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To: Stephen B. Temple who wrote (2219)   12/19/1998 1:35:00 PM
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The iNOW! [VoIP Interoperability Now!] Joint Press Release

[note: the exclamation mark is part of the title... I would not be putting it there myself at this point, seen a lot of joint announcements like this one in the past six months... maybe this one has some meat on it? Let's wait and see...]

Ascend, Cisco, Clarent, Dialogic, Natural MicroSystems and Siemens Join ITXC, Lucent and VocalTec in Support of iNOW! Interoperability Initiative

Business Wire - December 17, 1998 06:16

PRINCETON and MURRAY HILL, N.J. and HERZLIYA, Israel--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Dec. 17, 1998--ITXC Corp, Lucent Technologies and VocalTec Communications (Nasdaq: VOCLF) today announced that six additional companies will support the upcoming iNOW! (TM) ("interoperability NOW!") Profile scheduled to be published in January. iNOW! is a standards-based, multi-vendor initiative established to quickly provide interoperability among IP telephony platforms. Ascend, Cisco, Clarent, Dialogic, Natural MicroSystems and Siemens will be working with the iNOW! Profile to make their gateways and gatekeepers interoperable with each other's products and with those from Lucent and VocalTec.

The industry has come a long way in a year with interoperability now at the top of the agenda for customers and vendors. At this fall's Voice on the Net Conference, ITXC, Lucent and VocalTec demonstrated interoperability among their IP telephony platforms marking the first such accomplishment in the industry. Interoperable Lucent and VocalTec gateways are now deployed on ITXC's commercial network. And most importantly, gateway to gateway interoperability is now commercially available with the release of the VocalTec Ensemble Architecture(TM) and Lucent's PacketStar(TM) Internet Telephony System (ITS) version 2.2.

Understanding that customers need interoperability, Ascend, Cisco, Clarent, Dialogic, Natural MicroSystems and Siemens also announced today that they will be supporting iNOW! interoperability in their future products. (See Addendum for quotes) The iNOW! Interoperability Profile will detail how to achieve interoperability between gateways from different vendors and interoperability between gatekeepers from different vendors. Up until recently, carriers and callers were limited in the destinations they could reach since calls had to be terminated on the exact same platform from which they originated. Internet telephony service providers had to choose between dependence on a single vendor or operating multiple parallel networks of incompatible gateways.

Tom Caldwell, VP of Carrier Services Marketing and Product Management at Bell Atlantic stated that "Bell Atlantic applauds the companies that have agreed to support the Lucent and VocalTec interoperability. In order to see significant growth of IP telephony in 1999, the industry must commit to certification and demonstration of interoperability early in the year. We believe that interoperability is a key component of a full fledged 'Carrier Class' IP telephony system, therefore a key requirement of Bell Atlantic's suppliers."

ITXC Comunicacoes Ltda. was established in July 1998 and deployed its first site one month later, in Sao Paulo Brazil. Its managing officer, Claudio Collado Riechelmann, added today, "The net of this key industry move taken by IP telephony vendors is to allow the homogeneous and solid growth of the ITXC Ltda. footprint in South America. This gives our customers the opportunity to choose whichever platform they feel satisfies their telephony needs for much more affordable prices and future enhanced services."

"Many companies have announced interoperability, but Lucent and VocalTec are the first to actually do it. They are to be applauded," said Jeff Pulver, President of pulver.com. "ITXC's leadership in promoting this idea to other major industry vendors is a coup to all involved."

Lucent and VocalTec are responsible for the development of the programming and engineering for the iNow! Interoperability Profile. ITXC wrote the marketing requirements, provided project management, and has provided lab and field testing as part of the interoperability effort. VocalTec, ITXC and Lucent together wrote the interoperability guidelines based on the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) H.323 standard, and the upcoming H.225.0 Annex G standard.

"By joining this initiative, these six leading companies are affirming the strength of the iNow! Interoperability Profile being developed by VocalTec, Lucent and ITXC," said Dr. Elon Ganor, Chairman at VocalTec Communications. "VocalTec has been at the forefront of the industry standards effort since the beginning of the IP telephony industry. We are bringing to market interoperable end-to-end IP telephony solutions that support the broad range of services that carrier and corporate customers need."

"We are delighted to see the commitment to IP telephony interoperability from other leading vendors," said Chris Schoettle, Vice President of IP Communications, Lucent Technologies. "The leadership Lucent, VocalTec and ITXC have shown in developing the industry's first interoperable IP telephony products and industry's first IP telephony guidelines is proof that customers need interoperability now."

About Lucent Technologies:

Lucent Technologies designs, builds and delivers a wide range of public and private networks, communications systems and software, data networking systems, business telephone systems and microelectronics components. Bell Labs is the research and development arm for the company. More information about Lucent Technologies, headquartered in Murray Hill, NJ, is available on its Web site at lucent.com . Additional information about Lucent's PacketStar ITS is available at lucent.com .

About VocalTec Communications:

VocalTec Communications' software enables audio, video, data, text and collaborative communications between personal computers and other devices over IP networks. VocalTec is a leader in developing innovative, open standards products that bridge IP networks and the traditional public switched telephone network (PSTN) and drive the convergence of computing and telephone technologies. VocalTec owns a minority equity interest in ITXC. More information about VocalTec Communications, headquartered in Herzliya, Israel, is available on its Web site at vocaltec.com . For more information on the VocalTec Ensemble Architecture(tm), please visit vocaltec.com .

About ITXC Corp:

ITXC is a wholesale provider of services to companies originating and terminating IP calls. Its WWeXchange Service provides wholesale call completion and settlement to anywhere using both Internet telephony and traditional PSTN. Its customers are prepaid calling card and call back companies, traditional carriers, ISPs and new Internet telephony service providers (ITSPs) all of whom use Internet telephony to reduce the cost of international calling. The company operates the most extensive wholesale network of affiliated Internet telephony gateways in the world. www.itxc.com.

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Certain statements contained in this release may contain forward-looking information with respect to plans, projections or future performance of VocalTec Communications, the occurrence of which involves certain risks and uncertainties including, but not limited to, product and market acceptance risks, the impact of competitive pricing, competitive products, product development, commercialization and technological difficulties and other risks detailed in the Company's reports filed from time to time with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Addendum

Comments from supporting vendors

Ascend

"Interoperability between gateway vendors is a must to create truly global IP voice networks," said Roger Boyce, Vice President and General Manager, Enterprise Networking Division, Ascend Communications, Inc. "By participating in iNOW! Ascend is helping shape innovative solutions, like voice over IP, that run on our next generation networks."

Cisco

"Open Standards and vendor interoperability are critical to the success of packet telephony," said Alistair Woodman, Product Line Manager for packet telephony applications at Cisco Systems. "We are pleased to be working with other industry leaders to ensure wide acceptance of standards which will accelerate the rapid transition to New World networks and services."

Clarent

"Clarent's carrier customers are currently carrying millions of minutes of IP telephony traffic per month and are expecting interoperability so that they can expand the reaches of their networks," said Jerry Chang, President and Co-Founder of Clarent Corporation. "We endorse interoperability efforts like the iNOW! initiative because such efforts will grow the deployment of IP telephony across the globe."

Dialogic

"Dialogic has been driving IP telephony standards from the industry's inception and is pleased to support this standards-based

Natural MicroSystems

"Natural MicroSystems' products are at the heart of many of today's leading IP telephony systems, including those from Lucent and Clarent," said Joel Hughes, Director of IP Telephony for Natural MicroSystems. "Our support of the iNOW! interoperability initiative will enable our customers to create and sell platforms that can seamlessly operate in any iNOW! compliant network worldwide, such as the ITXC network."

Siemens

"Siemens applauds ITXC's interoperability initiatives," said Chuck Harris, Vice President and General Manager of Internet Solutions for Siemens Information and Communication Networks. "We look forward to continuing these efforts with ITXC, as we work together to develop industry standards for IP telephony, while leveraging Siemens' global presence and carrier grade VoIP platform, the InterXpress."

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