

CalREN Video Services Oversight Committee Meeting
April 26, 2005 12:00pm – 1:00pm Telephone and Video Conference Call

Attendees:

For CCC:

Catherine McKenzie, CCC CO

For CSU:

Jeff Layne, CSU Chico

John Rolon, CSU CO

For CENIC:

Sherilyn Evans, Director, Technical Operations

Kelly Stack, CVS Coordinator

Chris Taylor, DC-TAC and CSUMB

For UC:

Kim Dorsey, UCOP

Howard Laurence, UCSD

Mike Shannon, UCOP

ABSENT:

Lou Albert, LACCD

Mike Arnold, Kern CCD

Dave Barnett, Santa Cruz COE

Mark Crase, CSU CO

Jim Dolgonas, CENIC Chief Operations Officer

Todd Finnell, Imperial COE

Phil Howard, State Center CCD

Jack Lemley, Butte CC

Jorge Mata, LACCD

Roger Parker, CSU Hayward

Dave Reese, CENIC Chief Technology Officer

Patrick Thompson, CSU Fresno

Mike Van Norman, HPR-TAC and UCLA

Kelly Stack started the meeting with a roll call. Stack summarized the recommendations from the Scheduling Software Evaluation Team. The evaluation team recommended that the CVS Oversight committee consider obtaining and using the latest version of Polycom's PCS product. (For more information, see the Report and Recommendations at the end of this document.)

Mike Shannon noted that the scheduler is a driver for UC migration to CVS, moving forward with a scheduling solution is very important for UC sites. Shannon also voiced a

preference for an off-the-shelf product as a “cleaner” solution than a “homegrown” solution, a sentiment shared by the other committee members present. John Rolon concurred on the need for progress in the area of scheduling software, saying, “We need to move on.” He said it was worth trying Polycom given the minimal cost to do so. The committee unanimously agreed that CENIC should move forward with obtaining the PCS software.

The next agenda item was the need for centralization of contact lists. Stack noted that Mark Crase had requested it to be on the agenda and wondered if it might be better to delay discussion until he is able to attend. John Rolon is aware of Crase’s concerns in this area and asked that this topic be covered rather than delayed. Crase feels videoconferencing contact lists should be maintained in a central location. Catherine McKenzie raised the question of authorization, since contact lists should be updatable only by authorized users. Stack stated that the PCS software offers a comprehensive solution for contact lists, including self-service for making changes to contact info and authorization. Given the decision to obtain PCS scheduling software, it was felt the centralization of contact lists would be achieved as a byproduct, and did not require further discussion. Stack will contact Crase after the meeting to discuss. Jeff Layne asked when the committee members would be able to see the PCS contact list interface. Stack replied it would be available as soon as the server is up and running, and that committee members would be able to view it before pilot testing began..

Shannon asked if there is a specific timeline for software implementation. Stack and Sherilyn Evans estimated that pilot/beta testing would begin in June. Roll out to campuses would occur in phases with a completion target of the end of the summer. Evans asked that committee members volunteer to participate in the June pilot phase. McKenzie asked if training is included in the rollout plans, and Stack confirmed that it is. All members present were satisfied with this timeline.

Stack listed previously unresolved items that should be discussed in a future meeting, including the CVS FAQ, CVS Policy Revisions, and Internet2 Commons participation. Layne said he would engage the End User Group to work on the first two issues. Stack will prepare information on the third issue for consideration at the next meeting.

The next CVS Oversight Committee meeting will be scheduled for the end of May. (McKenzie noted that she cannot meet on May 25). Stack will send a list of potential meeting dates and times to the full committee.

CVS Scheduling Software: Report and Recommendations

Background

In July, 2004 the CVS Oversight Committee requested the two CVS subcommittees (Video Users and Technical) to work together to review videoconference scheduling software options. Volunteers from the two groups formed an evaluation team to assess available software and report findings and recommendations back to the Oversight Committee.

Initially, ten packages were chosen based on input from the Oversight Committee including the *Wainhouse Research Report on Video Communications Management Systems 2004*, information from the original CalVIP RFP, and other feedback. The evaluation team developed criteria (see next page) to narrow the field from ten to just five. Of the remaining five, one was eliminated because of failure to support CENIC's existing hardware infrastructure, one due to concerns about the company's financial stability, and a third because company representatives did not respond to multiple requests for more information. Subsequent to the initial identification of candidate software, CENIC learned of two new products. The first, VSpan, was highly recommended by a third-party videoconference support company, but further investigation revealed the company provides a scheduling service, not a software product. The second, LifeSize, was recommended by the Imperial County Office of Education. LifeSize does not yet have a product on the market, and therefore is not a viable candidate.

The two scheduling systems that remained in consideration were Polycom's PCS Scheduling System and Tandberg's TMS system. Both companies provided demonstrations of the features of their current products for the evaluation team. In terms of features, both products were considered adequate to CVS needs.

Faced with the facts that neither of the products considered offers a truly cross-platform client, and that Windows has been widely adopted for administrative uses, the evaluation team agreed that a Windows-based solution should be considered. In fact, both server products being considered also run solely on the Windows platform. To ensure adequate security, CENIC technical staff recommends the scheduling servers be placed in the CENIC server room behind a firewall rather than in the POPs where they had been located previously. In order to locate the servers at CENIC, the original, DC-powered CVS servers will need to be replaced with AC-powered servers, adding \$10,000 to the cost of the project.

In addition to scheduling features, the evaluation team requested an assessment of each product's compliance with ADA accessibility requirements. In 2002, a new state law required state agencies receiving state funds to comply with the requirements of section 508, which refers to ADA accessibility. Utilizing the Voluntary Product Accessibility Template created by the Information Technology Industry Council (www.itic.org), we evaluated both products. While both products are partially compliant, neither is fully compliant with ADA/508 requirements.

The proposed remedy is two-fold: 1) request feature upgrades from the vendor to meet compliance, and 2) in the interim, offer an alternative method of scheduling videoconferences for disabled administrators (e.g., submission of scheduling requests via email). Because the scheduling system will be used by a limited population (estimated to be fewer than 150 users), we anticipate the demand on resources generated by the alternative method will be negligible.

Tandberg Management Suite

We found the Tandberg user interface easier to use, but Tandberg's pricing model is prohibitive. CENIC followed up with Tandberg, as well as with third-party support organizations, to determine if pricing could be substantially reduced. The Tandberg sales group quoted a list price of \$185,295, and was unable to provide a discounted quote, although they indicated that some discounts might be negotiated, especially if accompanied by an order for additional Tandberg hardware. A distributor of Tandberg products quoted a price of \$124,163 (32% discount). Annual support and maintenance contracts are not included in this price.

Polycom Conference Suite

Though the user interface was not considered as "friendly," the Polycom product provided necessary functionality for CVS purposes. CENIC followed up with the technical support group to determine if the security issues experienced during initial use of PCS in spring, 2004 could be resolved. After receiving and reviewing technical specifications, CENIC believes the security issues can be adequately addressed. In terms of pricing, since an earlier version of this software was purchased through the CalVIP RFP, a minimal upgrade fee of approximately \$37,500 will provide us with the latest version of the software and a support and maintenance agreement that includes free software upgrades until October 2005. Subsequent annual maintenance contracts will cost us about \$37,500 per year. The prices quoted include an "education" discount.

Custom "Home Grown" Software

Although the Oversight Committee asked the evaluation team only to consider off-the-shelf products, the option of hiring a programmer to write a customized application has been raised in Oversight Committee discussions. The potential for building a scheduler that would satisfy all user and technical needs and expectations is attractive. However, the cost, in terms of both time and money, would be quite high. There is also some risk that ongoing maintenance, support and upgrades could be dependent on a single source (the author of the software), calling into question issues of maintenance, future development, and growth.

Recommendation

Concerns regarding the development time, cost and ongoing support issues related to a customized software solution should be carefully assessed. In the meantime, the evaluation team feels that the difference in price between the two off-the-shelf solutions far outweighs any benefit that the Tandberg user interface provides over the Polycom

product. Therefore, the evaluation team recommends that the CVS Oversight committee consider obtaining and using the latest version of Polycom's PCS product.

Evaluation Team

Lou Albert	George Huega
Mike Arnold	Howard Laurence
David Barnett	Jeff Layne
Wayne Clement	Catherine McKenzie
Kim Dorsey	John Parker
Alberta Edmond	David Phelps
Sherilyn Evans	John Rolon
Todd Finnell	Kelly Stack
Phil Howard	Patrick Thompson

April 5, 2005

Videoconference Scheduling Software	Aethra	AMX Corp.	Forgent Networks	MagicSoft	Polycom	Radvision	Renovo	Tandberg	VCON	VisionNex
	Team 1	Mike Arnold	Team 2	Mike Arnold	Team 3	Team 1	Team 4	Team 2	Team 5	Team 3
People assigned to review										
Features/Functions - Scoring 10 -Highest Score										
Scale of 1 to 10. 1 is low and 10 is high.										
Standard features/functions of scheduler	0	0								
▪ Web based, available 24/7			N/A		10	10	10	10		10
▪ Platform independent, accessible by both Macs & PC's, with equal functionality of both platforms			N/A		0	10	5	10		10
▪ Viewable as single page in a printable format			N/A		?	10	10	8		?
▪ ADA compliant			N/A		doubtful	?	1	6		?
Scheduling functions	0	0								
• Access requires User name/ password			N/A		10	10	10	10		10
• Ability to schedule/modify recurring video events with single request/ action			N/A		7	10	10	10		10
• Site availability verification along with conference detail display including, but not limited to: date/set up time/start time/end time/ sites participating/conference title & unique ID/port info/ coordinator name & phone – site coordinator email link /current trouble contact information (phone/technician/pager, etc.)			N/A		5	10	7	10		5
• Ability to modify/delete existing events within 24 hours prior to event			N/A		10	10	10	10		10
• Support ad hoc conferencing			N/A		10	10	7	10		10
Automated functions-	0	0								
Unique conference ID generated			N/A		5	10	10	10		?
Videoconference Administrator email notification (modifiable)			N/A		5	10	10	10		10
Default set up time (modifiable)			N/A		0	10	10	10		8
Speed matching			N/A		10 ?		NA	10		10
Off network support, other protocol support			N/A		10	10	7	10		10
MCU assignment, prioritization, etc.			N/A		10	10	NA	10		10
Viewing only functions	0	0								
• Daily/ weekly/ monthly schedule viewing at a glance			N/A		10	10	10	6		10
Public access should not reveal proprietary information (IP addresses, other info deemed confidential)			N/A		?	10	8 7+-			?
Search function (calendar based) or drop down menu			N/A		10	10	8	6		?
Ability to evaluate potential meeting dates/times for multiple campuses			N/A		10	10	10	7		10
Printable schedules – daily/ weekly/monthly			N/A		10	10	10	6		?
Room profile information - equipment/contact information, etc.			N/A		10	10	10	10		10
Monitoring/administrative functions	0	0								
Access requires User name and password			N/A		10	10	10	10		
• Ability to determine status of event in progress in <i>real time</i> . (Determination whether problem is network or site specific related)			N/A		8	10	10	10		
• Ability to generate reports within parameters set by administrator – e.g. conferences within specific time frame, specific sites, event type, etc.			N/A		1	10	8	10		
• Interface with trouble ticket system			N/A		0 ?		NA	7		
• Assist with trouble shooting events by providing current status of the videoconferencing and the participants, i.e. are they connected, etc.			N/A		8	10	8	10		