

University of Houston-Downtown Expands its Video Horizons

The Mission

The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) needed to replace its existing video network infrastructure (MCUs) with a reliable, robust platform that delivered value added features, such as firewall traversal, high definition support and remote desktop connectivity and data collaboration.



A UHD video conferencing room

The Challenge

UHD is a pioneer within the University of Houston System in utilizing video conferencing technology. It is used both in distance learning and day to day communications between remote sites, with up to 80 hours of constant connectivity per week. As such, the video conferencing system is a mission-critical part of the university's communications infrastructure. The new infrastructure not only needed to deliver value added features, it had to be easy to use, integrate seamlessly with existing endpoints and workflow, and deliver the robust performance for UHD's heavy usage today, as well as with projected added desktop connectivity and high definition.

The Solution

UHD enjoyed years of positive experience with RADVISION's gatekeeper technology, especially when it came to engineering issues. For the staff at UHD, strong engineering was a critical factor in choosing a new vendor. RADVISION's standard-based vision was in sync with UHD's approach and laid the groundwork for a fruitful partnership.

UHD deployed two [RADVISION SCOPIA® 100/24 MCUs](#), [SCOPIA Desktop](#), the [iVIEW™ Suite](#) and gatekeepers in an extensive, full-scale pilot. The first stage of the pilot was to ensure that the new infrastructure would stand up to the rigorous test of UHD's present capacity, without compromising the constituent's experience. These tests were completed in a full production environment, with special emphasis on remote desktop connectivity. High definition testing in a production environment with Polycom Viavideos and Tandberg 3000 MXPs and a standard PC was carried out successfully as well.

The Result

For both audio and video, the system was tested for out of order packets and lost packets and the results were verified and deemed excellent. The system proved robust to handle added remote desktops via SCOPIA Desktop. The high definition tests were also very successful, with the quality on the PC significantly impressive relative to commonly transmitted composite video direct.

"We are now positioned to offer our constituents a completely seamless solution that extends our advanced systems right to the desktop," says Steve Cachia, Manager for Video Network Services, UHD Division of Information Technology. "With the SCOPIA platform's Flat Capacity Plus™, we are getting more value from each port, while reducing the burden on the system to handle network, audio and video separately. And we can transmit sessions using H.264, HD & H239 without restriction."

"The SCOPIA platform proved to be a robust package that encompassed reliable desktop conferencing, built-in firewall traversal and HD support. This single-vendor solution proved reliable, dependable and blended ergonomically with our workflow - without compromising system stability or application deployment."

Steve Cachia, Manager for Video Network Services,
UHD Division of Information Technology

Looking Forward

UHD is planning to roll out SCOPIA Desktop in the near future. While this pilot was within the limits of the university's operational centers (UH-Cinco Ranch, UH-Sugarland & The University Center), plans include expanding to encompass security and crisis management, as well as e-learning. "The SCOPIA Desktop is a springboard for offering connectivity to the university's many 'road warriors' and opening a whole new world to so many of our constituents," adds Steve. "The SCOPIA MCU and SCOPIA Desktop have been proven to deliver a reliable, robust platform that meets our needs. We have found a true partner in RADVISION; a partner that shares our vision of what video conferencing can do, and where it will take us."