Microsoft

Microsoft® Exchange Server 2010

WHITE PAPER

Exchange 2010 Unified Messaging

Voicemail: a story of unrealized potential

Voicemail is a relatively mature technology. It is so thoroughly established in users' daily workflows that it has become practically invisible to the organization except as an ongoing expense. Because of their origins in telephony, voicemail systems tend to exist in their own silos, managed separately from other IT systems in general, and business messaging in particular. Many fail to provide the features and ease of use that users have come to expect from other types of messaging.

Yet voicemail is a critical communication tool for most workers. Given the right strategy, it can go from a basic service to a productivity-enhancing tool. One way to do this is to treat voicemail as just one more messaging modality. It is then possible to manage it using the same tools administrators and users know from email. A universal inbox is also the foundation for delivering advanced voicemail features across devices and platforms. Microsoft calls this capability Unified Messaging. Microsoft® Exchange Server is the key technology that enables it. The newest release, Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, delivers voicemail functionality engineered from the ground up to improve productivity while helping you reduce the cost and complexity of your voicemail system.

Empower your users

Better access, easier to manage

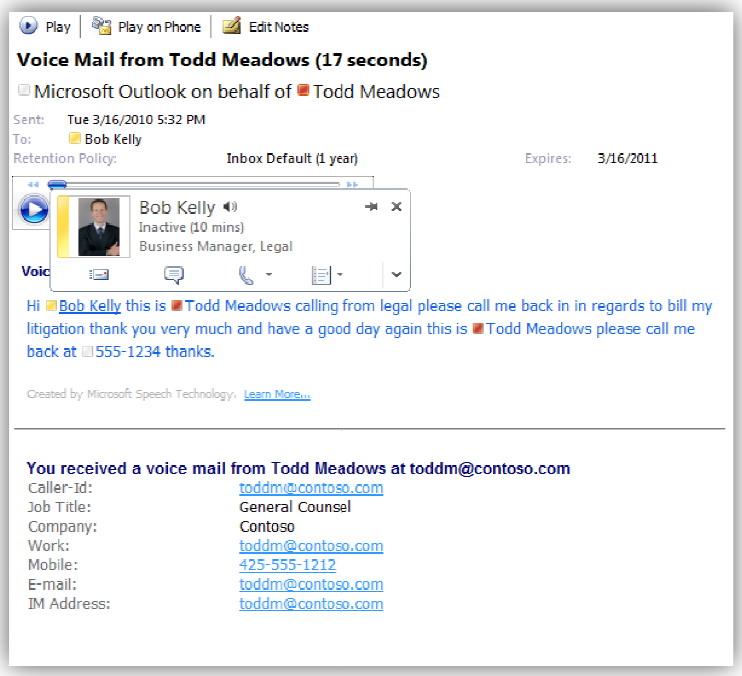
Elabs will improve its customer experience by providing them with Exchange Server 2010 Unified Messaging. Since it is now available in German, many Elabs customers will enjoy having the service in their local language. - Elabs

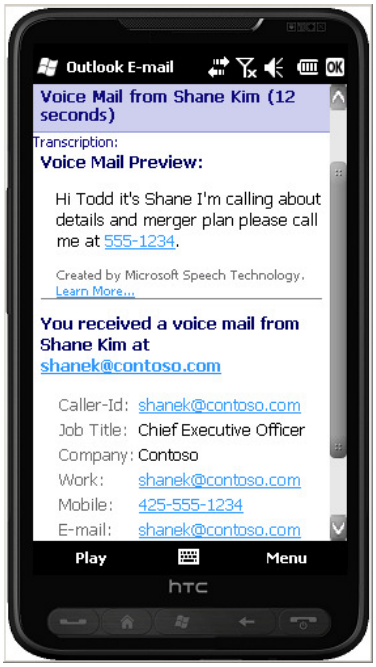
Providing users with access to all of their communications in one place can help them save time and get more done. Ordinary voicemail fails this test. It is typically accessible only by phone. It exists in an entirely separate system from email and SMS messages. Managing it is cumbersome. Users must navigate messages using the telephone keypad and listen to each message to decide if it is important or not. If they receive a voicemail message while in a meeting or otherwise unable to call into the system, they have no way of knowing if the message was important or not. Users often have little control over how voicemail messages are answered or routed. Even if they have options in this regard, they may be difficult to configure and manage.

These factors can limit voicemail systems to being little more than high-tech answering machines. If we look at that list of limitations again, however, we see an interesting fact: none of them apply to email.

Therefore, one way to make voicemail better is to make it more like email. That is exactly what Exchange Server 2010 does. It delivers voicemail messages directly to the users' email inboxes and enables them to manage these messages using familiar methods and tools.

Each Exchange Server 2010 voicemail message is presented as an inbox message with an audio file attached. The body contains an automatically generated text preview of the first portion of the voicemail audio. Users can read the transcription to decide whether the message is important enough to listen to. It is a simple solution that immediately increases the manageability of voicemail for users. Whether they are using a phone or PC or accessing their messages through the Web, they no longer need to call into the phone system to access voicemail. In fact, they don't need a phone at all. Microsoft Outlook® and Outlook Web App provide an inline player for instant access to voicemail audio. The audio attachments can be delivered in a variety of file formats, with MP3 as the default because of its high portability across platforms and devices including smartphones.





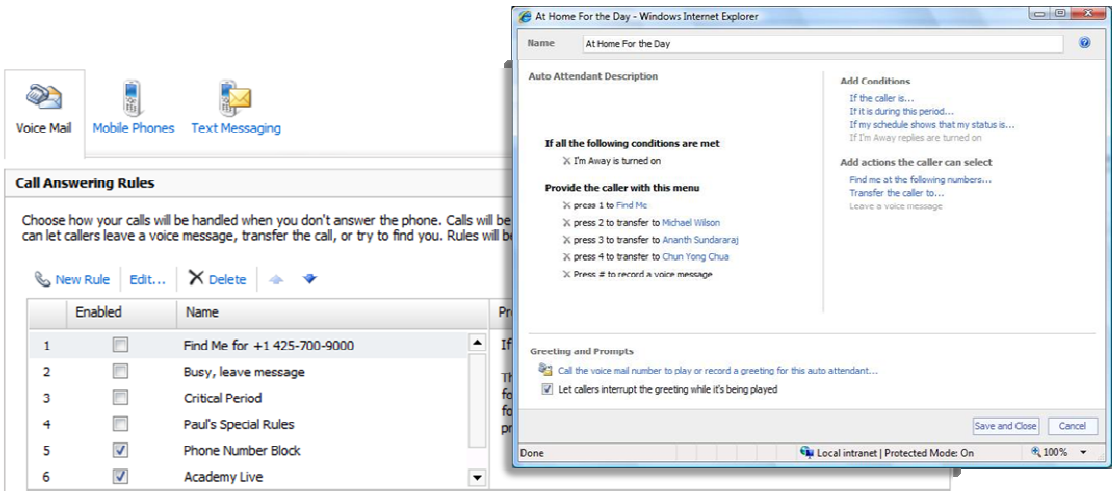
Just as with email messages, Outlook makes the voicemail preview "actionable," meaning that recognized names, contacts, and phone numbers can be activated with just one click. While listening to a message, the user can click on any part of the transcription to jump directly to that portion of the audio. Because the messages are delivered to the email inbox, users can move, mark, forward, and delete messages quickly. Most importantly, Unified Messaging helps users avoid missed opportunities by empowering them to respond more quickly to important communication.

Unified Messaging with Exchange Server 2010 also works the other direction—that is, when a user has only voice access. Regardless of the phone, users can control their inboxes using Outlook Voice Access

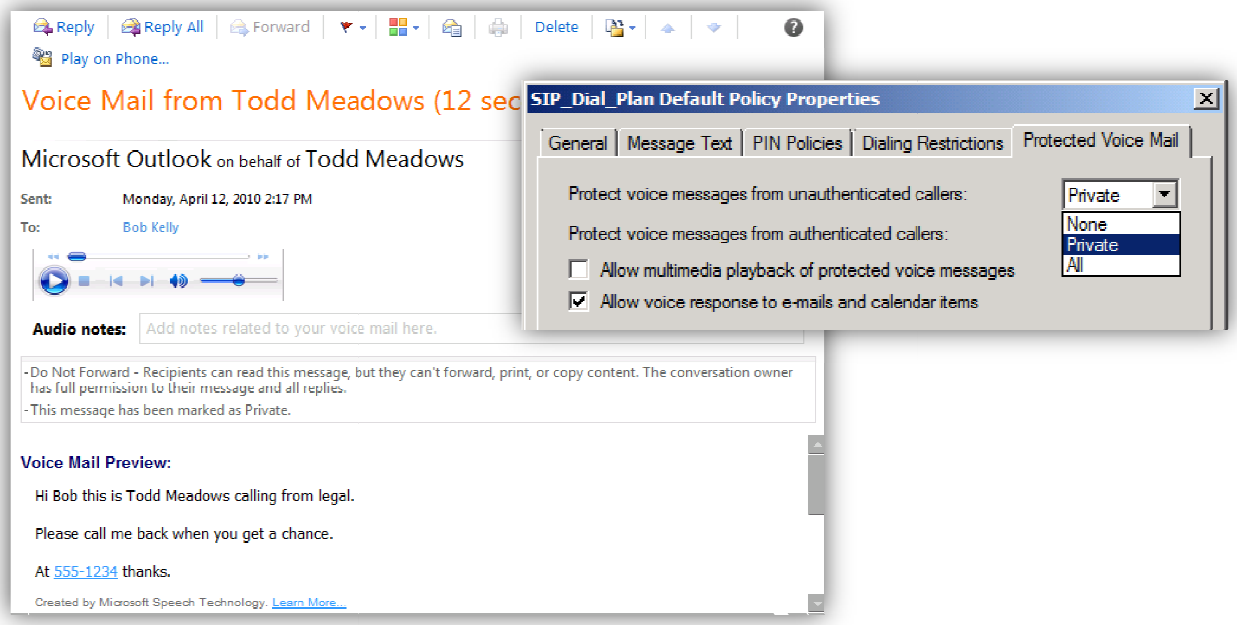
and keypad or voice inputs. This enables “anywhere access” to their mailboxes—including voicemail, email, and text messages—when away from a computer or Internet-connected device. The system can read email messages aloud in 26 languages. Users no longer need to worry about being late for appointments or being disconnected when traveling, as they can instantly call into their mailboxes and manage their calendars, contacts, and email messages. They can navigate the company's Global Address List using the phone and call anybody in the directory. If they are running late, they can even notify meeting attendees from the telephone. And on office phones, a message waiting indicator alerts them to unheard messages.

Empower users with custom call answering features

Unified Messaging in Exchange Server 2010 improves users' ability to access and manage multiple message types through a universal inbox. With voicemail, there is another side to the equation: the calls and the callers. The simplest answering systems send all callers to voicemail if the intended recipient is not available and present all callers with the same message. The net result is that all callers feel equally unimportant. Some systems support call handling rules and custom messages, but they are not always easy to configure. If a user needs to call the IT department every time he or she needs a new greeting, it can be difficult to get the full value from those features.



In Exchange Server 2010, Unified Messaging gives users the power to manage call flow and answering. Setting up call answering rules is as easy as setting up email rules. Call answering rules have three components: conditions, greetings/menus, and actions. The rule syntax is: If (condition) is true, present (greeting/menu) enabling (action). Conditions can include caller ID, time of day, and the call recipient's free/busy status on the Exchange calendar. The greeting can then be configured for specific groups or even individual callers. The menu of actions presented to the caller is also customizable. Users can enable "find-me" and call transfer options that help callers reach them, or just prompt the caller to leave a message.



Self-service control over call answering enables users to create call flows that help them work more effectively and produce greater value for the organization. For a sales professional, it could mean the difference between connecting with an important lead and sending it to voicemail. Custom greetings can provide caller-specific information and support closer relationships with customers. And none of it requires intervention from the IT department.

Reduce cost and manage risk

Simplify your voicemail systems

"Our salespeople need to respond quickly to dealer concerns. With Exchange Server 2010 and voice-to-text conversion, within 20 seconds after a dealer leaves a voicemail message, our users see an email preview on their cell phone. Our mobile employees might check voicemail anywhere from 5 to 10 times a day, at 5 to 10 minutes a session. By using Office Communications Server 2007 R2 and taking advantage of the voicemail preview feature in Exchange Server 2010, they can increase their responsiveness while saving more than 15 minutes a day. From a business perspective, that's an incredibly valuable productivity increase."

- George Hamin, Director of E-Business and Information Systems, Subaru Canada

Empowering users in ways that reduce the workload of IT professionals is an example of how Exchange Server 2010 Unified Messaging can help cut costs while simultaneously giving users a better experience. More broadly, implementing Exchange Server 2010 Unified Messaging reduces the need to manage a separate infrastructure component for voicemail. Administrators manage voicemail from within Exchange Server, just as they manage email. Compared to the legacy systems that handle voicemail at many organizations, switching to Exchange Unified Messaging can help significantly reduce the cost and complexity of your communications infrastructure whether you use traditional phone systems or voice-over-IP. For example, Sprint Nextel expects to see $9.3 million in benefits from their transition to Unified Messaging, which includes phasing out 18 voicemail systems. Manufacturer Lifetime Products is phasing out a legacy voicemail system and

expects cost savings of $850,000.

Help reduce risk

As with any business communication, voicemail can contain sensitive, confidential, or legally restricted information. Most companies want to exercise some control over voicemail messages. Those in highly regulated areas such as finance, healthcare, and government may be legally required to do so. Exchange Server 2010 Unified Messaging helps provides multiple layers of control to help reduce legal, compliance, and security risks. You can implement retention policies across email and voicemail messages to ensure that sensitive information persists only as long as is legally required. Should it become necessary to prepare for litigation, Exchange Unified Messaging reduces the cost of accessing, searching, and producing voicemail. It also supports situations in which organizations are required to store voicemail and email messages separately.

Another potential source of risk is unauthorized access to voicemail messages, typically through forwarding outside the organization. Exchange Server 2010 helps prevent this through integration with Active Directory® Rights Management Services. This provides control over who can access voicemail messages and what actions are allowed for various users. These rules can be applied by the sender or by administrative policy and help prevent the forwarding of protected voicemails in a playable form to unauthorized persons. It works regardless of the platform or mail client because the protection lives with the content wherever it goes.

Unified Messaging is better messaging

Exchange Server 2010 Unified Messaging unlocks the latent potential of voicemail to enhance productivity. By treating voicemail as it would other message types, it gives users the ability to access and manage voicemail efficiently across platforms and devices. It also empowers them to customize greetings and call handling to improve customer relationships and ensure they get important calls. On the operational side, using Exchange Server 2010 for voicemail helps you streamline your IT infrastructure and reduce the workload of IT staff. It delivers advanced, yet easy-to-use features to help mitigate legal, compliance, and security risks. Exchange Server 2010 is also designed to scale effectively. It puts Unified Messaging within the reach of small businesses, yet can meet the needs of global enterprises with hundreds of thousands of seats.

Many organizations take voicemail for granted. They use it every day, yet expect nothing more than a sophisticated answering machine. With the power of Unified Messaging and Exchange Server 2010, you can not only save money, you can transform voicemail into an enhanced productivity tool that helps users get more from their communications.