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A Globally Distributed Real Time Infrastruture for World Wide Collaborations

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VRVS (Virtual Room Videoconferencing System) is a unique, globally scalable next-generation system for real-time collaboration by small workgroups, medium and large teams engaged in research, education and outreach. VRVS operates over an ensemble of national and international networks. Since it went into production service in early 1997, VRVS has become a standard part of the toolset used daily by a large sector of HENP, and it is used increasingly for other DoE/NSF-supported programs. Today, the VRVS Web-based system is regularly accessed by more than 30,000 registered hosts running the VRVS software in more than 103 countries. There are currently 78 VRVS "reflectors" that create the interconnections and manage the traffic flow, in the Americas, Europe and Asia. New reflectors recently have been installed in Brazil, China, Pakistan, Australia and Slovakia.

VRVS is global in scope: it covers the full range of existing and emerging protocols and the full range of client devices for collaboration, from mobile systems through desktops to installations in large auditoria. VRVS will be integrated with the Grid-enabled Analysis Environment (GAE) now under development at Caltech in partnership with the GriPhyN, iVDGL and PPDG projects in the US, and Grid projects in Europe.

A major architectural change is currently in development. The new version v4.0, is expected to be deployed in early 2005. We will describe the current operational state of the VRVS service and provide a description of the new architecture including all the new and advanced functionalities that will be added.

Primary authors: Mr ADAMCZYK, D. (Caltech); Mr LATTKA, D. (Caltech); Mr DENIS, G. (Caltech); NEWMAN, H. (Caltech); LEGRAND, I. (CALTECH); Mr FERNANDES, J. (Caltech/CERN); SUCIK, J. (Caltech); Mr WEI, K. (Caltech); FARKAS, P. (Caltech); Mr GALVEZ, P. (CALTECH)

Presenter: Mr GALVEZ, P. (CALTECH)

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