



WEEKLY MESSAGELINK

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POWER OF PRESENCE TO UNIFY THE WAY WE COMMUNICATE

Presence technology is the critical component that enables unified communications, collaboration, and knowledge management technologies to work together to make organizations and their teams more productive.

What is Presence Technology?

Presence is the ability to indicate to internal and external resources useful information about a person, including:

- Who the person is
- What the person is currently doing
- Where the person (location and online status)
- Whether the person can be reached
- The persons' online and offline availability to communicate
- How best to reach the person (phone, instant message, email, video conference, etc.)

Internally this works very well, but the outside world is far from complicated. It comprises perfect strangers, customers, family members and friends, team members, managers, and fellow employees – each of whom might merit a different response about an employee's status and availability. Then there's the question of "Who the person is?" Again, this can vary by context. A customer seeking technical support, for example, might not care in the slightest about reaching an employee named Mary Smith – he just wants to reach someone qualified to fix his particular problem.

Presence is really the way of providing the above information based on the priority and status of the individual or resource requesting it. For example, friends and family during business hours may see, "Do Not Disturb – Having a performance review with the Big Boss," but selective internal resources, team members and higher ups would see "Available for LIVE conversation." Extending this process, staff and support resources may see "Available for TEXT, but not LIVE calls or collaboration."

Presence is not new technology, infact the earliest form of presence is the telephone Busy & No Answer signal. Automatic Call Distributors (ACDs) are another approach to presence – routing callers to the "Next Available Agent." And a more recent mechanism is Instant Messaging, which includes basic indicators for availability, including the ability to set "Away" messages. Presence is a tool that has been with businesses for many years, but in the emergence of Unified Communications, Presence and its ability to manage and filter live status for rich collaboration, has emerged as critical technology to enable Unified Communications and change the way business communicates!

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