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Stellenbosch University Case Study

Connecting Microsoft Lync to Skype Connect SIP Trunking

Stellenbosch University selected the Mediant 1000 Enterprise Session Border Controller (E-SBC) to ensure a smooth migration to Microsoft Lync and enable seamless and reliable connectivity between its new Lync infrastructure and Skype Connect's SIP trunking service.

Background

With roots going back to the 17th century, Stellenbosch University is now recognized as one of the four top research universities in South Africa. It takes pride in the fact that it has one of the country's highest proportions of postgraduate students of which almost ten percent are international students.

The University is an internationally recognized institution of excellence with more than 24,000 students, 800 lecturers and some 50 research and service bodies.

Galdon Data is a national Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services company that provides state-of-the-art solutions for innovative business communications across South Africa. Galdon Data has been a Microsoft partner since 1998 and is accredited as a Certified Microsoft Gold Partner. Furthermore, the company has been awarded a competency for Unified Communications, specializing in IP Telephony (VoIP / Voice).



Challenges

The University's existing telecommunications system was based around a variety of Siemens platforms. This set-up had served its purpose well for a number of years but advancements in technology, such as the widespread availability of cost-effective IP-based platforms together with the advent of advanced unified communications solutions, led the university to look for an improved solution for its 3,000 users. The new solution needed to offer the full range of communications, collaboration and presence functionality in order to increase the staff's productivity and efficiency.

The university selected Microsoft Lync Server 2010 as the platform for its new unified communications infrastructure. Microsoft Lync Server is a software-powered communications platform that unifies email, instant messaging, conferencing and voice, resulting in streamlined and improved business communications.

With the introduction of Lync's IP-based communications, the university also took the decision to move to SIP trunking for its long-distance and international calls in order to benefit from the reduced rates offered. It chose Skype's SIP Connect SIP Trunking service which offers reliable and secure VoIP calling at low rates.

The final piece needed to complete the solution was a means of enabling seamless and reliable connectivity between Skype Connect and the new Lync platform. In addition, during the migration process, the university wanted users still using the old Siemens platform to be able to benefit from Skype Connect as well.

Solution

Based on Galdon's recommendation, Stellenbosch University selected the AudioCodes Mediant 1000 Enterprise Session Border Controller (E-SBC) to provide the connectivity between its Lync platform and the Skype Connect service.

Residing on the field-proven Mediant 1000 hardware platform, the E-SBC enables secured and reliable interconnection between IP-based communications systems, in this case Lync on one side and the Skype Connect SIP trunking network on the other. Based on years of experience in deploying SIP-based networks in multi-vendor environments, AudioCodes E-SBC products have been certified as interoperable with leading IP-PBX vendors and major SIP Service providers, including both Lync and Skype Connect. This meant that the university could rapidly hook up to Skype Connect and start benefiting from the efficiency and reduced rates it offered.

"AudioCodes Mediant 1000 E-SBC met all our requirements to ensure the successful integration of our Lync platform with Skype Connect's SIP Trunking service."

*Wieligh Lambrechts
Senior Systems Administrator at
Stellenbosch University*

"AudioCodes has proven to be an innovative partner and has added value and flexibility to many of our Lync sites."

Fairoz Jaffer, Galdon Data Director

The intelligent call routing mechanisms built in to the E-SBC meant that incoming calls could be routed to the Siemens IP-PBX platform if the called party was still using the legacy system. This enabled the university to continue working in a hybrid environment while the migration of its users to Lync was still in progress.

Two other important factors in the selection of the Mediant 1000 platform were its scalability and modularity. The Mediant 1000 is housed in a compact, stackable 1U hardware platform so that, as more users at Stellenbosch migrate to Lync, additional devices can be added to increase call handling capacity

without consuming valuable rack space. Furthermore, the Mediant 1000 supports a full range of traditional analog and digital telephony interfaces which can be installed on the existing platforms when required. This will extend the voice connectivity options available to include legacy PBXs and fax machines, as well as enabling interconnection with TDM-based PSTN service providers.

Results

AudioCodes' extensive experience of working with both Microsoft Lync and Skype Connect has ensured that the transition of Stellenbosch University's infrastructure has been extremely smooth and hassle-free. The university is already seeing significant savings in its communications costs through the low international calling rates offered by Skype Connect. At the same time, employees' productivity and efficiency are increasing thanks to the rich functionality of the Lync unified communications offering as a whole.



Mediant 1000 E-SBC

"AudioCodes Mediant 1000 E-SBC met all our requirements to ensure the successful integration of our Lync platform with Skype Connect's SIP Trunking service," explained Wielligh Lambrechts, Senior Systems Administrator at Stellenbosch University. "From the technical point of view, the Mediant 1000 is fully qualified for interoperability with both Lync and Skype Connect so we could be assured that the integration would go smoothly. Also the Mediant 1000's scalability means that it will be able to support our needs throughout the migration process and beyond."

Mr Lambrechts was also impressed by the level of local support offered by AudioCodes and its partner Galdon Data. "With the technical experts from both AudioCodes and Galdon Data on hand to provide local support, we could be sure that any issues that might arise will be handled promptly," he added.

Fairoz Jaffer, Galdon Data Director, commented, "AudioCodes has proven to be an innovative partner and has added value and flexibility to many of our Lync sites. Galdon Data has always been on the forefront of Unified Communications in South Africa, and the first to explore alternatives to enable customized solutions. Stellenbosch University has been a customer for many years and it's great that we could be the system integrator to help them to move to a Unified Communications strategy."

About AudioCodes

AudioCodes Ltd. (NasdaqGS: AUDC) designs, develops and sells advanced Voice over IP (VoIP) and converged VoIP and Data networking products and applications to Service Providers and Enterprises. AudioCodes is a VoIP technology market leader focused on converged VoIP & data communications and its products are deployed globally in Broadband, Mobile, Cable, and Enterprise networks. The company provides a range of innovative cost-effective products including Media Gateways, Multi-Service Business Gateways, Session Border Controllers (SBC), Residential Gateways, IP Phones, Media Servers and Value Added Applications. AudioCodes' underlying technology, VolPerfectHD™, relies on AudioCodes' leadership in DSP, voice coding and voice processing technologies. AudioCodes High Definition (HD) VoIP technologies and products provide enhanced intelligibility and a better end user communication experience in Voice communications.

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Website: www.audiocodes.com**

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