

British Medical Association Adopts RADVISION System to Improve Collaboration among its Staff, NHS Committees and Experts Worldwide

About



Customer: British Medical Association (BMA)
Country: UK
Industry: Healthcare
Product: SCOPIA XT1000 / XT1200 Room Systems
SCOPIA Desktop
SCOPIA Elite MCU & SCOPIA Gateway
SCOPIA PathFinder Firewall Traversal
SCOPIA iVIEW Management Suite

About BMA

BMA is an independent trade union and professional association for doctors and medical students founded in 1832. Comprised of 143,000 members worldwide, BMA offers services such as career development and support, business optimization, guidance in medical ethics and law, medical school advice and access to a host of knowledge resources. BMA is also a world class publisher of medical journals and information, including the prestigious British Medical Journal (BMJ).

For more information, visit www.bma.org.uk

The Mission

With over two-thirds of practicing UK doctors as members, BMA is in constant contact with ministers, government departments and many other influential bodies in order to fulfill its mission to protect the collective interests of doctors. Over the past few years, video conferencing

has become a critical tool for conducting meetings among BMA staff and various BMA and National Health Services (NHS) committees as well as for providing ad-hoc access to in-house and remote experts.

The Challenge

BMA's video conference users had grown to encompass close to 1,000 desktops, 140 home workers in the UK and 25 employees in other countries. Its existing video conferencing system was no longer efficient enough to handle its robust requirements, so BMA began looking for an alternative that would make collaboration faster and easier to use for its members. Superior high definition capabilities for data sharing, support for current and future endpoints and a single desktop solution for Mac and PC clients were identified as critical components, as was seamless integration with legacy infrastructure, in order to maintain BMA's original investment. The new solution also needed the ability to conduct multiple meetings of up to 40 users with the potential to expand to 100; allow

users to connect from the MPLS or via the Internet as well as to non-BMA endpoints by IP or ISDN; enable telephone participants to dial into meetings; share data; record meetings with full audio, video and data; use SIP; and allow BMA Staff to easily administer all aspects of video conferencing and audio meetings.

"Basically, we needed our members working from home, hospitals, surgeries and clinics to be able to talk to each other and share data, anytime, anywhere in the world, using whatever equipment they had-up to 40 participants concurrently," said George Birch, BMA's Information Management & Technology Support Services Team Leader.

The Solution

The RADVISION system implemented comprised of endpoints including SCOPIA XT1000 / 1200 HD video conferencing room systems and SCOPIA Desktop for video communication on PCs and Macs. SCOPIA Desktop Pro licenses also enabled easy one-to-one conferencing without using MCU resources.

Infrastructure included the SCOPIA Elite MCU as the centerpiece of the deployment for multi-party conferencing, PathFinder for firewall traversal for H.323 systems, and a SCOPIA ISDN Gateway for connectivity with external systems on ISDN networks.

Management for the entire deployment is through the SCOPIA iVIEW Management Suite providing a single access point for managing all video conferencing devices including RADVISION and third party endpoints along with infrastructure devices such as MCUs and gateways. iVIEW's integrated gatekeeper provides call control, comprehensive traffic and bandwidth management and makes connecting simple for users.

BMA is using RADVISION's full range of equipment on a service footing from its local video conferencing provider, but located entirely on its own premises in London with BMA support staff operating and carrying out first line support. When the XT1200s first arrived, an incompatibility issue arose due to the inability of BMA's legacy video conferencing systems to support the latest codecs. "We thought it may be a show stopper," recounts Birch. "We still had 11 units in the field and to use them we would have had to downgrade the XT1200's to support the older H.263 codec (as opposed to the latest H.264) which is a bit like sticking a caravan on the back of a Ferrari; it's possible but pretty pointless." The problem, however, was quickly solved by RADVISION's R&D Division. "Within a month, they produced a software workaround for the XTs, which was pretty impressive," adds Birch. "There are not many large companies out there that would make their product compatible with an old piece of equipment produced by a business rival."

The Benefits

For BMA, instant visual communication is vital. "We use video conferencing like many other organizations use the telephone," says Birch. "Our users don't see technology as a limitation but as a right. They want to be able to use their webcam from a hotel room or their mobile to dial into a meeting from anywhere in the Middle East, for example. With our RADVISION solution and especially SCOPIA Desktop, they can do that easily."

The BMJ, which often sends representatives around the globe to advise on medical matters and deliver lectures at universities, can now attend by video conferencing. Recently, a very senior member gave evidence to the World Health Organisation in The Hague on the Swine

Flu epidemic, using SCOPIA Desktop from her office. Besides fulfilling BMA's fundamental requirements such as the capability to record all of its meetings and maintaining its initial video conferencing infrastructure investment, RADVISION's solution has delivered additional perks. For instance, BMA's large meeting rooms with ornate, curved walls present an extremely challenging environment to conduct video conferences due to secondary and tertiary echoes. According to Birch, the XT1200s' excellent pickup seems to have solved that problem.

"I'd like to say that the level of service and support we have received from RADVISION has been first class," he adds.

About RADVISION

RADVISION (Nasdaq: RVSN) is the industry's leading provider of market-proven products and technologies for unified visual communications over IP and 3G networks. With its complete set of standards-based video communications solutions and developer toolkits for voice, video, data and wireless communications, RADVISION is driving the unified communications evolution by combining the power of video, voice, data and wireless – for high definition video conferencing systems, innovative converged mobile services, and highly scalable video-enabled desktop platforms on IP, 3G and emerging next-generation networks. For more information about RADVISION, visit www.radvision.com

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