

# Evaluating Conferencing Solutions

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## A Buyer's Guide

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## Introduction

Today's enterprises are confronted by a dizzying array of seemingly contradictory responsibilities. Your success depends on investing in new growth opportunities, but you're also under pressure to lower costs. You need to communicate regularly with all constituents – employees, customers, partners, suppliers, and shareholders – but without incurring the expense of off-site meetings and events. Your strategy requires that you collaborate more with remote partners – but you're being driven to reduce travel to a minimum. You want to deliver high quality, responsive customer service – but you also want to reduce support costs. And with the renewed focus on profitability and the need to increase shareholder value, you're being asked to achieve more with fewer resources.

If your company is like many others, these forces are driving you to seek better and more efficient ways to communicate, collaborate, perform business processes, and deliver services. That's why conferencing has emerged as one of the most effective ways to improve productivity, control costs, strengthen communications, streamline business processes, and collaborate more effectively, enterprise-wide.

Organizations worldwide are discovering that conferencing is much more than simply a feature of their business phone systems; it has become an essential collaboration tool driving new levels of productivity, competitiveness, and profitability.

**But what type of conferencing is best for your organization? Is audio-only conferencing adequate – or are there extra benefits that only the combination of audio and web conferencing can deliver? Is there a role for videoconferencing? Does it make more economic sense to purchase conferencing services on a per-usage basis – or to invest in an in-house conferencing solution?**

This white paper is intended to help you answer these and other questions so that you can choose the best conferencing solution for your organization's needs – and derive maximum value from it.



## The growing use of conferencing

Over the last two decades, changes in the business environment have made it increasingly difficult for organizations to manage their time and business relationships. Markets have become more global. Companies have expanded internationally. Strategic alliances, partnerships, and joint ventures are proliferating. Workers are more mobile than ever. Telecommuting is an everyday reality. And business has become a 24x7 activity.

A growing array of technologies has emerged to help bridge the gaps between people, time, and geography. These include both synchronous and asynchronous technologies, such as:

- **Email:** began as a departmental text-messaging tool and now the dominant form of global asynchronous communications for business.
- **Voice mail:** originally a simple answering machine, now the preferred tool for distributing audio messages.
- **Audio conferencing:** interactive, real-time audio communication among three or more people, usually via PSTN networks.
- **Web conferencing:** interactive, real-time application sharing between two or more people via the Internet.
- **Video conferencing:** interactive, real-time video, audio, and data communication between two or more locations via voice and/or data networks.
- **Webcasting/streaming media:** one-to-many, non-interactive audio and/or video communication conducted in real time or near-real time via the Internet.
- **Instant messaging:** a near-real-time text-based messaging tool increasingly being used in a business environment.

### Asynchronous vs. synchronous communications

Of the communications technologies listed above, email and voice mail are by far the most ubiquitous and widely used – partly because they've been around longer and partly because they take advantage of the two most popular desktop tools for business: the telephone and the personal computer. After all, if a person is already using a telephone and a PC, it doesn't take much additional effort, investment, or skill to learn how to use email and voice mail.

Email and voice mail have become indispensable business communications tools. However, they are both asynchronous technologies – that is, they don't support simultaneous communications – which limits the user capabilities they support, as shown Table 1 below:

	Time	
	Asynchronous	Synchronous
Converse		•
Communicate	•	•
Conference		•
Collaborate	•	•
Achieve	•	•
Celebrate	•	•

Table 1

Unlike email and voice mail, conferencing technologies support synchronous communications, bringing greater interactivity, immediacy, and a more natural collaboration experience to their users.

The characteristics of each conferencing technology make it suited to its own set of applications and uses, as shown in Table 2 below.

Medium	Attributes	Uses
Audio conferencing	Familiar interface; intuitive; ubiquitous; no visual or data support	Spontaneous or scheduled business communications that do not require visual or data sharing
Web conferencing	Familiar desktop tool; easy to learn and use; supports desktop-to-desktop communications, rich media, meeting tools, and document sharing	Spontaneous or scheduled business communication and collaboration incorporating visual support, shared documents
Video conferencing	Supports rich media and meeting tools; not universally available; complex to deploy, learn, and use; requires specialized systems and support	Scheduled business communication with visual or data support among compatible systems
Webcasting/ streaming media	Familiar desktop tool; easy to learn and use; supports rich media; non-interactive	Scheduled, one-to-many business communication with a large audience

Table 2

## Audio conferencing

Audio conferencing is the most widely used synchronous collaboration technology today, for a number of compelling reasons:

- **Ubiquity.** Audio conferencing is universally available via conventional telephones, including wireless.
- **Ease of use.** Audio conferencing does not require users to learn a new device or interface.
- **Interactivity.** Audio conferences are fully interactive, and all parties can participate equally.
- **Scalability.** Audio conferences have the flexibility to accommodate a variable number of participants.
- **Immediacy.** Audio conferences can be convened quickly.

Audio conferencing can handle a broad range of communication and collaboration needs – from brainstorming sessions to unstructured staff meetings. However, audio conferencing does have one significant drawback compared to conventional “in person” meetings: it does not support the sharing of visual information. This makes audio conferencing inadequate for many common business applications that require visual information, including:

- Formal presentations with slide support
- Product demonstrations
- Project management
- Engineering discussions
- Advertising presentations
- Training classes
- Press and analyst briefings

## The missing visual link: web conferencing

With the advent of the World Wide Web in the 1990's, organizations gained a new way to share visual information, unconstrained by time or distance. By about the year 2000, web conferencing had begun to emerge as a complementary technology to audio conferencing. Web conferencing offered all the same advantages of audio conferencing as outlined above, plus it provided a new way to bring participants closer to the experience of an in-person meeting by offering:

- **The ability to collaborate visually** – with tools such as shared whiteboards and annotation;
- **The ability to manage collaboration** with tools such as chat and polling;
- **The ability to display and share PC application files** – including presentations, spreadsheets, and documents – among participants without requiring participants to have those applications installed on their PCs;
- **The ability to co-browse web sites.**

**Audio and web conferencing are typically used in tandem. Without an integrated audio and web conferencing system, this means holding duplicate, parallel conferences (one audio, one Web) with separate interfaces, scheduling methods, and service providers.**

## Integrated audio and web conferencing

To avoid dealing with the unwieldy approach of scheduling and managing dual conferences – one audio and one web – organizations interested in conferencing now have available newer conferencing solutions that integrate audio and web capabilities into a single, seamless conferencing experience. These integrated solutions enable users to schedule and run integrated audio/web conferences from a single point, using a single interface, and without multiple service providers. Integrated audio/web conferencing solutions create a more seamless experience that leverages the capabilities of telephones and the World Wide Web in a complementary way.

## A word about video conferencing

At its essence, video conferencing delivers three capabilities: audio conferencing, data sharing, and the ability for participants to view each other. In those specialized business applications in which face-to-face contact is vital, the higher cost, complexity, and technical requirements of video conferencing are worth the expense. However, face-to-face contact is not essential for most business activities, as evidenced by the relatively slow growth of the video conferencing market. Except for meetings that require virtual face-to-face contact, most companies can achieve their conferencing objectives more simply and affordably with audio and web conferencing systems and forgo video conferencing.

## The value of existing devices and familiar interfaces

One of the strengths of audio and web conferencing is that they employ devices – telephones and personal computers running web browsers – that most business users already have. That means:

- They are easy to learn and use.
- Organizations can gain additional value from their existing applications.
- Organizations can better leverage their existing data and telecommunications infrastructure.
- There is no need for yet another application on each user's desktop.
- Organizations can adopt audio and web conferencing enterprise-wide, thereby sharing large-scale benefits – lower costs, higher productivity, and improved communications – throughout the enterprise.



## The business value of conferencing

As Figure 1 below shows, the market for conferencing services is growing rapidly and is expected to reach nearly \$14 billion in sales by 2005.

### Worldwide Conferencing Services- Market

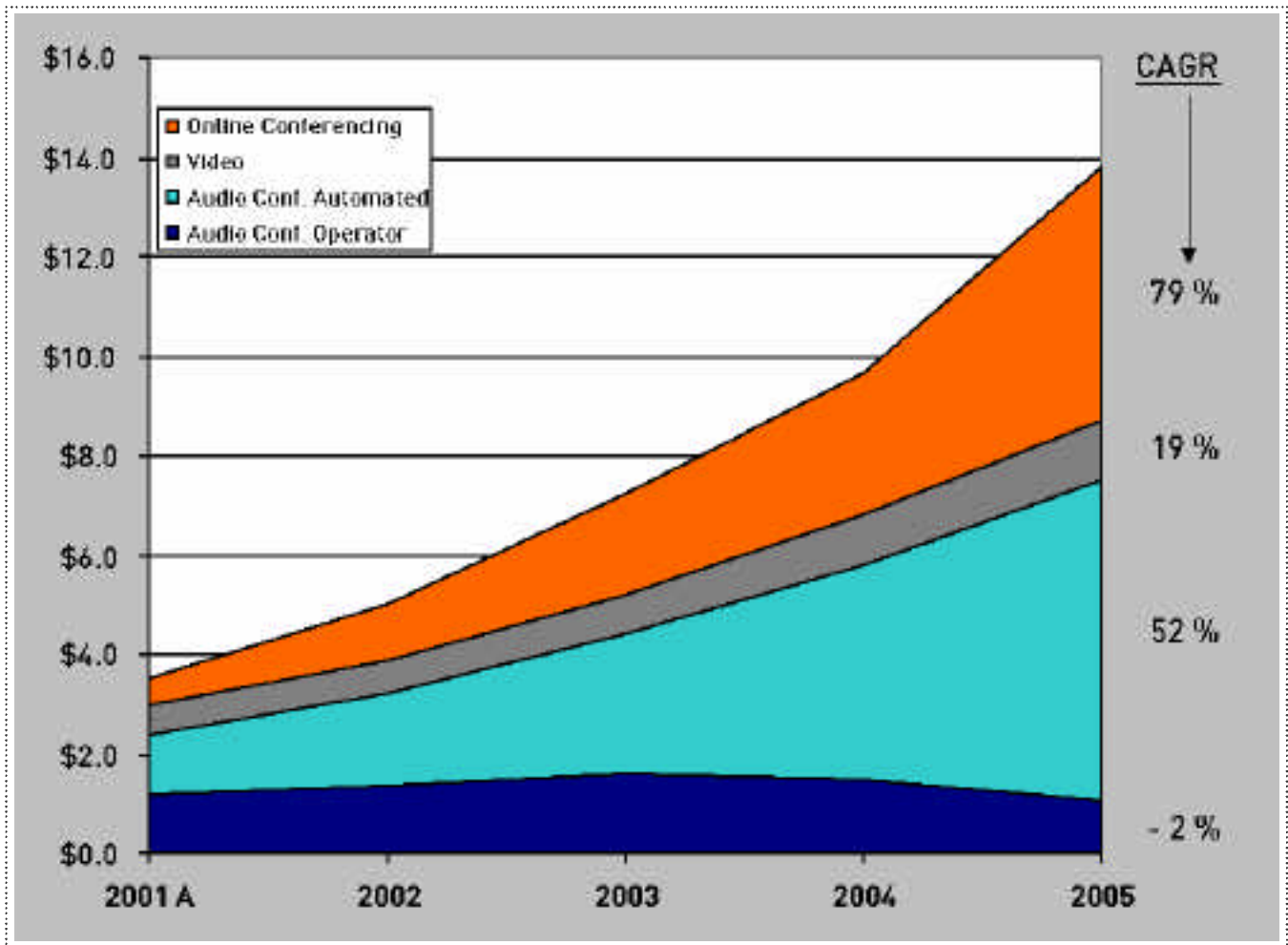


Figure 1

Source: IDC and Raymond James

A portion of that growth can be attributed to the desire of organizations to reduce the expense and lost productivity of business travel. However, many organizations that initially invested in conferencing solutions for such short-term, tactical reasons are finding that conferencing delivers significant, long-term, strategic business value far beyond their initial expectations. These businesses are aggressively expanding their use of conferencing.

The business value of conferencing varies from industry to industry and company to company, but it generally falls into two categories:

### Doing things you already do better

- Supporting customers more effectively
- Managing projects and programs more effectively
- Prospecting and qualifying business opportunities
- Making staff meetings more efficient and productive
- Training employees and customers more quickly and efficiently
- Sharing information more fully with remote employees, partners, and customers
- Turning simple conversations into more productive collaborations
- Responding faster to emergencies
- Making decisions more quickly
- Responding to market changes more rapidly

### Doing things you could not do before

- Delivering new or enhanced services to customers and partners
- Reaching prospects and markets that were previously inaccessible
- Delivering presentations from a distance
- Demonstrating new products to customers and prospects at any time
- Bringing high-level experts into sales calls or negotiations – anywhere, any time
- Presenting and reviewing proposals and contracts with a geographically-dispersed team
- Presenting, reviewing, and modifying concepts, designs, products, and marketing materials without anyone leaving their desks
- Conducting brainstorming sessions with other departments and remote offices
- Convening company-wide meetings on short notice and with greater frequency
- Delivering seminars at a fraction of the cost, and without requiring attendees to travel
- Increasing the number and frequency of training sessions without incurring additional expense
- Conducting regular customer feedback sessions and user group meetings
- Expanding into web services, enabling application integration via corporate web portals

As these examples suggest, the benefits of conferencing span every department and discipline in an organization, including:

- Sales
- Marketing
- Engineering
- Finance
- Manufacturing
- Legal
- Human Resources
- Training

By delivering these capabilities on an enterprise-wide basis, conferencing can make a significant contribution to:

- Increased customer satisfaction
- Stronger business partnerships
- Increased productivity
- Increased revenue and profitability
- Enhanced competitive position

This explains, not only why conferencing is growing, but also why it is becoming critical to organizations' ability to function. In fact, many organizations are now making conferencing an essential, integral component of their long-term business strategy.

For companies considering conferencing, the next two questions are critical:

- How should one evaluate different conferencing solutions?
- Which type of conferencing solution delivers the most value?



## Audio and web conferencing choices

Initially, most organizations become interested in a conferencing solution when their conferencing needs exceed the small, four- to six-party audio-only conferencing capacity of their PBX systems. For these and other organizations in the market for a conferencing solution, there are three basic choices:

### 1. Service provider solutions for audio-only conferencing

Historically, most organizations have relied on telecom service providers to provide the bridging services necessary to enable multi-party audio conferencing. In this model of conferencing, organizations can either arrange an audio conference via an operator or purchase a subscription service that allows participants to set up a conference on demand without advance reservations and without an operator. Service providers charge for their audio conferencing services by levying per-minute surcharges per participant on the call. The longer the call and the more participants, the more it costs. Costs also increase as users add extra features, such as recording and playback, toll-free access, polling, and additional security features.

### 2. Service provider solutions for web conferencing

Organizations that want to add web collaboration to their audio conferences typically do so through an online web conferencing service. In this case, customers are required to select a separate web conferencing service provider to provide the web element of the conference, in addition to contracting with an audio service provider for the audio element. In this model, users typically pay a monthly license fee for the web services, plus the per-minute per-user surcharge for the audio services.

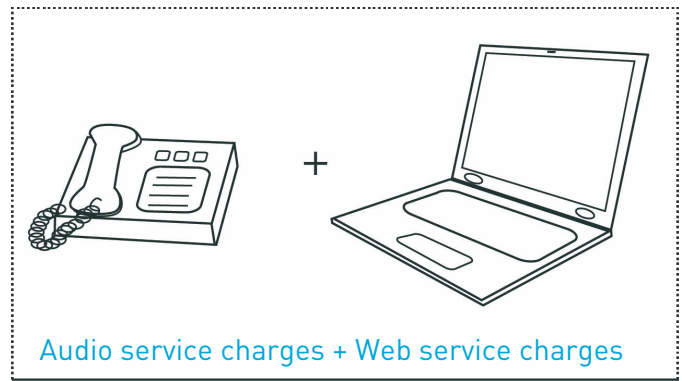


Figure 2

### 3. In-house solutions for audio-only, web-only, or audio + webconferencing

In this model, organizations invest in their own conferencing solution by either purchasing or leasing equipment, installing it on their premises, and connecting it to their corporate voice and/or data network. This premises-based conferencing platform then performs the necessary conference bridging services to enable multi-party calls, and support either audio-only conferencing or integrated audio and web conferencing.

**Using in-house conferencing, costs are fixed: they do not vary by the number of conferences or the number of participants. As organizations deploy this capability and deliver the benefits of conferencing and collaboration more broadly, they can do so without incurring costs with per user and per minute.**



## Comparing costs of conferencing solutions

Since most organizations interested in conferencing solutions are seeking to reduce expenses, cost is one of the most important factors in their decision-making processes.

There are a number of costs – both fixed and variable, one-time and ongoing – that determine the overall total cost of any conferencing solution. These costs include:

- Audio cost per minute for accessing a conference bridge (long distance costs)
- Audio conferencing cost per minute per participant
- Web seat license fees or cost per minute per participant
- Equipment
- Installation
- Maintenance

To assess which type of conferencing solution – service provider or in-house – is better for their needs, organizations need to consider current and future usage patterns:

- The number of employees using the conferencing solution;
- the amount of time spent conferencing within a given time period; and
- the number of concurrent seat licenses they will need.

The Yankee Group performed just such an analysis in its August 23, 2002 report, Analysis of Purchasing an Audio/Web Conferencing Platform vs. Outsourcing Conference Bridging Services. The report's author based his analysis on a hypothetical organization of 600 employees that spends 50,000 minutes per month on audio conferences and has 15 concurrent web conference seat licenses. Per-minute audio costs, per-user web license fees, and equipment, installation, and maintenance costs were based on typical costs.

**The Yankee Group** report found that the in-house conferencing platform cost less than the service provider solution, summarizing as follows: "The results of the model showed a return on investment in seven months for the enterprise [with the in-house solution]. After the seven-month period, the enterprise will realize a savings of \$7,000 per month."

Based on this analysis, it is reasonable to assume that an in-house conferencing platform will offer an even faster return on investment and greater monthly savings for larger organizations. But what about smaller enterprises?

To put it as simply as possible, if an organization is spending more than \$750 per month on a service provider conferencing solution, a review of in-house conferencing solutions is warranted.

**The more employees that use an in-house conferencing solution and the longer it is used, the greater the savings.**

## Service providers vs. in-house solutions: an historical perspective

Another way to view the conferencing investment decision is from an historical perspective. It is a matter of historical precedent that when any technology becomes critical to an organization's ability to function, that organization will most often opt to purchase the technology rather than to continue rely on outside service providers.

**Why?** It is most often a matter of control – control of intellectual property, control of a strategic business tool, control of investments, and control of enterprise-wide adoption. The more an organization uses a service provider solution, the more it will cost – and the more attractive an in-house solution will become. The pay-per-usage model either spirals out of fiscal control or limits use so much in an effort to conserve costs that the true value of the solution is never fully realized.

At the same time, organizations do not want to leave themselves at the mercy of their service providers. What if the service provider changes its business model? What if the service provider's systems become infected by a computer virus?

What if the service provider decides to increase its conferencing fees by 20 percent? By owning the solution, an organization gains greater control, not only over the technology, but also over its own business.

An additional consideration is the emerging requirement to integrate conferencing solutions into a broader collaboration infrastructure. As organizations deploy conferencing more broadly, it becomes part of an overall strategic system to help organizations more effectively share knowledge and make decisions. As such, the conferencing system needs to be integrated into project management, groupware, knowledge management and other enterprise-wide systems. An in-house conferencing system provides the organization greater flexibility in managing this integration.

There are a number of historical precedents that demonstrate how major market shifts can occur when organizations are given the opportunity to gain greater control over their technology decisions, as shown in Figure 3 below.

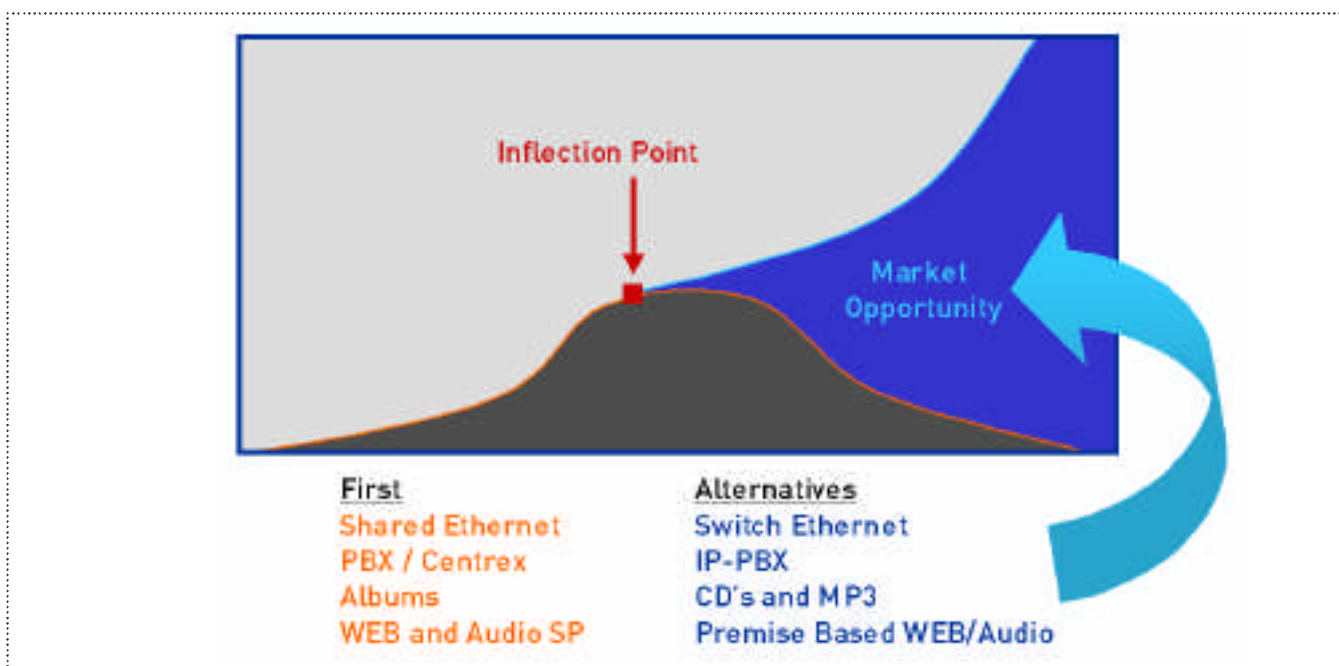


Figure 3

As the above chart suggests, the service provider model is initially successful because it offers organizations a low-risk environment for testing applications with a small number of users. Within this test environment, organizations then have the opportunity to measure the operational benefits and adoption levels of a technology, thereby developing an understanding of the opportunity and the anticipated impact of enterprise-wide adoption.

After validating the value of the application, **organizations reach a point where it becomes clear that it is in their best interests to own and control the technology.** This is often done to reduce costs, but also to gain greater freedom of choice, get a more customized solution, increase security, or simply to control their own technological destiny. At that point, the in-house solution becomes the preferred model.

We can see examples of this with the early use of several technologies:

- **Business telephony services.** The first business telephone systems were service provider solutions, such as Centrex. When in-house solutions, such as Key and PBX systems became available, they were quickly adopted and became the standard. Now the market is moving toward IP-PBX in search of greater value.
- **Voice mail.** Business voice mail was initially a service provider solution tied to a central Centrex system. Today, voice mail is an integral part of every business phone system and organizations have used it strategically to streamline and support customer service.
- **Email.** Originally offered under a service provider model with remote mailboxes, email is now an in-house asset, due to organizations' efforts to improve security and reduce costs. Email has since spawned strategic groupware products, such as Lotus Notes, Microsoft Exchange, and HP Open Mail.

## Additional cost considerations

**In addition to the direct expenses associated with conferencing, it's helpful for organizations to consider other, less obvious, but no less important, conferencing-related costs when evaluating their conferencing choices.**

### Variability of costs

One such consideration is the variability of conferencing costs. When conferencing is delivered by an outside service provider, costs will **vary** month-to-month, quarter-to-quarter, depending on the number, size and length of conferences. The organization needs to accommodate this unpredictability. By contrast, if an organization owns its own in-house conferencing system, it will incur a predictable monthly cost for management and support. If it leases the system, it will also incur a fixed monthly lease expense. These on-going monthly costs, however, are fixed and predictable and completely unaffected by the number of conferences held.

### Opportunity costs

Finally, before choosing any conferencing solution, organizations should consider the costs they will incur by not conferencing. While harder to quantify, these costs can be considerable. For example:

- What's the cost of not holding an important sales meeting in order to keep expenses down?
- What's the cost – in lost time and lost business – when organizations and their partners can't respond quickly to new market opportunities?
- What's the cost of not communicating more frequently and fully with customers?
- What's the cost in competitiveness when employees cannot receive frequent training in new job skills?

**When all of these costs are considered, an investment in in-house conferencing is truly money well spent.**

## Other purchase factors

**In addition to cost, there are a number of factors organizations ought to consider as they evaluate conferencing solutions. The relative importance of these factors will vary from one organization to another.**

### Security

Security is a major point of difference between service provider and in-house conferencing solutions. Because the equipment enabling service provider conferences exists outside the user organization's corporate firewall, it is necessary to transfer confidential information outside, making it vulnerable to unauthorized viewing. This is a matter of concern to any organization that is serious about guarding the confidentiality of its business communications.

In contrast, an in-house conferencing platform exists within the user organization's facilities and behind its corporate firewall. As such, it remains as secure as any other device on the corporate network. Some in-house conferencing platforms also offer additional security features not available with service provider solutions, such as secure login, Class of Service assignment, and random PIN generation. This ensures that only authorized and identified users can join each conference and view any material.

### Ease of Use

Setting up and conducting an audio or web conference must be easy for the host and the participant in order to be used widely. Ease of use is a significant factor when comparing web and integrated audio/web conferencing solutions.

Prospective buyers should begin by comparing the user interfaces of each solution to see how intuitive and easy to learn they are. Can participants schedule services for audio, web, or integrated audio/web conferences using a single interface? Buyers should also consider whether the solution enables users to schedule and manage conferences using their preferred desktop tools, such as email and calendar applications. Ease of use also extends to the flexibility of the solution.

- Does it work with familiar devices and applications?
- Does it support wireless devices and networks?
- Can users perform tasks from either a browser or a telephone?
- Does the solution provide complete reporting information detailing usage and exception reports for conference allocation and bill-back services?

**By answering these and other questions, organizations can determine the likelihood that their employee populations will adopt the solution quickly and readily and what resources will be required for training and support.**

## Rich Media Feature Set

Organizations should carefully assess the feature set provided by a conferencing solution to ensure that it will meet a broad range of requirements.

- Does the solution allow users to review and annotate a wide range of documents, including spreadsheets, presentations and graphics files?
- Can additional documents be added during a conference already in progress?
- Can conference participants co-browse web sites?
- Does the solution provide tools to the moderator to ask questions of the participants and tabulate results?
- Can the moderator pass control to other participants?
- Can participants share a whiteboard to capture diagrams and notes?
- Can participants chat to the entire conference or to selected individuals during the conference?

**In evaluating the capabilities of the conferencing solution, organizations can better assess its potential value to meet the needs of a broad range of users. In general, a more expansive feature set will enhance the system's value.**

## Integration with existing data and telecom infrastructure

Because service provider solutions are outside the corporate infrastructure, it isn't possible to integrate them with an organization's existing applications. While this makes initial set-up easy, it also prevents service provider solutions from delivering any of the benefits of such integration, such as enhanced security.

When it comes to evaluating in-house conferencing solutions, however, integration is an important consideration.

- Can the system work with all of an organization's existing telephone and networking equipment and protocols?
- Can it be installed quickly and easily?
- Does integration require extensive customization?
- Will the conferencing system require specialized support or administrative overhead above and beyond existing needs?
- If the organization decides to change its data or telecom systems, for example, migrating to VoIP, will the conferencing system become obsolete?

**By answering these questions, an organization can gain a clearer picture of the impact and the total cost of ownership of an in-house conferencing solution.**

## Purchase Criteria Comparison

	Service Provider Solution	In-House Solution
<b>Cost</b>	Per-user, per-minute	Fixed
<b>Security</b>	<p>Limited to service provider's security systems</p> <p>Optional security features sometimes available at additional cost</p>	<p>Protected within users' facility</p> <p>Protected behind corporate firewall</p> <p>Secure login</p> <p>Class of Service assignment</p> <p>Random PIN generation</p> <p>Detail usage reports available on the fly</p> <p>Exception reporting</p>
<b>Integration of Audio and Web</b>	Not currently supported by most providers	Fully supported
<b>Ease of Use</b>	<p>Typically, audio and web conferences must be managed separately</p> <p>Typically not integrated with email and calendar applications</p>	<p>Uses familiar devices and interfaces</p> <p>Integrated audio and web conferencing</p> <p>Integrated with email and calendar applications</p>
<b>Rich Media Feature Set</b>	Broad range of available features, though additional surcharges may apply	Broad range of features provided and available at no additional charge

Table 3



## The Sonexis approach to conferencing

**Sonexis developed its ConferenceManager to meet the emerging demand for conferencing with a more cost-effective and secure solution. ConferenceManager is a modular, in-house conferencing platform that is easy and affordable for any organization to install, deploy, use, maintain, and expand.**

The architecture of the ConferenceManager platform is based on defacto and industry-standard technologies, including:

- Microsoft Windows 2000 with enhanced security services
- Internet Protocol (IP) and a variety of VoIP protocols- H.323 and SIP
- Microsoft applications, such as Internet Explorer, Outlook, Exchange, and Office
- Other standards, such as iCalendar, HTTP, and SMTP

From a technical standpoint, this architecture offers many advantages. It enables Sonexis customers to:

- Take advantage of the growth of IP in business communications
- Integrate ConferenceManager easily with existing network infrastructures, including PBX, IP-PBX, PSTN, and VoIP
- Deploy ConferenceManager enterprise-wide
- Upgrade and enhance ConferenceManager quickly and easily via software downloads
- Administer ConferenceManager from a browser
- Add new users without system upgrades or service calls
- Provide security at the physical, network, application, meeting and content levels.

For organizations seeking to reap the benefits of conferencing enterprise-wide, the ConferenceManager architecture promotes easy and full adoption throughout the organization. When an organization has adopted conferencing enterprise-wide, the benefits of conferencing are greatly amplified. These benefits include:

- Richer and more open communication throughout the organization
- More productive meetings
- Better management of time
- Reduced travel expenses
- The ability to respond more quickly to issues and opportunities
- The ability to deliver new and/or better services to customers, suppliers, and partners
- The ability to collaborate more closely across distances ... and more.

## Sonexis customer successes

**More and more companies are discovering the strategic business value of Sonexis ConferenceManager. Here are a few examples:**

### Datatec

Datatec Systems is a \$70 million, New Jersey-based company focused on the deployment and implementation of network technologies for Fortune 1000 companies and world-class technology providers. With more than 400 field service engineers (FSE) working at customer sites daily throughout the U.S., Datatec spent more than \$8000 per month using audio conference bridges to support the heavy call volume between the FSEs and its Customer Support Team.

Datatec chose Sonexis ConferenceManager to add web conferencing capabilities while reducing costs. The Sonexis solution paid for itself within four months. Datatec now has customer-specific conference meeting rooms set up with unique password detection. These enable up to 50 Datatec experts to participate in ad hoc conferences to address each customer's unique site requirements.

### PRTM

Pittiglio Rabin Todd & McGrath (PRTM) is recognized internationally as the leading management consultancy to technology-driven business. For 25 years, the company has focused on helping technology-intensive companies structure their strategies, organizations, and core business processes for competitiveness, profitability, and growth. Recently ranked #1 in Consulting magazine's "10 Best Consulting Firms to Work For" feature, PRTM manages relationships with a widely distributed employee and customer base.

As a consultancy, most of PRTM's expenses are billed directly back to its customers. Conferencing was becoming a source of escalating costs as the number of weekly and monthly meetings between PRTM focus group consultants grew in parallel with client meetings. On their most active day, PRTM employees conducted 80 conferences that lasted anywhere from 15 minutes to two hours. Conferencing fees were topping an average of \$16,500 per month.

In order to save money for its clients, PRTM sought an alternative conferencing solution that would result in significant savings. In addition, PRTM wanted to provide web conferencing in order to remove the need for travel to the three- to four-hour consultant training sessions conducted 12 times a year at its largest Atlantic Region office in Massachusetts. The company had contracted a separate outside service provider under a one-year, 30-seat license subscription for Web conferencing.

After switching to a 96-port Sonexis conferencing system, PRTM saw its audio conferencing fees dramatically drop to \$2,000 from an average of \$16,500 within the first month of usage – an 88% savings. The system quickly provided PRTM with a return on investment within two months, and the savings have been reflected in client billings.

In addition, PRTM increased consultant productivity with features within the Sonexis system such as the Microsoft Outlook plug-in that allows appointments to be automatically scheduled in a consultant's calendar, and an intuitive Web interface used for scheduling that required no formal training.

**For more information about Sonexis ConferenceManager, or a free custom ROI analysis to assess cost savings within your organization, contact Sonexis at 1-866-2SONEXIS (1-866-276-6394), email at [info@sonexis.com](mailto:info@sonexis.com), or visit [www.sonexis.com](http://www.sonexis.com).**



# Sonexis ConferenceManager features and benefits

## Conferencing Features

The Sonexis ConferenceManager provides a broad range of rich media conferencing features in order to meet the conferencing needs of users throughout an organization.

- Sharing and annotation of spreadsheets, presentations, and other documents
- Co-browsing of web sites
- Whiteboarding of diagrams and notes
- Ability to add in documents during a conference in progress
- Chat capability to all participants or selected individuals
- Ability to add new participants to a conference in progress
- Pass control of conference from the moderator to selected participants
- Polling and tabulation tools.

## Security

Sonexis ConferenceManager is designed to protect your sensitive corporate information and keep confidential information confidential.

- System and documents remain behind the corporate firewall
- Unique conference IDs and PINs
- Password security option
- Secure host login using advanced authentication protocols and encryption
- Host monitoring of participants via login identification, roll-calls, and conference locking

## Ease of Use

Sonexis ConferenceManager is designed to allow everyone in your organization to set up and participate in conferences with minimal training.

- Easy to use conference controls from telephone or web interface
- Post and review documents created in any desktop application
- Automated scheduling and notification via integration with Microsoft Outlook, SMS email and Blackberry devices
- Scheduled or ad-hoc conferences

## Integration

Sonexis ConferenceManager adds value to existing and future network infrastructure investments.

- Operates in PSTN, VoIP, or mixed environments
- Integration with Microsoft Outlook, SMS email and Blackberry devices for automated scheduling and notification
- Post and review documents created in any desktop application
- Simple connection of ConferenceManager to PBX

## Financial Benefits

Due to its premises-based architecture, the Sonexis ConferenceManager offers significant financial benefits over conferencing solutions from outside service providers. **The result is proven cost savings and rapid ROI.**

- Eliminates per-user per minute audio surcharges and monthly per-user web license fees
- Offers a fixed monthly costs, regardless of the number of conferences or the number of participants
- Investment protection due to support of multiple networking environments
- Upgrades delivered remotely to support expanded conferencing requirements

## Administration and Support

Sonexis ConferenceManager can be deployed quickly and requires minimal administrative support.

- Self-service requires no conference scheduling administration
- High reliability
- Simple connection of ConferenceManager to PBX , rapid deployment
- Thin client desktop requires standard browser
- Easy to use system requires minimal end-user training and help desk support
- Full call detail reporting to allow allocation of cost to multiple cost centers
- Easy upgrades, conducted remotely, to add users and features
- Telephone and web technical support available

## Scalability

Sonexis ConferenceManager can be tailored to fit your current needs and it is expandable to meet future requirements.

- 24-port system, expandable to 96-PSTN ports
- 30 port of IP, expandable to 120 VoIP ports
- Web conferencing from 5 to 150 seats
- Easy upgrades, conducted remotely, to add users and new features
- Supports VoIP, PSTN and mixed environments to accommodate future infrastructure investments

Sonexis, Inc. delivers a premises-based, integrated audio and web conferencing system that helps businesses improve business processes and communications while significantly reducing the cost of conferencing. The Sonexis™ Conference Manager system is easy to use, enhances security of sensitive corporate information, requires low administrative overhead, and leverages existing network investments. The system has been proven to significantly lower costs and deliver rapid return on investment. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, Sonexis is backed by Zero Stage Capital, Venrock Associates and UBS Capital Americas.

**Contact Sonexis at 617.531.2100, toll-free at 866.SONEXIS (1.866.276.6394), or at [www.sonexis.com](http://www.sonexis.com).**