Clients Choosing Voice Over IP

May 19, 2015

Overview

This document is intended to give a "high-level" overview for clients who intend to switch their Relius Administration VRU telephony architecture from traditional analog to Voice Over IP (VOIP). While somewhat technical in nature, the information contained herein should provide executive managers, sales associates, and support staff the necessary understanding before committing to a new voice platform.

VOIP Defined

The simplest definition is transmitting and receiving voice signals over a network connection. Modern telephony systems use existing network infrastructure to convert voice into a digital signal that can be transmitted within an office or around the world. Any new office telephone system purchased these days will likely use this technology.

History

Throughout the time that Relius Administration provided a VRU solution to clients, only analog voice cards and lines were supported. Most used 4-port or 8-port cards from Natural Microsystems. While these cards are durable and still supported at the latest version of Edify, they are no longer being manufactured. More importantly, it is getting increasingly difficult to purchase 64-bit servers that will support such cards.

The reasons are twofold:

- The size of the card means that the server will either have to be a large tower or a high-end developer workstation.
- Newer servers and workstations do not have slots to accommodate traditional PCI cards.

Since that time, digital cards are available, but SunGard Relius does not support them due to the complexities surrounding that technology.

Now that Edify supports VOIP, most major corporate offices who are already running VOIP telephone systems for their desk phones will be able convert easily.

Initial Costs and Considerations

The primary cost beyond licensing from Dialogic and Edify will be configuring a client's internal telephony infrastructure to receive the appropriate signals. SunGard Relius has set up their own system on an Avaya Communication system. The initial setup required some additional equipment that didn't come standard as well as some consultation and configuration assistance at an additional one-time cost.

Clients should expect a similar experience. Costs and time constraints will vary from one office setting to the next. Early and open communication with your telephony vendor is strongly encouraged. If you need specific documentation that will assist your vendor, please contact Relius Technology Support.

VOIP Licenses

There are two primary costs associated with the licenses of VOIP, the "developer kit" from Dialogic and the voice portal licenses. These fees are collected by SunGard Relius and passed on to Edify. Contact your Relius Administration Sales Representative if you wish to convert to VOIP.

Support for Virtual Servers

Many technology-based products are now supported on virtual systems. Edify 13 is supported on VMWare systems – only if using VOIP. Physical voice cards are not supported on a virtual environment and will cause the primary server to crash.

Overall Value

Based on the overall cost of a VOIP system in your office, the ease of support and maintenance once the system is in place, and the low price of the VOIP licenses, the overall price of VOIP is a better value than purchasing new digital voice cards, which start at over $5,000 each. Digital voice cards aren't supported by SunGard Relius because of the architecture required to develop and test such a system.

Primary Steps to Convert

While this is not a comprehensive list of steps necessary to convert your existing environment to VOIP, below is a general idea of the tasks ahead once you have decided this course of action.

- ❑ Discuss the options and costs with your telephony provider. Determine whether the phone system currently in place needs any hardware, software, or configuration changes. Be sure to get those specific costs from your vendor as quickly as possible.
- ❑ Call Relius Technology Support or your Relius Sales Representative to begin the purchase process for obtaining VOIP licenses.
- ❑ Determine with your IT staff whether you will use a physical server or a virtual server.
- ❑ Make sure your server will meet the requirements of running everything required, such as Windows Server 2008 r2 (a 64-bit operating system), Dialogic Host Media Processing (HMP) and VOIP, Edify 13, and Relius Administration VRU.
- ❑ A second, dedicated network card is recommended for your VOIP. Note that the VOIP license will be tied to the "MAC Address" (the unique identifier) of the network card. When obtaining your VOIP licenses, this address will need to be passed on to Edify for processing.
- ❑ Copy the "QTECH" folder from your existing VRU to a safe place, such as your network or a backup drive.

- ❑ Install Windows Server 2008 r2 to your server as a new system (upgrades are not supported).
- ❑ Install Service Pack 1 to the operating system.
- ❑ Install all necessary patches and third party software such as security, remote desktop, etc.
- ❑ Install software provided by Edify:
    - Edify 3rd-Party CD
    - Edify Media Server CD (VOIP)
    - Edify 13 CD (with licensing CD)
- ❑ Install software provided by SunGard Relius
    - RA 20.0 Component DVD
    - Relius Administration VRU (note version 19.1 is supported at this level, but a special installation will need to be downloaded)
- ❑ Run the VRU Configuration software
- ❑ Copy your voice clips from your old server to the new one
- ❑ Run a special voice clip conversion utility so your voice clips are in the necessary format
- ❑ Call and test