

ETH Zurich Adopts RADVISION Technology for its Desktop Video Meetings

About



Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich
Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

Customer: ETH Zurich (Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich)
Country: Switzerland
Industry: Education
Product: SCOPIA Elite 5115 MCU, SCOPIA iVIEW Management Suite, SCOPIA Desktop and SCOPIA IP/ISDN Gateway

About ETH Zurich

ETH Zurich - also known as The Swiss Federal Institute of Technology - was founded by the Swiss Federal Government in 1854. With more than 17,000 students from 80 countries around the globe, ETH Zurich is ranked among the top 20 universities in the world. Approximately 400 lecturers and professors currently teach and carry out research in the fields of engineering, architecture, mathematics, management studies and natural and social sciences. More than 20 Nobel Prizes have been awarded to ETH Zurich students or professors, the most famous being Albert Einstein in 1921, and the most recent being Richard F. Heck in 2010.

For more information, visit http://www.ethz.ch/about/index_EN

The Mission

A university thrives on the exchange of knowledge and cooperation between its own members and with other educational and research institutions - as a result, video communication is being increasingly implemented by prestigious institutions such as ETH Zurich. Committed to providing its students and staff with the most advanced technological tools, ETH Zurich has been using video conferencing since 2001. The university encourages professors to deliver lectures from home; graduate students to attend meetings and follow presentations from wherever they are; colleagues and research groups outside ETH Zurich to cooperate with the university; and many more collaboration scenarios.

Previously, ETH Zurich was using a mix of video equipment from a number of different vendors. Although the system was up and running, there were several challenges that needed to be addressed. For example, the solution was not interoperable with other traditional, standards-based (H.323) video systems, it was not scalable, and its security mechanism regularly blocked a number of functions. Finally, the video network was PC-based, leaving the 40 percent of lecturers and students who used Macintosh computers without video access. ETH Zurich set out to find a new solution that would address these challenges while also enabling the university to leverage its existing investments in video.

The Challenge

ETH Zurich needed a scalable, high definition desktop video solution that was interoperable with H.323 and H.320 and supported both PCs and Macs. The system also had to be able to standalone and require minimal additional deployment costs.

"Our requirements were clear-cut," explains Thomas Rechsteiner, Head of Videoconferencing Services at ETH Zurich. "The solution had to be easy-to-use and platform-independent, allowing everyone to use their own computers. It also had to be scalable, compatible with the existing infrastructure and equipped with a firewall transversal mechanism to enable easy access to the system regardless of location."

The Solution

After assessing a number of solutions, ETH Zurich made the decision in 2010 to implement a RADVISION system including two SCOPIA 5115 MCUs that connected to emulate a single virtual MCU with 30 ports; a SCOPIA IP/ISDN Gateway to access the legacy world and enable ISDN-based communication; SCOPIA iVIEW Management Suite, and SCOPIA Desktop with 300 Desktop Pro video conferencing licenses.

“We decided to go with SCOPIA Desktop because RADVISION fulfilled all of our requirements,” adds Rechsteiner. “RADVISION was actually the only company offering a product that also ran on Mac OS when we were

evaluating the competition.”

Hans Geeler CEO of CollabCom AG, a RADVISION partner located in Horgen, Switzerland, assisted ETH Zurich with the implementation and deployment of the RADVISION solution.

“We had a long and intensive evaluation period of almost two years. We analyzed all the available solutions on the market but none could fulfill the requirements except RADVISION SCOPIA Desktop. It was the one solution that covered the technical, multi-platform support and the licence schema requirements of ETH.”

The Benefits

ETH Zurich now has a fully scalable, HD desktop video conferencing solution with the availability to grow as needed. Staff and students take part in video meetings from locations around the globe using their own computers. The SCOPIA Desktop firewall traversal function also enables delegates from outside the university's network to quickly and easily join conferences. Meetings are moderated using the same user interface, while screen content, such as presentations and videos, are easily displayed or exchanged amongst participants using PCs, Macs, and traditional room-based video systems.

“The advantages are clear to see,” says Rechsteiner. “Collaboration and meetings across many locations have become not just easier to organize, but more effectively carried out. Productivity has increased, our people save time and gain flexibility, and we've significantly cut travel expenses. Lastly, thanks to SCOPIA's superior interoperability, we were able to use our existing equipment as well, making the solution even more cost-effective.”

Rechsteiner also emphasizes how easy the solution is to install and operate. “Users don't need license keys, administrator rights or any in-depth technical knowledge. SCOPIA is ready to go with a click of the mouse,” he adds.

Looking Forward

As part of its future rollout, ETH Zurich will soon be phasing in mobile devices to meet the growing demand for video conferencing and telepresence applications on the move. There are also plans to integrate Microsoft Lync. The

SCOPIA solution supports both platforms with SCOPIA Mobile for the iPhone and iPad as well as the SCOPIA Video Gateway for Microsoft Lync. With the RADVISION solution, ETH Zurich's investments – both past and future – are well protected.

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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