

## Cross-Government Unified Communications Forum - Inaugural Meeting

Location: Somerset House, London – 14:30 Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008

### Meeting notes

Attendees:

Name	Public Sector / Supplier Organisation
Jim Boyle	HM Revenue & Customs - Chair
Steve Irving	HM Revenue & Customs /Aspire
Adel Al Shebab	Audit Commission
Steve Beard	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Paul Goff	Communications-Electronics Security Group
Adam Khan	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
Peter Miller	Home Office
Andy Savvides	National Health Service
Richard Steel	Newham Council
John Stubbley	Cabinet Office
Andy Williamson	National Assembly Wales
Michael Bowyer	Siemens Enterprise Communications Limited
Wendy Carstairs	Cisco Systems Ltd
Robin Denton	Microsoft Ltd
Stuart Foster	IBM United Kingdom Ltd
Nick Hoareau	Mitel Networks Limited
Kelly McMillian	Mitel Networks Limited
Terry Robinson	Cisco Systems Ltd
Jonathan Sowler	Microsoft Ltd

Apologies received from:

Name	Public Sector / Supplier Organisation
Dave Gordon	Department for Children, Schools and Families
Kash Walayat	Department for Children, Schools and Families
Andrew Davidson	Criminal Prosecution Service
Dean Bennett	Office of Government Commerce

### 1) Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves and provided

- *A description of their role within their organisation*
- *A brief description of their organisation's desktop and telephony infrastructure*
- *An indication of their Department/Organisation has any experience of Unified Communications*

Only one Government Department had any experience of Unified Communications capabilities.

- 2) The background for the creation of the forum was outlined.

*To inform HMG Unified Communication Requirements to be taken forward as part of Ocean Procurement, particularly for the early adopters.*

*To understand the implications of different Public Sector Organisation communicating with each other using unified communications via a shared QoS enabled network particularly the issues of security, scale and interoperability*

*To confirm it will be possible for each Public Sector Organisation to choose its own UC product/ VoIP telephony system that could be deployed as an in-house system or a service purchased from a 3rd party and collaborate effectively.*

*To understand how interoperability will be achieved using industry open standards and identify the base dependencies before a Cross Govt UC solution should be deployed*

*To understand what UC capabilities are not currently supported in a heterogeneous environment and the road map (if any) for their resolution.*

- 3) The suggested outcome from this exercise as outlined in the Terms of Reference was also discussed.

- *Close collaboration between suppliers to solve the integration issues*
- *Consultation with Government representatives during the process*
- *A **joint** presentation of the solution by the suppliers to this forum/PSIT*
- *A **joint** demonstration of a working solution by the suppliers to this forum/PSIT*
- *A cross-government exemplar describing the result in **Early January 09***

**A general discussion followed, the main points are detailed below.**

- 4) Attendance at the forum - It was suggested that we increase the membership of the forum by:

- Inviting Phil Pavitt the CIO Transport of London who has interest this area **[Action J Boyle]**.
- Issuing an open invitation to all main Unified Communication technology vendors **[Action M Bowyer]**.

- 5) It was suggested that we need to document a common vision and definition for Unified Communications for Public Sector Organisation which encompasses:

- One Network that allows secure exchanges and collaboration between people the user trusts, in a way that suits the individual.
- Open Standards to support both interoperability and security for protectively marked material up to Confidential.
- Infrastructure end-point agnostic solutions in terms of desktops (thick/thin clients), telephone handsets, and fixed/wireless/mobile connectivity to the network

- Legislative and Ministerial requirements (FOI/DPA/Green IT etc.)
- Seamless authentication and log-on utilising a user role via a federated directory for both authentication and authorisation.
- Contact information and Calendar sharing,
- Presence awareness
- Secure voice and the provision of location intelligence by alerting users to the level of trust being provided by the network infrastructure, e.g. when a call breaks out from internal networks into the PSTN or mobile networks.

It was agreed that the Vision should define modular components that allow different organisations to select the base level, a selection of optional components or all available components to meet particular business needs of the organisation. i.e. Providing presence to citizens or RFID/presence aware assets are not likely to be required by all Organisations.

This above list is not exhaustive and forum members will provide input to the creation of the Vision and the progressive building blocks to Unified Communications capabilities via a small sub group. Several members volunteered to support the sub group:

Jim Boyle	Michael Bowyer
Richard Steel or nominee	Jonathan Sowler
Andy Williamson	Stuart Foster
Paul Goff	
Peter Miller	
Steve Irving	

The first meeting of the sub group to be arranged. **[Action J Boyle]**.

- 6) There was a discussion around the collaboration between vendors for developing services on Public Sector Network.

It is clear that one of the main drivers for the creation of the Public Sector Network were the creation of greater choice for government departments and an ensuing reduction in costs due to increased competition between suppliers

We need to understand how the basic functions, (presence notification telephone/PC, transferring calls, adding user to audio/video conference) work across different manufacturer's platforms/systems. This needs to be confirmed before we assure the more complex requirements of encryption, authentication, single sign-on etc. There are very few agreed open standards to support interoperability for Unified Communication Capabilities and we need to consider if a standards body is needed to define the standard.

- 7) The supplier community have inter-operability labs and volunteered to undertake some tests. Wendy Carstairs from Cisco volunteered to coordinate the lab efforts from the suppliers. The Vision on how organisations might want to use Unified Communication capabilities in terms of business scenarios will be useful to help the suppliers understand what success looks like in terms of both functionality

and scale. A code of connection will need to be agreed to ensure that both suppliers and organisations understand the minimal standards needed to support Unified Communications interoperability.

HMRC to facilitate a meeting of the supplier sub group.  
**[Action J Boyle/W Carstairs].**

Date of next meeting to be scheduled (approximately 4 weeks time) after the sub groups are able to report progress on their sessions. **[Action J Boyle].**

James G Boyle  
30 September 2008