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14 of Asia's brightest technology companies

By Ben Chong



## Voice of experience



It's a quiet victory on the road to success and MediaRing can justifiably feel a flush of satisfaction. The IP communications services and software company crossed the revenue mark of US\$100 million for the first time at the end of its financial year 2006.

Management walks with their heads held a little higher these days, a long way and a different management team, from the hard-scrabble days that beset Singapore technology companies in the years following 2000.

MediaRing did start on the right track, its trump cards a couple of proprietary ace technologies that smoothed out the trio of quality challenges that VoIP service providers faced: lost packets, high latency and out-of-sequence packets. "Lost packets is the most troublesome, and we have an algorithm that rebuilds and recovers lost packets," said Khaw Kheng Joo, CEO, MediaRing. The greater hurdle was to ride out the haze that beset an industry trying to get its slow mind to understand and recognise the business for PC-to-PC voice calls.

Better clarity prevails now in both its voice services and management's business plans. In the area of voice service, PC-to-Phone based on VoIP has

been available since 2002. Affordable, high-quality voice calls can be made to land-line handsets and mobiles on cellular networks. MediaRing names the Middle East and IndoChina as outright successful markets, with South America and Africa showing good takeup rates as well since the countries came

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**Khaw Kheng Joo (pictured), CEO, MediaRing**

on the network in 2007. And of course connections to favourites such as China, the US and Canada keep the total call traffic volume up. It increased 26% to 1.3 billion minutes in 2006.

Khaw points out that building MediaRing into a globally successful pure-play VoIP service provider can be attributed to the company's ability to keep innovating in VoIP technology, providing high quality voice services, as well as supporting MediaRing business partners reselling its service. "The intelligence of the internet depends on the devices and apps on the edge. Our degree of innovation is only limited to our ability to spot the needs of our customers," said Khaw.

The other important part of MediaRing's growth plan was the launch of global VoIP network services for MNC enterprise customers. This kicked off from 2002, and to date counts Singapore Airlines, Venture Manufacturing, Creative and MMI as key customers enjoying good cost savings for their intra-company phone calls. Khaw adds that innovations for their Enterprise solutions are a key focus. "We will make our offering as good as traditional phone services. This is important as VoIP becomes more and more mainstream," he said.

The second area of innovation lies with value added services, helped along by strategic acquisitions such

as that of NetPlus Communications, a Singapore-based ISP in July 2006. "With NetPlus, we picked up the ability to venture into the data business," said Khaw. Converged voice and data services promise rich opportunities among enterprise customers. The successes continue to add up in this area for example in Cambodia where MediaRing's joint-venture, AngkorNet, launched WiMax in Phnom Penh last year.

Between the M&A activity that seeks to bolster MediaRing's voice and data over IP innovations, and the continuing growth of the VoIP PC-to-phone voice business, the company sees a market at steady growth. Said Khaw, "More than 90% of our revenue comes from outside of Singapore. We are definitely already a global player." NWA

Company: MediaRing Ltd  
Year founded: 1993  
Location: Singapore, offices in 7 Asia-pacific countries and the US.

### Global Revenue

FY2006: US\$117 million  
FY2005: US\$95.2 million  
FY2004: US\$51.9 million

### Recent innovations and developments

- Upgraded MediaRing Talk client software. New major users include Republic Polytechnic in Singapore. Will be pre-installed on Hewlett-Packard consumer notebooks and desktops.
- Call terminations to more than 200 countries.
- Bought ISPs in Singapore (NetPlus) and Indonesia (PT Atlasat Solusindo) in 2006.