

HD and Telepresence Applications

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The more I research HD and telepresence, the more confused I find the marketplace to be. It seems to me that one can have a telepresence room without HD and an HD room without telepresence, but combined the two become very powerful. Perhaps looking at user comments about the systems will help clear up the confusion.

A Senior Manager of Infrastructure and Procurement stated that his firm uses telepresence systems “because traditional videoconferencing wasn’t being well used. The systems allow us to save on travel costs and offer a better lifestyle to our employees.” I happen to know that this firm is now looking at HD options to further enhance their current telepresence systems.

An Audiovisual Manager stated, “We deployed telepresence systems because we found business disruptions and productivity to be the key issues.” This particular company finds the telepresence rooms sufficient and has no plans to enhance them with HD. Part of the reason is the need to change out display devices and cameras. Another reason is because telepresence is serving the purpose for which it was installed and there isn’t a need to go to a different aspect ratio to accomplish the business objectives.

“The way the voice and image are packaged is what makes telepresence work for us.” The systems are used to share technology, hold due diligence meetings, participate in board meetings, for international portfolio meetings, and when meetings need to be held on short notice. The company was looking for something better than videoconferencing.

“The quality of the meetings is far superior to traditional videoconferencing and people feel more comfortable using telepresence. People are having conversations they weren’t having before. People started traveling less almost immediately, since they could connect with colleagues across the globe at a moment’s notice.” Monthly management meetings, strategy meetings and communication department meetings were conducted via telepresence, realizing dramatic cost savings within months.

So it appears that telepresence helps many organizations frustrated with traditional videoconferencing find a much better way to communicate. The advent of HD videoconferencing has introduced improved video to a number of organizations who have not experienced telepresence and to firms who have telepresence, but like the video image and enhanced features of HD.

This seems to be especially true in training and healthcare. As one person put it, “if I really need to SEE what I am experiencing, HD is the way to go.” Leaders in

the Internet2 community find value in HD for physics and astronomy, healthcare and the arts. Physicians and medical staff are receiving training remotely that they would not have received in the past without the value of HD. Niche areas where movement is critical, like music and dance, are also finding value with HD.

What makes high definition video conferencing most attractive is the 3-dimensional depth of the picture, the sense of the image filling the screen, and the ability to share high definition content.

As one physician put it, “being able to see images in HD is critical to our success and we look at HD as the next enhancement to telepresence.”

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