

MOBILIZE YOUR COMMAND

By Robert Veschi

In the wake of September 11, 2001 the world now knows that we must plan for and expect the unexpected. This said, anyone involved in public service should be aware that their facilities and their primary and backup communications could be compromised by terrorist activities. As a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) product manufacturing and integrated access solutions-company, specializing in homeland security, first response, and mobile communications, Edge Access is the post 9/11 tool of choice for any organization that takes voice and data communications seriously.

International agencies, as well as local and state authorities across the nation, have already integrated and currently use Edge Access VoIP solutions to supplement their missions:

- Edge Access technology provides responsive and efficient communications in disaster recovery efforts for the virtual adjuster or immediate response units regardless of the condition in which the environment was left – loss of local services such as telephone, power, cell service, etc.
- Law enforcement agencies are fully prepared to ‘hold the line’ with Edge Access mobile command solutions.



- State officials and government offices are deploying this technology in their fight against terrorism and domestic security initiatives.
- With the addition of Edge Access technology and a satellite modem, the broadcast industry is now able to make telephone calls, send faxes and surf the web.

A perfect fit

Having integrated a router, SIP-aware firewall, quality of service manager (QoS), virtual private network (VPN), DHCP server, wireless access point (AP), SIP proxy server and, most importantly, a voice capability into a small, single device allows a very cost-effective

means to add two key functions – voice and data. All of this capability is packed into a lightweight solution requiring less than two inches of rack space, which is significantly less than that required by a competitive multi-box solution and costs considerably less.

Mobile communications demand

Edge Access' first-response customers continually refer the company to anyone seeking to build a future-proof mobile command unit with a set of converged services over satellite. Edge continues to be selected as the preferred vendor for those mobile applications.

An integrated QOS manager automatically prioritises the voice over the data so everyone can function mobile just as they do at headquarters. Adding VPN capability makes this technology invaluable for police, fire or rescue communities who want complete 'reach back' to their corporate servers, databases and telephone systems.

Voice and data security are paramount

Edge Access technology is the only known technology that supports VoIP and has integrated an NSA approved Type II encryption device for wireless. Future versions of Edge technology is expected to include an NSA approved multi-level secure operating system.

Reliability is essential

So is the question of backup. There are many backup and restoration features available as a part of the complete Edge Access solution. Given the small size and the ease of configuration, a spare pre-configured unit, power cord, a few phone cords and within minutes it's back up and running. Additionally, Edge Access technology can be powered by the vehicles' 12-volt system; so, even if the generator fails, use of all features can continue. Each unit can be configured with battery backup so that it is available even when other technology might not be.



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Benefits

The benefits to state and local municipalities deploying multiple vehicles, like police, fire and rescue include: a decrease in telecommunications costs associated with inter- and intra-office communications; remote 911 dispatch can be achieved as if sitting at headquarters; and outbound calls appear on the agencies' phone bill simplifying expense reporting and telecommunications budgeting.

Future-proof

The technology from Edge Access has many unique features, not the least of which is the universal wan interface (UWI). One of the biggest questions any IT organization faces as they make technology decisions for their products or services is 'what is my environment going to look like in the future?' A ten-base-t ethernet backbone infrastructure running at 10Mbps or 10Meg soon became obsolete when 100Meg was made available and then a year later 1 gigabit ethernet came into being. In order to take advantage of those newer technologies, the previous generation of technologies was discarded along with the investment.

The purpose of our UWI is to insure that the organization will never have to follow that same progression with their VoIP technology. If a new wireless, ethernet, T1, DSL, cable or other broadband technology comes along, a driver will be written allowing end-users to remove their current card from the slot and populate it with their new one. The cost of the networking card is minimal compared to the cost of the whole product. Many of the broadband cards that fit our UWI cost less than one hundred dollars. So, their total investment may not be future-proof, but the majority of it certainly is.

A critical differentiator is the level of feature set integration. Opting for the single-box solution as opposed to five boxes not only significantly reduces hardware acquisition costs; but also eliminates the need for an expert support technician. Every feature of the Edge component is configurable via the web from a network control centre so that the ongoing costs of supporting this technology is significantly less than that of a multi-box solution. ■