

BELTUG consultation - SKYPE for Business – January 2012

1. THE QUESTION

We asked BELTUG members whether they use Skype for business purposes, or if on the contrary they discourage or even prohibit its use. And of course we wanted to know why.

2. MOST COMPANIES ABSTAIN

Most of the (large) companies that answered us indicate that they prohibit the use of Skype, mainly for security reasons. For others, it remains a tool that offers a “best effort” service with no support. This is simply not good enough to be recognised as a business-grade tool.

3. BUT THERE ARE BELIEVERS

Still, a number of companies take a pragmatic approach, and do allow the use of Skype. Skype usually works, and the quality is acceptable. And when it doesn't or isn't, that's ok: the company's other communications tools remain available to take over.

The main driver for this approach is the cost savings that can be made. “It's worth taking the risk”, is the supporting motto. And Skype is often successfully used for international voice and video communications.

4. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE

Those who use Skype bring up a number of issues, such as the high load on the LAN and the possible impact on the PC configurations. The recommendation is to use a dedicated Skype gateway, to keep some level of control.

One interesting comment was that Skype recently changed certain system specifications, which resulted in a breakdown of an operational gateway. There was no warning, no support and no escalation procedure.

5. MICROSOFT AND SKYPE

Now that Microsoft owns Skype, will anything change? It's hard to say, of course. The fact remains that many of our respondents are aware of a multitude of reliable, internet-based communication platforms on the market, including Microsoft's own MS Lync. The expectation is that, over time, Microsoft will integrate Skype in some shape or form into its products. There is plenty of curiosity about what that will result in.

6. CONCLUSIONS

"Take it or leave it" is a good summary of the survey results. Either a company is prepared to put up with the downsides of Skype and make attractive savings, or it prefers to abstain all together. BELTUG will certainly follow up on this topic.