**RESEARCH NOTE**

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# Hot Vendors in Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2017

***Summary:*** *Communications and Collaboration is evolving as an integrated platform offering. New emerging providers are looking to replace legacy ones with new capabilities or a better offer. Aragon identifies four new Hot Vendors for 2017.*

**Topic: Unified Communications and Collaboration**

**Issue**: Who are the Communications and Collaboration providers and how will they evolve?

## Introduction

Mobility and Cloud are redefining how people want to communicate. Today, voice, video, collaboration, and mobile messaging are uniting in ways unseen, forming the backbone of the modern Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) Platform. Today, it is an imperative to be able to offer multiple UCC capabilities as part of a Product or Service offering, as the demand for these capabilities only continues to grow. This Research Note identifies four Unified Communications and Collaboration providers that are making a difference.

Although voice and email communications still dominate interactions within the enterprise today, the shift to video and messaging-based UCC is already taking place. Business users increasingly want Real-time Collaboration. The need to integrate Collaboration and Communications capabilities with other business applications is one of the ways that enterprises can transform themselves into a full-fledged digital business.

Unified Communications has always encompassed a voice-led product offering but as the market has shifted, buyers no longer want just voice – they want video, collaboration, and mobile, which is more than UC or UCaaS can provide. Unified Communications and Collaboration (UCC) is the closest term that describes what we have been calling Real-time Collaboration. UCC Platforms provide voice, video, collaboration, mobile, and more – everything buyers want.

At its core, UCC is about enabling seamless Communications and Collaboration. It allows for calls that are both voice-based and video-based; it enables meetings with users and rooms; it is about the shift from instant messaging to mobile messaging, which we have termed Mobile Collaboration. However, not all have been quick to recognize these changes in the market, particularly the impact of mobile messaging.

**The Business Case for Omni-Channel Interactions**

There are many business use cases for UCC because of the increased demand for omni-channel forms of communication. For example, in sales, sales reps know that today's customers are busy, and trying to schedule a sales appointment has become much harder. Customers might not have time to look over every email or return a missed phone call – and they might not want to, either. When it comes to outreach, the efforts made must be omni-channel and take into account the technology that customers increasingly want to use – such as messaging and video. Phone calling and emailing are only part of the communications equation. A UCC platform will provide different areas of the business with multiple forms of outreach capabilities in order to successfully compete in today's digital world.

**Meetings and Calls – Voice is still Core**

While the market focus on Voice Communications is large, the shift to complete UCC capabilities is already taking place. Along these lines, the shift to Cloud is causing disruption, since voice deployments can be quicker and more cost effective than on-premise legacy solutions. Hybrid Cloud is appealing to enterprises, as they look for capabilities that connect to their mixed endpoint deployments, which are shifting to SaaS Cloud offerings.

The reason more Voice services are shifting to SaaS and Hybrid is because it provides the best of both worlds: it allows leveraging on-premise infrastructure with the flexibility that Cloud offers on a go-forward basis.

Due to Cloud, the number of players in Voice is growing, as is the pressure on traditional on-premise PBX suppliers. Newer providers are offering more choices and in many cases, a more compelling ROI.

**Voice Sets Higher Expectations for Quality**

The need for quality in audio and video calls is often unmet. HD Audio and the newer HD with 3D sound makes a single call or a conference call a delightful experience. One of our Hot Vendors Voxeet is making its mark here.

**Enterprise Video is On the Rise**

This growing use of video has raised workplace expectations for seamless, high quality, and real-time video interactions with colleagues in support of business activities. It is easier for more providers to offer Video Conferencing, but sometimes at a cost of lower quality.

Many UCC Providers are partnering for Video. This is a good choice for many because Video is inherently harder to do.

**Mobile Messaging as the Tip of the Spear in in UCC**

The mobile phone is the new computing platform that nearly everyone has with them all of the time. New Mobile Collaboration apps are making it easier for people to interact with internal and external colleagues and partners on any device, without barriers. The disruptiveness of these tools lies in their ability to take communications and messaging control away from carriers and telecom providers.

People also want the same level of convenient communication with their business colleagues as they have in their personal lives. This business use of personal tools is a major driver of IT consumerization. Increasingly, messaging-based collaboration will be a capability that major UCC and best of breed providers will need to enable or partner to enable.

**Context and Performance Are Key**

With so many collaboration and communications tools and so much content in use, users can be overwhelmed, leading to a loss of context. While content is critical to collaborative interactions, context is the component that configures those interactions. Context should be used as the guidepost to reach desired goals and outcomes in regard to content creation and sharing.

Performance is also key. For many enterprises and development teams, the complexity of building real-time capabilities and also getting them to perform at a high level (99.99% uptime) is a challenge. This, too, is where PaaS meets the need.

The key Collaboration and Communications capabilities that represent the UCC architecture of the future include:

- Voice, including PSTN and VOIP feature sets and conference calling

- Video meetings, including HD resolution, 1080P and higher

- Mobile Messaging, which is SMS-focused and is increasingly powering app-to-app notifications

- Collaboration, including the ability to share documents and other content

Most of all, the need to deliver these capabilities in a mobile fashion is an imperative. Mobile is the one thing that makes all of these services more difficult to deliver.

**Hot Vendors in Unified Communications and Collaboration, 2017**

Our Hot Vendors in Unified Communications and Collaboration are poised for explosive growth, in part due to the perfect storm of user demand and the ability to actually deliver real-time collaboration in the cloud.

Our 2017 Hot Vendors for Unified Communications and Collaboration include:

- *3CX*

- *IntelePeer*

- *Nextiva*

- *Voxeet*

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## 3CX



*Figure 1: 3CX focuses on Cloud PBX as one of its lead offers.*

3CX, based in London, and other global locations, offers Cloud or On-Premise based Voice PBX. 3CX offers the flexibility that others don't, since its virtualized UCC offering can run on different cloud platforms, including Google, Amazon, or OVX.

What makes 3CX hot is its focus on a Voice PBX with support for multiple deployment modes, along with support for a variety of third party IP phones. This, combined with its flexible SIP Trunk, means that enterprises can save significantly over other UCC subscription plans. 3CX also offers Video and Mobile Messaging capabilities, which positions it for the growing demand for UCC Platforms.

### Who Should Evaluate 3CX?

Enterprises looking to exit from legacy UC providers should evaluate 3CX because of its strength in Voice PBX and its deployment options. The flexibility in deployment means 3CX may meet certain stringent security and on-premise requirements that some Cloud-only providers will not.

**Note 1: 3CX at a Glance**

3CX is a Cloud-based communications service that offers Voice PBX, Web RTC Video, and Mobile Messaging capabilities with flexible deployment options, including Cloud and On-Premise.

**Locations**: London

**CEO**: Nick Galea

**Key Offerings**: Cloud PBX, SIP Trunking, Web RTC Video Conferencing, Mobile Messaging
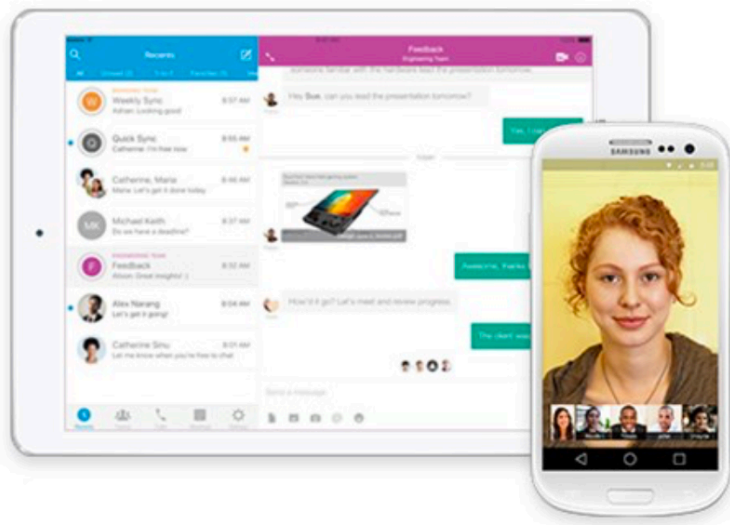
**Availability**: Available now

**Website:** http://www.3CX.com

## IntelePeer



*Figure 1: IntelePeer offers its Atmosphere Voice Services that integrate with partner products, such as Cisco Spark.*

IntelePeer, based in San Mateo, CA, offers Cloud Calling & PBX, full UCC, Contact Center, and a clean upgrade path from premises to the cloud. IntelePeer is the first and only PSTN provider for Cisco Spark and Meraki with direct integrations that enable instant service activation and on-demand scaling.

What makes IntelePeer hot is its focus on all aspects of UCC, including its recent move into Contact Center. This, combined with its partnership with Cisco, provides it with a strong partner. The Atmosphere® offering puts IntelePeer directly into the mix of UCC Providers. IntelePeer's focus on the Cloud gives buyers more deployment options than legacy on-premise providers.

### Who Should Evaluate IntelePeer?

Enterprises who are looking for a complete UCC or Contact Center offering should evaluate IntelePeer. On top of that, we expect that many Cisco Spark buyers will evaluate IntelePeer in the U.S. due to its deep integration with Spark.

**Note 2: IntelePeer at a Glance**

IntelePeer is a Cloud Communications service that offers Voice PBX, Contact Center, and PSTN integrations with UCC providers such as Cisco Spark and Meraki.

**Locations**: San Mateo, CA

**CEO**: Frank Fawzi

**Key Offerings**: Cloud Calling & PBX, SIP Trunking, PSTN Gateway, and Contact Center

**Availability**: Available now

**Website:** http://www.intelepeer.com

## Nextiva



*Figure 3: NextOS 3.0 provides an intuitive and easy way to manage Nextiva's UCC services, all from a desktop or mobile device.*

Nextiva, based in Scottsdale, AZ, provides a cloud-based UCC platform, NextOS 3.0, with a focus on VoIP, Voice PBX, HD Video, and Analytics. Nextiva has been growing, in part because enterprises are looking for a cloud-based solution to replace their legacy phone system. Nextiva's focus on customer service, referred to as Amazing Service®, has helped it to scale.

What makes Nextiva hot is its ability to offer a complete UCC platform with the flexibility and modularity that an enterprise needs. Nextiva provides a compelling offering, called NextOS, with modularity and advanced analytics that others often can only match with third party solutions.

### Who Should Evaluate Nextiva?

Enterprises looking for a cloud-based phone system with full UCC capabilities such as Voice, Video, and Analytics should evaluate Nextiva. Nextiva is investing heavily in AI-based capabilities, so this puts it on par with larger providers.

**Note 3: Nextiva at a Glance**

Nextiva offers NextOS, a complete UCC platform that combines Voice, Video, and Messaging into a scalable offering for small and large enterprises alike. Nextiva also offers advanced analytics as part of NextOS.

**Location**: Scottsdale, AZ

**CEO**: Tomas Gorny

**Key Offerings**: VoIP, Voice PBX, SIP Trunking, Business Analytics, HD Video Conferencing, and VoIP Mobile App

**Availability**: Available now

**Website**: http://www.nextiva.com

## Voxeet



**Note 4: Voxeet at a Glance**

Voxeet offers a Digital 3D HD UCC Platform with Conference Calling, Messaging, and Recording and File Sharing. The high quality of the service makes a noticeable impression.

**Location**: San Francisco, CA

**CEO:** Stephane Giraudie

**Key Offerings**: Conference Call Service, Mobile Messaging, and File Sharing.

**Availability**: Available now

**Website**: https://www.voxeet.com/

*Figure 4: Voxeet offers a Mobile First Cloud Conference Calling service.*

Voxeet, based in San Francisco, CA, offers a Conference Calling Service with 3D HD Sound quality. Today, when it comes to meetings, it's all about quality, and Voxeet serves as a new alternative to traditional conference call services that are often still analog-based calls.

What makes Voxeet hot is its ability to provide 3D-enabled HD quality conference calls over the web or on iOS or Android Devices. Voxeet works with all the major Cloud Calendars (Google, Microsoft) so scheduling a call is seamless. Built-in recording makes it a breeze to share the session with colleagues who were not able to make the call.

Voxeet's multi-stream technology provides a "same-room" sensation by eliminating frustrating cross talk and garbled voices. Voxeet also delivers screen sharing, presentation mode, broadcasting, call recording, translation, messaging, scheduling, and more. All Voxeet features are also available for developers to add to any app or website through its APIs for 3D surround sound voice and video communications.

### Who Should Evaluate Voxeet?

Small, Mid-sized, and Large enterprises looking for a global conference calling service with HD quality should evaluate Voxeet. Today, you often only get one chance to make an impression and Voxeet's 3D voice Conferencing Platform will help to leave a lasting one.

**Aragon Advisory**

- Enterprises should look at UCC platforms and the opportunities to integrate them into existing business applications.

- Voice PBX and Conferencing may be the primary driver for a replacement of the legacy PBX.

- Look for opportunities to leverage mobile as a key part of your enterprise UCC strategy.

- Enterprises should develop a five-year plan for implementing video as part of a workplace strategy.

**Bottom Line**

Communications and Collaboration are becoming unified and open at the same time. The opportunities provided by cloud UCC platforms cannot be overlooked and neither can the return on investment (ROI). Enterprises should evaluate how UCC capabilities can be added to business processes to enable more seamless work and better interactions with customers and partners.