Recommendations for Videoconference Systems

EMORY UNIVERSITY | **University Technology Services**

Videoconferencing

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Equipment Standards:

Customers should purchase standards compliant video conference systems (H.323/H.320/SIP) to ensure interoperability. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) recommends Cisco (formerly Tandberg) 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. Today, new video conferencing codecs (encoder-decoder) offer high-definition (HD) capability. Codecs should also be SIP (Session Internet Protocol) compatible/capable to allow more connectivity flexibility.

New codecs have integrated HD capabilities so customers need to review their network connectivity and local bandwidth as HD requires higher bandwidth to transmit and receive. 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.

Connectivity:

Video conferencing end-points are mostly IP based systems. Some systems have a combination of IP/ISDN connection capabilities. Typically, Emory customers only need to purchase an IP based system unless there is a specific reason to have individual ISDN connectivity for the system. Customers should partner with OIT in their planning stages to evaluate their connection needs and to ensure communication between IP video conference endpoints through Emory's network firewalls.

Bridging IP and ISDN calls is accomplished using OIT's videoconference bridge, also known as the Multipoint Control Unit (MCU). OIT will continue to evaluate bridging needs for the Emory campus and provide reasonable solutions.

Customers wanting to host multi-site video conferences may request the use of OIT's MCU.

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 Services:

General video conference facilities and the MCU are available through OIT 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.

Room Design Standards:

The design of video conferencing 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). OIT offers room design consultation services within our UTS Video Services team. AVYVE, our preferred audio visual systems integrator, works in tandem with OIT to form custom design recommendations to support your needs and will meet existing campus requirements.

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OIT Recommended Vendors:

Room Integration and Portable Equipment:

AVYVE
Merry McCleary
404-209-8600
merry@avyve.com

BT Conferencing
Carolyn Martin
770-972-0556
Carolyn.martin@bt.com

Managed Conferencing Services:

(Bridging capabilities, audio conferencing, web conferencing)

BT Conferencing
Carolyn Martin
770-972-0556
Carolyn.martin@bt.com

Support and Maintenance:

Customers need to consider ongoing support and maintenance of their video conference 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, OIT may be able to assist in troubleshooting Cisco installations. OIT provides connectivity support and assistance with more in-depth troubleshooting support for departments that maintain their own systems.

Desktop Videoconferencing:

OIT currently supports desktop video conferencing using Vidyo and Skype. Desktop Vidyo is a cross platform solution that allows for full two way communication, document/desktop sharing, and interconnectivity between the desktop client and existing video conference room systems. Every user for Vidyo must be registered in the system including any room system. Vidyo is available to all Emory entities. Non-Emory users of Vidyo will require an Emory Sponsored Account.

Customers would need to purchase a desktop "package" including a webcam and a headset or echo-cancellation microphone for their computers to use desktop videoconferencing. Built in cameras and microphones may also be used. OIT recommends Logitech cameras and headsets.

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Other Conferencing Tools:

OIT supports Adobe Connect for live or recorded webinars. OIT Collaborative spaces host the SMART Meeting Pro software with access to the Bridgit server. A client for Bridgit is available for remote participants joining into conferences with these collaborative rooms. Access to the Bridgit server is limited to room hosted events only.