



SIP STRATEGY

On June 26th, 2006 Microsoft announced new and enhanced unified communications technologies as part of the Microsoft Office 2007 system.

The company plans to bring together its Exchange Server corporate e-mail offering and Office Outlook and Speech Server, along with updated versions of its real-time collaboration technologies and a set of new communications devices, to form a cohesive unified communications solution.

Unified messaging in Exchange Server 2007, expected to ship in late 2006 or early 2007, will deliver a unified in-box experience that includes e-mail, voice mail and faxing functionality, as well as new capabilities such as speech-based auto attendant allowing users to access their communications from any phone.

For its part, Microsoft Office Communications Server 2007 is an SIP (Session Initiation Protocol) standards-based real-time communication platform that enables presence-based VOIP (voice over IP) call management; audio, video and Web conferencing; and instant messaging communication within and across existing software applications, services and devices, and is expected to ship in late 2006.

That product works in tandem with Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 to deliver a presence-based, enterprise VOIP "soft phone"; secure, enterprise-grade instant messaging that allows for intercompany connectivity to public instant messaging networks such as MSN, AOL and Yahoo; one-to-one and multiparty video and audio conferencing; and Web conferencing. The product will be available for the desktop, browser and Windows Mobile.



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In addition, Microsoft Office Communicator phone software for running an innovative set of new voice and video devices is designed to run on dedicated communications devices in tandem with Office Communications Server 2007 to extend and enhance the Microsoft unified communications experience. It is slated to ship in the second quarter of 2007.

The new unified communications product lineup is rounded off by SIP peripheral devices like USB handsets, wireless USB headsets, USB Webcams and PC monitors with built-in audio and video components.

Devices from industry partners GN Netcom, Logitech, Motorola, Plantronics, Samsung and Tatung will work with Microsoft Office Communicator 2007 to deliver the communication experience on the PC.

Microsoft's approach to unified communications will break down today's silos of e-mail, instant messaging, mobile and [VOIP] telephony, and audio, video and Web conferencing.

Motorola has announced that it will deliver mobile devices and network hardware based on Office Communications Server 2007 and Office Communicator Mobile.