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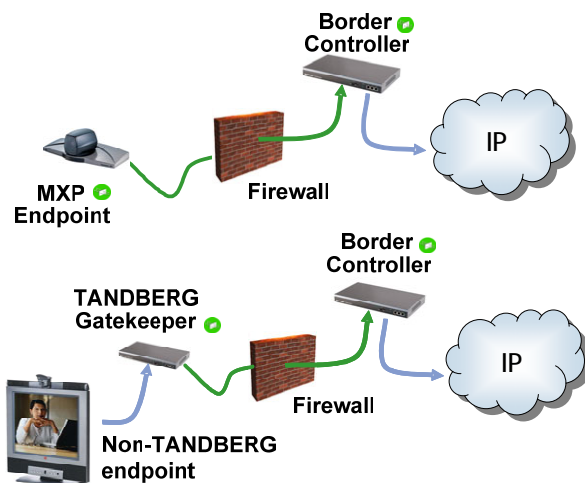
Andrew W. Davis, andrewwd@wainhouse.com

Say Hello to H.460

The ITU (International Telecommunications Union – a United Nations Agency) has ratified a new set of recommendations (standards to most people) that promises to make NAT-firewall traversal between vendors' videoconferencing equipment and different end user organizations much easier in the future. The new recommendations are H.460.18 (edited by TANDBERG) that enables H.323 video endpoints to exchange *signaling* information, and H.460.19 (edited by RADVISION) that defines the NAT-firewall mechanism for *media*. The two standards obviously work together closely, but by keeping them separate, the architecture will enable cleaner upgrades and enhancements in the future, perhaps similar to the ISO 7-layer stack model for network protocols. (Don't ask us whatever happened to H.460.1 through H.460.17, which like MPEG 3, 5, and 6 shall forever remain a mystery.)

H.460 takes NAT-firewall traversal into the area of the service provider or network cloud as well as the enterprise. Until now, any organization could implement its own method or solution for NAT-firewall traversal, but when it came time for inter-enterprise H.323-based voice/video communications, there was no standard to handle the situation. Now, this barrier disappears, providing a MAJOR capability for IP communications between organizations. Yes, things are getting better. Easier that is, when people understand how to register to session border controllers, and when session border controllers know how to neighbor.

Where the rubber meets the road, in terms of actual deployment, H.460 will require two things. The first is client software running behind the firewall - typically inside the videoconferencing endpoints themselves, or a gatekeeper substitute for non-compliant endpoints (see below). The second implementation element is a device (session border controller) in the network cloud, typically provided by the network service provider.



If this sounds familiar to you, it may be because you remember TANDBERG's announcement of its Expressway product line ([WRB Vol 6 #05, Feb 7](#)), a product based on technology the company acquired with its Ridgeway acquisition. In fact, H.460 is based on Expressway, but has some minor modifications in the registration packet handling protocol (not minor if you are a registration packet protocol software engineer perhaps).

So, here's how TANDBERG and Polycom appear to shape up right on the H.460 front: TANDBERG has made its Expressway H.460-compliant, which apparently required only a minor change to the code; the company launched immediately; shipping units are now H.460-compliant, and software upgrades are available

for units in the field. The TANDBERG MXP endpoints (all the models in the current lineup are MXP endpoints) can support the H.460 client software running inside. For customers with non-MXP endpoints (including non-TANDBERG endpoints), the solution is to deploy the TANDBERG gatekeeper behind the firewall. See diagram.

Polycom is promising beta versions of its H.460 solution in Q4-05 and general availability in Q1-06. Specifically, the VSX and PVX product lines will be upgraded to support the H.460 client software. Polycom's VTIU product line (which currently consists of an ALG designed for enterprise deployment, not service providers) will be expanded to include an H.460-compliant border controller for the service provider environment. Polycom will also make enhancements to PathNavigator. For older endpoints that cannot support an embedded H.460 client, Polycom's solution will be to have the older endpoints register with PathNavigator, which will direct traffic through the VTIU ALG and the VTIU will communicate with the SBC in the cloud. So, while ALG's are not particularly expensive, the Polycom solution for older endpoints has an extra step in it compared to the TANDBERG solution.

Here's What I Think:

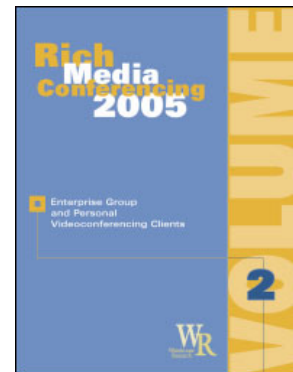
Yes, H.460 promises to make things easier, for one thing it could eliminate the need to use ISDN when communicating between IP endpoints on different networks. Long run, it should diminish the need for gateway services. The major question we all need to think about is when will the service providers step up and deploy the needed devices. H.460 is both an opportunity and a threat.

Another issue: today an endpoint can register with only one SBC or gatekeeper. I don't know if this will always be the case. And changing gatekeeper IP addresses on an endpoint sometimes requires navigation through 6 levels of menus – frustrating if you think you are going to change addresses with any frequency. To make things easier, we need to have peering between session border controllers. Final thought, this is a great step forward, but it will take a while before inter-enterprise H.323 video calls are no-brainers.

⇒ [WR Forum: Say Hello to H.460](#)

[Rich Media Conferencing 2005](#)

Volume 2: Enterprise Group and Personal Videoconferencing Endpoints



This market study is part of our annual flagship series of reports on conferencing and collaboration products and services.

Volume 2 is an in-depth study of the videoconferencing endpoint market, technologies, and major vendors. The 201-page report includes a review of the top 11 endpoint vendors worldwide that we believe are either leaders in their respective markets or candidates to become industry players because of their unique technology or innovative business strategy. Includes market sizing and our 5-year forecast for Europe, North America, and Asia Pacific.

See www.wainhouse.com/reports for complete details and a FREE executive summary

Cisco Launches Small-Medium Business Thrust

Macromedia, TANDBERG partnerships enhance Cisco's Collaboration Solutions

Cisco Systems is announcing new products and services and financing plans targeted exclusively on the small-medium business (SMB) segment. The company claims that its new applications, endpoints, call control systems, and infrastructure products are not just dumbed-down versions of those aimed at larger enterprises, but are designed from the ground up to be the smart, simple, and secure solutions these customers crave. The announcement is very broad in scope, and includes CallManger Express (CME) v.3.3 call processing, Cisco Unity Express v2.2 voice mail and automated attendant, Cisco IP Phones 7941G and 7961G, the Cisco Catalyst Express 500 switch, the Cisco Network Assistant for management, and IP

Communications Express quick configuration tool as well as a few other bits and pieces. One of the other pieces is the Cisco 7985G videophone (vying for the distinction of being the industry's worst-kept secret) with a list price of \$3595, a Cisco-branded SCCP-compliant TANDBERG 150 executive system. This videophone complements the Cisco-branded video MCU and gateway provided on an OEM basis by RADVISION.

While I am sure that all of the elements of the SMB initiative are interesting, one of the most intriguing pieces to me is MeetingPlace Express (MPE), deliverable sometime late in Q4. MPE is based on Flash technology and represents a close partnership between Cisco and Macromedia to provide a customized version of Macromedia Breeze. (The full Breeze for example supports video, but the Cisco version does not.) Breeze in essence becomes the web conferencing engine in MPE and works along side the voice capabilities provided by Cisco's Latitude-based infrastructure.

MPE will be priced below the currently-shipping version of MeetingPoint, but MPE won't scale to the large number of users that can be addressed with MeetingPoint (which can run on distributed servers), nor does MPE integrate directly to Outlook, like its cousin, which uses DCL technology to provide web conferencing.

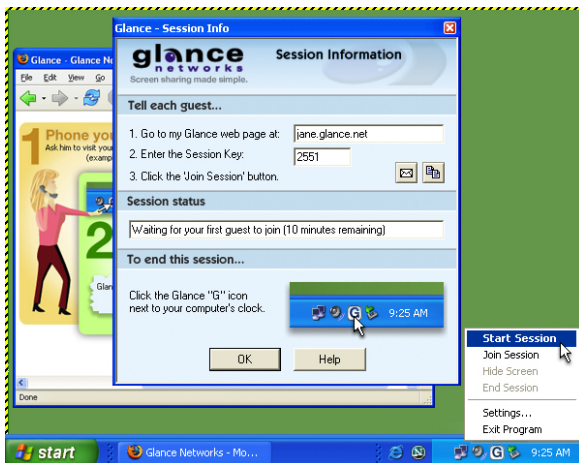
Here's What I Think. The move to Flash-based technology is a smart one for Cisco. Flash runs on somewhere around 115% of today's personal computers and is also moving to the mobile phone world. The SMB move puts Cisco squarely in the position of being able to provide fully integrated solutions (including a videophone) to small businesses, customers who are far less likely to want to string together piece-part solutions.

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Glance 2.0 Moves From Beta to General Availability



Glance Networks (glance.net) has announced Glance v2.0, promising performance boosts to the collaboration service that we believe is still the simplest in the industry to use and the fastest to launch, particularly in an ad-hoc fashion. Glance engineers have completely re-written the base code driving the service, thereby speeding up screen updates, supporting 24-bit color, and employing an architecture that enables customers to integrate Glance into their own web sites. Glance is still based on Java technology. The company reports to us that they have been most successful selling to small companies and that the service itself is most commonly used as a software demonstration and selling tool. This makes sense, or at least there is a good fit between the simple, limited functionality of Glance and the need to not overwhelm, confuse, or distract prospects with the sales tool (or software downloads) while launching a demo session.

Polycom Enhances Microsoft Compatibility

Polycom's desktop and conference room video systems and bridges now offer embedded software support for Microsoft Office Communicator 2005 and Microsoft Office Live Communications Server 2005. Users can simply add PVX and VSX video endpoints as "buddies" on an instant message buddy list in Communicator and can initiate high-quality, multiparty and point-to-point video calls and share content with each other.

LifeSize Ships Phone

LifeSize announced the availability of LifeSize Phone, a circular-shaped high definition audio conference phone that doubles as a conference room speaker phone and as the microphone system for the company's not-yet shipping high-definition videoconferencing systems.



September SpotLights Web Seminar



Casting vs. Conferencing: Getting Your Message Across Without Breaking the Bank

Speaker: Ira M. Weinstein, Senior Analyst and Consultant, Wainhouse Research

Date: 29 Sept **Time:** Americas – 11:00 am Eastern (New York) [Register - Americas](#)
Europe – 10:00 am GMT (London) [Register - Europe](#)

There is no shortage of tools available to support enterprise communications. With options ranging from audio conferencing, web conferencing, videoconferencing, streaming / webcasting, and even virtual office solutions, it easy for end-users to become confused regarding which tool will provide the best experience and bang for the buck. Instead of focusing on product features and capabilities, this presentation provides guidance and insight into selecting the right meeting, presentation, and teaming tools based on end-user requirements and organizational priorities. **Ira M. Weinstein** is a 13 year veteran of the conferencing and audio-visual industries.



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Four Events to Put on your Calendar

1 Final preparation is underway for the [Keystone Conference](#), to be held in Indianapolis, Indiana and online October 3-5, 2005. Sponsors include Polycom, VBrick, Ectus, Marratech, RADVISION, TANDBERG, Safari Video Networks, LifeSize Communications, Renovo Software, Expedite, Haivision, Cisco Systems, and ConferencePlus. Cisco, Ectus, Marratech, RADVISION, and VBrick Systems will be delivering a special web-based showcase via Cisco MeetingPlace 4-6 PM CDT on Tuesday, October 4th – details available soon at the [Keystone web site](#). These and other sponsors also will appear on panels moderated by Wainhouse Research. Finally, in conjunction with the Keystone Conference and as part of an upcoming segment report on *The Distance Education and e-Learning Landscape*, Wainhouse Research is conducting a survey of K-20 educators and trainers. If you teach or train using collaboration technologies, [click here](#) to take the survey and get your chance to win an Apple iPod Nano or a copy of *Videoconferencing for K-12 Classrooms*.



2 The [CSP Summit](#) is just two weeks away! We have put together a compelling agenda (October 6-7) that we hope will challenge CSPs and their partners to explore new areas for growth. We are also providing numerous opportunities for networking during breaks, lunch, and a cocktail reception. [Sign up now](#); there is limited hotel and conference space and the conference has sold out every year. Details are at wainhouse.com/cspsummit. WR has negotiated a special nightly rate of \$150 at the exceptional W Hotel Lakeshore in downtown Chicago. To reserve your room, contact our events coordinator Kris Kristie at +1 609.714.2222, kkristie@espkits.com and identify yourself as a CSP Summit attendee.



3 The Wainhouse Research European Forum 2006 will be Berlin Germany April 19-20-21, 2006. Details will be forthcoming in about three weeks. We are planning an exciting agenda this year that will encompass directions in conferencing and collaboration and through our new diamond sponsor, the European commission funded Augmented Multiparty Interaction project (AMI), will extend out to include next-generation meeting technologies. We will be looking for speakers and sponsors, as well as participants in our technology showcase. If you want to be put on the mail list to receive additional information, send an email to Sara Fargo, sfargo@wainhouse.com.



4 The Wainhouse Research Summit 2006 is in the very preliminary planning stage. But this premiere conferencing and collaboration event is already scheduled to take place at the Colonnade Hotel in Boston's Back Bay again, July 19-20-21. Put this on your calendar as the "can't miss" event. This year will focus on critical issues in the integration with telephony and Presence-based solutions as well as end user considerations when evaluating hosted and managed services vs. CPE deployments.



New on www.wrplatinum.com

If you haven't registered on our [Platinum web site](#) yet, you should. Check out how you can arrange for personalized data delivery. Examples of recent Research Notes posted on Platinum include:

- The Emblaze-VCON Acquisition
- Ectus: One-Trick Pony or Here for the Ride?
- Differentiation, Attach Rates, and Multipliers in Telephony-Based Unified Communications Systems
- The Multimedia Minute Catches On
- NAT / Firewall Issues with Voice and Video over IP

One on One with York Telecom President & COO Ron Gaboury



York Telecom has been providing managed services to government accounts for many years. The company more recently began to focus on enterprise and commercial markets. WR had a chance to sit down with President and COO Ron Gaboury and talk about managed services, and why this market segment might be of growing interest to more end users.

WRB: What is your (York Telecom's) definition of managed services?

RG: Based on the discussions at this year's Wainhouse Research Summit, it seems that everyone has his own definition of managed services. Personally, I believe that a managed service offering should include various products, tool sets, and services that improve the performance, reliability, and cost-effectiveness of the client's

conferencing environment. Ideally, the packaging of these products and services should be flexible enough to allow the client to utilize from one to all of the components of the offering. Basically, managed services should support, augment, and enhance the client's visual communications environment. We've followed these general managed services principles in designing our managed services offering.

WRB: Just how important are conferencing managed services to York Telecom's future?

RG: Managed Services are not only the future of our company – they are also our past. The fact is that York Telecom has been providing what is now becoming known as “conferencing managed services” for more than ten years of our twenty year history. We have large federal customers that have enjoyed many years of 98.9% (or better) endpoint uptime. Considering the demanding, mission critical nature of Department of Defense and civilian government environments, achieving this level of performance has been no easy task. At York Telecom, we've made the delivery of turnkey conferencing and collaboration managed services an integral part of our corporate culture.

WRB: So what makes your offering different from other managed service offerings?

RG: We believe that our approach, philosophy and breadth of services differentiate our offering from competing services.

1) Our approach involves understanding the needs, priorities, and business model of each client. Then, and only then, can we provide a package of offerings that will help them achieve their goals. Our managed service offering is not an off-the-shelf product; it is a customized set of services designed to give each client the support they can most appropriately utilize, at the most cost-effective price.

2) Our philosophy is that our managed service offering must not only adhere to the highest possible performance standards, but it must help the client save both time and money. Critical to the success of any managed service program is real-time measurement. Furthermore, we continue to learn daily from our clients. The feedback we receive from service monitoring and our clients is a critical part of helping us improve our offering today and make tomorrow's service even better.

3) Finally, the modularity and breadth of our services allows us to meet and exceed the expectations of even the most demanding customers. We've designed our solutions to integrate with the client's existing infrastructure and work flow. This means that instead of disrupting the client's environment, we enhance it.

WRB: You mentioned that York Telecom helps customers improve the ROI of their conferencing investments. How do you make that happen?

RG: First of all, we don't just come in and suggest ways to cut costs. While cutting cost will decrease expenditures, it could have an adverse affect on other aspects of the client's environment. For example, we could generalize a recommendation that all non-critical video meetings should utilize lower connection speeds. In a hybrid network or a pure ISDN environment, this would significantly decrease transport costs. But, the resulting meeting experience would also be compromised. In this instance there would be immediate savings result, but not necessarily an increase in overall longer term ROI.

The true ROI improvement stems from increased performance and reliability, balanced with cost-effectiveness. For example, the turnkey nature of our service allows the client to focus on core business, decrease the risk of technology obsolescence, and control and budget for the cost of conferencing – on a global basis.

The result is increased overall satisfaction with videoconferencing, increased end-user adoption, and a greater ROI on all conferencing investments. It's pretty straight-forward really. Better conferencing services result in additional usage and investment return. This is what we do ...

we make conferencing services better.

WRB: What do you see as the future of managed services?

RG: Today' Managed Services offerings espouse primarily videoconferencing services. I believe it is York Telecom's responsibility, and mission, to lead the way by architecting enterprise solutions that encompass all the modalities of visual communications ranging from streaming to content storage, from webcasting to web conferencing, and from event management to on-site support. The future of managed services certainly involves increased performance and flexibility at lower cost points, but I believe that increased breadth of services is the true destiny of managed services. Managed Services, stated simply, will become an integral part of an enterprise's core communication environment.

WRB: Some might say that conferencing and collaboration are growing to encompass audio-video-web and IM. This will give collaboration much higher visibility in most end user organizations, and move collaboration clearly into the IT space. How will York react if these developments occur? And won't this change your competitive environment dramatically.

RG: Our current competitive environment includes both the highly specialized integration of video systems, and our managed services support programs. The system integration often requires trained personnel to support the applications (room attendants, video operations staff, tech-to-tech interfaces). However, as conferencing and collaboration evolve, Managed Services programs must evolve too. Therefore, our technical support team is already morphing into an organization geared towards providing support to the non-technical end user level. This re-tooling (catering to the real end-user) aligns very well to the merging of audio-video-web and IM support, which I agree will merge with VTC and collaboration over time.

From a depth level, it requires our specialists to have full working knowledge of all aspects of enterprise IP support, and to adopt data center / network operations center mentalities.

I don't see that our competitive environment undergoes dramatic changes given that we will maintain our specialty in visual communications engineering. The more significant impact I see will be the changes necessary in our partnerships and in our suppliers. Our firm has specialized in seamless operational partnerships since inception, and I see that this will carry us through this next level of technical evolution.

Letters

Dear Editor: In my opinion, the crucial element of Skype that you did not refer to is its Beta version of Skype with Vision. Here is the business model that is likely to have an immense impact on business and personal communications. When one is buying something from an unknown person or trying to clinch a business deal, most people would find being able to see the appearance and demeanor of the other party very attractive: "The whites of the eyes". While I concede that there are some very adept liars around who are able to disguise their body language, for the great majority, the way you twitch can be a dead giveaway and such subtle clues are the basis of much day to day personal interaction.

So this is my bold prophecy. Within a couple of years, Skype Video will be in use by a very large number of Internet users, particularly those under 20 in age. Business transactions will increasingly be over the desktop and an audio visual connection will be very much in evidence. This is simply an obvious extension of video conferencing but in a package that will be universally accessible and more to the point, extremely cheap..... Peter R Jensen, Hyparcons, NSW 2088, Australia

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