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NEWS AND VIEWS ON REAL-TIME UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

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SCOPIA Desktop Supports Point-to-Point H.264 SVC

RADVISION has introduced v7.0 of its desktop conferencing software, adding support for a) direct point-to-point desktop video calls, b) directory support for simplified calling, c) scalable video coding with H.264SVC, and d) enhanced firewall traversal capabilities, and e) offline access to HD recordings via the SCOPIA portal.

Under version 7.0, point-to-point desktop calls are now brokered by the SCOPIA Desktop Server, and the media traffic flows directly between the two participating endpoints instead of through the SCOPIA MCU. The result is decreased latency (delay) during the video session, and the ability to host point-to-point calls without using MCU ports. Note that calls between SCOPIA Desktop clients and standards-based H.323 / H.320 endpoints will still leverage the SCOPIA MCU as a gateway.

The new directory function provides desktop users with a contact list, simple presence, and the ability to double-click to call one person, multiple people, or a SCOPIA meeting room. The directory is stored within the iVIEW management system and locally cached by the SCOPIA Desktop server, a configuration which allows for a distributed environment and provides users with a usable directory even if LAN/WAN access to a specific iVIEW server is lost. The directory system can be disabled for environments using Microsoft OCS or IBM Lotus Sametime.

Version 7.0 also adds support for H.264 SVC (Scalable Video Coding) within the SCOPIA Desktop client. For those still unfamiliar with SVC, the key benefit is the ability to host video sessions over lossy networks (e.g. the public Internet). This capability is only supported during point-to-point calls between SCOPIA Desktop clients and multiparty SCOPIA Desktop calls on the new SCOPIA Elite MCU.

RADVISION has also improved the NAT / firewall traversal capability within the desktop platform by adding STUN / TURN capabilities to the SCOPIA Desktop platform. When making a point-to-point call, SCOPIA tests the connection directly between the devices. If there is a firewall issue, the system attempts to traverse the firewall using STUN. If that doesn't work, the software attempts to make the connection using the SCOPIA Desktop server as a relay TURN server. If THAT doesn't work, the system shifts to the current

method of TCP tunneling. (If that doesn't work, they suggest using the telephone).

It is also worth pointing out that version 7.0 includes a new video codec that is optimized for all generations of Intel processors from Atom to i7, and is "processor-aware" to provide optimum performance.

Here's What Ira and Andrew Think. The claims here are impressive. We shouldn't lose sight of the fact that this is version SEVEN of the software, and many features and performance enhancements have been added to this mature platform over time. RADVISION has been stuck in a competitive squeeze for a long time because the company does not manufacture group video systems, and its MCU-centric story has failed to motivate many resellers to lead with the RADVISION product line. But, as the world turns towards desktop video, the company is in a much stronger position. SCOPIA desktop has many of the management and control features that customers will need for large scale desktop video deployments, and RADVISION's embrace of SVC provides yet another significant performance advantage.