

## **A Host Media Processing Primer: When 'Going Cardless' Makes Sense**

*Host Media Processing eliminates the need for special purpose network interface cards to support voice, fax and even video processing by replacing hardware with software. Moving media processing from special-purpose interface cards makes it possible for more applications and servers to share those resources. Is HMP worth considering as your network evolves? The short answer is "yes." The longer answers – including the when's, why's and what other companies are doing – is the subject of this report.*

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## Key Findings

Progressive telecommunications equipment manufacturers (TEMs) and Independent Solutions Vendors (ISVs) use HMP-based approaches to differentiate their products from those of their competitors. They lure customers with the promise of lower capital costs coupled with higher levels of flexibility and port densities, especially in a SIP-enabled world. Adoption of HMP goes hand-in-hand with the transformation of enterprise IT infrastructure to services oriented architectures (SOAs) and network service providers' migration to the IP-Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) specification. To support those trends, HMP adheres to four major attributes that are shaping 'future-ready' application development and delivery platforms:

- **Virtualization** – The replacement of dedicated hardware systems (such as IVR, Voicemail, or autoattendant "boxes") with software running on general purpose servers.
- **Flexibility** – In many cases, adding capacity or additional features (such as fax over IP or voice recording) is a simple matter of licensing software, rather than purchasing additional hardware as companies migrate traffic from their "switched" (or TDM networks) to VoIP.
- **Openness** – This refers to adherence to well-understood standards and protocols for application programming interfaces (APIs). It can also refer to the support of "Open Source" initiatives, such as the Linux operating system, Eclipse (for application development tools) or the Asterisk IP-PBX.
- **Ease of Migration** – By retaining existing telephony hardware APIs, HMP eases the transition into the cardless world. Because they are software-based solutions, HMP subsystems consisting of soft-DSPs can exist behind commercially available general purpose 'media gateways' that convert TDM traffic to IP and vice-versa.

As a growing percentage of voice traffic are initiated with SIP invites and IP-telephony's footprint expands, deployment of software-only (HMP) solutions give deployers a granular way to engineer their service delivery platforms.

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