

## Atos Acquires Unify For Greater Stake in Collaboration Platforms and Services

**Summary:** *Atos' acquisition of Unify signals major consolidation in the collaboration space around platforms and services.*

**Event:** On 3 November 2015, Atos announced its agreement to acquire Unify from the Gores Group and Siemens for €340 million (U.S. \$373 million). Siemens has a 12% ownership stake in Atos. Atos will take Unify's €50 million net debt and pension liabilities worth €200 million. Full terms of the deal have not been disclosed. The deal is expected to close in the first quarter of 2016.

### Analysis

The acquisition of Unify by Atos represents the major shift in the Unified Communications and Collaboration market towards consolidation. There is an ongoing trend in which major enterprise technology companies are under financial pressure to sell off significant parts of their businesses. This results in acquisitions to fill specific needs of technology providers in order to round out their platform and services offerings.

Unify was rebranded from Siemens Enterprise Communications in 2013. The Atos acquisition marks a platform and services ecosystem play, as Unify had previously opened up their Communications and Collaboration platform as a PaaS (see [Trends in Communications and Collaboration PaaS](#)).

### Mobile Collaboration

Atos now becomes a UCC and Mobile Collaboration platform provider with the

acquisition of Unify and its OpenScape and Circuit offerings. Mobile Collaboration combines cross-platform synchronous and asynchronous interaction modes with elements of collaboration infrastructure that may be mobile-first or mobile-optimized but must at least be mobile-friendly. It includes point-to-point and group chat/IM, audio and video, and screen/file sharing, backed up by presence and by social group and community services like activity streams, news feeds, profiles, and expertise location. Unify's Circuit platform provides these Mobile Collaboration capabilities.

### The Emerging Collaboration Platform as a Service

Atos, which is well known for its zero email initiative as a measure to improve communications, also acquired blueKiwi, a social networking vendor in 2012. As an IT Services firm and system integrator, we believe Atos is working towards solving the integration dilemma of Communications and Collaboration capabilities into existing business applications and processes. The solution requires a platform, or, more specifically, a PaaS, that can be extended via APIs to embed functionality into applications. The idea is to create a developer ecosystem around the platform in order to extend it.

While there is a major platform play among enterprise software companies, these companies are also trying to figure out services. Atos already understands services and how to monetize it; with Unify's new Circuit mobile collaboration offering and platform now available to them, they can provide integration services around this new

offering and platform. Circuit is the new direction for Unify - it represented a major shift in focus and helped to define the emerging Mobile Collaboration market. Circuit is a PaaS platform for which Atos was already a system integrator, as well as an active member of its developer community. Atos will now service the larger cloud developer community and service providers with the Circuit collaboration PaaS.

### Challenges and Opportunities

The big challenge and opportunity for Atos will be penetration into North America against competitors such as Microsoft and Cisco. The integration message into existing infrastructure environments has to be clear. Atos will also face challenges working with other Unify channel partners providing services around OpenScape and Circuit, which are also competitors.

Atos will also have the opportunity to leverage its blueKiwi Social Collaboration Platform with Unify's Product Portfolio, including Circuit. Atos has not done much with blueKiwi since they acquired them in 2012. By leveraging the two offerings together, Atos has a broader Collaboration portfolio to offer to prospective clients.

### Aragon Advisory

- Unify customers have to request clear roadmap direction from Atos on current investments in OpenScape and Circuit.
- Atos has to provide a clear roadmap to existing Unify channel partners providing services around OpenScape and Circuit.

### Bottom Line

The UCC and overall collaboration market is experiencing ongoing consolidation. Cloud

and mobile are convergence points for developing collaboration PaaS platforms, along with a move towards providing a rich set of services that are diversified and solutions-enabled for verticals. Major vendors are making the move to software and services; both Microsoft and Cisco have already made this move. We believe Atos is set to build out an ecosystem of collaboration software and services.

### Related Aragon Research

- [Enable Collaboration in Context with Presence](#)
- [Trends in Real-Time Communication and Collaboration PaaS](#)