

## **Unifying communications, centralising benefits and empowering a digital future**

By Robert Sussman, joint CEO, Integr8

The increase in application of unified communication locally and internationally reminds us that we are firmly on track towards a truly connected world.

Centralising voice, video and data onto a single platform and the ability to access all communication feeds from a single device is changing the way we live and work.

End-users use this infrastructure to expand their social network and manage the many areas of their lives by virtually being in more than one place at the same time. With controlled multi media at a person's fingertips, it is easy to understand how consumers can store, manipulate and transfer information to virtual communities.

Social network sites like Facebook have been quick to take advantage of this trend. The launch of a messaging platform by Facebook is an exciting offering that automatically centralises and 'stacks' various communication threads, including instant messaging and email, in sequential order.

This means users can accommodate multiple messaging and respond in a controlled way, without getting confused and overwhelmed by the communication.

The advent of unified communications has also fuelled the emergence and plausibility of the Personal Area Network (PAN) and the numerous end-point devices and applications (including BlackBerry™, Twitter, MySpace and Whatsup, as examples) that form part of the environment.

From a business point of view, there is no doubt that unified communications is increasing in significance and relevance.

The ability to streamline communications and empower employees with devices that offer a platform to multi-task across various channels simultaneously is certainly an advantage.

Productivity and extending the reach of the business into existing and emerging markets is critical to operations and the ability to compete in the market at large.

In South Africa the laying of undersea cables and continued trade with service providers and telecommunication companies represent definite progress in developing the country's broadband capacity.

As an example, media reports emerged in April of this year about Neotel and

its connection to the West Africa Cable System (WACS). This represents another undersea cable to land in South Africa and adds to the current group, including SEACOM, EASSy, SAT-3 and SAFE.

Connectivity and the opportunity to service markets is really the underbelly of competitive trade within international ICT and telecommunications.

It is a highly active market and one that continues to develop at a rapid rate. We notice the increase assimilation of global telecommunication companies with integrators as a point of interest.

There is also significant interest in forming alliances with South African integrators and IT companies as international firms seek to establish and strengthen trade in Africa.

NTT's purchase of Dimension Data certainly attracted the attention of local ICT operators. There is also talk of some overseas companies, such as Orange UK, the British mobile network operator and Internet service provider, possibly looking with greater interest at domestic markets.

Local integrators that are on top of their game - those that have the resources, experience and knowledge to deliver immediate value, could stand to benefit handsomely.

As economies continue to take a bashing around the world and markets experience ongoing pressure, the importance and relevance of being in constant contact and digitally communicate using unified communications has never been more obvious.

Universal communication is really a matter of growth in unified communications.

**END**

### **About the Integr8 Group**

The Integr8 Group is an established and dynamic provider of Managed Information, Communication and Telecommunication services.

Founded in 2001, Integr8 ([www.integr8group.com](http://www.integr8group.com)) has organically grown into the largest privately owned BEE ICT company on the African continent.

The company employs in excess of 550 full time ICT professionals across its multiple offices. With 100% of the company being management owned and operated, Integr8's customers benefit from a healthy balance of entrepreneurial innovation and a well corporatized culture.

Integr8 own and operate the only South African based Nerve Centre® ([www.nervecentre.co.za](http://www.nervecentre.co.za)). This hub of customised technology, skilled personnel and ITIL processes, manage the complete ICT environment of

many of the country's leading organisations.

Integr8 is vendor agnostic, choosing the very best solution for each client and can deliver managed ICT services through the cloud to customers of any size and in any location.

The company supports multiple charitable organisations. In fact, the Integr8 Group found itself sponsoring so many initiatives it has created the Integr8 Foundation, which will act as a central facilitator for all CSI in future. It is supported both by the company and by the directors in their personal capacity.

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