

WHEN STANDING STILL ISN'T AN OPTION

■ Commercial Profile: IP Telecom

Future-proof your telephony services with IP Telecom

IP Telecom, an Irish owned company, offers first class telephony solutions to companies in Ireland and across the world via its own Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) network.

With over 20,000 users across thousands of businesses in Ireland, the company has invested significantly in technology and people to deliver excellent call quality, customer service and technical consultancy.

IP Telecom works to futureproof a client's telecommunications infrastructure – ensuring security, innovation and functionality are at the heart of the system. Solutions are professionally installed with zero downtime guaranteed – or your money back!

IP Telecom clients range in size from multi-site and international enterprise and corporate firms to SME businesses across diverse industries such as Construction and Engineering, Pharma, Technology, Financial Services, Wholesale, Retail and Communications. Examples of multi-site clients include Portwest, the workwear supplier with offices in the UK, Ireland, Poland, Dubai, Australia and the USA, global engineering firm Byrne Looby who have a strong presence in the Middle East and helicopter fleet management company Lobo Leasing, who are based in Blackrock, Co. Dublin but also have offices in San Francisco and Rio de Janeiro.

IP Telecom has achieved considerable growth over the last 18 months, with a substantial part of this expansion resulting from strategic partnerships and through wholesale deals with other companies. An example of this is a three year wholesale deal worth €500,000 recently signed with Goldstar Telecom, a Cork-based company who provide a range of telephony solutions in Munster and across Ireland through its growing partner network.

Anthony Tattan, Commercial Director of IP Telecom, says the company will



Anthony Tattan, Commercial Director of IP Telecom with Shena Brien, CEO of IP Telecom

continue to focus on the needs of the customers and will expand accordingly: "We have seen a significant surge in multi-site companies switching to IP Telecom over the past 18 months. We guarantee high quality service, a professional installation with zero downtime and of course excellent savings. In fact, many of our customers save as much as 70% on their bills.

We have been in expansion mode this year, investing €500,000 in our own point of presence infrastructure in the BT Data centre in Citywest. We have also made plans to hire 20 new staff members over the next 18 months as we move to our new flagship headquarters in Park West. We will also be launching our own broadband offering in late 2017."

Find out how much you could save your business on telephony costs by checking out our Savings Calculator on iptelecom.ie, follow us on Twitter @IPTelecom or call us on 01 687 77 77



Michele Neylon, chief executive, Blacknight Solutions

Picture: Maura Hickey

The ability to go mobile is more important than ever, but so too is mobile security. Alex Meehan reports

At this point in 2017, there probably isn't a serious business person in Ireland who doesn't have a smartphone. Mobile working is an increasingly normal part of the average day for many people, but managing that mobility for employers can be challenging.

It's their job to make sure that data is stored safely, not misused, lost or stolen, and that if it is, devices can be remotely wiped to ensure no privacy laws are broken.

"The goals of a good enterprise mobility strategy haven't changed in recent years, even if the technology has. It's about facilitating employees being able to work securely on the road and away from the office," said Karl McDermott, head of information and communications technology for Three.

"It used to be about phone calls and emails, but today customers want to be able to access files when they're on the go. They want to be able to work on no matter where they are using the applications they know and trust, in a coffee shop or on the train, working on a smartphone or a laptop. Then when they go into the office, they want to pick up where they left off."

In addition, McDermott suggested that a big expectation for customers working remotely is ubiquitous data – the infrastructure needed to support enterprise mobility needs to run at top speed, faultlessly and invisibly in the background.

"It has to be high-speed data – poor quality broadband, a bad wifi connection or 3G need not apply," he said.

A challenge for companies is how to provide access to the functionality that employees demand. McDermott offered the example

of Dropbox. "Users aren't malicious but they do what occurs to them as the easiest way to get a job done. If they want to send a file that's too big to email, it makes sense to upload it to a service like Dropbox. The company, on the other hand, hates that enormously. It has no control over the security of that data, it doesn't know what's in it, where it is and it can't answer for it," he said.

"The concept of 'shadow IT' is real and it's a pain for employers. The reality is though that mobile devices are being used everywhere and in the absence of a better option from the company, employees will happily use consumer-level applications without realising the potential headache they're creating."

The solution is to offer alternatives that are managed by the company and conform to its regulatory obligations while providing consumer-class ease of use.

"With the right software, you can have total oversight of where your documents and your data is, who has access to it and for how long, whether it's editable or just readable and so on. Because with your employees on the road, the boundaries of your company no longer exist. They're completely permeable."

It's also possible to set up profiles on mobile handsets so that the user can maintain virtual walls between their personal data and company data.

"You can do all your work on the phone, but place limits on the ability of the user. You can stop, for example, somebody taking a work email and copying it into a Gmail client or a Dropbox document. And when the employee leaves, it's then easy to delete the work persona and the employee gets to keep their own data," said McDermott.



Over the past few years, Irish companies have been becoming more aware of the need for an enterprise mobility strategy but this is such a rapidly-changing space that the requirements aren't always clear. According to Gerry Hampson, senior consultant engineer for Ergo and Microsoft MVP in enterprise mobility, one identifiable trend is that there has been a shift in the way that companies want to protect their data.

"They're less interested in actually managing the devices and more interested in securing the applications and data on the devices. The Irish workforce is now very tech-savvy – people like these devices and enjoy using them," he said.

"They want to be able to access corporate resources and this is actually not a bad thing – they just want to do their jobs. Those of us in IT shouldn't prevent this proliferation of devices, we should embrace and manage it and empower users to work as they would prefer.

"Those companies that haven't done this yet should prioritise it for 2018."

At the most basic level, companies without proper enterprise mobility strategies need to prevent their data being compromised due to lost or stolen devices, and policies should include the usual features like password protection and encryption. "However, it isn't enough to just secure the device. It's vital that the data and the user's identity are also protected. As a Microsoft partner, we used Microsoft's Enterprise Mobility + Security suite to implement secure solutions for our customers," Hampson said.

This suite of applications includes components which provide user identity management, mobile device and mobile application management and data protection on the move using rights management.

"We're noticing a trend in the deployment of modern device management. Traditional management typically uses technologies such as active directory, group policy and systems center configuration manager (SCCM) to provide deep manageability and security," said Hampson. "Now, instead of this, we're seeing a simplified approach become popular using cloud-based solutions like Microsoft Enterprise Mobility + Security, which includes Azure AD Premium and Intune. It's complemented by cloud services like Azure Information Protection, Office 365 and Microsoft Store for Business."

"For a very long time, Irish companies lagged on certain levels of technology to other countries, basically because they could. They didn't have to be early adopters, they could wait and see because doing so didn't have a business impact," said Catherine Doyle, enterprise director for Dell EMC Ireland.

"But when it comes to mobility and digital transformation, they can't wait any more because this is what's generating revenue and driving their business. And in general, Irish companies are pretty good now. I've returned from working in Britain and it's actually really inspiring to see the types of things they're doing here."

From creating new digital teams to look at mobility, to engaging with how customers interact with them from a mobile point of view, Irish businesses are increasingly creating new 'think paths' within their companies and providing really creative spaces for employees to work in.

"It's all about creating better user experiences for customers," Doyle said.

According to Doyle, the average Dell EMC mobility customer is looking primarily for ideas on how they can improve their customer's experience from a mobile point of view.

"Often that comes down to applications and wanting to ➤

Karl McDermott, head of information and communications technology for Three



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Jamie Young, corporate sales manager Ireland for Compu b
Picture: Clare Keogh

know how to put front-ends on to their existing experiences and applications to make them more use-friendly. We've done a lot of this in Britain, where we have created a lot of retail and insurance applications to allow companies to improve their ability to reach younger people.

"They want to be able to do things like put offers into their applications, such as offering free coffee and cinema tickets to people who sign up for health insurance. That kind of thing really resonates with people."

Behind the scenes, carrying out such work requires Dell EMC to know how to link front-end health-based applications to back-end delivery systems.

"We're doing an awful lot of work on that in terms of helping customers create that whole B2B experience behind the scenes. That is still very much in its infancy but that is what Irish companies are thinking about right now. Increasingly, consumers expect that kind of interaction, and the younger they are, the more they expect it," said Doyle.

For Stephen O'Herlihy, chief technology officer for PFH Technology Group, an interesting development in enterprise mobility has been a move away from focusing on data delivery devices.

"A lot of the enterprise mobility activities we are seeing are about the ability to deliver a digital workspace platform to a user. I'm a big believer in talking to customers about what they want to deliver to the user," he said.

"In other words, what kind of applications and what kind of data as opposed to what devices – I think this is about moving away from the idea being that the user is tied to an individual device and only that device."

For example, a growing number of people use multiple devices for different purposes, and an enterprise mobility strategy needs to be able to deal with Google Chromebook, Apple's iOS devices, Android devices and Windows devices, all at the same time.

"It's about being able to deliver a consistent seamless ex-

perience irrespective of what device the user wants to use in the workplace or in their personal life, because sometimes you have to work with a personally owned device rather than a corporate device," said O'Herlihy.

"Many people want to be able to use a personal device to access some of their work-related content, but, of course, all this needs to be securely delivered using identity management."

PFH works primarily in this area with Microsoft's Office 365 enterprise management suite and VMware's M-watch, both of which are designed to deliver a digital workspace.

"Of course, the very idea that a user goes to their desk to do their work is truly gone. Obviously, there's some exceptions but home working and mobile work are becoming extremely popular. We're also moving into a new era when the larger concept of human-machine partnership is evolving to include the concepts of AI assistance and VR meetings and so forth," said O'Herlihy.

"I think mobile technology is in its infancy at the moment and a top priority for customers when we talk to them is securing the data and the applications. The conversation may start with them very much around the need to secure the device but the real asset that needs protecting is their data."

At the same time, companies are increasingly struggling under the strain of supporting all the new devices that are flooding into the enterprise.

"A few years ago, if you had a 500-user estate on paper, that probably meant managing 500 devices. But that's now probably more like 1,500 devices, from tablets to smartphones to laptops and desktop machines. You need to be concerned about any device that stores data and runs applications. To do this, you have to start thinking in terms of a digital workspace which has full identity wrap around," said O'Herlihy.

"This means when you provision a user, you provision a single digital workspace. When the user leaves, and this is a huge problem from a security perspective, you need to know how to erase their access to the data they no longer should have access to."

One of the side effects of this move towards provisioning digital workspaces is that increasingly it doesn't matter what operating system is running on the device to be provisioned. This is something that has yielded benefits for brands that historically weren't considered easy to manage in a corporate environment.

"This is a perception we come up against a lot in Ireland and Britain. The enterprise sector used to be largely driven by

Stephen O'Herlihy, chief technology officer for PFH Technology Group



Are all mobile OSs made equal?

A challenge facing companies wanting to facilitate bring your own device (BYOD) initiatives in the workplace is how to handle the issue of competing platforms. According to Stephen O'Herlihy, chief technology officer for PFH Technology Group, that can mean drawing lines in the sand and opting to support only some mobile operating systems.

"It's possible to support most operating systems, within reason, but really the jury is still out when it comes to Android. The mainstream Android providers such as Samsung have built-in encryption and other additional features which provide peace of mind," he said.

"They're typically working with the most up-to-date iterations of Android, but that can't be said of all manufacturers and all devices."

The most up-to-date version of Android, code-named Oreo, was released in August, but studies have shown that up to 80 per cent of Android users have an older version of the operating system installed. As a result, O'Herlihy said, he has worked with companies that have found it easier to blacklist Android devices rather than engage with the complexity of supporting the many versions of the operating system in circulation.

Kenneth Arthur, chief compliance officer with VisionID



downloaded once that handset is turned on," said Young.

"It gives the IT department the highest level of access and management to those devices. Part of the reason that these handsets are offered to employees is because they're considered highly desirable. We're seeing more large employers offering them as part of an 'on-boarding kit,' so that a new employee goes to their desk and finds a Macbook and iPhone waiting for them, preconfigured and fully controlled by that company's IT department."

One obvious concern for companies looking at developing an enterprise mobility strategy is the issue of how to handle data storage. Cloud technologies and robust fourth-generation mobile telecommunications networks mean that accessing data on the move is simple, but less clear is where that data is stored.

Upcoming legislation in the form of the general data protection regulation (GDPR) places strong responsibilities on the shoulders of companies to know where their data is stored, who has access to it and how it is handled. The regulation is designed to protect the interests of consumers, and according to Blacknight Solutions chief executive Michele Neylon, even smaller companies are becoming a lot more switched on in this area.

"One of the best ways around this kind of issue is to stick with one of the larger players so you have the reassurance of knowing they're going to look after you. For example, the thing with Mi-

crosoft is that if you buy Office 365 through ourselves or one of the other Irish companies offering it, then the data you create and access is going to be stored in Microsoft's data centres in Ireland," he said.

"Under Irish and European data protection law, this is something we all have to be a bit concerned about. With GDPR coming into force in a few short months, transferring data abroad is something you have to be careful about. You can do it, but it has to be handled very, very carefully."

Sticking with a provider like Microsoft means that smaller companies can have confidence in the product they're using to power their enterprise mobility strategy.

"Microsoft takes these issues very, very seriously. With some of the other cloud providers out there, you might be able to choose certain aspects of where the data is stored but whether or not they're going to be fully respectful of your wishes and offer the same level of protection isn't as clear just yet. While most of them are going to do the right thing, at the same time there are question marks and ultimately you are responsible."

Windows apps, but in recent years we've seen a lot more Apple products finding their way into corporate environments," said Jamie Young, corporate sales manager for Compu b Ireland.

"The chief executive wants an iPhone or a Macbook and then it permeates down through the company. In recent years, we've seen more companies offering a choice between a Windows or Mac to employees, and we typically see a 60 per cent take-up of Mac. So it's being driven by popular demand from the top and bottom of the company."

It's also true that as the security credentials of Apple's iOS operating system have improved in recent years, companies are keen to take advantage when it comes to managing fleets of mobile handsets.

"A lot of our deployments at the moment are driven by the Apple's device enrolment programme (DEP), which allows an IT department to offer zero-touch configuration. We can ship a handset directly to an end user and the IT department can configure it as it travels. All the desired system settings are

Mobility gone wild

Not every business has the same requirements when it comes to enterprise mobility and mobile device management, but there are options out there for everyone.

"If you have a thousand mobile devices, running a help desk to support that is a real headache. We're seeing more and more companies outsourcing the support of those devices to companies like us, because it's a hassle to do it themselves," said Kenneth Arthur, chief compliance officer with VisionID.

VisionID describes itself as a company that specialises in 'true' enterprise mobility; in other words, managing a mix of consumer devices such as those made by Apple and Samsung, as well as ruggedised devices made by the likes of Honeywell and Zebra.

"When we talk about enterprise mobility, we're talking about mobilising

all the workforce, not just giving people an iPhone and an Office 365 account. We talk about field force mobility where shop assistants or those direct sales people on the road can send in orders using a ruggedised tablet, or a car hire company can have its staff use a mobile PDA to allow customers to sign for a hire car right there in the parking lot," said Arthur. "We can do the same for a shiny ten-inch tablet that doesn't leave the office – it's about adapting to the specific needs of the business, from a slightly different direction to most people. That's what we call true ruggedised, industrial mobility."

When Arthur discusses mobile device management, he's usually talking about a wider range of devices than the typical corporate operator.

"For the likes of the car hire companies we work with, we have our mobile device management software installed on both state-of-the-art prosumer tablets and handsets, as well as on industrial PDAs that can be used in all weathers, indoors and out," he said.

Focus On: Intellicom

NEW VOIP PLATFORM DELIVERS A SAVING OF 33% FOR ATHLONE IT

When faced with a telephony solution reaching end of life with vendor support withdrawn, replacement hardware unavailable, Athlone IT (AIT) took a considered look at the options and how they might completely revolutionise telephony for the 500+ users across the college campus.

This approach not only led to the deployment of an advanced VoIP-based system, Intellicom Connect, that gave Athlone IT extensive additional functionality and long-term, easy scalability, but it also delivered a 33 per cent saving to the bottom line on the college finances.

AIT wanted to avoid the large capital outlay of a new, expensive on-premise solution or being locked into a proprietary system. "We wanted a flexible and scalable solution, that was fully resilient and included robust security safeguards against threats such as toll fraud," said John Swanick, senior technical officer at Athlone IT who led the transformation.

Day-to-day administration of the system is conducted in-house via the very user-friendly administration frontend and they now have a simple, easy-to-use web interface that controls all aspects of the solution. Commenting on this, Cian Maher, CTO of



Intellicom CTO and co-founder, Cian Maher who led the Intellicom Connect deployment at Athlone IT

Intellicom said: "Intellicom Connect provides the team at AIT with control over call routing, reporting and real-time information on the system with different levels of user permissions and access, as defined by them. Adding additional extensions can be undertaken by the team locally in as little as five minutes via our interface."

A full analysis of the total cost of ownership of the hosted Intellicom Connect service versus an on-premise IP PBX revealed an impressive 33 per cent saving achieved by AIT. "We aimed for the best of both worlds, more functionality and flexibility at a lower cost. We have a solution now that gives

us the day-to-day ability to deliver what our users need but also ramp-up functionality and users as needed. It's a solution that will grow and mould to our needs," said Swanick.

With very impressive cost savings, functionality and scalability, together with a seamless deployment, the team at AIT has delivered a masterclass in how to migrate from a legacy telephone system to a hosted VoIP solution. Top of the class for the team there.

For details:
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or visit intellicom.ie

