How Enterprises Can Benefit from Unified Communications

Gartner defines **Unified Communications** (UC) as “Products (equipment, software and services) that facilitate the interactive use of multiple enterprise communications methods. This can include control, management and integration of these methods. UC products integrate the communications channels (media), networks and systems, as well as IT business applications and, in some cases, consumer applications and devices.”

UC was developed with an objective to assimilate the software that supports synchronous and asynchronous communication, so the end user can easily switch among all the tools from any devices that are in use.

**Popular Communication Tools to Facilitate UC**

1. User-facing components of UC include the following technologies:
2. Text-based tools
3. Video-based services
4. Web conferencing platforms such as VM spaces and interactive whiteboards
5. Voice-based applications like telephony, voicemail and audio conferencing
6. Real-time presence
7. Enterprise social networking and collaboration platforms

**How Does a Unified Communication System Work?**

Various back-end systems support UC and are often referred to as UC platforms. These UC platforms enable integration among services and front-end clients in getting access.

• For example, a web conferencing system leverages an audio conferencing system, which itself is designed on an underlying IP telephony platform. This allows clients to use services such as click-to-talk (CTC), click-to-chat or click-to-video functionality for flawless switching among tools.

• United Communication facilitates users moving to another mode of communication within the same session. For instance, a user may initiate contact via email and then eventually decide to switch to real-time communication, then upgrade the meeting to a voice call with a single click and then further change the session to video conference, all without any interruption.

• UC components can be positioned or deployed on the premises, public and private cloud or on all three.

• Unified Communications as a Service (UCaaS) is a cloud-based unified communication.
Pillars of Unified Communication

Osterman Research states, “Research conducted by scientists in the 1980s mentioned UC communication as the reality of the future. Their research has become the reality today where we can communicate with people across the globe while sitting in our office and send files anywhere in a very short interval.”

UC has primarily changed the way organisations work. In its purest sense, UC eliminates the need to switch applications or tools by integrating all the functions of various communication systems.

Benefits of UC for Enterprises

Before implementing an application, training the users on the new system and standards is of paramount importance. These standards will redefine the way in which the industry works. Implementing UC involves providing extensive training to the employees to keep them up-to-date on the latest trends and functionalities.

Video calling and video conferencing have been around for years, but it is only now that organisations will be able to use them in a low-cost, efficient manner. This functionality of UC is also perhaps the one that will see the most significant advancement in the coming years.

The implementation of a UC solution will remove the need for numerous hardware resources employed in its deployment. Also, applying such a solution eliminates the need to travel in most cases and at the same time minimise carbon footprints by saving fuel, energy and materials.