Cisco Introduces New Unified Communications System to Streamline Business Processes, Drive Productivity

New presence, desktop tools, mobile integration and network intelligence improve business agility and customer interaction

LONDON, England – March 6, 2006 -- Cisco Systems, Inc. today announced the Cisco® Unified Communications system, a new suite of voice, data and video products and applications specifically designed to help organisations of all sizes to communicate more effectively. The system will allow customers to integrate their communications system with their IT infrastructure, streamlining business processes for the way effective businesses need to work today.

Based on the Cisco Service-Oriented Network Architecture (SONA) announced in December 2005, the Cisco Unified Communications system is an open and extensible platform for real-time communications based on presence, mobility and the intelligent information network. By using the IT data network as the service delivery platform, the system helps workers to reach the right resource the first time by delivering presence and preference information to an organisation’s employees.

“The Cisco Unified Communications system is the first true second-generation Internet Protocol (IP) Communications system providing not just telephone services, but rather a rich communications environment that seamlessly integrates voice, video and data collaboration in one system. It is also the first new Cisco system to fully support the Cisco Service-Oriented Network Architecture (SONA) announced in December 2005,” said Charles Giancarlo, chief development officer, Cisco Systems, Inc. “Cisco SONA extends the power of the network to optimise applications, processes and resources to deliver greater business benefits to enterprises. By building on Cisco SONA, Cisco Unified Communications leverages network intelligence to greatly simplify the day-to-day challenges of collaboration with colleagues.”
The Cisco Unified Communications system is based on Cisco’s industry-leading IP Communications portfolio including Cisco CallManager, Cisco Unity, Cisco MeetingPlace and Cisco IP Contact Center and now includes additional innovative products, applications, features and capabilities. New to the Cisco Unified Communications system are Cisco Unified Personal Communicator, Cisco Unified Presence Server and Customer Interaction Analyzer. Current customers will be able to upgrade their existing systems to take advantage of the new capabilities.

- **Cisco Unified Personal Communicator** simplifies the way workers share information by helping them to communicate in real time. Its user-friendly GUI (Graphical User Interface) makes it easy to move through multiple communications applications. The Unified Personal Communicator bridges the gap between the stand-alone applications on the desktop, telephone and network. Using dynamic presence information, employees can search existing directories to locate contacts and simply “click to call” using voice and video, allowing them to exchange ideas face-to-face. The virtual nature of IP networks allows remote or traveling employees to securely access these tools from wherever they are.

- **Cisco Unified Presence Server** collects information about a user’s status, such as whether or not they are using a device such as a telephone, personal computer or video terminal at a particular time. Using this information, applications such as Cisco Unified Personal Communicator and Cisco Unified CallManager can help users connect with colleagues more efficiently by determining the most effective method of communication. The Cisco Unified Presence Server aggregates presence information from the network as well as Cisco Unified CallManager and third-party devices using SIP and SIP for Instant Messaging and Presence Leveraging Extensions (SIMPLE) and then publishes that information to Cisco Unified IP Phones, Cisco Unified Personal Communicator and third-party services and applications such as IBM Lotus Sametime and Microsoft Live Communications Server (LCS) 2005.

- **Customer Interaction Analyzer** is being introduced to maximise effective communications with customers, a new approach to analytics in the contact center. It uses information from customer interactions, including self service and agent assisted interactions, to determine things like customer distress, agent distress, silence and word patterns. The data helps to give the conversations business context and can help a business to coach and train agents, make changes to processes and self service scripts based upon findings – ultimately creating better customer relationships and growth for the business.
Additional new features of the Cisco Unified Communications System include the following:

- Cisco Unified CallManager 5.0 and Cisco Unified CallManager Express 3.4 and Survivable Remote Site Telephony (SRST) 3.4 now natively support SIP, effectively opening up the system to an emerging standards-based developer community while retaining the current security and resiliency features. A new program, SIP Verified, provides third-party verification for voice, data and video SIP endpoints. An initial set of vendors who have completed this testing is also announced.

- Cisco Unified CallManager 5.0 is now available in a choice of operating models based on customer and channel partner preference. A new appliance model version based on Linux is available now and a version based on the existing open operating system model is scheduled to be available within 12 months.

“Miercom has exercised and reviewed key components of the entire Cisco Unified Communications system and after seeing it in action, we believe that Cisco has leapfrogged their competition in a number of areas,” said Ed Mier, principal, Miercom. “Cisco’s native implementation of SIP, which is interoperable with Skinny Client Control Protocol (SCCP) helps give customers investment protection for their system so that it can adapt as quickly as the standard does.”

Cisco continues to bridge the communications islands with innovative solutions building on the enterprise Wi-Fi (802.11) networks and the GSM public networks. In conjunction with leading wireless handset suppliers such as Nokia and RIM, Cisco will soon bring to market single and dual mode Smartphone solutions which drive enhanced productivity of mobile enterprise employees both inside and outside the office. These single device products allow users to reduce the communications complexity and help companies manage costs without losing the productivity.

Among the major European organisations running early field trials of the Cisco Unified Communications system are T-Systems, Deutsche Telekom’s business customer brand, and global systems integrator, Getronics.

“T-Systems and Cisco share one vision of how convergence and unified communications can improve collaboration and effectiveness for all businesses from SMBs to multinational organisations,” said Hendrik Otten, vice president, Customer Based IP Voice, T-Systems. “We are
now working with Cisco to take advantage of the Unified Communications platform to add new services to our Octopus portfolio.”

Getronics has deployed Cisco Unified CallManager and Cisco Unified Contact Center in its network of over 8,000 Cisco IP phone users and 500 call centre agents. Gail Anderson Lavender, vice president, Global Alliances at Getronics said, “The solutions introduced by Cisco today will take convergence of business communications to a new level, making it possible for Getronics and our customers to enable more effective communications that directly impact the top and bottom line. From our early field trials of the Cisco Unified Communications System and the new Cisco Lifecycle Services model, we see a clear migration path that will deliver greater returns on both our own and our customers’ infrastructure investments.”

Cisco and its partners provide a lifecycle services approach to deploy and manage the Cisco Unified Communications system. New Cisco Operate Services for Unified Communications combine technical support services capabilities such as server replacement, application software updates and hardware and software problem resolution into one service that covers the entire system. To ensure proper deployment, Cisco is also offering Planning and Design Service Bundles and Optimisation Services that are packaged for easy ordering.

Cisco also today introduced a number of new phones and updates to existing applications, as well as announcing Cisco Unified CallManager and Cisco Unified IP Phone are localised for China, Korea and Japan. For more information on the Cisco Unified Communications System visit:


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