



RSPCA

Overview

The Communications Server ONE allows the RSPCA to streamline both its business processes and communications infrastructure. Voice, fax and email services are seamlessly integrated with Novell GroupWise and Cisco CallManager. With the new system, the RSPCA will optimise the utilisation of its resources and substantially reduce the cost of ownership.

Looking after the welfare of animals today involves very extensive and complex communications. The RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals), the world's oldest animal welfare charity, currently deals with more than 2 million calls a year alone. Since its formation in 1824, the RSPCA's work now extends to providing education, prosecution and even lobbying parliament in addition to hands on work caring for animals...

Challenge

Up to now, communications between 1,500 office based and mobile staff, 10 regional headquarters, 23 animal centres, 7 animal hospitals on top of 198 franchise operations and an army of volunteers throughout England and Wales has been shared between many disparate systems – a plethora of PABX, handsets, mobile phones, paper-based fax machines and inefficient desktop solutions. Managing and maintaining this array of equipment has proved extremely difficult, expensive and inefficient. To address these issues, the RSPCA recently looked at ways to streamline its business processes and communications infrastructure in order to optimise resource utilisation and minimise expenditure.

Solution

To meet its objectives, the RSPCA looked at converging the traditionally separate telephony and data network structures – in other words, to utilise VoIP (voice over IP). In place of a conventional PABX over copper to handset scenario, the RSPCA uses a Cisco CallManager to route calls over the LAN to soft phones. This has the advantage of needing to install and maintain just one network and allows voice messages to be directed to the RSPCA's existing email environment, GroupWise.

The new communications infrastructure began as a pilot at the RSPCA's headquarters in Horsham, England. The pilot system comprised a Cisco CallManager, Novell GroupWise 5.5 and the TOPCALL Unified Messaging Server to provide integrated voice, mail and fax services. Because the envisaged solution involved leading-edge technologies, the proof of concept needed to show that it could deliver on the RSPCA's business requirements.

Following extensive research and consultations as well as investigations on the Internet by the RSPCA, the choice fell on TOPCALL to provide the unified messaging interface to this platform. Two key factors influenced the decision. Firstly, the solution had to align itself with the RSPCA's strategy of voice over IP, to reduce the cost of ownership while maintaining scalability. And secondly, it had to integrate seamlessly with their legacy email environment GroupWise in order to attain the most efficient business processes.



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In addition to rendering the unreliability of the organisation's current fax solution obsolete through TOPCALL's proven stability, the communication server offers two further advantages:

- *all incoming faxes are assigned direct to the desktop/mailbox of the recipient*
- *TOPCALL's integrated, high performance archiving system with full OCR capabilities for text-based searches backed up by a CDR jukebox offers distinct benefits and ensures all message types are reliably stored and easy to retrieve – even many years later.*

TOPCALL was the only vendor able to meet the technological requirements in terms of functionality, resilience and scalability. TOPCALL's willingness and ability to work with the various partners involved in the project was an additional consideration, as was the object-oriented design of the Communication Server, which made the integration process straight forward and economical. Finally, the system's seamless administration through encapsulation within NDA ensured the RSPCA a significantly lower cost of management and maintenance.

Result

The new communications solution uses the Cisco CallManager to route all voice calls over the LAN to the soft phones – LAN connected handsets with optional XML mini-browser screens. In the event of calls not being picked up, these are redirected over a local primary rate ISDN connection to the Communication Server, which activates a voice mail session and ultimately places the voice message in the relevant recipient's GroupWise mail account. Faxing to and from the desktop is also achieved from the GroupWise client, with messages being exchanged directly with the TOPCALL Communication Server.

Those users who have already been introduced to the pilot scheme are impressed with its ease of use and the additional functionality offered by the convergence of the networks and are eager for its adoption when they move into the new headquarters building. For the RSPCA as a business entity, the outlook is positive. Without the need for bespoke systems and programming, the geographic unshackling of the mail environment, the ease of moving personnel and the implicit reduction in cost of ownership, the organisation can focus on its real mission – to raise animal welfare standards in the UK and around the world.

In addition to rendering the unreliability of the organisation's current fax solution obsolete through TOPCALL's proven stability, the communication server offers two further advantages. Firstly, all incoming faxes are assigned direct to the desktop/mailbox of the recipient via DDI (Direct Inward Dialling). Furthermore, TOPCALL's integrated, high performance archiving system with full OCR capabilities for text-based searches backed up by a CDR jukebox offers distinct benefits and ensures all message types are reliably stored and easy to retrieve – even many years later. The luxury offered by unified messaging means that, in accordance with the accepted e-business model, the message store containing voice, fax and email messages can be accessed through TOPCALL by anytime, anyplace, anywhere devices like mobile phones, PDAs and laptops. By augmenting the capabilities of GroupWise with technologies such as voice mail, IVR and faxing for all, time management and prioritisation of tasks have also been considerably improved.