3Com ExecutiveAssistant 5.0 – Call Recording

3Com ExecutiveAssistant for Call Recording

3Com provides a Call Recording solution as part of its NBX offering that is unparalleled in terms of features and value: **3Com Executive Assistant**.

Because of the high costs and hardware requirements of traditional hardware-based or packet sniffing call recording products, recording has historically been relegated to high-end call centers with large budgets.

Alternatively, some legacy phone systems offer an option in their voice mails to tap into voice mail as a way to record calls. For anything but spot usage, however, that type of call recording is both pricey and restrictive because the limited voice mail ports remain tied up for the duration of calls, voice mail storage space is often limited, and the functionality is inherently quite restrictive.

3Com ExecutiveAssistant combines call recording with monitor/whisper/barge-in for any or all calls associated with the NBX (even including incoming calls that are transferred back out to remote phones with Find-me/Follow-me). With ExecutiveAssistant, you have power and flexibility beyond the more expensive 3rd-party options, using the 3Com -branded recording method that will survive upcoming changes in NBX architecture (it will remain 3Com's primary call recording method in NBX R6.0, R7.0 and beyond).

On Demand vs. Always Recording

With ExecutiveAssistant, call recording can be configured to either be "Always" or "On Demand." If "Always" is selected for chosen employees, all conversations will be captured. This includes inbound, outbound, calls from hunt groups, DID, operator transfers, ACD groups and even Find-me/Follow-me calls that the employee receives on their cell phone.

"On Demand" calls are only recorded if the employee or supervisor chooses to record it at some point during the call. If the employee decides at any point they want to capture the conversation, they press Star-Star (**) – the other party does not hear the command but the conversation is recorded retroactive to the first word spoken. This type of recording finally answers the need of On Demand call recording – it

archives what "Has Been Said" instead of just "What Is Going To Be Said."

Some new features to supplement both types of recording such as "Record from Now" and "Pause/Un-paused" are described below.

Why Record Calls?

In today's competitive market, customers are becoming more demanding – it is increasingly important to have good documentation of conversations with customers and vendors. Here are some example benefits of call recording:

- Ensures commitments and agreed details are documented to avoid future disputes

- Allows review of conversations later when evaluating customer complaints

- Information for reviewing employee performance, particularly for training purposes

- Documents positive kudos from customers and prospects for internal morale boosting

- Records conversations for marketing materials using customer testimonials

- Captures detailed information when it is too slow or difficult to write everything down

- Archives conference calls for sharing with missing participants

- With today's price of hard-drives, it is finally affordable to capture the quantity of data that recordings generate
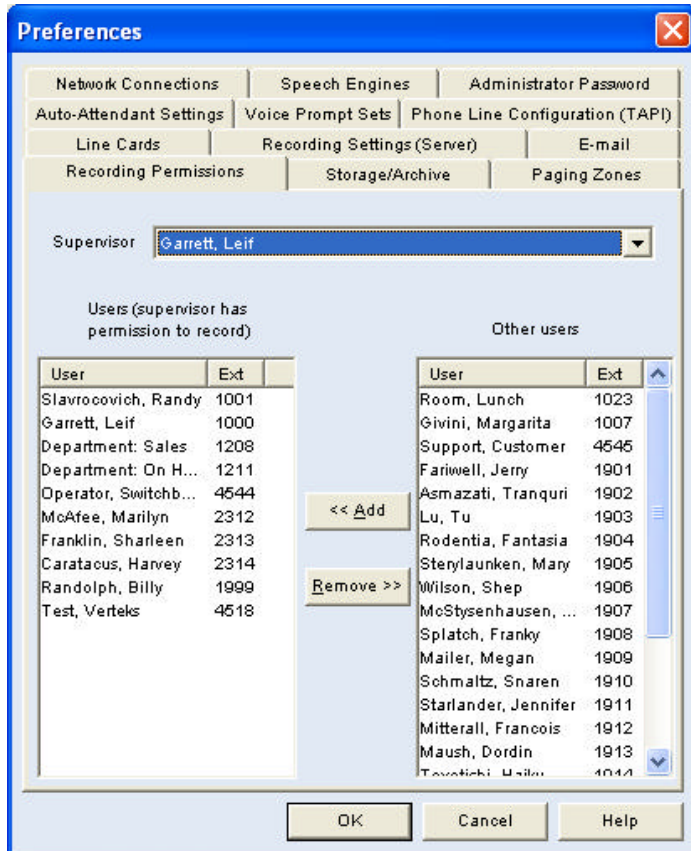
Security

Although it is important to capture conversations in many organizations, it is also imperative to preserve the security of those conversations. The V3000/V5000 phone systems have all conversation scrambled over the LAN, and with 3Com ExecutiveAssistant, those conversation remain encrypted except within the secure framework of the ExecutiveAssistant server.

The administrator is the only person who can designate which Supervisors have access to which employees – secured by the Supervisor's password. Competitive phone systems typically either only support packet sniffers, which require that conversations be un-scrambled on the network, or record into voice mailboxes, which is secure but very restricted. 3Com's ExecutiveAssistant is a uniquely flexible and secure method of recording conversations.

Types of Organizations Who Need Recording

- Law firms often need On Demand recording for capturing details of important cases

- Financial firms and transaction departments of other companies frequently must document the spoken details of financial transactions

- Public service organizations, such as law enforcement or emergency services, where reviewing conversations later is often critical

- Technical and engineering firms and departments benefit from capturing the details of technical conversations

- Firms that hold conference calls for their customers, vendors, remote employees, or even investors who need to capture what is being said

- Companies with call centers where service representatives can be guided through regular review of their conversations

- Companies that have employees receiving or placing calls from cell phones where it is impractical to immediately write down details of the conversation

- Organizations where information received by one employee can be of use to others

- Offices where improving the information flow and minimizing errors increases competitive advantages

In reviewing this list, it turns out that the last several items apply to virtually all organizations. Given the low price and high value of call recording, particularly in documenting transactions and dispute resolution, the ROI is very fast.
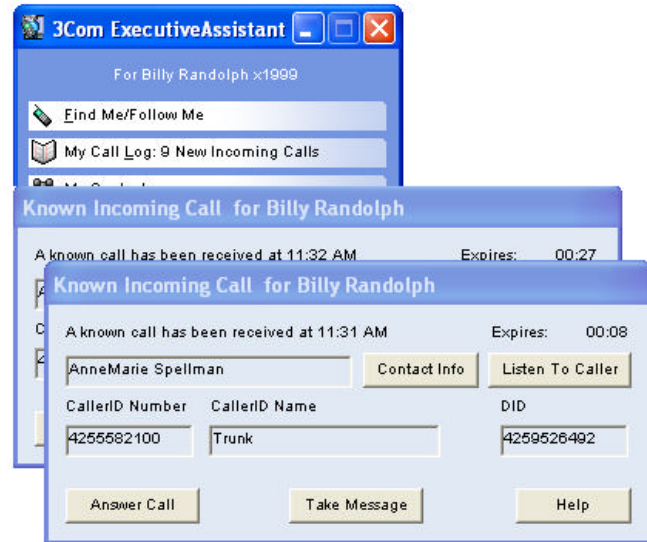
Sounds of a Recording

3Com's Recording feature has some special options to enable compliance with local state laws. In addition to methods by which the caller can be notified of potential recording when a call first arrives, ExecutiveAssistant includes an optional feature for playing a periodic beep tone.
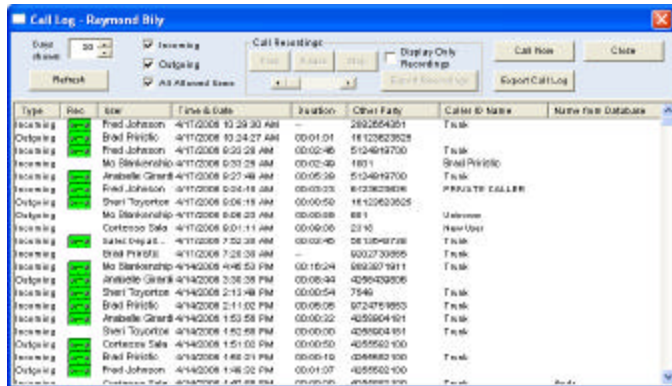
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Real-time Call Status Information Display

Phone conversation information is logged and immediately available to users on their PC display. After a conversation is over, the PC still displays that last call's dialed number (or Caller ID) along with the time and duration. This is especially useful for professionals like attorneys so that they can document their conversation for billing purposes, while having a convenient and lasting view of the time spent on the phone.
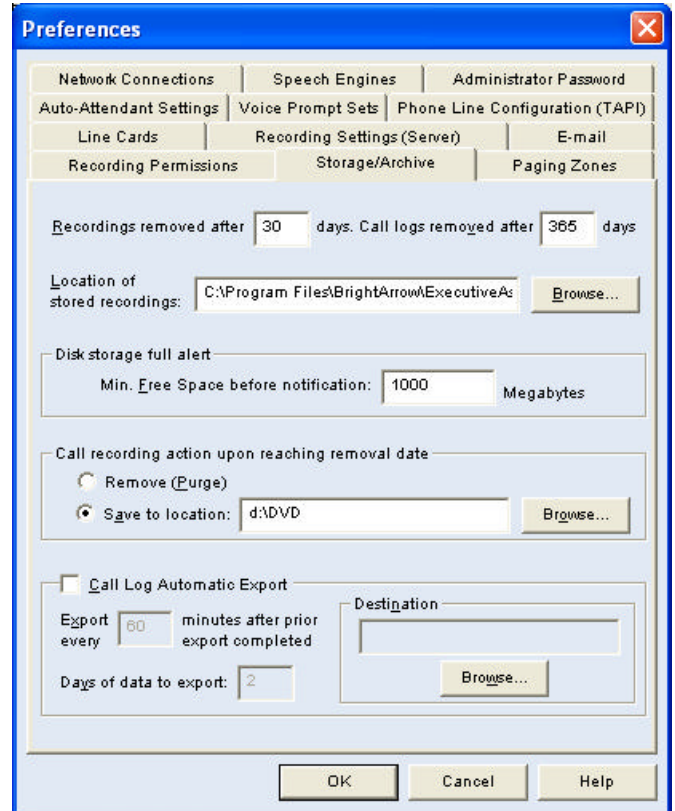

You also have instant access to your Call Log on your PC screen, which can be handy for attorneys, for example, to log their billing information at times that are more convenient for them. Their administrative assistants can be provided access to this same information if they are logging the call data or assembling the client time logs. This same Call Log data can be exported into Excel format with a single click, and sorted or arranged by Caller ID, called number, date/time, or employee.

Even if calls are received via Find Me / Follow Me on a cell phone, those calls are still logged and available for later review and billing purposes.

Hard-drive Space Is Cheap

You can find 250GB hard drives for under $80 these days. That represents 250,000 minutes of recording, uncompressed. 3Com ExecutiveAssistant lets you define automatic archival periods for writing old recordings to DVD, or even purge old recordings if you prefer. With the help of Moore's Law, we have finally reached a time where hard-drive limitations no longer are a limiting factor for recording any or all conversations.

One Integrated Platform

3Com ExecutiveAssistant provides a rich set of recording features that not only integrate with the V3000/V5000 system, but with the other features of ExecutiveAssistant. If the organization needs ExecutiveAssistant only for recording purposes, the incremental cost for each user is only the cost of a Basic Client license (3C10452). The same server license can seamlessly perform the wide variety of other features available with ExecutiveAssistant by upgrading users from the Basic Client license to the Advanced Client license. Advanced Clients can not only be recorded, but have access to ExecutiveAssistant's personal assistant features, including Speech recognition-based caller identification and screening, Smart call routing, Speech recognition dialing, Call queueing and its Find-me/follow-me features.

ExecutiveAssistant's recording works great with the 3Com eXchange Call Center, the native ACD feature, and any variety of phones (NBX, Nortel with Citel, analog handsets and even remote phones like cell phones).

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On Demand Recording Features

Using ExecutiveAssistant's On Demand Recording feature, a user can choose to record a conversation at any point during that conversation. At any time, they can press ** (star-star) and the entire conversation is saved (without the other party hearing the touch tones). There are also new touchtone commands available to allow a recording to start right when the keys are pressed, or to pause a recording for "off the record" discussions.

Any type of conversation is eligible for call recording: inbound, outbound or even remote (cell phone) conversations.
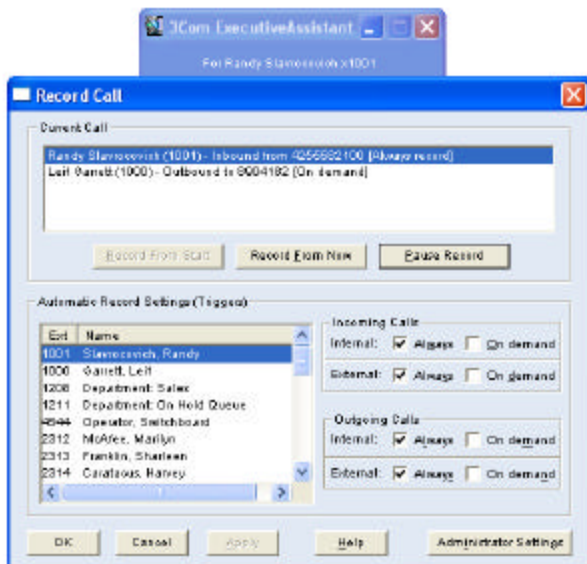
Some customers, such as law firms and financial companies, need the ability to control which parts of a conversation are recorded.

For any call that is On Demand for recording, the employee has the following options (can be pressed from their NBX or even a remote telephone):

On Demand Recording Keypad Shortcuts

** (star-star) – Saves the entire conversation, retroactive to the beginning

*0 (star-zero) – Saves the rest of conversation starting from now (erase what was said up to now)

*7 (star-seven or star-P) – Pauses the recording ("off the record")

*8 (star-eight or star-U) – Un-pauses the recording ("back on the record")

For supervisor clients, the above recording commands are also available as buttons on the PC screen.

Includes Monitor/Whisper/Barge-in

The 3Com ExecutiveAssistant Recording feature also has a powerful built-in option to allow real-time Monitor, Whisper and Barge-in functions.

With the appropriate permissions and a Supervisor Client license, a supervisor or colleague can hear their employee's call by selecting it from a list on their PC screen. They are also a single click away from being able to Whisper (when they speak, the employee hears them but the outside caller does not) or Barge-in (join the conversation).

Multiple supervisors can barge into the same call to expand conferencing functionality beyond the 4-party NBX limit. Also, the monitoring and recording features are not using multicast networking, broadening the types of configurations where this can be implemented and used. In addition, the software allows the monitoring of calls that have been routed to analog phones and even remote phones (like home offices or cell phones).

What's New in 2006

3Com and the ExecutiveAssistant development team continue to enhance and streamline the ExecutiveAssistant call recording platform. Some of the new enhancements include:

- ExecutiveAssistant Sentry App is now available that is a small applet that runs (as a service) on any server on the network. Its purpose is to ensure that calls route to the intended destination, even if the ExecutiveAssistant server is taken off-line for system maintenance.

- The programmatic interface to ExecutiveAssistant has been enhanced with ActiveX calls available programmatically from other application and web interfaces to perform functions like turning on recording, dialing a recorded call, restart/pause/un-pause a recording, or even rename a copy of recorded files for integration with a customer CRM.

- An option is now available for automatically converting recorded files to .WMA format, which results in recordings of 60K-80K/minute, which is a 12x compression over the native .WAV format.

What Components are Required to Record

ExecutiveAssistant runs on a dedicated Windows PC. Detailed system requirements and technical guideline documents are available from BrightArrow. Required components include:

- 3Com Media Driver site license (3C10329)
- ExecutiveAssistant Server Licenses (3C10450A)
- Basic Client Licenses for each extension and department (3C10452A)
- Supervisor Client Licenses for each supervisor (3C10454A)