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 January 11, 2008

The TMCnet VoIP Week in Review

By [Patrick Barnard](#)
 TMCnet Assignment Editor

Happy New Year from the VoIP Week-in-Review, which makes its triumphant return this week after a month-long hiatus.

The launch of the MyVonage product strategy, 8x8's introduction of the Packet8 Virtual Office Tango Video Terminal Adapter, and Raketu's new VoIP service offering for mobile business users were among the many news items crossing the wires here at TMCnet this past week.

Although it didn't seem as though this year's Consumer Electronics Show, which was held this week in Las Vegas, generated quite as many VoIP-related announcements as last year's show, there were still plenty of VoIP-related announcements to go around nonetheless. So let's get started with the run-down:

On Monday, Vonage ([News - Alert](#)) [announced](#) the launch of its MyVonage product strategy, which is focused on introducing products, services and features that fit into a customer's given lifestyle and support the way they want to communicate. As part of this overall strategy, the company unveiled the V-Portal, a digital voice adapter and single port router with a built-in LCD display, Contact Book, and innovative one-stop communication hub. The Contact Book offers useful features such as group calling and voice activated dialing, providing customers with more control over how they can communicate. The LCD screen can also capture Caller ID, time calls, log calls, and provide easy access to Vonage service numbers and for displaying the date and time. The device also can be used to troubleshoot basic issues. In fact, company officials claim it is "the closest thing to having a customer care agent with them in their home." Selected customers can try out the Alpha version of the Contact Book, due out later this year, at <http://alpha.vonage.com/>.

VoIP provider Skype also made news on Monday when it [announced](#) the future release of "new mass-market devices" at CES ([News - Alert](#)), where the company was also demonstrating the "Mobile Skype Experience." The company plans to launch "a range of wireless devices and accessories" in 2008. Gareth O'Loughlin, general manager of mobile and hardware devices at Skype said with these new devices "millions of people around the world will now be able to leave the desk behind, put Skype in their pocket and take their conversations with them." Among the first of these devices is the 3G Skypephone, which Skype developed with mobile operator 3. The 3G wireless handset will allow users to make Skype-to-Skype calls and send instant messages from mobile phones to Skype users. The 3G Skypephone will soon be available in the UK, Australia, Austria,

HD Videoconferencing	Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Sweden and Hong Kong.
Headsets	Also making our headlines on Monday was 8x8's introduction of a free trial program for the Packet8 MobileTalk application. The program is designed to enable customers of any U.S.-based wireless carrier to experience the Packet8 MobileTalk mobile VoIP international calling service at no charge. The service, which was introduced in late 2007, is designed to remove the obstacles associated with existing carrier, calling card and call back services that can discourage the use of cell phones for overseas calling -- obstacles including costly per minute rates, poor call quality, cumbersome dialing procedures and unreliable service availability. The free trial lets wireless customers download the MobileTalk application onto their mobile device and use the service at no charge until a total of \$2.00 in per minute fees is reached. The service provides for rate of \$.02 to \$.05 per minute for most locations in Europe and Asia.
Hosted PBX	
Hosted VoIP	
IMS	
International Calling	
Internet Fax	
IP PBX	On Tuesday, 8x8 made news again when it introduced the new Packet8 Virtual Office Tango Video Terminal Adapter (VTA) today. The videoconferencing solution is designed to enhance the functionality of the Packet8 Virtual Office hosted IPBX phone system, which is currently used by more than 10,000 small businesses across America. 8x8 Chairman & CEO Bryan R. Martin said with this new device, companies can now easily and affordably employ powerful desktop video communications right next to their business phone to enhance the quality and success of their day-to-day interactions with colleagues and customers." The free-standing device replaces the previous Broadband Phone Adapter that usually connects to the Virtual Office speakerphone to a business' high speed Internet network. It sports a built-in LCD color screen and rotating camera to deliver advanced full-motion video at up to 30 frames per second. Compatible with Packet8 Softalk Office, the device also offers a built-in router, a digital picture frame, easy navigation and a remote surveillance mode.
IP Phone System	
IP Phones	
IP Trunking	
IPTV	
Linux PBX	
Managed Services	
Open Source PBX	
PC to Phone	Also making headlines on Tuesday was Zhone Technologies' announcement that bn:t Blatzheim Networks Telecom had selected its multi-service access platform (MSAP) to help expand its access portfolio to include IPTV. Zhone is a global provider of advanced communications equipment and a supplier of VoIP, IPTV and Ethernet over copper and fiber access lines. Bonn Germany-based bn:t Blatzheim Networks Telecom provides voice and data services to more than 20 cities throughout Germany. With Zhone's MSAP, bn:t Blatzheim Networks Telecom will be able to deliver a full range of xDSL services, VoIP and/or traditional voice, and carrier grade Ethernet from one feature-rich platform.
Phone Systems	
Selecting VoIP Solutions	
SIP Server	
SIP Trunking	
Small Business VoIP	Also making a splash on Tuesday was Raketu's introduction of a new VoIP service offering for mobile business users. This Web-based application is optimized for the BlackBerry, which means that users of the BlackBerry Curve, BlackBerry 8800 Series and BlackBerry Pearl will now be able to make international calls either at Raketu's ultra-low cost VoIP calling rates or totally free. The application also allows the users to send text messages globally, as well as email. It does not require users to download any software -- all they have to do is log on to BlackBerry.raketu.com and sign up to access the service via their BlackBerry web browser. New subscribers are eligible for up to 600 free calling minutes per month towards BlackBerry initiated phone-to-phone calls.
SOA/Web Services	
Softswitch	
Telecom Cost Management	
Telecom Expense Management	
Telemarketing Services	On Wednesday, Broadcom and Trolltech announced they will jointly deliver a complete multimedia-enabled VoIP development platform for IP phone manufacturers.
Triple Play	When combined with Broadcom's proven VoIP technology, Trolltech's upcoming Qtopia software offerings for broadband devices will enable a feature-rich graphical user experience as well as exceptional voice and video quality. The VoIP platform will provide OEMs with an integrated software package that enables faster time-to-market for the development of next generation IP phones. Qtopia is a software application platform and user interface for embedded Linux devices which is optimized for Broadcom BCM1103 VoIP processors and its VideoCore II-based BCM1180 multimedia co-processor. According to Trolltech, the upcoming Qtopia software offerings for broadband devices will support unified communications (including voice and video
Unified Communications	
Video Conferencing	
Voice Peering	

VoIP	calls, and visual messaging) as well as full web integration. Through Qtopia software, users can easily access any Website or multimedia content, turning the IP phone into the communications center of the digital home. Pretty cool!
VoIP Call Recording	
VoIP Contact Center	Also making the TMCnet homepage on Wednesday was the announcement that Palisades Charter High School Replaces had
VoIP Developer	replaced its legacy PBX with ShoreTel's Unified Communications Solution. With this advanced IP Telephony system, staff can
VoIP Gateways	communicate when they need to – and can avoid being distracted by unwanted calls during busy periods, including class time. With its
VoIP PBX	presence capabilities, staff members can see who is available on the network at any given time. Plus the system can be easily configured
VoIP Phone	through its intuitive user interface. This will make it easier for the school IT staff to implement adds, moves, and changes, thus
VoIP Robustness Testing	significantly reducing ongoing maintenance costs (and as everyone knows, schools sometimes have significant staff turnover from year to year). In addition, it also provides for “flexible hunt groups” to let the
VoIP Test Solutions	school decide which administration phones ring simultaneously -- or in a specific order -- to ensure all calls are answered with the least
Wholesale VoIP	distraction. With its “pick-up groups” feature, some administrators have the ability to pick up a call if everyone else is busy - even though
CRM	their phone is not ringing. The school is also reportedly using ShoreTel's E911 Notification Application, which immediately notifies
Billing	appropriate school personnel of a 911 emergency, enhancing the school's ability to quickly and efficiently coordinate a response. The
Conference Call	system provides calling party information to the 911 service during an emergency and also automatically notifies the appropriate school
CRM Integration	administrators that a 911 call has been made. Through this simultaneous notification, staff members can react more quickly and in
CRM Software	a unified manner when an emergency comes up. Using the system, they can also securely IM each other from their desktops.
Headsets	Yet another item of interest on Wednesday was In-Stat's report that VoIP is now “mainstream for business customers worldwide.”
Hosted Contact Center	According to the report, IP telephony is no longer an “emerging technology,” but has become a “mainstream” choice for businesses
Hosted IVR	worldwide. During the first half of 2007, sales of VoIP lines solidly outpaced traditional lines among businesses, representing more than
Marketing Software	80 percent of total shipments, In-Stat said. This, In-Stat analyst Norm Bogen said, indicates that the initial technical and operational
Open Source CRM	challenges associated with VoIP are a thing of the past. “ROIs are proving the economics to be solid, and the productivity gains
SIP Server	associated with the technology are, and will continue to exceed, those that could be realized with traditional telephony,” Bogen said in the
Speech Technologies	report. The new battleground for vendors is now unified communications. In the IP-PBX arena, one of the bigger events of
Telemarketing Software	2007 was Microsoft's (News - Alert) entry into the marketplace with its Office Communications Server 2007 product that includes VoIP
Workforce Management	capabilities. So supposedly we're out of the boutique and into the big box stores like Best Buy and WalMart (well, sort of) ... and how about those Vonage ads on TV? If those don't spread consumer awareness,
Workforce Optimization	I'm not sure what else will ... I'm sure you'll notice more of those during the NFL Playoffs.
Call Center	Friday was a pretty slow day, as usual, but there were couple of announcements of interest. One was VoIP-PAL.com (News - Alert)
3rd Party Remote Call Monitoring	Inc.'s announcement that it would be expanding its market to 50 million users by launching its first foreign e-commerce Web site to
Billing	South Korea. This new Web portal will enable users in South Korea to purchase the company's VoIP products online. This move is expected
Call Center Furniture	to build VoIP-PAL.com's customer base substantially. “We are very excited about opening up this new and lucrative market for the
Call Center Jobs	company's VoIP products,” said Richard Kipping (News - Alert), CEO of VoIP-PAL.com, in a press release. “This site is in response to the
Call Center Outsourcing	growing interest for South Koreans to have a way to call North America and we have the products that will allow them to call for free.
Call Center Recording	This transactional site will be the first VoIP-PAL.com site offered in a foreign language and we hope to launch additional foreign sites in the
Call Center Scheduling	future.” In December VoIP-PAL.com announced that it will be launching its transactional pay platform in the first quarter of 2008.
	The pay platform will enable customers to receive frequent flyer miles, from a variety of renowned airlines, after purchasing VoIP products from one of the designated VoIP-PAL.com Web sites.

- Call Center Software
- Call Center Training
- Call Recording
- Conference Phones
- Contact Center Services
- Customer Care
- Dialer
- Headsets
- Hosted Call Center
- Hosted Contact Center
- Hosted IVR
- IVR
- Mobile Management
- Open Source CRM
- Predictive Dialer
- Quality Monitoring
- SIP Server
- Speech Recognition and Text to Speech
- Speech Technologies
- Telemarketing Software
- Virtual Contact Center
- Voice Broadcast
- Workforce Management
- Workforce Optimization
- IPTV**
- IPTV
- Communities**
- Business VoIP
- Contact Center
- Green Technology World
- IP Communications
- Open Source PBX

Friday also brought news about MobileMax and 8x8's [plans to jointly launch](#) an international mobile calling service. MobileMax is an expert in mobility and unified communications technologies. This new service, which is based on MobileMax's Residential Edition software for carriers and service providers, is dubbed as "Packet8 MobileTalk." It makes use of a downloadable software application compatible with any smart phone including Windows, Palm, Blackberry and Symbian-based mobile phones, and routes international calls from the phone through the Packet8 digital VoIP network. The service will help cell phone users trim their phone bills while maintaining superior voice quality and flexibility associated with mobile calling. "We are delighted to have signed our first distribution agreement with an American VoIP provider," said MobileMax EVP Sales and Marketing Gaddi Menahem in après release. "This agreement indicates the great market need from VoIP and telecom carriers to enter the mobile market and to compete with mobile operators on costly mobile minutes. MobileMax technology enables providers like 8x8 to quickly launch a successful mobile service and to provide quality, innovative solutions for the residential, SMB and enterprise mobile market." MobileMax's solutions will be showcased at [Internet Telephony Conference and Expo East 2008](#), to be held January 23-25 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. So, it was a very busy week for the folks at 8x8 indeed.

Well, that's it for this week's round up. Be sure to tune again next Friday ...

Patrick Barnard is Associate Editor for TMCnet and a columnist covering the telecom industry. To see more of his articles, please visit [Patrick Barnard's columnist page](#).

Mark your calendars! Internet Telephony Conference & EXPO — the first major IP communications event of the year — is just days away. It's not too late to register for the event, which takes place in Miami Beach, FL, January 23–25, 2008. The EXPO will feature three valuable days of exhibits, conferences and networking that you won't want to miss. So what are you waiting for? Sign up now!

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Technology Marketing Corporation,
One Technology Plaza, Norwalk, CT 06854 USA
Ph: 800-243-6002, 203-852-6800; Fx: 203-853-2845

General comments: tmc@tmcnet.com. Comments about this site: webmaster@tmcnet.com.

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