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A Conversation with Vopium CEO, Tanveer Sharif

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By [John Lahtinen](#), Community Development Editor, TMCnet

TMCnet discusses the latest mobile VoIP industry trends and developments, as well as Vopium's place in the market with Vopium CEO, Tanveer Sharif.

TMC: What top trends do you see happening in your industry and what is driving these trends?

TS: I believe that we are seeing and will continue to see the ongoing migration away from fixed-lines to mobiles. A trend being driven obviously by the fall in the cost of a mobile call, but additionally, by the many more types of communications now being performed with [mobiles](#) and mobile apps, in the sense that people are chatting or they are on Twitter or IM. Mobile communication has become more than just voice. It has come to mean, IM, chat, Wi-Fi, twits and much more.

The mobile has become our communications hub; we have shifted away from fixed lines, whether it is our home telephone or even our PC, to becoming truly mobile, much of it made possible by rich voice solutions.

TMC: What new products, services, or enhancements to your existing solutions have you developed in response to these issues, and how will they help improve your performance?

TS: While Vopium always seeks to add more projects to our pipeline that will improve the user and calling experience, we nevertheless, continually strive to enhance the services that we already deliver.

We are always looking to improve sound quality and usability. To this end, the latest versions of our apps for the respective mobile platforms: iPhone, Android, Blackberry, Symbian Nokia and Java, have all made significant strides. The sound quality has been vastly improved due to low bandwidth codecs while the usability of the apps, from registering to choosing how you would like to connect your call based on call cost preview, have all greatly enhanced their functionality.

TMC: Where does your company fit in the marketplace? What are your core differentiators?

TS: I believe we produce a product that is easier to use and simpler to understand than the others. Basically, anyone that needs to make an [international](#) call and would like to do it from the freedom of their mobile phone, meaning while they're in the car or at the ballgame, benefits from Vopium. There's not much more than that.

We have eliminated the hurdles that still exist with the other mobile VoIP providers. With Vopium, you do not need to dial a special access number; change your service provider; enter some 15-digit pin code or even call from a Wi-Fi connection – although you can of course, call from Wi-Fi with Vopium – but the choice is yours. In other words, you do not need a smartphone with Vopium, but you certainly can. If you are still using an old school Nokia, it doesn't matter, you can still save up to 94 percent on your international calls, dialing direct from your mobile and your contacts, with Vopium.

Vopium is unique in that you do not need to get a special username or new identity. You dial, IM, SMS from your mobile, your telephone number; that is your identity. To make a call, just enter the number or tap the contact, if it is international, you can choose to use Vopium. If you are Wi-Fi or 3G enabled, you can choose to use Vopium, even for domestic calls. If it is Wi-Fi to Wi-Fi, and you are both on Vopium, you can call free.

TMC: What sets Vopium apart from other VoIP service providers?

TS: I believe what truly sets Vopium apart, aside from the app's ease of use and simplicity that we just highlighted, is that we are actually not trying to set ourselves apart from the Telco mainstream. We are not seeking to disrupt anyone's business – we are actually looking to benefit them.

Vopium actively partners with companies by delivering a white label version of our mobile [communications](#) platform: enabling businesses, from operators to MVNOs, to tap into the exploding market and demand for rich voice services.

With our turnkey platform, companies can deliver a full suite of mobile and fixed line international calling, domestic Wi-Fi calling, IM, global SMS packages and much more, featuring great sound quality and at the absolute lowest prices: all under their brand and their network, and importantly, for a minimal investment

Presently, we are putting the final touches on two global white label partnerships and are in talks with others.

So again, if you asked me what sets Vopium apart, I would say that it is the goal of not being apart but rather, a part of the solution. We help companies and people like you and me, take advantage of rich voice services in a cost effective, easy-to-use solution.

Want to learn more about the latest in communications and technology? Then be sure to attend [ITEXPO West 2011](#), taking place Sept. 13-15, 2011, in Austin, Texas. ITEXPO offers an educational program to help corporate decision makers select the right IP-based voice, video, fax and unified communications solutions to improve their operations. It's also where service providers learn how to profitably roll out the services their subscribers are clamoring for – and where resellers can learn about new growth opportunities. To register, [click here](#).

John Lahtinen is Community Development Editor for TMCnet. He has more than 15 years of combined professional and educational experience involving news, education, and marketing. John holds a master's degree in journalism from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and a bachelor's degree in English from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh. To read more of his articles, please visit his [columnist page](#).

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