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New Systems from Aethra Highlight Relaunch



While walking the beaches of Sardinia last week, I ran into none other than my old pal JF Thau from France's Hypcom organization. JF reminded me that Aethra had introduced two new endpoints based on a new platform with improved performance and support for the latest audio and video algorithms. The company also announced a new business strategy based on combining its network technology business with its videoconferencing business, an unfolding strategy to refocus on North American, and strengthening relationships with RADVISION to provide an end-to-end solution.

The Vega X5 and Vega X3 are new set top systems based on the latest TriMedia chip sets, increased memory, and a VCON-like wedge-shaped design produced by Italian designer Paolo Villa. The new X Series all support wideband audio (G.722.1-C and AAC-LD), H.264 and H.239, H.323 and SIP, a new digital microphone, and a new user interface (we have not seen the new GUI). The entry level X3 will go for around 3300 Euro, while the X5, which supports higher bandwidth, voice tracking and an 8-site MCU with 10 layouts changeable on the fly, will start somewhere below 5000 Euro. Aethra is sticking to its policy of base-level systems with lots of options, typically initiated via software keys, giving resellers total flexibility and modularity. At the same time as the product announcement, Aethra revealed it plans to introduce a new videophone and all-in-one exec system in 2006.

	 Vega X3	 Vega X5
IP-only base unit	\$3890	\$5990 (2MB on IP)
XGA input/output	\$790	\$990
H.239 option	\$790	\$990
BRI ISDN: 1-3-4-6 BRI	\$350-\$1080-NA-NA	\$350-\$1190-\$1490-\$3000
PRI ISDN	NA	\$2540
Embedded MCU	NA	5 site: IP only \$1990 5 site: IP+ISDN \$2990 8 site: IP+ISDN \$3600

Here's What I Think:

Well, I haven't had a chance to see the endpoints in action, or to get the feel of the new GUI hardware and software, but feedback from some of the resellers I spoke with is that these are exciting products – up to snuff from a technology point of view, and very aggressively priced. Aethra, of course is pretty much an unknown in North American enterprise circles, but the company has been very successful in other areas, notably China, and Italy, and

is growing in France; and even more interesting is that Aethra has been very successful with the US military. But it would be folly to think that introducing two new endpoints is the key to success. The company desperately needs to build a North American team if it is to have any chance of growth, make its partnership with RADVISION work (a daunting task to say the least), and put some real efforts behind the stated promises of new strategy, new products, new presence, and new marketing.



A panel of Aethra partners and resellers discussed current trends and issues in the visual collaboration space, including challenges facing channel partners.



Aethra's Corrado Mazzocato trying to convince Andrew that the company is for real in North America.

⇒ [WR Forum: New Aethra Products](#)

Wainhouse Research Launches Point Nine User Forum

Wainhouse Research hosted the first meeting of an industry collaboration strategy forum, a program designed to facilitate peer networking, to act as an information sharing resource, to help attendees optimize deployed solutions, and to serve as an information conduit between members, vendors, and Wainhouse Research. In all, 23 managers from 12 multinational, global enterprises spent the day discussing IP transition strategies for video, webcasting implementation plans for real-time corporate broadcasts, managed service providers, and other issues around driving success with rich media collaboration tools. The meeting, hosted by Bear Stearns in New York City and supported by Polycom, SPL, and BT, featured four attendee-led discussions as well as one presentation by WR. The round table format facilitated lively discussions and some heated debate in the by-invitation-only meeting. By popular demand, we are planning a follow up meeting in NYC in early 2006 and launching a UK roundtable in late Q4-2005. For further information, contact Richard Norris, richard@wainhouse.com.



Two views of the meeting room at Bear Stearns where Wainhouse Research and 12 multinationals discussed deployment issues surrounding IP Communications.

Four Events for your October 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 ONE week 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.



One of the highlights this year will be a presentation on “The Meaning of Persistence: Driving Value Through Collaboration Portals.” Audio, web, and video conferencing will soon be integrated into collaboration portals such as Groove and SharePoint. The emergence of portals could enable CSPs to offer greater value and to increase client “stickiness”. Our speaker will be Marc Sanders, Product Line Mgr – Real-Time Collaboration Bus Unit, Microsoft.



3 Two members of the Wainhouse Research team will be presenting at this year’s [Polycom User Group Annual Meeting](#), October 15-19 in Phoenix, AZ. Richard Norris and Ira Weinstein will be presenting two sessions on “Maximizing your Conferencing ROI” and “High Definition – Does Anyone Really Care?” Attendees at the PUG conference will be “Blazing the Trail”, as they attend other educational and motivational keynote sessions and participate in 30+ interactive concurrent sessions and visit over 35 exhibitors.

4 MVC and meetyoo conferencing are running another one of their famed German roadshows, this time sponsored by Arel, Codian, LifeSize, NEC, Microsoft, Polycom, TANDBERG, and yours truly Wainhouse Research. The October 17 event will be at the Frankfurt Marriott Hotel, October 19 at the Dorint Sofitel in Munich, while the October 21 seminar will be in central Berlin at the Hotel Palace. These events will have a CIO focus, with Wolfgang Franklin, founder of the cioforum, following a Microsoft presentation on IP, collaboration, and real-time communications, followed in turn by WR’s take on “Buzz vs. Reality.” Check out www.meetyoo.de/citytour2005.

News in Brief

- SightSpeed is now offering unlimited 1-to-1 voice and video calling – for FREE. The new basic service plan also includes unlimited video mail. A new SightSpeed Pro service plan will cost \$4.95 per month or \$49.50 per year. This plan will deliver 4-way multi-party conferencing, extended video mail recording times and storage length.

- At the recent VON show in Boston, AGT announced FATHOM 4.0, a new release of the network performance tool that adds size settings for call patterns, alias configuration from the console interface, and the ability to make multiple simultaneous test calls. At the same time, AGT announced version 3.0 of VIDEO PRESENTER. The new release makes quality video conferencing more accessible to the average user, allowing individuals to present video and content from the Web to video conferencing devices. Version 3.0 bridges H.239 and non-H.239 technologies so that all meeting participants see and experience the same video and content simultaneously, allowing for more effective communication.
- VBrick is adding Windows Media support to its MPEG solutions that enable organizations to record, distribute, and manage digital content. The VB6000 WM Appliance for streaming media expands customers' digital video capabilities while maximizing their Microsoft investments. At the VON show, the company also announced its EtherneTV Media Distribution System 3.0, a turnkey platform to record, distribute, and manage digital video across IP networks.
- Also at the VON show, SIPquest announced its Dual Mode Client (DMC) software that allows a user to place and receive a call using the same number, on the same handset, over the best available network – WiFi or cellular. In addition, the company joined IBM's PartnerWorld Telecommunications Industry Network to complete the IP Multimedia Subsystem (IMS) architecture. SIPquest brings an IMS Client and framework that integrates new services.
- Minneapolis-based reseller Video Guidance has signed up to be a LifeSize channel partner.
- Spain-based ttrends (www.ttrends.es) is launching the "dirVC.net" service for NAT-firewall traversal based on TANDBERG's H.460 implementation, Expressway.

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People & Places

Polycom Video Division, Wayne Allard, CTO, Ken Kalinoski, VP of Engineering
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 RADVISION, Richard Li, General Manager of China operations.

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