

# Japan Conferencing News Updates

## By CNA Report Japan

Conferencing News & Analysis for Japan market since 1997

Conferencing News focused on Japan reported for overseas readers

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### >News in Japan

#### TomenCyberBusiness, Logicool, Daiwabo Information System partnered to PC based promote visual communications in Japan

TomenCyberBusiness, who develops “Visual Nexus”, H.323 compliant PC based videoconferencing system, Japanese arm of Logicool, who develop webcams etc, Daiwabo Information System, a well-known system integrator with 80 sales offices and 1500 sales partners nationwide, have made partnership agreement to drive PC based visual communications for companies in Japan.

By leveraging respective prowess combined, three companies will combine forces to conduct co-marketing programs for the PC based visual communications solution to virtual markets such as corporations, government, and education through seminars and exhibition, marketing promotion via web site etc..

#### Japan Media System supports 1000 concurrent users for their webconferencing system

Japan Media System who develops “LiveOn” webconferencing system has announced “LiveOn Ver3.0i”, software upgrade.

With version 3.0, LiveOn will support up to 1,000 concurrent users for their webconferencing software and some other features that enhance system capabilities and user experiences for LiveOn.

Also with the new version, you can have more variations in “conference room” capacity in terms of the number of concurrent users who can join into one

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activated single room where a session is going on. They used to have 10, 15, 20 concurrent users supported for one single session, now they support 2, 4, 6 and 8 to meet various user requirements.



#### LiveOn

LiveOn has whiteboarding, application sharing, chatting, recordings of sessions, with easy to use user interface.

LiveOn has also intelligent QoS mechanism to check both incoming and outgoing packets over the network on real-time basis to adjust to changing network conditions in terms of bandwidth available and network congestion.

Japan Media System offers both on-premise installation of their webconferencing software and ASP based webconferencing services.

#### Moranet webconferencing ASP service supports 1000 concurrent users for their webconferencing system

Moranet, webconferencing service provider in Japan

now supports 1000 concurrent users for MORA Video Conference, their ASP service.

Their web conferencing service standardizes on webconferencing software platform developed by Japan Media System.

### **Creo releases new software version for their webconferencing software**

Creo, system integrator in Japan announced the release of new software version for their webconferencing, "FACE Conference".

The new version is called, "FACE Conference ORIGINAL". It now supports 105 concurrent users for a single conference session allowing 13 users speaking at the same time in the session.

### **NTT East/West releases a new model for their IP videophone targeted for business**



**VP1500**

NTT East and West released "VP1500", a new model for their IP videophone VP family.

They now have VP1000 and VP1500. Prices are 59,800JPY for VP1000 and 79,800JPY for VP1500.

A little change in design of VP1500 compared with VP1000. Other than design, they improved on interoperability with other H.323 endpoints.

VP1000 was first released in September 2004. With VP1500, NTT targets business users as inexpensive

H.323 endpoints.

Both models supports H.323 standard with bandwidth up to 2Mbps, interoperable with other relevant videoconferencing endpoints. However, VP1500 is more tuned for interoperability to work with others in H.323 videoconferencing environment. Codecs supported are H.263 and MPEG4 for video and, G.711 for audio.

Both models run on Windows CE with installed software like Internet Explorer and Windows Media 9, have 30Megapixel CMOS camera with 8 inch touch panel TFT LCD display whose resolution is 65,536 colors.

Also they have inputs and outputs for audio and video for external monitor and microphone.

They are rather Windows CE based PC that allows video calling, emailing, internet browsing, streaming. However, NTT rather market the product as an IP videophone.

As explained, VP1000 was initially targeted mainly for consumers and the product was bundled with NTT's IP network service or their partners'. It meant you could not use the phone for purposes other than that.

However, during the course leading up to the new release of VP1500, NTT changed its marketing policy tilting towards more business users by trying to partner with System Integrators delivering solutions such as bundling VP1000 with other H.323 video endpoints and MCUs so that users can reduce costs associated with purchasing multiple numbers of endpoints coupled with MCUs because VP videophones costs lower than 1,000US dollars per endpoint.

### **Kimura Joho Gijutsu introduces 500 JPY per hour webconferencing service**

A venture startup Kimura Joho Gijutsu, based in Saga, southern part of Japan, introduced "3e Conference", webconferencing service with 500Yen per hour per user.

It supports up to 4 simultaneous video participants along with 12 simultaneous audio participants in a single

session.

500 Yen is for light user and they have standard user (=7,350Yen) and business user (=10,500Yen). If you choose the business user, the webconferencing supports GIPS (Global IP Sound).

The company also re-sells “V2 Conference” developed by a Chinese developer, V2 Technology.

### **NTT Resonant and Mitsubishi Research Institute compiled a survey report on visual communications usage in companies in Japan**

NTT Resonant and Mitsubishi Research Institute released a survey report on visual communications usage in companies in Japan.

They did the survey from February 9<sup>th</sup> to February 23<sup>rd</sup> on the internet by collecting responses from their registered 26,110 subscribers who were business people.

They were from 22% of them work for a company with less than 10 employees, 24% with less than 100, 18.5% with less than 500, 8.4% with less than 1000, 9.5% with less than 3,000, 13.6% with less than 5,000.

26.7% respondents replied that they were using visual communications tools such as either group video or PC based video or video chat, or 3G mobile video in their organizations. And user percentage was bigger as the size of the companies that the respondents belonged to got bigger.

When you look at companies with more than 1,000 employees, 46.6% were affirmative on the usage in their organizations.

However, in terms of frequency of video usage, this tendency is almost the same regardless of the size of companies.

Among the listed visual communications tools above, 62.3% said that they were using group video followed by 3G mobile video(19.6%) and video chat(19.3%). The result suggested that smaller companies tend to purchase less expensive tools available on the market.

Regarding a question on how they are using visual

communications tools, the report found that 42.7% were using it for internal staff meetings, followed by 11.8% of internal trainings, 9.9% of management meetings, 5.8% of presentations, 5.2% of meetings with clients or customers.

People are using visual communications tools more for staff meetings on day to day operations rather than management meetings. And usage trends are changing from rather internal usage to external involving clients and customers.

The report also found that management tends to use group video rather than PC based video. As for PC based video, people are using it for internal trainings.

Speaking of benefits of visual communications, 62.3% replied they could increase productivity while reducing costs associated with travel and time and they expect visual communications tools to be ones that facilitate sharing of business information vital for their company, among colleagues even if they are geographically dispersed.

The survey also asked them if the respondents want to use visual communications tools more often. More than 70% of respondents who work for companies with more than 1,000 employees said affirmative. The larger the company is the more affirmative they were.

As opposed to that, the survey even asked reasons why not using visual communications tools. 55.5% said that they do not have requirements to have meetings with remote colleagues with such tools. The larger company, the less negative response was. It was because the larger companies usually have branches and factories or others nationwide or even in foreign countries, so they need to have some kind of tools to facilitate communication to move business forward among them. Therefore, they need such tools.

Second response was 19.1% said, “in-person meetings can not be replaced by video” meaning that you can not convey your feelings or nuances fully to your colleagues via video.

Others were pointing out on costs on network and

visual communications tools, quality of audio and video. These were less than 10% respectively.

The survey report concludes as follows. Many of respondents who pointed out the cost issues were from small and medium sized companies. So if vendors keep reducing costs and improve on quality of products and services, it is likely that more small and mid-sized companies will consider possible purchase of visual communications tools, that will help propel the further expansion of the market going forward.

#### **Survey report:**

<http://research.goo.ne.jp/Result/000277/>

#### **Featured report:**

#### **Broadband & IP video**

#### **IP video has become the norm for videoconferencing in Japan**

**By Keisuke Hashimoto, managing editor  
CNA Report Japan**

Broadband has been expanding over the past several years in Japan and we now are seeing a rapid shift towards FTTH departing from ADSL boom.

As of the end of 2005:

Internet subscribers: 30,796,456 subscribers  
FTTH (10/100Mbps): 4,637,280 subscribers  
ADSL (1Mbps-47Mbps): 14,480,958 subscribers  
CATV Internet: 3,226,680 subscribers  
IP-VPN: 264,226 subscribers  
Wide Area Ethernet: 149,943 subscribers

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications

<http://www.johotsusintokei.soumu.go.jp/english/>

ADSL was once a key driver for expanding the number of broadband users but now ISPs are trying to promote FTTH supporting either 10Mbps or 100Mbps.

When ADSL was a key driver a couple of years ago, competition among ISPs were centering around on service coverage and pricing and we saw lots of

promotions coming from the ISPs such as “two months free if you now subscribe to whatever ADSL service”. And some of them even gave away free installation of ADSL services.

But after we saw saturation in that area of competition, the competition itself shifted towards and centered on bandwidth expansion starting from 1Mbps and all the way up to 47Mbps. The competition was furiously tensed.

And now ISPs are making inroads into FTTH to offer either 10Mbps or 100Mbps. What you are seeing now in Japan with that regard is that exactly the same when ADSL was before dawn or a key driver. You see lots of promotions from ISPs to get more customers subscribed to FTTH service.

Five years ago, we had a bit more than 10 million ISDN subscribers in Japan, which was a peak in terms of subscriber number.

However, as broadband has expanded into both business and residence, ISDN subscription started to diminish and went down to 7.98 million for the past three years or so after the peak.

When ISDN was its heyday, we heard many are using ISDN based videoconferencing with a bandwidth at 128kbps as far as domestic video connection was concerned.

For international video call, 384kbps was used in many cases maybe it was a preference for non-Japanese sides as far as we remember.

Maybe even so right now if some people who are still using ISDN video in Japan should be connecting on average at 128kbps for domestic or 384kbps for international.

While video CSPs in Japan are handling lots of ISDN video calls even now, they are also strengthening their IP video services. So that the transition is applicable to them also yet the speed of the transition is gradual. But, this situation will be changed as users shift to IP video going forward.

Speaking of video resellers, you might hear different

stories.

If we talk to some video resellers in Japan, they tell us that 80% or more are IP related video purchases when it comes to new purchases. A couple of them told me 100%.

In parallel to telecom transition from ISDN to IP, we have seen in our conferencing industry here that transition has been inevitable.

Every year since 2001(as far as I remember), the number of new purchasers who are choosing IP based video more often as standard protocol and ISDN has been growing and they have used ISDN as auxiliary pipeline in case IP video network gets some problems. This is becoming less of trend also, however.

Our SOHO office is subscribed to consumer FTTH 100Mbps service.

We used to use ISDN video but not any more. We are thinking that we might have to terminate ISDN subscription sometime in the near future as every videoconferencing that we have in our office is for the past one year 100% IP video even connection to foreign countries.

Our nine year old ISDN set top and desktop system are now sitting on our bookshelf sided by books. But we will keep them for good!

Another story is that we have heard companies who are not using IP-VPN tend to use public broadband Internet to have IP video sessions not only connecting domestic counterparts but also out of Japan counterparts such as in the US or Europe.

Some are using 784kbps or 512kbps connecting to the US locations. However it seems to us that common denominator is 384kbps as far as bandwidth is concerned. They either use Internet VPN sharing the pipe together with other data or using embedded encryption for video sessions for security reasons.

These broadband trends certainly helped transition from ISDN to IP even affecting videoconferencing arena.

Anyway, would you like to know how much we pay

in our office for broadband?

We pay around 5,200 Yen per month for it in addition to ISP's Internet connectivity service fee which is around 2,100 Yen per month. So in total, we pay 7,300 Yen. These are average prices for a broadband user.

Throughput we get from the FTTH is around 25-30Mbps on average enough even for 2Mbps or 4Mbps video sessions over the public Internet within Japan, if you are subscribed to large domestic ISPs with huge pipes.

Even for SOHO, we can use this bandwidth for video at this price range, so why not for companies?

Inexpensive and ubiquitous availability of broadband services has been one of reasons why we are seeing a strong push towards IP video.

## >Events Calendar in Japan

### **-Visual Communications 2006/IP Telephony & Mobile Solution 2006**

Date: May 18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Venue: Sunshin City Ikebukuro

Organizer: NikkeiBP

Video and web conferencing exhibition and seminar

<http://expo.nikkeibp.co.jp/iptel/vc/index.shtml>

### **Thanks for reading this newsletter!**

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