




## UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS BOOST EFFICIENCY

**Time is money. This truism has been confirmed once again by COWI Engineering Consulting Group after major investment in an all-new infrastructure designed to make the workday easier and to bring colleagues closer to one another.**

When you have to coordinate over 6,000 employees and representation in 40 countries, fast, secure communication is essential. Consequently, there was really no viable alternative to Unified Communications as the future communications platform when Cowi began installing a new Microsoft Communicator client on all of the company's computer workstations in early 2008.

Cowi had an urgent need for increased accessibility in communication between colleagues, as well as a need to improve both quality and security in the numerous data services used by staff for internal communication.

To achieve these goals, Cowi created an IT department which now independently handles security. The entire corporate UCS installation is hosted on a closed system of nine servers that gives Cowi's IT staff the ability to customize each employee's Communicator as needed, along with many other features and functions.

"As the number of electronic communications channels multiplied and at the same time began to integrate in new ways, we could see the potential for security issues. Previously, each employee typically used an ordinary MSN Messenger to chat with colleagues and keep track of their accessibility and a Skype client for VOIP telephony. This worked, but nowhere near well enough to meet our needs," explains Peer Sylvest, Cowi's IT project manager and system operator.

"Because many Cowi employees travel extensively, time becomes a crucial factor for them, with effective use of travel time and accessibility anywhere in the world as key objectives. Our new infrastructure, an integration of Microsoft Communicator, Live Meeting and a Nortel telephone system, lets them achieve these goals. Our new intranet also includes access to so-called softphones, allowing us to bring together all communication in a single platform in which the individual employee can take his "extension number" with him anywhere."



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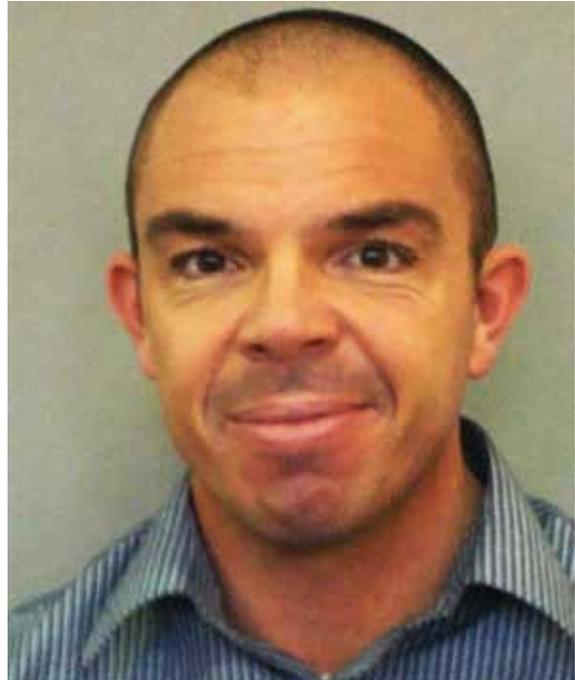
Essential to Cowi's Unified Communication solution is the fact that the system provides secure, convenient access to a wide range of communications services, including instant messaging (chat), presence information, IP-telephony, video conferencing, intelligent call forwarding, online document sharing, etc. At the same, every employee can always have the complete corporate communications platform with him on his laptop. All that is required is a headset certified for Unified Communication in order to be just as efficient on the road in India, for instance, as at the office in Lyngby, Denmark.

"In order for our many employees to experience the new communications platform as a success, we demand capable suppliers of both software and hardware and it is simply crucial that the service providers whom we choose as partners can handle an infrastructure of this magnitude. We have had excellent experiences with GN Netcom, whom we already knew as supplier of a large number of headsets for our staff," adds Peer Sylvest.

Cowi's IT department tested numerous headset solutions from various suppliers and the final choice was Jabra GN2000 USB, based on quality, sound and ergonomics that were far superior to the competition at the right price.

"The GN Netcom headset offers exceptional user-friendliness. It is pure plug 'n' play and the sound is sublime. When talking to a colleague in China via your computer softphone, it's hard to believe that he isn't sitting right there next to you. The sound of our system is much better than Skype and the GN Netcom headsets exploit that to the fullest. It is also extremely reliable and can take rough treatment," elaborates Peer Sylvest.

High sound and image quality is critical, if the user is to experience internet communication as a success. For this reason, it was part of the Cowi strategy to launch the company's new Communicator fully functional all at once, instead of a more traditional slow roll-out that gradually integrates the system. That decision proved to be the right one, measured in terms of response from the 200 employees who participated in the trial run of the new communications set-up.



Peer Sylvest, Cowi's IT project manager and system operator.

"We have many video conferences daily and the feedback from participants is that they feel that they can see and hear each other in a whole new way. This is made possible by our investment in quality headsets from GN Netcom and HD webcams. This alone provides considerable savings on travel, because virtual meetings are now just as effective as real meetings, Per Sylvest explains and goes on:

"Of course, improved technology and Unified Communications cannot entirely replace travel activity. Staff members on the go experience the same quality via our Sharepoint intranet and can make calls at local rates, regardless of whether they are in Denmark, Canada or Qatar. All it takes is an active Internet connection, for instance via a 3G data link, and the sound quality is miles ahead of the usual scratchy Skype calls that we previously had to make do with."