

Actitalk!

Following up on the successful CT-PRO Server, Sequs has developed the ActiTalk Server to take advantage of emerging packet voice technologies.

Converging voice and data onto a common packet infrastructure provides the ability to share networks with data rather than requiring separate lines and interconnecting hardware; reducing network expenses, improves bandwidth utilization and accelerates the provisioning of new services. Clients can therefore implement enhanced voice and data services for significantly lower cost - capping investments in costly, legacy circuit-switched voice infrastructure while migrating to a lower-cost, softswitch-based infrastructure.

The Value Proposition for Small and Mid-Sized Corporates

The ActiTalk Server establishes a new milestone in the evolution of solutions for corporate houses, providing three specific benefits to the intelligent entrepreneur:

- Superior feature delivery and greater productivity
- Improved network utilization
- Enhanced operational responsiveness

Traditional telephony systems have underserved the small and medium-sized corporate houses due to the high capital outlay and maintenance expense of on-premise EPABX and other proprietary equipment and software.

Until now such corporate houses had to do without flexible interactive voice response systems, intelligent call routing, call centre screen popping, and other sophisticated EPABX features. Large companies have been locked in to PBX systems that are difficult to program and costly to adapt to changing business requirements. Commodity hardware and open source software now radically change the cost – benefit equation.

A. Superior Services Delivery and Greater Productivity

Enterprises have the opportunity to greatly improve their service to customers through the ActiTalk Server. But enterprise employees also benefit in many ways. By supporting voice and data over the same converged network, IP telephony enables a broad variety of features and services to improve employee productivity.

The ActiTalk Server supports new desktop and system features that are unavailable with traditional circuit switched PBX systems. Some of the most common features and services are:

- Web Based Control over messaging including Voice Mail
- Call Centre Administration including Presence, Forward and Follow
- Customer Relationship Management and Database Queries
- Conferencing Services

B. Improved Network Utilization

Packet voice technologies offer better bandwidth utilization through silence elimination, redundancy reduction and audio compression. As a result, the ActiTalk Server typically uses only 40 to 50 percent of the bandwidth of traditional voice communications. The ActiTalk Server is more configurable and scalable than traditional circuit switched systems, because the office LAN infrastructure is normally in place and operating. An ActiTalk Server can deliver WAN-based functionality as well, eliminating multiple EPABX systems by supporting multiple branch locations through standard broadband Internet connections. The ActiTalk Server can be administered through a single interface from virtually anywhere. Underlying protocols are more accessible than traditional proprietary voice systems, and call control and traffic routing can be improved.

C. Enhanced Operational Responsiveness

Traditional voice systems use proprietary architectures, so adding third-party equipment or software can be costly or impossible. Not so with ActiTalk Server!

The ActiTalk Server uses commercially-available, off-the-shelf components that create vastly larger hardware choice and more software options, therefore delivering far more competitive pricing. The ActiTalk Server can support dozens of geographically dispersed locations, with applications provisioned across the entire organization at one time, and without the costly hardware redundancy.

Features of the ActiTalk Server

A. Modular Design

Computer-telephony integration means that the same network of servers can process both data and voice – and the nature of ActiTalk’s modular design allows for extensive customisation. For instance, dial plans for extensions can be configured to route traffic to either digital or analog endpoints, including phones.

B. Multiple Hardware Options

A wide variety of hardware is supported to provide access to analog and digital (E1/T1) Telco networks and to analog endpoints such as traditional phones and networked devices such as the facsimile machine or printer. To protect customer investment and allow incremental migration, ActiTalk interfaces to both traditional analog phones as well as the latest digital ones.

C. Hybrid Capabilities

ActiTalk Server also complements existing EPABX systems by avoiding costly replacement of existing EPABX investment while eliminating further vendor lock-in. In this fashion, the ActiTalk Server delivers hybrid EPABX capability for purposes from simple additional lines to special features like branch-to-branch calling. Fully compatible with a wide range of IP and analog protocols and codecs, ActiTalk Server translates between them on the fly.

D. Standard Features

Flexible Extension Programming

An extension can ring any local station, local or remote IP handset, or forward to any remote phone number. This allows you include your cell phones and phones in other locations as extensions, so your customers don't need to learn multiple numbers.

Group extensions may be defined to ring multiple phones. ActiTalk call groups ensure that callers are serviced as quickly and efficiently as possible by ringing group phones simultaneously or in-sequence.

Multiple extensions may be assigned to a phone. Distinctive rings and on-screen displays are available to let the user know which extension a caller is requesting.

VoiceMail

Every extension can have a unique voice mailbox with independent 'Busy' and 'Unavailable' announcements. Voicemail distribution lists may be defined to deliver important messages to multiple recipients to ensure a rapid response.

IVR (Interactive Voice Response)

When callers dial your number, ActiTalk takes the call and offer callers instant access to important information like movie schedules, stock quotes, account balances, hours of operation or directions to your location.

ActiTalk can play a different greeting after hours or on holidays to offer customers alternate options to assist them in the event of an emergency.

There are no limitations on the number of greetings or type of menu structure that can be created. ActiTalk can even make call routing decisions based on CallerID, to automatically connect an important caller with his/her assigned sales representative for example.

Conference Calling

The ActiTalk Server provides sophisticated conferencing facilities. Simultaneous conferences are limited only by available PC computing resources. Security is configurable with talk-only and listen-only access. Joining a conference is as simple as dialling a designated extension.

Incoming or outgoing calls may be transferred to a conference, or it may be direct dialled. This allows agents to quickly bring supervisors into the conversation if they need help with difficult calls.

Music on Hold

ActiTalk supports music playback for callers on hold. Hold-on music can be any audio file in MP3 or wav format.

Call Parking

ActiTalk can transfer a call to a special "parking" extension so that it may be picked up from another phone. This is useful in combination with intercom and paging features to announce to someone that they have a call waiting for them. This way, that person can retrieve his/her call from wherever he/she is. If a caller has been parked for a longer time than the specified time limit then ActiTalk will again ring the originally dialled extension.

Call Pickup

This feature allows anyone to answer a nearby ringing phone from their phone, provided the ringing phone is in the same call pickup group as you. This is configurable, so for example, the manager's phone may only be picked up by their assistant.

Intercom and Paging

Call direct to a phone and make an announcement over the speaker (compatible handsets only), or address a large area through an "Overhead Paging" network (additional hardware required).

Distinctive Ringing

ActiTalk can be configured to provide more than one telephone number or extension to reach the same user. The Distinctive Ring feature provides a unique ring cadence to identify the extension that was dialled. One can then specify different ring tones for priority calls or Internal/External call differentiation.

Automatic Call Distribution (ACD)

ACD features that have traditionally been available only in large EPABX systems are included as a standard component, making your call centre more efficient while improving service to your customers. The ACD includes:

- Configurable call queuing
- Programmable announcement messages
- Call forwarding / transfer
- Supervisor features including queuing indication and agent monitoring capability.
- Flexible wrap-up times

Call Queues

ActiTalk supports the automatic routing of calls to agents using various strategies to determine whose phone or phones ring when the next call comes in. This functionality is in conjunction with the automatic call distributor (ACD).

If a call is not answered right away, ActiTalk can play music-on-hold while the caller waits. There is a configurable option to allow a caller who is on hold to escape to voicemail or to another extension.

A queue is basically a collection of agents. An agent can be a member of more than one queue at any time.

Agent Login and Logout

Agents can login to the ActiTalk Server using their Agent Ids and passwords to be able to receive calls. ActiTalk then sends calls to each agent as they are free to take a call.

E. Other ActiTalk Features

Last Number Redial

Speed Dials / Phone books

Configurable Call Waiting

Full Caller ID Name and Number support on all ports

Call Hold

Call Transfer

Blind Transfer to Extension or Voice Mail

Supervised Transfer to other phones

Do Not Disturb

The ActiTalk Advantage

Complete software based Corporate House Solution - ActiTalk is a complete enterprise solution in software. It runs on Linux and provides all of the features you would expect from a EPABX solution and more. ActiTalk performs voice over IP in three protocols, and can inter-operate with almost all standards-based telephony equipment using relatively inexpensive hardware.

A large and powerful set of capabilities - In addition to traditional EPABX features such as voicemail, call conferencing, automatic call distribution and interactive voice response; ActiTalk delivers essential corporate house features such as caller ID, call queuing, and conference bridging. For example, intelligent routing features can automatically redirect calls, making service representatives more accessible, responsive and productive – a win for both the company and the customer.

ActiTalk provides message-waiting indicators, call parking and transfer, paging, and intercom, among others features. It includes pre-recorded professional voice prompts. Incoming voice mails are recorded in Microsoft-compatible wave format for storage or forwarding to a user mailbox, or forwarding by email for playback on a personal computer.

Merging Voice and Data seamlessly - ActiTalk can merge voice and data traffic seamlessly across disparate networks. By using standard Packet Voice protocols, it is possible to send data such as URL information and images in-line with voice traffic, allowing advanced integration of information.

Rapid deployment and development - ActiTalk allows IVR applications to be rapidly created and deployed. Its powerful command line interface and text configuration files allow both rapid configuration and real-time diagnostics.

Extreme cost reduction - Combined with low-cost telephony hardware, ActiTalk provides an enterprise solution at a fraction of the price of traditional EPABX and key systems, and proprietary voice processing hardware, while providing a level of functionality exceeding that of many of the most expensive systems available.

Dynamic Content Deployment – In-built database integration allows ActiTalk to deploy dynamic information such as account details, movie show times, stock quotes etc, can be deployed over the telephone.

The ActiTalk Server can provide corporate houses with a phone network, voice mail, and an inter-office telephone network without a highly expensive, proprietary “black box” system that so many EPABX companies provide. ActiTalk provides your company with the resources you need to remain competitive. Unlike traditional EPABX and Key Telephone systems, ActiTalk Servers are based around a modular, upgradeable PC architecture. This allows businesses to "start small" and grow the system cost effectively, without reconfiguration headaches.
