

Web Conferencing: On-premise or in the cloud?

Internet technologies have turned our world into a virtual office in which we can conduct business with employees, partners, suppliers and, best of all, customers all across the globe.

Working in this virtual environment has become easier as well. Sophisticated Web conferencing technologies make it possible to conduct face-to-face meetings as easily as it once was to walk down the hall into a meeting room.

Without the expense and hassle of travel, Web conferencing allows you to make effective sales presentations, give product demonstrations, and conduct interactive collaboration via the Internet. You can share voice, video, text, and chat and conduct conferences as formal or relaxed as the situation requires.

There are two basic approaches to Web conferencing. One is to use a cloud-based service paid for with a monthly subscription. The other is to add Web conferencing technology to your own business network. Here is an overview of these two options to help you determine which might be best for your business:

Option #1: Subscribe to a third-party Web conferencing solution.

You may have experienced using one or more of these cloud-based services when attending a Webinar or other online group presentation. There are many providers of this type of solution, including Infinite Conferencing, InterCall, ClickMeeting, Adobe Connect Pro, MegaMeeting, WebConCentral, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Office 365, WebEx, FUZE Meeting and many others.

Most providers offer monthly subscriptions based on the number of users. For large groups of users, a few providers offer full license agreements. Here are the elements you should consider if evaluating this option:

- **Features** -- Determine what the system allows you to share in terms of visuals and the options for communication between participants.
- **Ease of Use** -- Ensure that the system you select is intuitive enough to be used easily by all participants regardless of their experience or their on-site technology.
- **Security** -- Analyze what kinds of barriers might arise to giving attendees access to the conferences. These barriers can include at registration, authentication, and getting past network firewalls. Also, you'll need to be assured that your conferences and the conference content can be kept secure.
- **Support** -- Check the type of help menus available within the application, the training available, and how easy it would be to get live support during the conference if trouble arises.

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Each system has its own pros and cons. However, here are the main negatives to using a cloud-based Web conferencing system:

- Incurs a monthly, quarterly or annual subscription cost
- Requires remote users to download an application and dial into an outside system
- Often produces issues with connection, firewall and anti-virus software, which can delay or prevent getting the meeting started
- May not support platforms such as Linux® or Unix®

Option #2: Leverage your own on-premise telecom network.

It's now possible to integrate Web conferencing into your corporate phone system, eliminating many of the technical challenges -- and monthly fees -- associated with third-party cloud-based Web conferencing solutions.

Running Web Conferencing through your own telecom network provides these primary advantages:

- Gain the reliability of using your own system for voice communications.
- Depend on one point of contact for support and service for both voice and Web conferencing.
- Eliminate the need for participants to install special software.
- Avoid the need to distribute a dial-in number with each conference.
- Achieve a higher connection rate and greater participation on the part of your customers, partners and team.

One of the leading technologies available to you for putting Web conferencing on your own telecom network is RHUB™ (which stands for Real-Time Collaboration HUB, and is pronounced R-HUB).

RHUB is completely platform and device independent and can be seamlessly embedded into any telecom system for almost flawless Web conferencing. It houses all your communications behind your own firewall and lets you customize all interfaces to your business needs and practices. You get superb remote access capabilities, which minimize support issues on the part of your conference attendees. Unlike cloud-based solutions, every employee can use the RHUB productivity tools without any extra costs. This means that, instead of paying per user, everyone can attend and use the patented RHUB WebView technology without a software download.

By eliminating the need for a named license subscription for each user, RHUB pays for itself very quickly and then eliminates ongoing subscription costs. RHUB provides the following capabilities:

- Web Conferencing -- Conduct sales presentations, product demos, and interactive collaboration.
- Remote Support -- Support PC and Mac users remotely.
- Audio Conferencing -- Use VoIP system for audio conferencing and landline audio conferencing.
- Video Conferencing -- Enjoy multi-point webcam-based video conferencing.
- Remote Access -- Access your office or home PCs from anywhere, anytime.
- Web Seminar Capabilities -- Provide online seminars without download of any kind for view-only attendees.



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If your business is small and you do not plan on conducting many Web conferences, Option #1 may be best for you.

Option #2 is far more reliable and cost-effective if you plan to hold frequent meetings with a broad base of attendees using a variety of systems.

The right Web conferencing system makes it easy for you to expand your market to reach more buyers, tap employees from a larger talent pool, and more easily partner with those who provide special expertise that enhances what you offer. It saves you money and can make a big impact on your bottom line.



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