



The Implications of Business Communications Convergence*

* Originally developed in February 2005

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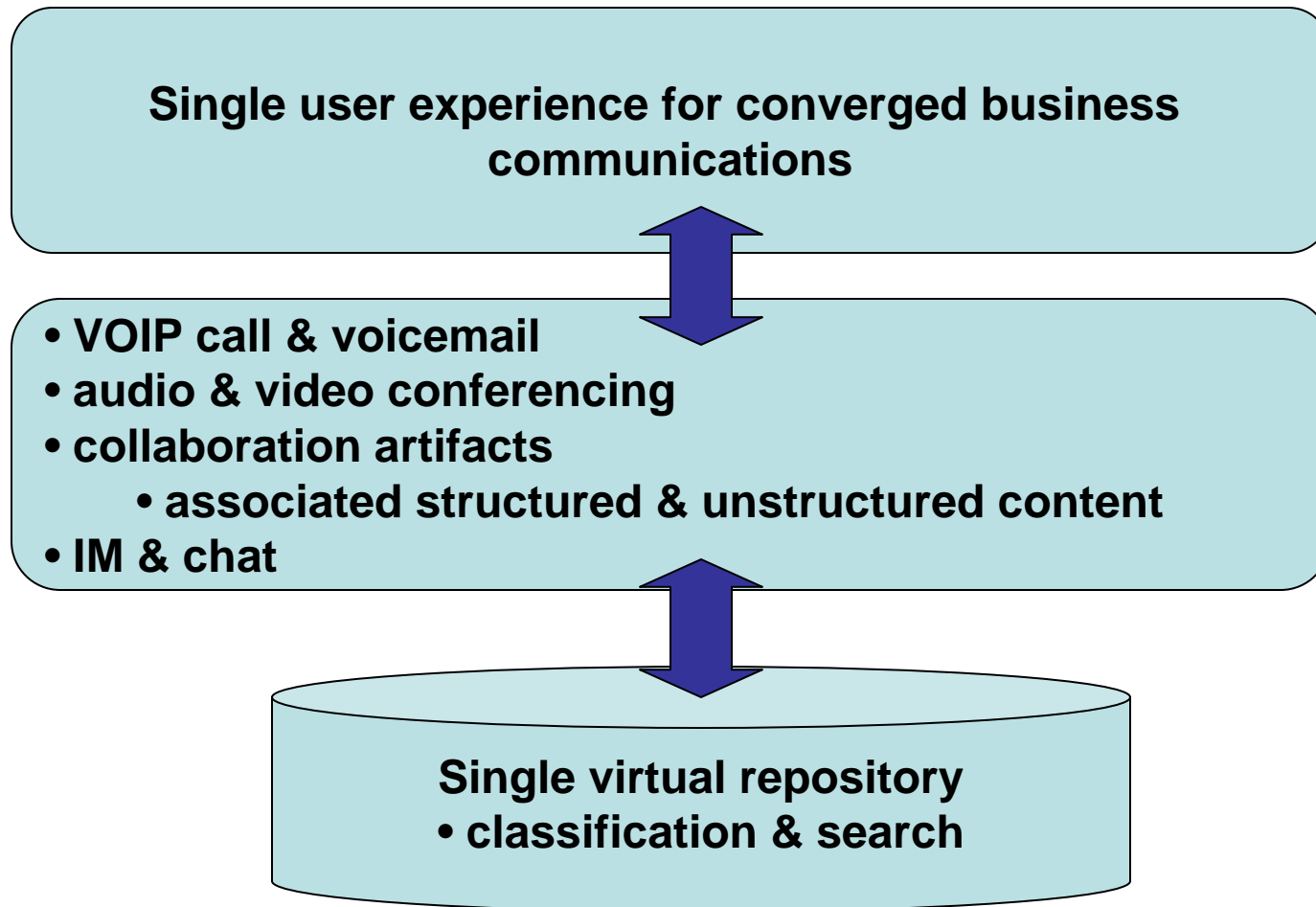
2004 Trends

- In March 2004, I published a FutureSense Strategist* that described several long-term trends in work & technology development
- I described the primary trend as business communication convergence, that is the expectation of business people to view all communications including telephone conversations & voicemails (VOIP telephony), IM, video & audio conferencing, collaboration artifacts (discussions etc.) etc. as comprising a single, searchable archive

* Technology Trends for 2004, FutureSense Strategist, 3/2004, © FutureSense Research 2004



Business Communication Convergence Schematic



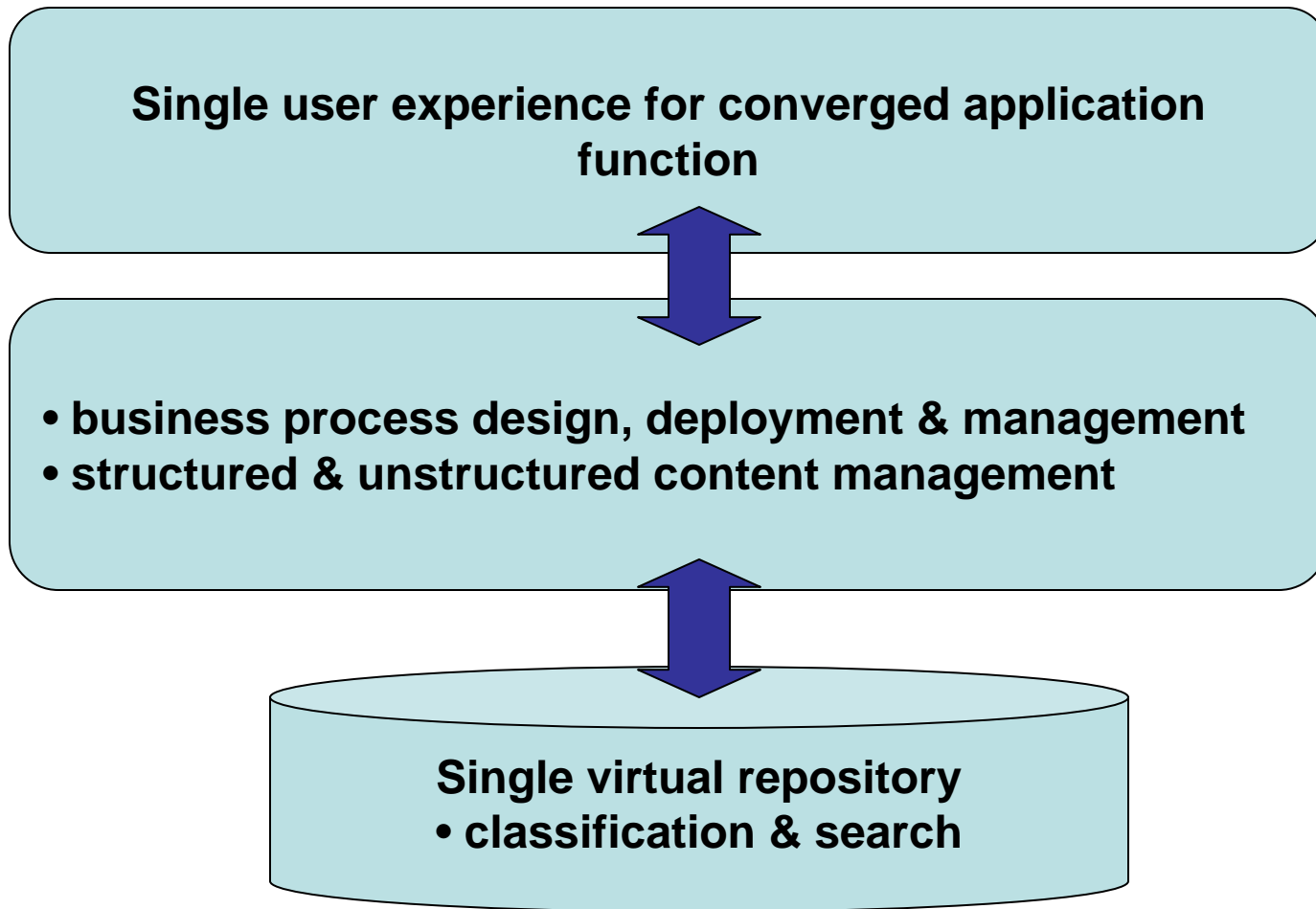


Application Function Convergence

- The second long-term trend I described at that time was “Enterprise Application Function Convergence”. This was an analog of the Business Communications Convergence trend
- It was expressed as enterprise users’ expectation that increasingly the strategic application function that they used in their everyday work would be available to them through a single user experience that was focused on their specific role, organizational & technology needs.
- This was true regardless of the origin of that function, even if it was provided by separate enterprise applications with proprietary servers.



Application Function Convergence Schematic





Larger-Scale Service Trend

- The technology to realize these trends exists now & will be improved in the near-term so that we'll see convergence in these areas over the next 12-18 months (these various technologies will be the subject of another Strategist).
- More recently, though, I've realized that these trends are not only analogs of each other - as I already pointed out – but they are examples of a larger-scale trend.
- This large-scale trend is the development & adoption (i.e. convergence) of service-based function into enterprise environments. The first examples of these services are IP-enabled (IP service convergence). Notice that I have been careful not to identify this trend as “Service-Oriented Architecture”



Why Not SOA?...

- Service-Oriented Architectures are all the rage currently, so much so that the hype meter on them is already pinned as high as it will go.
- The problem with this is that service based architectures can be very effective, it's just that web-services based architectures are not yet mature – they are primarily focused on data integration & are only just starting to move past this to the more productive integration of process & function

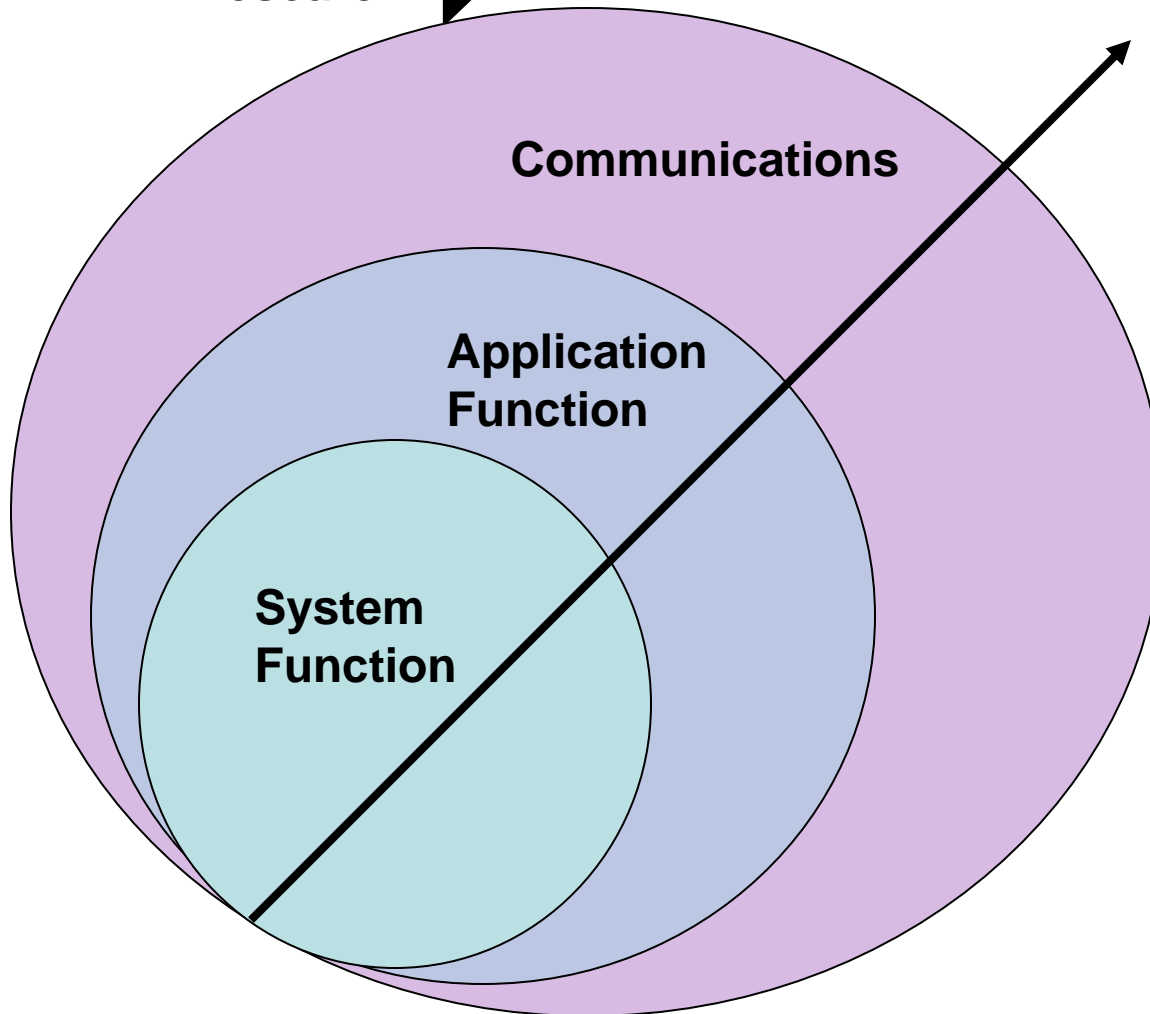


Not SOA, but LSSA

- The architecture I'm talking about here is the development of coarse-grained services to provide a broad range of system & user function, a large scale services architecture (LSSA)
- These services range from VPN provisioning to end-user collaboration function
- Once you start thinking about the broad system & user architectures as service based, you can start looking at technology & business models that are relevant to this view.



Levels of Service Convergence



User Work Process

- Communications function is closest to users' actual work process (telephone, (IM, collaboration etc.)
- Application function is next
- Finally is System function which provides infrastructure for users' work process



LSSA Landscape

**Large-Scale
Trend**

**IP
service**

**System
Function
Convergence**

- Private & Public Networks
 - provisioning
 - management
- Storage
 - provisioning
 - management

**Appl.
Function
Convergence**

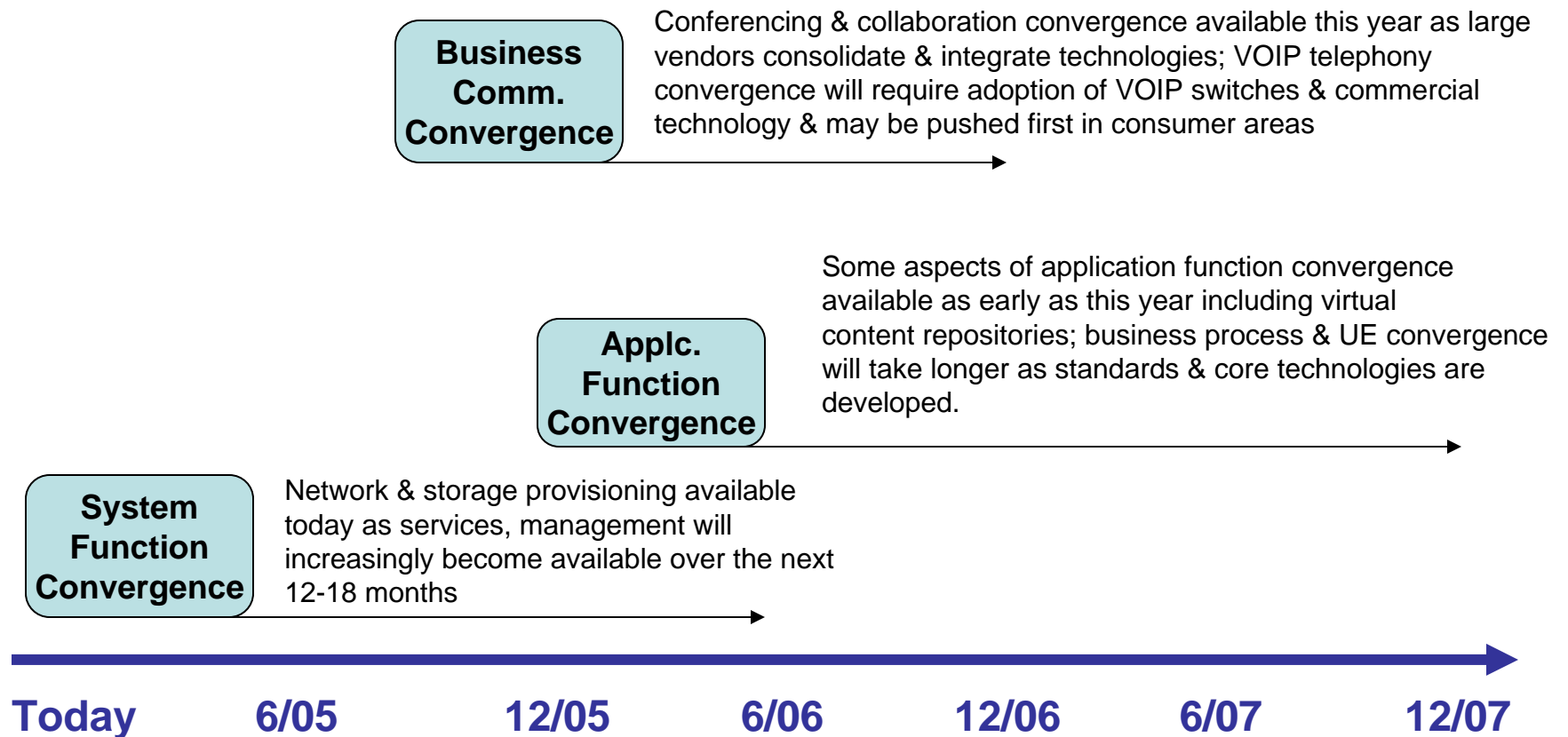
- UE convergence
 - archive
- Business Process
 - provisioning
 - management
- Structured & Unstructured Content
 - management
 - classification
 - search

**Business
Comm.
Convergence**

- Analog
 - Voicemail
 - Call xcripts
- Digital (VOIP)
 - Voicemail
 - Call xcripts
- Conferencing
 - audio archive
 - video archive
- Other Synchronous
 - eIM xcripts
 - chat archive
- Asynchronous discussion archive
 - Unstructured content



LSSA Timeline





Business Model Implications

- All businesses in these areas must develop strategies for presenting & selling function as a service rather than as licensed software
- Businesses must evaluate the LSSA landscape & determine both where they fit currently & how to move to offer more critical services
 - Infrastructure providers (network, storage...) should look to move up closer to user work processes & offer suites of application &/or communication services layered on their infrastructure
 - Application vendors should look to expand the range of services they provide through consolidation or business relationships
 - Communications vendors should move quickly to offer a full range of converged services & tie this through business relationships to the other layers



LSSA Technology Implications

- Businesses must evaluate web services technologies for service delivery
 - differences in standards & leading implementations will make it difficult to provide flexible & interoperable services across system boundaries for some time
- Open source implementations may provide more flexibility until standards & vendors shake out
- Specific technologies will provide leverage at all levels for the next 24 months; these include:
 - virtual (federated) content repositories
 - intelligent classification & search
 - UE to provide service visibility & aggregation



remember –
entropy
requires no
maintenance