

Recommendations for Videoconference / Collaboration Systems

Videoconferencing / Collaboration



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Equipment Standards:

Customers should purchase standards compliant videoconference systems (SIP/H.323/H.320) to ensure interoperability. The Library and Information Technology Services recommends Cisco for hardware based video conferencing equipment. Cisco systems integrate well with room audio/video installations, offer enterprise wide solutions, are reliable and user friendly, and are low maintenance. These systems offer high-definition (HD) capability with all models. Software based solutions should be SIP based and allow for interoperability with other standards as well as voice integration.

Connectivity:

Since HD video requires higher bandwidth to transmit and receive, customers need to review their network connectivity and local bandwidth resources. Actual HD call rates vary according to vendor products. All endpoints in a video conference need to have HD capable codecs and HD cameras in order to benefit visually. Customers should partner with LITS in their planning stages to evaluate their connection needs and to ensure communication between IP videoconference endpoints through Emory's network firewalls.

Bridging multiple sites via IP on and off campus is accomplished using LITS' videoconference bridge, also known as the Multipoint Control Unit (MCU). LITS will continue to evaluate bridging needs for the Emory campus and provide reasonable solutions which also includes recommended outside vendors.

The number of sites connecting depends on the speed (data rate) of the conference and each connecting site. Availability is on a first come first serve basis. Support/access charges apply.

Existing Emory Central Services:

General videoconference facilities and the MCU are available through LITS for Emory University, Emory Healthcare, and Emory Affiliates for the purpose of live, two-way communication and collaboration with other universities, research, and medical facilities throughout the world.

Desktop Videoconferencing and Collaboration:

LITS currently supports desktop video conferencing and collaboration using Vidyo, Adobe Connect, Skype for Business, and Avaya Aura Conferencing. Vidyo is a cross platform solution that allows for full two-way communication, document/desktop sharing, and interconnectivity between the desktop client and existing videoconference room systems. Users wanting to host meetings using Vidyo must be registered in the system. Vidyo is available to all Emory entities. Non-Emory users of Vidyo will require an Emory Sponsored Account to host meetings. Guest access is allowed and Vidyo is an Emory HIPAA approved solution.

Skype for Business is part of the Office 365 package and is available to all Emory Office 365 customers. S4B has similar features as Vidyo providing two-way audio and video, document sharing, chat, and IM presence. Avaya Aura Conferencing is similar to S4B and also allows for phone conference integration/management, recording of sessions, remote desktop control, and document sharing with limited storage. LITS also supports Adobe Connect for live or recorded webinars.

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Adobe Connect allows for templates that can be re-used for classes or lectures. Adobe Connect has various pods that can be used in the templates which include video, chat, polling, Q&A, whiteboard, and document / desktop sharing.

Customers would need to purchase desktop equipment including a webcam and a headset or echo-cancellation microphone for their computers to use desktop videoconferencing. Built in cameras and microphones on laptops or mobile devices may also be used. LITS recommends Logitech cameras and headsets.

Customers should partner with their local desktop support to install and manage any of these desktop collaborative tools.

Room Design Standards:

The design of videoconferencing / collaboration spaces depends on many factors requiring careful planning and consideration – room lighting, acoustics, space dimensions, layout, color and infrastructure requirements (i.e., connectivity running to and from your building). LITS offers room design consultation services within our LITS Video Services team in conjunction with Campus Services. Our preferred audiovisual systems integrators, work in tandem with LITS to form custom design recommendations to support your needs and will meet existing campus requirements.

LITS Recommended Vendors:

Room Integration and Portable Equipment:

AVYVE

Merry McCleary

404-209-8600

merry@avyve.com

AVTech Services

Bill Thrasher

770-663-1277

bthrasher@avts.biz

Managed Conferencing Services:

(Audio conferencing, web conferencing)

Intercall

Lynn A Muench

Global Account Executive

770-235-9324

LAMuench@intercall.com

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Video Bridging Services, i.e., ISDN

BT Conferencing

1 888 947 3663 (Video)

1 866 766 8777 (U.S.)

Support and Maintenance:

Customers need to consider ongoing support and maintenance of their videoconference systems. If the systems are mission critical, customers should consider purchasing annual maintenance contracts for their video conference codecs (this would be a separate annual contract from room maintenance contracts). On-site, daily support should be considered and is based on customer's needs. Because of our experience with Cisco products, LITS may be able to assist in troubleshooting Cisco installations. LITS provides connectivity support and assistance with more in-depth troubleshooting support for departments that maintain their own systems, as well as demos and training on LITS supported desktop collaboration tools.