



Will 2011 Be a Better Year in Every Respect?

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Trends within the communications space can move very quickly and if you were to ask Mark N. Ricca, Partner and Senior Analyst with IntelliCom Analytics his opinion of the most significant trend in this space today, he would tell you there are three -- one of which is in the area of business needs and two in the area of technology solutions.

Ricca recently took part in an interview with TMC CEO Rich Tehrani in anticipation of the upcoming ITEXPO West 2010 event -- the full conversation follows:

RT: *What is the most significant trend in communications today? Why?*

MR: In my opinion, there are three. One is in the area of "Business Needs" and the other two are in the area of "Technology Solutions."

Business Needs: Today's business environment is characterized by: geographically dispersed project teams and subject-matter-experts that need to collaborate / communicate mobile workers, decentralized databases, travel avoidance, intense competition and tight budgets. These Business Needs are begging for cost-effective solutions.

Technology Solutions: They are in the marketplace in all "forms and flavors." Clearly two of the more effective and impressive are Presence and Unified Communications. Properly applied and managed these technologies can deliver meaningful and measurable long-term benefits.

RT: *What is the one product or service the market is most in need of?*

MR: The effective integration of solutions. Solutions that don't integrate are troublesome and of questionable value.

RT: *When will unified communications go mainstream?*

MR: Within the next 18-to-24 months. This challenging economy has had a dampened the adoption rate for many (but fortunately not all) companies.

RT: *Who will win the Smartphone wars? Tablet wars?*

MR: The end user will be the consistent winner. On the supplier-side we will see a couple of leaders for some period of time. And if history teaches us anything it's that no supplier can stay on top indefinitely. We'll see "leap-frogging" every 2-to-4 years.

RT: *Has social media changed how you communicate with customers?*

MR: Yes, to some degree. Not dramatically yet. ROI is difficult to measure. Nearly every phone manufacturer is now incorporating support for wideband codecs.

RT: *Will we finally see widespread HD voice deployments in 2011?*

MR: Not sure about "widespread." Like other technology adoption curves...the pioneers driven by their vertical industry and "power-user" needs will be the first to adopt. Next will come the "fast followers" and so on. This will probably take 2-to-3 years to become widespread.



RT: *What are your thoughts on the viability of mobile video chat or conferencing?*

MR: These technologies play well in addressing the needs and expectations of most mobile workers.

RT: *Which wireless operating system (Android, iOS4, Microsoft (News - Alert), etc) will see the greatest success over the next three years? Why?*

MR: A tough call. A lot will depend upon the “marketing-effectiveness” of the providers, and they are all very good.

RT: *Some have suggested wireless networking will soon replace wired networks in the enterprise. Do you agree? Why or why not?*

MR: Those that are suggesting this are probably the offspring of those that predicted TV would eliminate Radio. Wireline and wireless each have their strengths, limitations and practical applications.

RT: *What impact has the growth of cloud-based services had on your business?*

MR: Nothing significant on our business yet. However, we view Cloud-Based Services as viable options that should be considered and seriously explored by users. Like all solutions, Cloud-Based Services have strengths and limitations. Potential users should do their homework.

RT: *What do you think of the net neutrality debate?*

MR: There are valid positions on both sides of the table. This debate will probably take a long time to resolve given the number of lawyers, bureaucrats and associations involved. I’m reminded of the observation “That God so loved the world that he did not appoint a committee to create it.”

RT: *What is the most overhyped technology in your opinion?*

MR: Cloud Based Services.

RT: *You are speaking at ITEXPO West 2010. What is your session about?*

MR: The session title is: “How Video Changes the Way We Communicate.” My role as moderator is to “level-set” with some of our current and relevant primary market research on the subject. I’ll also pose some of key questions from the attendees and me to the panelists.

The panelists are subject-matter-experts from Polycom, Radvision and VBrick Systems. They are all key players in this market.

RT: *What will attendees take away from your session?*

MR: Several insights and key pieces of information, including the: 1) Current size and forecasted growth rate of the industry; 2) A better understanding of the offers and capabilities of the panelist’s respective companies; 3) Areas to explore and questions to ask when exploring Video applications, and 4) Answers to specific questions that the attendees have.

RT: *Please make a bold technology prediction for 2011.*

MR: It will be a better year than 2010 in every respect. It will be a year marked by an increased number of IT acquisitions and mergers.