

FOCUS ARENA - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

Why wouldn't I just use my own PC?

Personal Computers are meant for individual desktop use with a small webcam and headset. While they can be used hands-free in low-volume situations, they are better served by echo-cancelling speakerphones but even then, camera and mic pick-up range is limited and unsuited to rooms larger than a "study". Personal login, size of text and camera position also create problems when shared within a group and are best avoided from the outset. The BYOD feature included within Focus Arena does provide individual users access to professional camera, microphones and speakers to facilitate those who prefer using their own Windows laptop or MacBook for control and presentation.

Why not dedicate a PC to the room and allow users to log in individually?

As an infrequent meeting room user, your login to a shared and networked PC will trigger a download of email inbox, deleted items, etc in front of all your colleagues, keeping them, and potentially other meeting participants waiting and creating frustration as to how long it might take. MS Teams is part of the Office 365 environment and so this scenario is more likely than not. The person with the Teams invitation may also be late for the meeting, preventing others from joining a call and wasting valuable time. So, whilst a dedicated PC is good for the room, it is better to give it its own identity, e.g., Room23@company.co.uk, without a regular email account, pre-loaded with all popular apps, so that it can be invited to anyone's conference on any cloud platform as a conventional PC.

Why have Teams Room or Zoom Rooms systems at all when a dedicated Windows PC preloaded with apps will do fine?

For some organisations, particularly in smaller meeting rooms, this approach is fine. A mini-PC or NUC tucked away behind a TV and operated with a wireless keyboard and mouse will do the trick, especially when accompanied by an Interactive Touchscreen or Whiteboard where the user is stood at its surface and juggling lots of content, e.g. in a training scenario. Within the Focus Arena solution, this principle is used for "Arena" apps pre-installed on a NUC PC (supplied). In larger rooms with a formal agenda and multiple different users, conference flow needs to be smoother, you don't want your local audience exposed to all activity and content on that PC and you prefer the easy-to-use buttons which appear on a touch tablet in front of the conference controller, including "Join" as you walk in and sit down, camera controls, volume etc. The choice is down to whether you host informal hi-tech meetings or more formal lo-tech ones. The beauty of Focus Arena is that it caters for both; Focused applications for formal use, Arena desktop applications for informal use, whether that be on dedicated room PC or BYOD.

Why not just have 2 systems – one for Zoom and one for Teams?

Normally this would mean 2 cameras, 2 sets of microphones, 2 speaker bars, 2 controllers and a complicated method of sharing PC content from a guest user's laptop. This is where we started our considerations for Focus Arena – How could we focus on both, but share a single set of devices,

optimised for the meeting room? Our focus on both MS Teams Room (MTR) as well as Zoom Rooms and in a way that didn't breach certifications by Microsoft or Zoom, meant having 2 processors; one for each, but having one set of peripherals we could seamlessly switch between them.

Isn't it just like having 2 devices with one set of camera and audio peripherals that I plug into the desired one?

Yes, it is exactly like that, except you don't have to plug and unplug any cables. We do all that for you behind the scenes. You select your mode, sit down and press "Join".

Now that Microsoft and Zoom have announced interconnectivity between themselves, why do I need Focus Arena?

Invitations are always from Teams users. Teams Room and Zoom Room systems may join a conference in Teams, but Teams Room systems (unlike Teams Desktops) cannot join a Zoom conference. The mechanism deployed by Microsoft and Zoom to achieve their interoperability is WebRTC but limitations on video quality and content sharing capabilities, means that it is poor in comparison with the native operation of Focus Arena. Interoperability through CVI and CRC gateway licences is not as popular as "native" registration, so with our dual focus on both Teams and Zoom, we have created the best of both worlds – a native experience on both, One Touch Join (OTJ) on both and easy switching between them in less than one minute, by meeting room users rather than IT specialists.

When I use my PC in a large meeting room, other participants complain of poor audio quality or echo being received. How does Focus Arena help solve this?

PCs and laptops are intended for personal use. By amplifying the incoming volume, the sound hits the microphones and attempts to go back the other way. A professional meeting room system on the other hand has an echo-canceller built-in. Audio waveforms coming into the room are recognised on the way back out and removed from the conversation. Focus Arena does this for Teams Room and Zoom Rooms it is focused on, as well as for any NUC/BYOD applications run on its Arena side. Noise Proof technology from Yealink also reduces the unwanted background noise allowing conference participants to focus on the meeting rather than distractions. At VideoCentric we test and demonstrate this in live calls involving our Thames Valley showroom.

So many devices and switching units usually means lots of cables. How does Focus Arena tackle that especially for rooms with solid floors?

Wireless Microphones, a wall-mounted soundbar, a wireless presentation stick for laptops, wall-mounted display-screens with "behind-the-scenes" hardware mounts, means that apart from BYOD connectivity, the ONLY single cable that goes to the meeting room table is a SINGLE Cat6 cable. This one cable supplies power to the touch controller and wired presentation capability back to the processor from a user's connected laptop.

Can we eliminate every cable from crossing the meeting room floor to the table, or from trailing across my classroom?

Yes, if it is absolutely essential, we will supply a wall-mount for the touch controller. Why do we say, “if absolutely essential”? Because we like the touch controller at touching distance during the conference! You will get an IR Remote Control with the solution which helps with wire-free camera and audio control, but we still prefer the 8” Touch screen with the MTR or Zoom Rooms interfaces showing.

Is the Focus Arena certified by either Microsoft or Zoom?

No, the solution is a bundle consisting of a complete Yealink MVC system for MS Teams and a partial ZVC for Zoom, each of which are certified in their own rights by Microsoft and Zoom respectively. The addition of extra cables, switching devices and control panel, integrated, installed and supported by VideoCentric, do not qualify for certification by these manufacturers.

The solution isn’t listed on Zoom.us as a certified device. Will it work?

Focus Arena itself isn’t Zoom certified because it is not a “product”; it is a bundled solution consisting of many products. VideoCentric has carefully selected components that are Zoom certified, to ensure that support, software upgrades and updates are available as for any certified Zoom Room system.

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In switching between camera, audio, and control panel, is reliability of the solution impaired?

VideoCentric has taken great care to select switching components which disconnect and reconnect USB and Cat 6 cables in a smooth, reliable, and invisible way. Intel PC are designed to have USB web cams and network cables connected and disconnected regularly and our solution does this using professional switching designed for the purpose. VideoCentric has thoroughly soak tested the solution for 6 months prior to launch.

Most USB solutions are regarded as a “bag of bits” put together by IT DIY’ers. I need something professional with full support, how does Focus Arena address this?

Focus Arena is based on professional meeting room technologies with parts certified by Zoom and Microsoft. Unlike USB peripherals, the superior processors and connected USB devices are all backed by warranty which VideoCentric extends to provide rapid swap-out and on-site service. The total solution is supported in exactly the same way as professional VC systems have been supported for the last 20 years, with SLAs that have resulted in awards for VideoCentric over the years. Our Gold (advanced swap-out) and Platinum (on-site) SLA’s are offered with Focus Arena for full peace of mind.

I have a PC already. Can I use that as part of the solution and just buy the bits I need?

Not for the “focus” processors. These core items must be Microsoft and/or Zoom Room systems, certified with the required Operating system, MTR/ZR software and used with the correct peripherals. For the “Arena” side, where the “NUC” can be substituted with your own PC, keyboard and mouse, to run a wide range of desktop applications, then yes, use your own and we’ll remove the unwanted items from the cost. Your own PC will share the professional room camera, microphones and speaker, but not be controlled from the touch panel which is reserved for the Focus applications.

Where in the world can I buy Focus Arena?

Mainland Great Britain only at launch. This is fully installed by VideoCentric’s own engineers, set up with retained wiring diagrams etc and professionally supported by our own technical support team and demo labs. Until global franchises are set up, we don’t have a global services footprint for this solution at launch.

Will you ship me all the components so that I can build and install the solution myself?

Not directly to an end-customer. Integrators wishing to partner with VideoCentric by purchasing its own support system and undergoing the required training and commercial agreement, can apply for full/part deliveries depending on the agreement made and support infrastructure available. Yealink integrators may purchase a Focus Arena Integrator’s Kit (FAKIT) from VideoCentric (minimum 3-qty) to serve customers locally in their own region.

Why does VideoCentric insist on installation when we have staff who can set it up themselves?

Focus Arena is not a product, but an integrated solution designed with discrete cabling, pre-programmed components, calendar integration, wirelessness and 1-2-3 ease of use in mind. A remote pre-installation survey (included for free) results in a documented Scope of Works, wiring diagrams etc and professional support, which requires processes, procedures and professional workmanship rather than supply-only. Franchised integrators will undergo training as part of their commitment. This is not available to end-customer organisations.

Can I plug in a laptop to share my screen content?

Yes, wired USB-C sharing is catered for at the meeting room tabletop. A HDMI converter is also supplied and adapters can be supplied for DisplayPort & DVI output devices.

Can I have full-screen people on one display and full-screen PC sharing content on another?

Yes, both Zoom Rooms and MS Teams Room systems support dual-display configuration. This is preferred for the “Focus” part of the solution. The Arena part though is single display (using just one of the two displays) as the desktop apps running on the NUC or BYOD will be single screen apps, and sharing is from the NUC or BYOD itself rather than an interconnected device.

Is wireless PC sharing available with Focus Arena?

Yes, the Focus accepts wireless sharing in MS Teams Room mode via a USB dongle transmitter button supplied. No wireless receiver is required; it is already built in. In Zoom Rooms mode the user

standardly uses Wi-Fi to pair with the Zoom Cloud conference as usual.

Can I plug in my laptop, present and run my favourite apps from there?

Yes, you can plug in a laptop and share presentation content wired or wirelessly into MTR or Zooms conference calls. The touch panel supplied manages this wired and wireless connectivity.

To use video/audio enabled collaborative apps such as Webex, GTM, Google Meet, Lifesize, BlueJeans, Pexip Infinity etc, then you use the "BYOD" mode and connect to two cables we have supplied to your meeting table. Firstly, a USB cable which connects the camera & microphone to your personal laptop and secondly an HDMI cable carrying your laptop screen output to one of the meeting room displays. To minimise the number of cables (to 2) extended desktop across dual displays is not catered for.

Can I wirelessly connect my laptop and run my own video apps without any trailing wires?

The wireless BYOD option planned for our 2Q 2021 release will consist of a wireless USB transmitter button for your laptop and a receiver plugged into the BYOD port of our processor switch. Testing of technology options is ongoing and in the meantime, the only BYOD solution we recommend is a wired one.

What size display screens can I use with Focus Arena and do they come as part of the package?

VideoCentric recommends dual 43", 49", 55", 65" and 75" commercial displays for use with Focus Arena. Although we can also offer 86" and 98", camera positioning then becomes a challenge owing to the excessive vertical dimensions. If a 3rd display is added to provide interactive touchscreen capabilities in seminar/training/classrooms, then 86" or 98" become great accompaniments to dual 65" but the choice is flexible and so not included in the standard price. A wide choice of mountings for wall, ceiling, roll about, wall-to-floor stands (for weak walls) is also available.

I have an Interactive Whiteboarding display. If I plug in a BYOD, can I drive it from the touchscreen surface while stood at the board?

Yes, with an extra USB cable, control from the display screen surface, i.e. fingertip or pen/stylus supplied, is passed back to the user's laptop meaning the laptop can stay on the table/podium/lectern while its user is stood at the interactive surface presenting to his/her audience. A wireless touch offering will be added in 2Q 2021.

How do I control the Pan, Tilt and Zoom of the camera?

Where the solution is used In Teams Room or Zoom Room mode (i.e. main focus), then camera control is either a) on the tabletop touch panel supplied, b) via auto-framing of the camera or c) via hand-held remote controller supplied. Where the solution is used in Arena mode, then only auto-framing or hand-held manual control is available.

What size of room is it suited to?

The 12x zoom PTZ camera supplied with 2-qty wireless microphones is suitable for large meeting rooms of 8-16 seats, whereas the 5x PTZ variant is for medium rooms of 2-7 seats. Each microphone has a 6m diameter pick up and will comfortably operate in rooms up to 10-12m long and 4-7m wide. By adding a further pair of wireless microphones (4 total), room size can be increased to about 30 seats dependent on distancing.

Optical zoom camera systems such as those supplied, are better suited to mounting on the shorter wall looking down the long sides of a room. Conversely, wide-angled digital cameras, as found in video soundbars and collaboration bars such as Poly Studio X and Yealink UVC40/MVC400, ZVC400, are suited to wide, short rooms where audiences are no further than 3-4m from the camera. If unsure, ask us for a comparison demonstration. This is a factor most customers get wrong if ill advised.

My room is wide but short. Is the camera a wide-angled one to capture people at both sides?

No, the solution at launch is not suited to such rooms. A further solution will be available in 2Q 2021 supporting a wide (130 degrees) camera, suitable for rooms of approximately 10-12m wide and 4-5 m deep. The depth of room is limited by digital camera processing which electronically zooms through cropping a wide angled image, rather than through optical lens movement which provides for much greater clarity and control.

My room is long but narrow. Is the camera able to zoom into just one person sitting at the rear of the room or is quality lost?

Yes, this is the perfect scenario for a 12x zoom PTZ camera with optical zoom rather than digital which exhibit a grainy or cloudy image at more than 4m, some less.

The corporate strategy is MS Teams, but our employees have been using a mixture of cloud platforms during Covid lockdown; can they choose their own apps on the MTR system?

Not on the MTR system itself. That is the "Focus" side of the solution. A user's own apps will run with the solution however, on a choice of dedicated meeting room NUC, or BYOD brought into the meeting room. That is the "Arena" side which can run any desktop app but share the same camera and audio and display screen.

Collaboration bars support Teams, Zoom, SIP, GoTo Meeting, Webex, 8x8, RingCentral already and claim that they seamlessly allow users to swap between one and another so why invest in Focus Arena which is more expensive?

Such collaboration bars are far from seamless. The multiple room app capability is for futureproofing purposes only. Your IT department need to log into them, reconfigure them (sometimes with connecting cables) and undergo at least one restart, often more than one. It is not a user feature and should be performed seldomly. Focus Arena on the other hand is designed for mode-switched by the meeting room user, using an illuminated set of buttons set into the wall, table or lectern.

How does performance compare with Collaboration Bars?

Collaboration bars run Android OS with a wide-angled digital camera aimed at huddle spaces only, typically for small offices no more than 3m deep. Focus Arena runs Windows 10 IoT with Zoom Rooms or Teams Room software and 12x or 5x optical PTZ camera for significantly higher performance. Ask for a remote comparison demonstration. The differences are very noticeable.

Wireless microphone supplied have what pick-up range?

Up to 6m each and so 2-qty supplied will comfortably reach participants in a 16-seater room if spaced sensibly. With 4-qty microphones all linked wirelessly, this extends usage to 30-seater rooms, especially those with horseshoe table layouts or classroom formats.

Wireless microphones may be left off charge; surely wired ones are more reliable?

Wireless Microphones come with a USB charger. With an 8-hour usage time and twice as much standby time, each day is more than covered. If left uncharged, then pop them on the charger for a couple of minutes to build up a base charge and then use them while still on the charger. Crisis averted. Wired ones are arguably more reliable, yes, but with flexibility and cable routing limitations. For those intent on wired, no problem we'll swap them for free, but our firm recommendation is to go for the wireless approach throughout, except for the touch panel which remains wired (only one Cat 6 cable).

My company has a "no wireless" policy due to security concerns surrounding Bluetooth or Wi-Fi.

We're not talking BT or Wi-Fi but DECT wireless for higher range and security. Microphones and wireless sharing dongles are paired only with the Focus Arena solution and so there is no risk of interference with adjacent rooms or from Bluetooth pairing devices such as mobile phones or tablets.

We currently use Clickshare (or equivalents such as Pano, LS Share, Logitech Share) for our wireless presentation sharing. Will that investment be wasted now?

No, Focus Arena supports HDMI ingest. This is how the output of Clickshare and other similar devices output presentations to TV screens and projectors, so we just take that same output to the content sharing input of the Teams Room focused processor. You may never invest in more of such devices though as our solution comes with a similar wireless sharing dongle and receiver built-in.

What service level agreement (SLA) can I expect, as our dependence on remote working is now higher than ever and we cannot afford downtime.

Gold SLA is offered on selected components for next business day hardware swap out, if a faulty component is identified through telephone or remote video diagnosis. Non-selected components are covered by standard manufacturer warranty only. Alternatively upgrade to Platinum XT SLA. This covers every installed component with an on-site engineer familiar with the wiring diagram and

Scope of Works for the installation carried out by VideoCentric. Spares are held by VideoCentric for rapid on-site resolution.

You supply a wireless keyboard and mouse but they are not our preferred brand/model; can we swap them?

We only supply one brand/model with Focus Arena. At launch this is Logitech. You can always repurpose the ones delivered and use any reputable brand, noting that your own will not be covered by our Gold or Platinum SLA.

We already have a NUC PC with wireless keyboard and mouse connected to a display screen. Can we re-use those and receive a discounted quote for the rest of the solution?

Yes, you will be discounted the i5 NUC PC component price along with wireless keyboard and mouse, as without them you are simply purchasing a system with BYOD capability on its Arena side.

With up to four processors in one room, each connecting to different cloud platforms, how do we avoid clash of room bookings?

Your processors are all independent resources each with their own identity, e.g. one for Zoom, one for Teams, one for Whiteboard/Touch of desktop apps. In theory they could all receive separate invitations for meetings at the same time. This is why it is important to define the room as a resource too. When scheduling a conference, remember to:- invite the room, invite the systems invite the people. For a more consolidated approach, consider a room booking system (also available from VideoCentric) to interface with your calendaring system.

We already have a TV/projector, can we reuse that?

Yes, but we prefer to supply the whole solution for control purposes. The mode selector is programmed to switch on the dual TVs, and to select the relevant HDMI channels on each one according to the mode selected (Teams, Zoom, Arena-PC, BYOD) and messaging we need to display. If you require us to install with recently purchased displays, they need to have 2x HDMI + 1x USB2.0 ports free and are best if they support RS232 control. If are forced to work with Infra-Red buds to switch on display devices and control their inputs, they will work at the time of installation sign-off, but we cannot guarantee long-term reliability, as they tend to become dislodged over time. These are excluded from any SLA.

We have already invested heavily in Lifesize Icons with Lifesize Cloud in some offices but now our focus is on Teams and/or Zoom. Can we tie the solutions together to protect our original investment yet benefit from Focus Arena's capabilities too?

Yes, a Focus Arena will reside in a dual Teams + Zoom environment. VideoCentric also supplies interoperability licence options for MS Teams (known as a CVI Gateway licence) and for Zoom (a CRC licence). With one or both of these in place, your Lifesize Icon can be invited into Teams or Zoom or

both and if set up properly (e.g. by VideoCentric) with One-Touch Join (OTJ), then your Lifesize Iconusers can join simply. The same applies to modern Poly(com), Yealink and Cisco systems which VideoCentric also integrate with.

Where did the name Focus Arena come from?

We wanted a name that outlined the primary *focus* as being a Room System based on Teams or Zoom, but one which would support an “arena” of desktop applications too, the sort that employees have chosen during lockdown. 25 years ago the same name was used by GPT Video Systems for a first generation multipoint bridging platform, worked on by the three founder members of VideoCentric and so the decision was taken to re-launch the name in today’s modern world of cloud communications.

How do we see a live demonstration?

To see the solution in person, you need to visit our showroom in Wokingham, near Reading, Berkshire, 30 miles west of London with easy access from M4, M3, M25 motorways and from London Paddington, Waterloo, Guildford and Reading by train. Our Edinburgh and Central London demo centres are closed due to the pandemic and are not yet equipped with Focus Arena.

Remote demonstrations are the place to start. We have re-equipped our Wokingham demo room with extra cameras so that we can show you the 1-2-3 approach to joining a meeting and controlling devices. You have the advantage in that you see and hear the quality it sends which is much more important than seeing or hearing the received quality which is often a webcam based solution and out of the control of the Focus Arena.

Can we see it live at our own premises as part of a casual demonstration?

As a fully integrated solution with a refined 1-2-3 step approach on dual displays, it needs to be properly installed and tied in with a calendaring system. For one-touch join (OTJ), an application is required to be installed on a VM server and firewall permissions need to be set up for Teams and Zoom. A demonstration therefore takes roughly the same effort and time to set up as a full installation. As such, a “Proof of Concept” (PoC) can be arranged through a “Sale or Return” (SoR) commercial agreement on the hardware, and non-refundable costings on the installation service. A PoC quote would normally only be generated after remote demonstrations have been successfully achieved and key stakeholders actively involved.

How does a Proof of Concept (PoC) differ from a demonstration or trial?

A PoC is a trial, but not a free trial.

Equipment is usually loaned or purchased at favourable pricing to cover re-stocking charges and wear and tear only. The customer normally pays for the non-returnable display screens, the installation labour together with remote assistance for calendaring set-up, firewall port configuration, OTJ set up on an existing VM and trial set up of free (30-day) CVI/CRC gateway interoperability licences if required.

Short-term PoCs are generally 2-3 weeks and costs are kept to an absolute minimum. A schedule of test calls and senior management involvement is pre-planned to ensure key-stakeholder buy-in.

Longer-term PoCs may last up to 2 months but costs are higher to cover depreciation on equipment as well as proactive involvement of a part-time project manager to assist with rollout considerations and project planning. Optionally for bigger projects, this may include prior workflow analysis & consultancy to ensure real return on investment (RoI). VideoCentric will quote on full workflow consultancy services if required and has a history of successes that can be referred to.

Cashflow is tight right now. Can Focus Arena be rented instead of purchased outright?

Yes, leasing is a form of rental. You commit to pay over 24, 36, 48, or 60 months with or without technology refresh at the end of the term, or with hand-back or right to purchase options. The same process as financing a vehicle through a 3rd-party finance company with whom we have 2 selected partners, or you can choose your own. Interest rates are low but dependent upon credit status and the required repayment profile required. As a ballpark budgeting estimate, customers typically work on £300-£400 per month over 3 years for Focus Arena (that's roughly only the same as one vehicle entering the London congestion charge zone each day).

What are the advantages of leasing rather than outright purchase?

Cashflow is the main advantage. Buy now to start realising the huge benefits of such a collaborative room solution and pay throughout the course of the savings you'll make on travel and business efficiency.

Don't pay the tax man until you need to – spread the VAT over the payment term too.

Claim back tax – Such solutions are eligible for Corporation Tax offset. Currently set at 19% by H.M. Government, profitable businesses can reduce their tax bill at 19% of the cost of the Focus Arena more than offsetting any finance fees, meaning that it is overall less expensive to lease than to buy outright, for any organisations which pay tax on their profits.