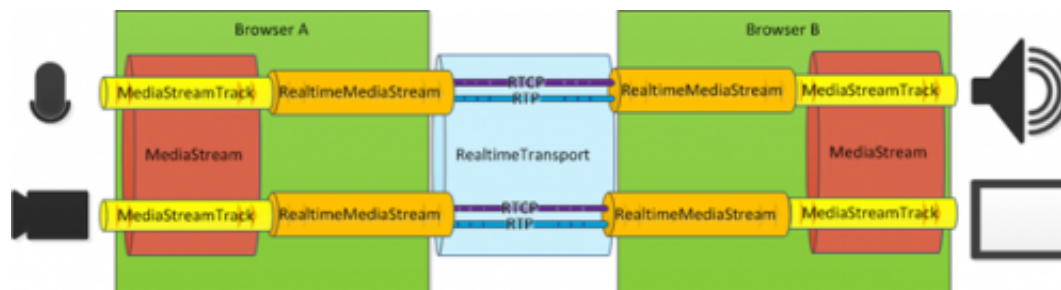


Microsoft wants to send WebRTC standard to rehab

August 8 2012, by Nancy Owano



(Phys.org) -- Microsoft is telling the W3C WebRTC working group that it has a better idea than the WebRTC standard which is still in progress and under revision. The goal has been to come up with a Web standard that will enable real-time audio and video conferencing on the Web without requiring any plugins. Now, though, Microsoft has submitted its own proposal for real-time communication to the WebRTC working group. The WebRTC specification is undergoing revision through this W3C WebRTC working group.

[Microsoft](#) wants to iron out the wrinkles in the existing WebRTC 1.0 proposal with a new approach. Microsoft is suggesting a new [CU-RTC-Web standard](#). The CU-RTC Web stands for Customizable, Ubiquitous Real Time Communication over the Web.

"Ubiquitous" is a standout concern. The WebRTC 1.0 standard falls short in an absence of "ubiquitous deployability" and that is one of the direct criticisms from Microsoft. "The standard does not show signs of interoperability with existing VoIP phones, and mobile phones, from behind firewalls and across routers and instead focuses on video communication between web browsers under ideal conditions."

Microsoft is not comfortable with the fact that the standard builds on the legacy of SIP, which does not make for a stateless system. Applications would be forced "to resort to trial-and-error and/or browser-specific code," Microsoft says. Instead, its proposed system would dispense with the constraints imposed by "unnecessary state machines and complex SDP and provides simple, transparent objects."

The WebRTC standard, meanwhile, has gathered some fans if not Microsoft, namely support of Mozilla, Opera, Ericsson, Cisco, and other companies. According to reports, Firefox, Opera and Chrome have implemented WebRTC on some level for plugin-free VoIP and webcam chats.

Microsoft wants to reduce some requirements that it sees holding the technology back. Microsoft takes issue with what is an overly prescriptive standard, asking too much of the network transport logic to be implemented by the browser. What is more, according to the critics at Microsoft, Web developers do not have enough wiggle room if they are looking to customize how their real-time communication services respond to changes in network quality.

According to Microsoft's [blog posting](#) on Monday, signed by key names at Skype as well as Microsoft, "A successful standard cannot be tied to individual codecs, data formats or scenarios. They may soon be supplanted by newer versions, which would make such a tightly coupled standard obsolete just as quickly. The right approach is instead to

support multiple media formats and to bring the bulk of the logic to the application layer, enabling developers to innovate.”

Microsoft makes its case that its proposal empowers developers to create applications that can take advantage of the benefits offered by real-time media in a clear, straightforward way.

Since Microsoft now has Skype under its wing, inevitable observations are that its move to offer a standard proposal of its own suggests some sort of business motive against competition. Those who have examined the proposal, however, conclude that the suggestions are useful and of benefit for a final outcome. The changes are more about making technical improvements than staging a political maneuver, commented one site; another report said it found the Microsoft proposals well-reasoned.

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