

Microsoft Shares Its Vision For Real Time Communication On The Web

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Admittedly I may be promising too much with that title: Microsoft isn't exactly sharing its plans in detail but they certainly are making it clear that their vision differs slightly from that of Google and other browser vendors when they recently published a post titled 'Customizable, Ubiquitous Real Time Communication over the Web (CU-RTC-Web)' on the official [Skype blog](#).

So what did they announce? In the post several key Skype/Microsoft engineers (headed by Matthew Kaufman who many Flash developers will remember as the inventor of RTMFP) explain Microsoft's contribution of the [CU-RTC-Web proposal](#) to the W3C WebRTC working group.

So why is Microsoft submitting their own RTC proposal to the working group? In short Microsoft thinks that the existing proposal falls short in several areas. According to Microsoft it doesn't address interoperability between different types of clients (not just web browsers) very well ("instead focuses on video communication between web browsers under ideal conditions") and also needs more flexibility when it comes to media formats and codecs.

Microsoft also point out that the existing proposal takes a significant dependency on the legacy of SIP technology, which is a suboptimal choice for use in Web APIs in their opinion. This in turn increases complexity and limits flexibility.

You can dig deeper into the specifics of Microsoft's proposal on their [blog](#).

From the perspective of a Flash developer who has been working with real-time technologies for years on the Flash platform this is an interesting topic. It is clear that one of the biggest hurdles in the quick iteration and roll-out of new plugin-free, open standard technologies is just that: the fact that they are open and standardised. Whilst it would be great for developers to have access to APIs that are truly cross-platform, cross-browser and cross-device I do ask myself how realistic it is to expect this anytime soon (trust me, I'd be one of the first to have a use case for properly integration Skype calls as part of a web application).

Yet here we are seeing major players (namely Google and Microsoft) with their specific visions of how such a technology should work, and Microsoft holding back support in its browser until a standard has been formalised whilst Google and others add support for a whole host of new web technologies and APIs whilst they are still being worked on.

I'm not going to criticise either approach as both have their good sides, but it demonstrates that a lot of people will have to do a lot of talking before we see a real standard emerging. On the other hand maybe we all need to be less concerned about standardisation, but instead simply work towards a good standard, and most importantly work together to get there.