

Overview of Videoconferencing @ CERN

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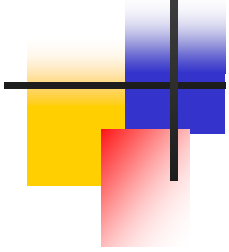
VC Rooms Service at CERN

- **1,600+ registered videoconferences in 2003**
 - **73% VRVS (IP), 27% ISDN**
 - In 2004 the ISDN part is much less, and "native" H.323 (IP) conferences appear.
 - Mostly because of ESnet MCU service evolution from ISDN to H.323
- **11 VC rooms/auditoria currently in operation (+1 more in project):**
 - **1 dedicated VC room (only),**
 - **8 meeting rooms,**
 - **2 (+1) auditoria**
- **7 rooms are PC-based:**
 - **VRVS** with *MBone* tools (Vic, Rat)
 - **Zydacron ONWan350 PCI card for 2x64 ISDN** ...and for **H.323** since February.
- **Progressing towards "out-of-the-box" solutions:**
 - 3 (+1) rooms equipped with Polycom Viewstations
 - 1 room with Aethra Vega Star for evaluation
 - Still requires a **significant installation/integration effort** by technician, as a consequence of purchasing the videoconference stations, projectors and cameras each from the cheapest provider.
- On-line documentation
 - http://cern.ch/it-multimedia/Videoconf_Rooms



Manpower for Audio/Videoconferencing

- Internet Services group (IT/IS) :
 - Manpower and budget downsized 3 years ago to run the VC service in "**Maintenance mode**", i.e. **Operating existing equipment** with minimal changes.
 - We are still in this *Maintenance mode*, because of global lack of manpower
 - => *No important/rapid changes, no major upgrades*
 - Manpower details:
 - *0.2 Engineer (staff)*
 - *1 Technician (staff)*
 - *will retire mid 2005, has holiday for 1 year*
 - *Replacement not granted yet...*
 - *1 Outsourced Data-aid* for assistance to users in VC rooms
 - **≠ full VC operation**
 - *1 Caltech/CERN Project Associate* for VRVS support
- IT/CS group:
 - ~ 1 FTE of Telephone Standard team for interfacing/reserving MCUs
 - and for Phone conferencing



Related activities/services

- **Desktop VC**: not centrally supported
 - However, VRVS users can Email support@vrvs.org
 - **Caltech staff:**
 - 3 people at CERN (incl. 1 Caltech/CERN P.A.)
 - 4 people in US
 - In CERN offices a few Polycom ViaVideo's, plus VRVS, Netmeeting, etc... and Phone (+Web) conferencing.
- **Telephone** Standard team IT/CS supports an increasing number of audio-conferences using CERN PABX
 - ~70/week, 3560 in 2003
- **Audio/Video distribution** among CERN auditoria over IP:
 - service in IT/CS group
- **Webcasting** (*Real/Networks*) and traditional Audio/Video services:
 - service in IT/UDS group
- ETT Video Production team (CERN Secretariat General)



Challenges

- Rooms maintenance and user assistance
 - + 4 extra rooms over a 12 month period, soon 12 rooms in total
...although still in maintenance mode.
 - Face that increasing number of rooms and users with existing manpower resources
 - ...and anticipate retirement of Technician staff in 2005
 - Follow technical innovations, and plan progressive equipment renewal...
- Large size of CERN (meeting) rooms => difficult audio problems
- Difficult trade-off between setup simplicity and requested features
 - different users usually have different ideas/requirements
- CERN Purchase rules:
"cheapest equipment/provider that is technically acceptable"
- Activities spread over 3 groups
 - ...but within the same (IT) department since 1st January 2004
- Very limited manpower / Growing user base and expectations / Evolving, multi-disciplinary, distributed technology that does **not** work by itself.



Questions ?
