**Will Unified Communications ever be unified? What role does Bring Your Own Conferencing play?**

**Quick Summary:** There is a trend towards users bringing their laptop and wanting to "run the meeting" without having to worry about interoperability, special SIP/H.323 setups, or even cloud-interchange. Can this trend unify the global conferencing infrastructure into a uniform service? What will that imply?

**Overview:** The world has done a strange thing to itself. It's tough to use one vendor's video conferencing system to call a different video conferencing system. When I first setup a Skype for Business endpoint in my office, I was pretty excited to see it in operation only to learn that my day is filled with video conferences that other people set for me ( via WebEx, Zoom, Teams, Google Hangouts, etc.), and my cool new room system simply won't work. Of course, there are standards that can, in theory, connect my room to other endpoints, but they require dedicated systems and backflips from a user-interface perspective. This is why [Pexip](#) has been so successful. It provides a transparent transcoder in the cloud to address this very problem. But I'm still not convinced it's been solved.

Unification shouldn't mean deep infrastructure changes. It should mean a unified front-end and a simple "click to start" mentality. My Verizon phone can call your AT&T phone without additional licensing or an IT team here at Mersive to deploy new infrastructure. UC needs to get there.

There are cracks in the armor of UC companies who once seemed determined to force the world to adopt a single platform. At ISE, for example, I saw an interesting demo from Cisco who has added a "bypass" cable on their system so users can plug in and get access to the room system without running WebEx. A brave move. I applaud any company willing to support user needs over their local battle for conferencing dominance. Will this take hold? If it does take hold, it will have deep implications on room design, and how we view both hard and soft codecs. It will likely move the "codec wars" to the background and allow us to simply have a video conference without focus on the particular codec that hosted the meeting.

**Places to Visit Checklist**

☐ **Pexip, Booth 3881**
Get a demo of the Infinity platform. Focus on the workflow. How do ad hoc meetings from a huddle room unfold?

☐ **Cisco, Booth 3443**
Take a look at RoomKit Mini and pay special attention to the USB "passthrough" option as an approach to an agnostic room.

☐ **Logitech, Booth 3681**
The Tap device is a game changer for both huddle rooms and larger spaces. Will it act as the agnostic glue to bring Microsoft, WebEx, Zoom together? Get a demo and decide for yourself.

☐ **BlueJeans, Booth 4675**
Take a look at how BlueJeans has integrated with Microsoft Teams. Is this the construction of another silo or a hint at better, more integrated days ahead?

☐ **Attend "AV/IT Best Practices for UCC** (Tuesday, June 11 – 11:30, Room W304H) Be the skeptic in the audience. Is there a real appetite from the vendors running these events to put the user first?