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Raketu Makes a Racket

June 13th, 2007 by Carolyn Schuk Raketu's press release announcing its new peer-to-peer VoIP service is a sterling example of how not to write a press release headline.

It passed by me yesterday: "Raketu Now Offers Combined Features Of Skype And JaJah Tied To A Single RakOut Dial Out VoIP Account." I confess, I yawned. Skype and JAJAH are interesting because they were first. More choices are nice, but they're not necessarily news. If Marcelo hadn't emailed me about it, I wouldn't have taken a second look.

But I digress.

What's interesting about Raketu is not even in the release; namely that Raketu offers Web-based converged communications that works on your computer and your smartphone. You don't even have to install the Raketu desktop client.

It reminds me of something from the early days of the Web: a portal. Portals were supposed to be the single place where users connected to everything they wanted. So I might call Raketu a Web 2.0 communications portal.

Making phone calls is only the beginning — although the company consolidates the Skype and JAJAH approaches nicely. You can also make conference calls with up to five people for free.

You can connect with Yahoo!, MSN, AOL, ICQ, Skype, Jabber and Google buddies without loading any of those clients. You can also conference across services and send offline messages. (This last one, I confess, perplexes me. Isn't that called email?)

You can send emails and low-price SMS text messages from the RakWeb site to anyone on your contact list. You can also send them files.

And that's just the communications piece.

Raketu also offers the framework for IP entertainment, including an integrated media player, online gaming, IPTV and Video on Demand. I say "framework" because there's not much content; I doubt that the Czech outdoor channel on offer will draw too many viewers. Like kyte.tv, Raketu has incorporated social networking into the viewing experience.

The service also integrates RSS feeds and podcasts, and even a travel planner.

Raketu has a good concept. But it's pretty obvious from the spotty website operation that this is still rough — and not just around the edges.

But it's a promising development and one that encourages me that, someday soon, unifying communications won't require changing or installing software or devices. It will just be a matter of signing up.

For more, the VoIP Service Blog has a detailed evaluation of Raketu's service.

Postscript: So, how should Raketu have made its announcement? Here are a couple of suggestions:

Raketu Adds Web-Based VoIP — Building One-Stop Shop for VoIP, IM/SMS, Conferencing, Email, VoD, IPTV

New Web-based VoIP Makes Raketu an Express Route to Communications: VoIP, IM/SMS, Conferencing, Email, VoD, IPTV

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