

Voice on the Net

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## IT GOES TO SHOW

### A telecommunications firm finds VoIP E-Learning "A breeze".

**As a leading international telecommunications company** with operations in more than 80 nations, London-based Cable & Wireless has substantial experience evaluating, choosing and selecting equipment from a wide variety of third-party telephony vendors.

Yet when it came time in 2003 to make internal training of employees a more efficient process, Cable & Wireless ironically found itself with similar procurement needs as many of the business customers it serves.

It's an increasingly complex business with training needs that sometimes change overnight—often faster than the traditional pace of internal e-learning modules and course distribution.

"We've found that e-learning is overly produced," says Billy Ward, Cable & Wireless' Learning Manager. "This over-pressing of the instructional design of content can sometimes defeat the object. There is a place, of course for high end 'e', but I believe this is a 'smaller place' than it was two or three years ago. Speed and access to the information and the knowledge is key."

"The key [to making it work] is the speed of the business," Ward explains. "With changing infrastructure and converging product sets, learning in our industry needs to be rapid, at the speed of business. It became obvious that we needed to have some kind of rapid [course] development capability."

When that realization hit home, Cable & Wireless evaluated several options. They selected Macromedia Breeze, a VoIP-enabled web-based conference system and toolset for online training and conferencing from San Francisco-based software and services platform developer Macromedia, Inc.

Ward says that Cable & Wireless uses Macromedia Breeze for system, process, product and even soft skill learning and development—usually as a blended solution.

"We can use Breeze to capture content-rich content—as it is created by the Subject Matter Expert who knows the topic, the need and the users," Ward says.

This fall, Cable & Wireless upgraded Breeze from Version 4 to 5, a version that Ward believes will allow for even more seamless development and transmission of VoIP-delivered audio within Breeze Meeting sessions. The Seminar Room is Cable & Wireless' newest Breeze Meeting application; it's used to roll out Siebel training to about 1000 C&W sales staffers.

Besides technical improvements such as better navigation around Breeze e-learning screens, Ward is energized by the VoIP

component of the latest version of Macromedia Breeze Meeting. He says that in conjunction with exhibiting and distributing courseware, Breeze Meeting's audio capability via an on-screen audio bridge aligns with Cable & Wireless' evolving training needs.

"We'll be using the VoIP component in Meeting—but we'll also give attendees a landline bridge number to use as a backup," he says. "In general it's a big 'yes' to VoIP capabilities all round." Ward estimates that Breeze Meeting enables C&W to save up to 30% on monthly mobile call costs.

For Ward, though, the benefits of VoIP-enabled Macromedia Breeze are not just ROI-related, but serve the cause of learning efficiency by making distribution of learning content more flexible.

"One of our guys can be in a London café, log on over their WiFi connection, and connect to this type of content," Ward enthuses. He says that as available bandwidth and audio codecs improve, the company will integrate this VoIP component with all of its worldwide learning modules.

Around Cable & Wireless, this flexibility is often referred to as the IP Advantage. "This means business and performance improvement by increasing sales and operational effectiveness, and entails getting learning, knowledge and information to the right people, quickly," Ward says.

Ward envisions Breeze helping to bring staffers at new C&W corporate acquisitions up to speed. "We're also looking at how we can leverage the toolset for quick wins around our acquisitions—rapid learning capability and knowledge sharing are key to successful integration and transformation," says Ward.

In fact, C&W is so impressed with Breeze, Ward says, that they're actively planning ways to monetize the application beyond the internal organization, and out toward their own customers.

"As broadband and access becomes ubiquitous we see the IP net being a massive lead and massive advantage both for our internal users—to enable access to content—but also for our external partners and customers," Ward says.

"Finally, our plans for Virtual Meetings and classrooms are strong—depending on the rollout of the current initiative," he adds. Ward says C&W will likely use the Macromedia toolset to support such projects as its IP-powered Next Generation Network (NGN). ▀

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