

12 JUNE 2011

PIONEERING TRIAL TO REVOLUTIONISE COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

Local governments could significantly reduce their telephony and communications costs while improving service to rate payers if a ground-breaking trial of the next generation of unified communications (UC) proves successful.

Computer Systems Australia is conducting the first large scale trial of Microsoft LYNC to be conducted within Local Government in Australia, and has invited local councils in New South Wales and Victoria to participate free of charge.

The manager of the trial, CSA's Sarah Cunningham, says the three month trial is designed to demonstrate that a new generation unified web communications platform like LYNC can deliver more for less by reducing operational costs and improving productivity.

"With local government managers under pressure from rate payers to reduce costs, they are looking at ways to reduce telephony charges, eliminate unnecessary travel and improve staff productivity," said Ms Cunningham.

"The rich presence information available through LYNC helps employees find the most effective way to communicate at a given time."

"Instead of travelling or e-mailing documents back and forth for approval, LYNC enables physically separate workers to enjoy real-time collaboration while at the same time reducing their environmental footprint."

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Through LYNC, local government staff in different offices, buildings or towns can share documents, share desktops, and contribute simultaneously to a common digital whiteboard.

LYNC makes it easy to see which colleagues are currently available, out of the office or in a meeting and communicate with several of them at the same time.

“LYNC save time and enhances productivity, which should satisfy the community because it will keep council costs down while improving customer service,” said Ms Cunningham

The platform also supports unified messaging, allowing users to consolidate multiple instant messaging networks such as Live Messenger, Google Gtalk and Yahoo Messenger.

All communication between users is done through a Microsoft Office Communications Server local server, which is more secure, as messages do not need to leave the corporate intranet.

Sarah Cunningham says LYNC allows businesses to replace their existing telephone systems with a more cost-efficient web communications platform that aggregates the various communication mediums into one platform.

“Unified communications has shown promise as a way of lowering costs and raising productivity but until Microsoft LYNC it has been relatively expensive and difficult to implement within existing IT infrastructure.”

“LYNC makes it easy - seamlessly building on the latest version of Microsoft Office by adding voice, video, instant messaging and desktop sharing functionality.”

Local councils taking part in the trial will be given a USB stick that allows them to “plug and play” with LYNC.

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To demonstrate the communications platform, participating councils will be invited to participate in one of four webinars to be hosted by CSA and Microsoft during August.

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