

GOOD CALL

METASWITCH POINT OF VIEW | BY STEVE GLEAVE

THE NEW TWISTED PAIR

The twisted pair is a cornerstone of understanding for the communications industry, but is it really relevant anymore?

I read a story this week, in a renowned finance periodical, which called copper “the pin-up of the commodity market”. Desperate people make a living out of stealing it, some developing countries have brought themselves to the brink of war about it, and now Wall St traders are apparently lusting after it.

But while copper’s stock might be high in some circles, the legendary twisted pair has lost some communications shine of late. While billions of subscribers still communicate over it, the reality is that a voice service is no longer associated with it. In the world of IP, voice is simply another application riding over any one of multiple competing or complementary access media. Does that mean the twisted pair is another term that won’t be understood by our children, or is it time for a marketing make over?

For many years, true fixed mobile convergence has been the goal of many companies, working to deliver on the promise of eliminating disparate phone numbers to create one unified identity, encompassing any assortment of fixed and mobile devices. These devices, which have expanded now to include tablet computers and smartphones, traverse the end user’s professional and personal lives to make them available to anyone at any time.

Indeed, subscribers no longer think about communications as something dug into the ground, but as something “around them”: a holistic, seamless experience with a consistent and intuitive interface.

Embracing this trend, Metaswitch’s CommPortal Communicator product portfolio can turn mobile phones into office extensions, tightly intertwine PCs and cell phones, and deliver a fully featured home phone experience, however far away you might be. I propose that this combination of hard and soft voice endpoints constitute “the new twisted pair.” Want to twin an office phone, and its full feature set, with a PC softphone client? That’s the new twisted pair. Have a consumer that wants their new home digital voice feature-set twinned to a smartphone or PC while travelling? That’s the new twisted pair. Want your customer’s 3rd party smartphone to completely replicate their office desk phone? That’s the new twisted pair.

So breaking the time-honored relationship between a quality, fixed-line, phone service and the humble copper wire doesn’t have to be the death of the twisted pair. In fact it’s actually the chance to be born all over again.

Good Call.

Steve Gleave is Vice President of Marketing at Metaswitch Networks.

ON METASWITCH METASWITCH NEWS

METASWITCH FINDS NEW BASE FOR GROWTH IN THE HEART OF SAN FRANCISCO'S TECHNOLOGY COMMUNITY

Metaswitch has opened a major new facility in San Francisco. From this site, now Metaswitch's largest office building worldwide, CEO Kevin DeNuccio, along with senior executives in marketing, product management and corporate development, will drive key aspects of the company's continued global expansion. Metaswitch has closed its outgrown office in Alameda, and now serves as the anchor tenant in a 75,000 square-foot brick-and-timber office originally built in 1916. The facility is newly refurbished to accommodate a training center for customers, interoperability lab and an executive briefing center – plus room to grow. Other companies in the community include Twitter, Zynga, Salesforce, Yelp and Riverbed.

THRUTU ANNOUNCES IPHONE RELEASE

With over 250,000 Android users already, Thrutu has announced its iPhone release, enabling a whole new range of cross-platform, in-call digital sharing capabilities that were previously unavailable in the mobile ecosystem.

“Android users have responded very enthusiastically to Thrutu - and their number one request has been for an iOS version so they can use Thrutu with their iPhone-owning friends and family,” said Liz Rice, VP, Thrutu. “This product release creates a whole new level of enriched communications between iPhone and Android that has not previously been possible.”

METASWITCH SPEEDS DELIVERY OF RCS-E SOLUTION FOR EARLY ADOPTING MOBILE OPERATORS

Following the acquisition of Colibria in April of this year, Metaswitch Networks is demonstrating its continued commitment to investing and building its position in mobility with the release of an RCS-e 1.1 compliant Instant Messaging Server.

Just weeks after RCS-e standards were finalized, Metaswitch completed product development and extended testing with its primary channel partners. This partner ecosystem continues to lead the industry in providing operators with flexible solutions that guarantee open integration and interoperability between network elements and handset applications.

METASWITCH SHOWS OFF APAC GROWTH AT COMMUNICASIA EVENT

With 26,000 industry attendees, CommunicAsia 2011 in Singapore is one of the region's biggest events of the year. Catch Total Telecom's interview with Metaswitch Technical Marketing Director, Simon Dredge, filmed on the bustling show floor.

CommunicAsia 2011 was also the perfect opportunity for Metaswitch to announce several new customer wins, expanding its presence in the Asia Pacific region.

CallStream Communications, the new Australian telecommunications company recently formed by Telco Consolidators Group (TCG), will launch Metaswitch Hosted Business Services to small and medium-sized businesses across the country. Meanwhile, as continuing economic development drives network evolution in the Philippines, Metaswitch now has four customers in partnership with Pastels Inc. Newly added are General Telephone and Iriga Telephone, family-owned incumbent operators that started serving rural communities in the early 1970s.

Taiwan's market leader in mobile, Internet and fixed line services, Chunghwa Telecom, is deploying the

Metaswitch Service Broker. With Metaswitch, Chunghwa Telecom will be able to use a single platform to deliver services across both its legacy and IMS networks. These services will be delivered to subscribers on any network at the same time, without compromising IMS capabilities.

Metaswitch has opened a new regional headquarters in Singapore to support its growing customer and employee base, while helping drive new sales throughout the APAC territory. The office will also serve as a training center for partners and customers, and complements operations in Australia, Guam and Hong Kong that already support customers in eight countries across the region.

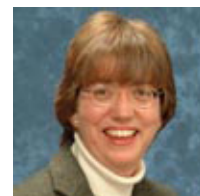
HANG UPS INDUSTRY DEBATE

The relentless spread of SIP over the last 10-20 years has brought the protocol from a position of relative obscurity to one of ubiquity. As this growth continues unchecked, grappling with the large scale deployment of SIP endpoints and accompanying mediation infrastructure to bring about greater scalability, smoother and more effective policy management, and other improvements — all while minimizing operating costs — have emerged as significant challenges that all major network operators share.

In this edition of Hang-Ups, we ask: how are operators shaping the next generation of SIP session management and control solutions? In the hot-seats for the debate are Caroline Chappell from Heavy Reading, and Metaswitch's Patrick Fitzgerald...

Caroline Chappell

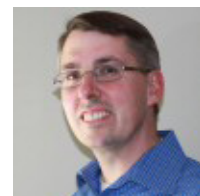
SIP traffic continues to grow for both fixed and mobile operators, especially with the build-out of LTE, VoLTE and IMS infrastructures. As a vendor of SIP infrastructure solutions, what does Metaswitch view as the critical challenges facing service providers as they build-out SIP infrastructure?



Patrick Fitzgerald

We see three key challenges facing service providers as they build-out SIP infrastructure today.

1. Scalability — There's the natural growth of SIP-based switches, proxy servers, feature servers, etc. but even more significant are the number of services using SIP (such as messaging, presence, video, etc). Service providers are finding a significant increase in traffic because SIP is no longer used for simple call setup.
2. Manageability — As the operator's SIP network grows it becomes harder and harder to troubleshoot and manage network problems and ensure network visibility across SIP network end points.
3. SIP Interoperability — Interoperability between multi-vendor products at times can get broken due to software upgrades and patches applied by a particular vendor's system software which introduces SIP signaling variances.



These three challenges help drive Metaswitch's SIP Infrastructure technology roadmap and provide insight into why we invest into technologies such as Service Assurance Server to compliment our SIP Infrastructure products.

Caroline, based on your conversations with operators and manufacturers, what is your perspective on SIP traffic and applications?



CC

Operators are beginning to pay much more attention to the benefits of SIP applications — their ease of development and ability to be combined with Web applications in innovative ways — which can help operators meet the apparently insatiable demand subscribers have for new services. At the same time, subscribers are becoming much more demanding — wanting a high degree of functionality and performance from any service they consume over the network and expecting their services to be available on any device anywhere in the world. This means that operators will need the right SIP infrastructure and interoperability capability to ensure their own and partner SIP services can be delivered seamlessly to subscribers. Another aspect of service delivery is that it is becoming increasingly personal to the needs and context of subscribers and here again, operators will need an ability to adapt SIP service delivery to take into account the profile and experience of individual customers.

PF

Agreed, SIP application traffic is definitely on the upswing and application delivery is a key challenge for telcos; how to do that with maximum performance, scalability, resilience and security. From my perspective, the market has responded with a whole swathe of infrastructure solutions to confront this need specifically around IMS architecture. Metaswitch has embraced IMS but at the same time, we realize that not all customers will deploy a brand new infrastructure overnight so have worked with our customers on a pragmatic “IMS Upgradable” approach which enables customers to transition to SIP but know that it can easily be upgraded to support all IMS interfaces.

CC

Patrick, I think you are right to have an upgrade path to support future architectures but I think it is important to leverage existing infrastructure which continues to support revenue-generating services. Service Providers today require a flexible means of bridging between all telco service platforms: SS7 and SIP/IMS, pre and post paid, fixed and mobile, network and Web. If an operator’s entire portfolio of services ran in a single platform, there would be no need for such a requirement. But communications service providers don’t live in an ideal world and are unlikely to reach this nirvana any time soon.

A key technology here is the service broker. The service broker is in the optimal place in the network to resolve the multiple service delivery challenges that face communications service providers, both in today’s hyper-competitive services market and as they seek to differentiate their future, next generation network-based service offers.

PF

Agreed — one of the advantages of the service broker is its ability to orchestrate interactions between applications in the service layer and network enablers in the control plane, and to act as the signaling infrastructure for the IMS (e.g. SIP) protocols it is handling as it does so. Service brokers are proving a popular solution for fixed and mobile operators worldwide, and the breadth of case examples demonstrates the inherent flexibility of the technology in allowing those operators to cost effectively drive change and rapidly capture revenues.

Research bears out what operators think. Late last year, the Service Broker Forum asked 50 global operators what they wanted service brokers to achieve. The ability to ‘easily and efficiently introduce service innovation’ was viewed as the highest priority goal when asked to consider network transformation strategic objectives, while ‘leveraging existing services and network assets’ was also cited as a primary requirement when moving from traditional to more IP centric architectures.

OVERHEARD

WATERCOOLER TALK FROM THE METASWITCH OFFICE



NEWS DIGEST

While Nokia continues to puzzle, Ericsson is at least starting to make some sense, both with its audacious pocketing of Telcordia for \$1.2bn, and with claims that the humble TV remote control holds the key for telcos.

Meanwhile, following hot on the heels of its shock Skype acquisition, has been Microsoft's long-scheduled launch of Office 365 which, with help from major global operators who will bundle the service with their own broadband and hosted offerings, is intended to reassert some control over the business communications and collaboration market. Cue sideswipes from Google...

While the Ericsson/Telcordia wrap-up promises some interesting market ramifications in the US, nothing it seems can stop the march of 4G network rollouts, with US Cellular the latest to plan launches this year. Live 4G services from the likes of Sprint and Verizon are lightning fast, but reports query whether performance will degrade over time.

Elsewhere, the tiny British dependency of Jersey — famous for its potatoes, cream and a TV detective show — is boasting some of the best communications infrastructure in Europe. On the mainland meanwhile, incumbent BT will soon reach the five million homes mark with FTTC connections. In Spain, the state of public finances has led to an auction of wireless spectrums, expected to raise nearly \$3bn.

If a stalling economy wasn't bad enough, Venezuela is slipping behind every other country in the CALA region, in the telecoms stakes. Only Bolivia has slower broadband, though on the plus side a new submarine cable (...to Cuba) opens later this year. Overall, the CALA market is poised for sustained growth. 104% of Venezuelans have got a mobile phone, which can't be all that bad, particularly when you consider China's 1.3bn residents only have 900m mobiles between them.

And finally, an unstoppable force met an immovable object in the latest installment of the YouTube hit 'Will it Blend?', as the world's toughest phone got (almost) mashed to pieces inside a kitchen appliance. That's entertainment!

NOW AND THEN BIG NUMBERS

FROM THE NEWS VAULTS: BROADBAND IS CATCHING ON

The proliferation of home and small businesses, not to mention consumer hunger for broadband connections, has led to a stratospheric increase in the number of DSL and cable Internet hookups in the U.S. According to a recent statement by the FCC, the number of ADSL lines in service increased by 108% during the second half of 2000, to a total of 2 million lines, while cable connections increased by 57% during the final six months of 2000, to a total of 3.6 million.

THE SMART MONEY IS ON SMARTPHONES!

Driven largely by the needs of business, IDC predicts that smartphone shipments will continue rising 55% year over year with annual production exceeding 1 billion by 2015.

VOICE PROS PEOPLE TALK

THE AIRBORNE ALASKAN HERO

Don Eller, General Manager of Yukon Telephone, enjoys the wild beauty of Alaska and providing the latest VoIP services to remote villages throughout Alaska. Founded over 50 years ago, and one of Metaswitch's first customers, Yukon continues to bring new technology to rural Alaska, areas accessible only by plane. This summer, Don is deploying fiber-to-the-home and a new microwave network while the sun shines. When not flying his Piper Cherokee 6 to visit customer sites, Don enjoys gardening, raising apples and Alaska's great outdoors.



THE ULTIMATE THROW

While many of us plan to throw a frisbee around at the beach this summer, to David Tyler, it's serious competition. As Coach/Captain of both Great Britain's largest Ultimate Frisbee team, Bear Cavalry, and of the country's Mixed Beach Ultimate Frisbee team, David has a number of wins on his record. This summer, David and his Mixed team are in the final preparations to represent the UK at the 3rd World Championships of Beach Ultimate to be held near Venice at the end of August. By day, David is a support services engineer based in Enfield, UK. Good luck in Italy!



ONE MINUTE IN VOICE OPRAH WYNFREY

FOR THIS EDITION OF OVERHEARD, STEVE CAUGHT UP WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL WOMEN, MEDIA MOGUL OPRAH WYNFREY.

SG Hello?

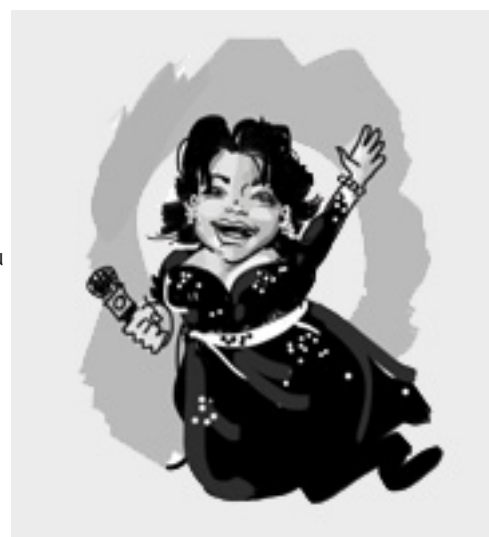
OW Hello, this is Oprah.

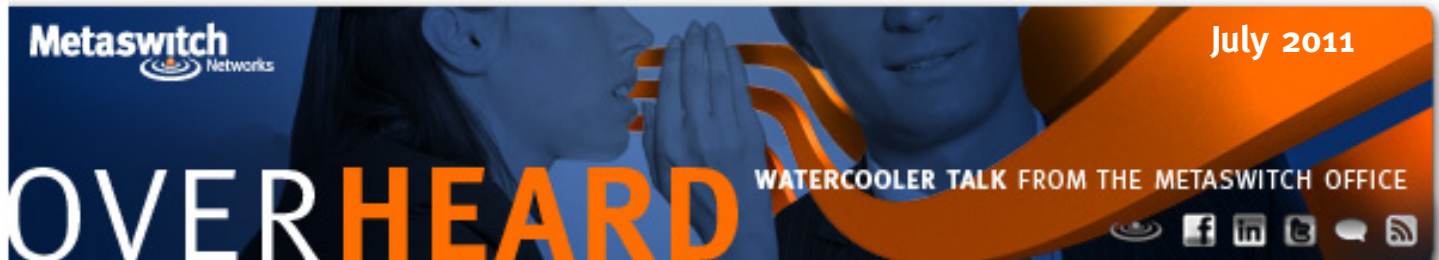
SG Wow, it really is you. You know you sound just like you do on the TV? Are you ready for One Minute in Voice with Metaswitch?

OW It's already 55 seconds and counting, honey.

SG The story goes that your actual given name is Orpah, but that family mispronunciation meant you ended up with Oprah. Ever felt like changing it back?

OW Oh boy. You think I've never got asked that question before? C'mon, ask me another one Jay Leno.





SG (rustling papers) Among all your achievements, you are best known as an innovator and exponent of the talk show. Now you've given that up, do you miss it?

OW Jeez... You know 20 minutes on Wikipedia is no substitute for actually doing some research before you interview someone. You think Walt Kronkite ever just punched some keywords into Google?

SG I'm sorry, let me think a second. Many of our readers own or operate networks, you see. We ideally need to reflect and address the challenges they face constructively. You wouldn't know what that's like by any chance? Owning or running a network I mean...

OW Unbelievable — now he's Ali G. You think I don't get sarcasm? Huh? Ask me about female empowerment, ask me about representing the issues of the downtrodden, ask me about giving a voice to those who are silent and unrepresented...

SG Can I ask you about your book club?

OW Oh yeah, yeah — ask me about my book club!!

SG And with that, we are sadly out of time. It's been a pleasure speaking with you Oprah. In your capacity as an expert interviewer, how did you think I did?

OW No comment.