handling of the call itself – the voice – from device to device as the call parties roam (from office to home, Wi-Fi to cell).

Our vision for the next decade sees a world where the handling of voice is improved, with telcos offering, amongst others, advanced voice authentication services, intelligent call completion and an enhanced call centre experience.

Of course, voice itself is still the ultimate form of

communication. In many personal and business scenarios it remains the most effective and instinctive medium. The good news is that the genetic code for voice services has already been decoded: simplicity; transparency; lots of digital branding at the device end;

and a pricing structure attractive enough so I don't need to give it a second thought.

For a good call, think voice, not telephony.

