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CERN automatic audioconference service

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Content :

Scientists all over the world collaborate with the CERN laboratory day by day. They must be able to communicate effectively on their joint projects at any time, so telephone conferences become indispensable and widely used. The traditional conference system, managed by 6 switchboard operators, was hosting more than 20000 hours and 5500 conference per year. However, the system needed to be modernized in three ways. Firstly, to ensure researchers autonomy in the organization of their conferences; secondly, to eliminate the constraints of manual intervention by operators; and thirdly, to integrate the audioconferences into a collaborative framework.

To solve this issue, the CERN telecommunications team drew up a specification to implement a new system. After deep analysis, it was decided to use a new Alcatel collaborative conference solution based on the SIP protocol. During 2005/2006 the system was tested as the first European pilot and, based on CERN's recommendations, several improvements were implemented: billing, security, redundancy, etc.

The new automatic conference system has been operational since the second half of 2006. It is very popular for the users: 39000 calls and 30000 accumulated hours for around 5000 conferences during the last twelve months. Furthermore, to cope with the demand, the capacity of the service is about to be tripled and new features, such as apps sharing and on-line presentation, should be proposed in the near future.

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