

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Legal Administrator Section

Winter, 2004 Newsletter

Seminar: Overview of IP Telephony... ..1
Transitioning to Voice Over IP... ..2-4
Officers and Council Members... ..5
Upcoming Seminars and Council Meetings... ..6



Seminar: Overview of IP Telephony

Learn about the implementation of IP Telephony to combine different types of communications such as data, voice and video over a single IP-based infrastructure.

Date: Wednesday, February 25, 2004

Time: 7:30 am Continental Breakfast
8:00 – 9:00 am Presentation

Cost: No Charge

Place: Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss – Detroit Office
1 Woodward Ave, Suite 2400

Presenter: Garry Arbuckle, Cisco Systems

RSVP: Jeanne Wong, jwong@jafferaitt.com or 313-964-8637

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Legal Administrator Section – Winter, 2004

Transitioning to Voice Over IP

by John. E. McGreevy of Freeport Technologies

While the voice communications industry is now embracing the transition to voice over IP (VoIP), the question remains as to the manner in which the legal profession needs to make the change. While some cost models indicate that there will be cost savings over the traditional TDM PBX architecture, this may not be the case when all of the cost factors are considered.

The four primary questions to consider when evaluating a change to IP-based communications are:

1. Is the business environment of your firm driving your communications systems to a real-time model?
2. Is the way your firm practices law becoming more mobile?
3. Are high value IP-based applications becoming available that make the way your firm practices law more efficient?
4. Will cost savings and increased efficiency of firm communications assets justify the costs of a transition to IP voice communications?

With the advent of the cell phone, Instant Messenger, videoconferencing and Blackberry devices, clients have come to expect instant access to their legal counsel. Real-time communications between all devices on the network is becoming widely available and in some areas of the legal profession, it's a proven significant competitive advantage.

Recent studies clearly indicate that lawyers and their staffs are being required to be much more mobile. But these lawyers on the road will find it increasingly difficult to remain as productive in this evolving environment unless they are able to maintain access to all of the tools that are currently available to them in the office.

While access to some of the high value applications like unified messaging, CRM, billing and voice recognition driven systems are not exclusive to IP, many of the new software products were developed first for the IP environment. Whether these new applications are ever ported to the old phone architecture will depend on how fast the transition to VoIP takes place. Today, very little investment is being made in the purchase of applications that run just in a TDM environment.

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Legal Administrator Section – Winter, 2004

The most compelling reason for adopting an all-IP network is the ability to utilize a single set of communications channels for all of the firm's communications needs. The need for POTs, ISDN, BRI and PRI lines and voice T1 lines, in addition to the IP data lines, is greatly minimized. This usually saves dollars and decreases management costs of the communications network. Yet, in many cases, the cost of investment in new equipment, training, network infrastructure and higher bandwidth IP lines may far exceed any savings in cases where an existing infrastructure is already meeting most of the firm's needs.

The question then becomes, what is the best strategy to move your firm to VoIP? As used herein, the term "converged" means a combination of tightly integrated TDM and IP PBX while the term "pure IP" means a solution with architecture such as the one provided by Cisco. The correct answer differs depending on these issues:

- The status of current wiring and network infrastructure on a site-by-site basis.
- The ability to make a smooth transition to a converged environment with your current vendor.
- Whether converged or pure IP supports your current and future application requirements.
- Whether converged or pure IP supports high value applications on IP phones.
- If money will be saved on the use of outside services and if real-time communications will be facilitated with integrated audio bridging capabilities.
- Whether network voicemail may be lost on a site-by-site basis as offices are transitioned to pure IP.

Once you have decided to transition your voice communications system to IP, what are the opportunities and strategies to move forward?

The following situations present you with the best opportunities to fully implement VoIP:

- You are moving to a new space and intend to purchase a new PBX.
- Your current PBX is at the end of its useful life and must be replaced.
- You have targeted opportunities to install small remote offices and/or a new branch office.

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Legal Administrator Section – Winter, 2004

There are a number of areas of risk that you should consider in the design phase of your transition to VoIP:

Transition from Legacy PBX to VoIP: Make sure that your selected vendor understands your current environment completely and can produce a detailed migration plan that ensures success. If you are moving away from your current phone vendor, make sure that your selected partner can handle the transition issues with your legacy system, as your current vendor may become less motivated to help as he loses the business.

Voicemail: If your firm uses networked voicemail, begin the transition by replacing your existing voicemail system, while leaving your old PBX infrastructure in place. Your users rely on their voicemail and may become unhappy if you take away features while you are moving into the IP world. This will also lower your transition risk.

Redundancy: Ensure redundancy, remembering that your current PBX environment is very reliable. A misstep here could be very difficult to explain as these kinds of failures can significantly disturb a law firm's practice.

Support: Make sure that your selected VoIP vendor has the proper service agenda and the staff to support it. Many data vendors don't really understand the importance of a rapid response to a phone capability that has stopped working. As a result, they have staffed to act at the speed that they have responded to data-only issues in the past. That speed may be inadequate for phone issues.

Conclusion

When you decide to transition your firm's voice communications to VoIP, whether to a converged system or to a pure IP system, you will need to do so in such a way that you maintain your current services during the transition and for compelling reasons. Do not justify your decision on a potential cost savings alone. Base it on the fact that your firm's practice has become more mobile, that it has a need for real-time communications and that high-value IP applications have become available that make the way your firm practices law more efficient.

STATE BAR OF MICHIGAN

Legal Administrator Section - Winter, 2004

Upcoming Seminar - May, 2004 Saving Lives - Saving Dollars

Ken Holtyn of Holtyn and Associates will present their One to One Comprehensive Wellness Model. Companies who have implemented this model have demonstrated a 50% reduction in cardiovascular disease risks over a 14 year period. The return on investment ranges from \$2.30 to \$10.10 for every dollar spent.

Holtyn & Associates has received numerous awards from a wide variety of organizations including the State of Michigan Governors Award, the American Heart Association and C. Everett Koop National Health Ward for excellence in health promotion.

Look for future updates on location, date and time.

Upcoming Council Meetings

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>	<u>Location</u>
March 9, 2004	Monthly Council Meeting	TJ's Grillworks, Detroit
April 13, 2004	Monthly Council Meeting	TJ's Grillworks, Detroit

Section council meetings are open to all interested members of the section.
TJ's Grillworks is located on the corner of Griswold & Larned.
All members are urged to attend and participate.

2003-2004 Section Officers and Council Members

Chairperson

Jeanne Wong (jwong@jafferaitt.com)
Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss, PC
Tele: (313) 964-8637 Fax: (313) 965-5448

Chairperson-Elect

Bill Parsons (parsons@mcps.com)
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC
Tele: (313) 963-6420 Fax: (313) 496-7699

Secretary-Treasurer

Joe Thimm (thimm@mcps.com)
Miller Canfield Paddock & Stone, PLC
Tele: (313) 496-8474 Fax: (313) 496-7699

Corresponding Secretary

Greg Grass (ggrass@s4online.com)
Sommers, Schwartz, Silver & Schwartz, PC
Tele: (248) 355-0300 Fax: (248) 746-4001

Web Site

www.michbar.org/sections

Legal Administrator Section

State Bar of Michigan
c/o Jeanne Wong
Jaffe, Raitt, Heuer & Weiss, PC
One Woodward Ave., Suite 2400
Detroit, MI 48226-3418

Council Members At Large

Kathy Batts (kbatts@mbpia.com)
Patterson & Williams
Tele: (313) 877-7000 Fax: (313) 877-7001

Ex-Officio

Michelle Kimbro (mkimbrow@dykema.com)
Dykema Gossett PLLC
Tele: (313) 568-6643 Fax: (313) 565-5440

State Bar of Michigan Liaison

Rodger D. Young (young@youngpc.com)
Young & Susser, PC
Tele: (248) 353-8620 Fax: (248) 353-6559