



1 of 1 DOCUMENT

Copyright 1995 Network World, Inc.
Network World

February 13, 1995

SECTION: TOP NEWS; Pg. 4

LENGTH: 636 words

HEADLINE: VocalTec ware lets users make voice calls over 'Net

BYLINE: Adam Gaffin

BODY:

Northvale, N.J. A vendor whose software lets users talk across LANs is now hoping to make its voice heard on the Internet. VocalTec, Inc. last week announced software called the Internet Phone that lets Internet users hold voice conversations across the global network. The software can save users money, particularly on international calls, by letting them establish voice conversations by dialing in to local Internet nodes rather than using traditional long-haul services, the company said. Company President Elon Ganor said VocalTec is saving hundreds of dollars a month by using Internet Phone for conferences between its headquarters and a research and development center in Israel. The software should prove attractive to companies as more groupware programs are made available to run over the Internet, he said. VocalTec's software relies on proprietary compression techniques to pack 1 second of conversation into roughly 8K bits - good enough to hold half-duplex discussions over 14.4K bit/sec dial-up links to the Internet via a Serial Line Internet Protocol (SLIP) connection. The software, which runs on Intel Corp. 486-based personal computers equipped with Windows, a sound card and a microphone, also works over direct Internet connections. Internet Phone uses a proprietary algorithm for overcoming one of the Internet's inherent properties - the way that data packets do not necessarily wind up at their destination in the same order they were sent. The software attempts to determine what information was carried in out-of-sequence packets and re-create it. Ganor said conversations can remain intelligible with a missing-packet rate of 15%. The software uses Internet Relay Chat (IRC) to establish impromptu user directories (see graphic) IRC, a real-time data conferencing system, relies on a distributed database system that holds names as well as E-mail and IP addresses of participants while they are on-line. Ganor said using IRC eliminates problems caused by the way many Internet access providers offer SLIP access via dynamic addressing. But Martin Horton of Fort Worth, Texas, who has used a beta version of the software, said this reliance on IRC is one of the product's main drawbacks for the corporate market. Speaking for himself, the American Airlines, Inc. software engineer said many companies with Internet firewalls block employee use of IRC. Even still, Horton said that the software works well, to the point where there are only slight lags in the conversation. David Goodtree, a senior analyst with Cambridge, Mass.-based market research firm Forrester Research, Inc., said the software will prove useful in certain niche situations, but he doubted the phone companies have anything to worry about. "It's taken 100 years to develop the voice network, and there are all the great features we've come to rely on, [such as voice mail and call waiting]," he said. According to Ganor, VocalTec actually is working on voice mail support. But Goodtree said the phone system also has a common set of standards for such mundane, but critical, functions as connecting phone users across several networks that will be hard for VocalTec

VocalTec ware lets users make voice calls over 'Net Network World February 13, 1995

to imitate on the Internet. "There's no such development occurring in the [Internet] standards bodies," he said. Pat Parseghian, a member of the technical staff at AT&T Bell Laboratories, said the Internet does not currently have the bandwidth to handle large volumes of voice messages, and it is not designed to guarantee delivery of packets. She added that security on the Internet will continue as a key concern for any companies looking to migrate voice traffic. Internet Phone is available now, with prices starting at \$ 49 per user. VocalTec: (201) 768-9400.

GRAPHIC: Graphic, How Internet Phone works, Terri Mitchell

LOAD-DATE: March 7, 1995