

# IP Platform bridges<sup>the</sup> communications gap

A radical internet protocol (IP) platform that solves the transmission problems currently associated with videoconferencing over IP has been developed by ICU Global.

**T**he new product, Global IP Index™, acts as a bridge that links networks via IP for secure and reliable videoconferencing over IP, as well as voice and data transmission.

Working in association with Cisco Systems, the company has reported positive test results from their technical location at Telehouse Europe, based in London, where they successfully connected five separate end points via different network service providers (NSPs). In addition, Wainhouse Research has compiled a white paper on the product, which is also available from the following link.

This discusses the problems related to the lack of end-to-end network management between organisations, and highlights the benefits of the solution offered by ICU Global.

“We are pioneers in the IP network arena,” says CEO Stephen McKenzie, who

foresees dissatisfied users transferring from ISDN networks to IP. “A lot of the service providers operate networks that are not fully compatible with each other...and there is also the security issue. Our product, by providing a platform for IP connectivity amongst different networks - whilst also accommodating ISDN networks - gives seamless and secure connections with quality of service.”

Currently, the performance benefits afforded by enhanced end-to-end network management do not extend outside the corporate private network. In other words, when data and communications traffic must flow between organisations on different private networks, there is not enough raw bandwidth to ensure adequate performance. The result is inconsistent and unreliable performance for IP-based videoconferences between organisations on different networks. Thus many organisations still use

over IP, especially between NSPs, is a loss of synchronisation between the audio and the visual. With Global IP Index™, the synchronisation was excellent. I expect it to particularly benefit lower bandwidth connections where video connection quality can vary tremendously.”

Speaking in London recently, Stephen explained how Global IP Index™ would make the 'impossible possible' by providing end users with a videoconferencing solution not currently provided via ISDN. “There is no other similar product on the market. We can offer service providers point-to-point connectivity at a fixed tariff per month via IP. Today's networks are like islands, but this product provides the bridge via IP to allow networks to talk to each other in a secure environment.”

Recent research also supports claims that IP is the way forward. According to The Gartner Group, IP video applications will be utilised in 80 percent of Fortune 2000 companies by the year 2006. The applications are rapidly replacing the legacy ISDN videoconferencing applications. Also, according to In-Stat/MDR (March, 2003), videoconferencing end points are expected to reach US\$875 million in sales in 2007, and the videoconferencing services total is expected to reach US\$5.5 billion in the same year.

We doubtless live in a highly technological world where it is difficult to remember a time without video. When we take into consideration the financial savings to be made, as well as the security risks associated with international travel, it is natural to look to videoconferencing as the solution to enable businesses to both save time and work more efficiently. With video over IP, the added benefit is the vast cost saving.

Global IP Index™ offers service providers the opportunity to improve their revenues by offering an enhanced service to

their customers, who in turn benefit from cost-effective communications and the next best thing to being there that video over IP provides.

It is easy to imagine that in the not too distant future the communication breakthroughs developed for the boardroom could be transferred to domestic use, with grandparents tuning in to see and hear their families from thousands of miles away or school parent-teacher meetings taking place via videoconference link for those parents unable to attend in person - the possibilities for cross network communications via IP are endless.

ICU Global was founded on three guiding principles:

- To understand, before being understood
- To be recognised as a company with four Cs - clear, concise, continuous communication
- To overcome problems that customers do not even know they have

Those three principles have helped ICU Global to become, in just over two years, the most positively-aggressive company in the videoconferencing business. The launch of their IP platform is just the next step towards meeting customer needs by addressing communications issues that ensure their customers can concentrate on achieving their own business objectives. ■

ISDN for videoconferencing outside their organisation. ICU Global's IP platform will alleviate this problem by providing the environment to enable secure and reliable IP-to-IP communication via different networks.

The benefits of videoconferencing over IP rather than ISDN are well recognised and there are undeniable benefits of choosing IP over legacy ISDN systems. Global IP Index™ provides a simple business model, with fixed monthly costs and recurring revenue for NSPs plus a guaranteed quality of service for end users.

In contrast to current ISDN users, IP network users do not have to pay per minute usage fees. Add to this the improved audio/visual synchronicity achieved via IP and the wave of interest in this technology is understandable.

Elaine Wallace, MD of Kerridge Media Services, has welcomed the breakthrough. “I've seen the Global IP Index™ in operation. One problem that can occur with video

ICU Global Ltd was launched in 2002 to provide a complete and reliable video and audio conferencing service, supplying everything from simple point-to-point conferencing to global multipoint, multi-participant conferencing services. In parallel to this, the company has been developing its patented video over IP product. For more information, please contact ICU (GLOBAL) Ltd: +44 870 351 6580 <http://www.ipplatform.com>

Wainhouse Research is an independent market research firm focusing on critical issues in the rich media conferencing and communications fields. Wainhouse Research analysts have been quoted in the Wall Street Journal, New York Times, Washington Post, Boston Globe, Philadelphia Inquirer, Fortune, Business Week, PC Magazine, and other leading publications.

Gartner Group is the world's leading supplier of information and advice on all areas of information technology.

In-Stat is the leading provider of actionable research, assessments and market forecasts of advanced communications equipment and services.