



vMeeting

General Overview Whitepaper

vMeeting - Overview

1. Prologue

The Rich Media Conferencing (RMC) market has evolved dramatically over the past few years, driven by the impact of a shift from an operator-assisted service to a user-controlled service. Similarly there has been a strong acceptance of web conferencing by commercial users at levels of conferencing ranging from a build-your-own conference approach to web/data conferencing.

In addressing the requirements of our customers Vantage developed vMeeting; a suite of software that for all intents and purposes has been designed to be conferencing platform independent. Ultimately end-users and conferencing administrators alike are focussed on features, functions and benefits regardless of back-end platforms. vMeeting, through its unique design, is able to provide this level of transparency. What is paramount here is that the end-users interaction with the system remains largely unchanged via the application interface even if the back-end conferencing platform is upsized to take advantage of additional features (such as moving from an audio/data platform to a video/audio/data platform) or a particular market shift or trend. In this way your investment in the infrastructure is preserved.

vMeeting takes virtual communications to the next level by not only integrating multiple media sources – audio, video and data – into a single user interface, it also permits the transparent integration of these features into an organisation's business systems and IT infrastructures. Thus, enabling business people all over the world to communicate seamlessly in real time. vMeeting today leverages the award winning Polycom MGC Unified Conferencing Platform and Adobe Connect (Macromedia Breeze) Web Collaboration solution.

Taking this one step further, integral to vMeeting's software architecture is that its inherent modular design permits the leveraging of other business systems such as E-mail gateways, SMS gateways and common user address books. Further to this the Layered System Architecture (LSA) permits rapid integration into an organisation's existing portals and/or business applications. It provides a shift from centrally managed, scheduling and monitoring of audio and/or video multipoint conferencing services to automated, self-service features and functions.

The costly, slow, and awkward manual process of scheduling and securing infrastructure resources (and conferencing rooms), inviting meeting attendees, and managing the conferences itself, has moved from the hands of dedicated staff and trained operators into the hands of the real user. With vMeeting conferencing has become truly ad-hoc. Users can do it when and where they want, and can choose from operator-assisted to unassisted conferencing, and from on-demand to reserved and reservation-less meeting formats.

Product Suite

vMeeting is primarily designed for organisations that can justify dedicated infrastructure within the confines of their enterprise networks. Deploying vMeeting in this way means that it can be fully integrated into an organisation's business workflow and systems. In this way it becomes a cost effective exercise for leveraging internal communications infrastructures such as IP networks (some form of QoS of VLAN implementations assumed) or in the case of ISDN communications, E1 based telephony infrastructures. Depending on an organisations requirements vMeeting can be implemented in one of two ways.

For organisations that have invested heavily in web server technology, web portal applications and security/firewall infrastructures, **vMeeting Symphony** is the ideal software deployment option. For organisations that have significant lock-down and control of the desktop including the groupware application, whether it is Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes, Vantage offers the **vMeeting Groupware** software bundle. In this way users are able to take advantage of all the vMeeting from within the desktop collaboration tool of choice. Add the powerful web/data

conferencing features of **vMeeting Connect** to either of these options and users are able to experience Rich Media Conferencing in the real sense of the phrase.

1.1 vMeeting Symphony

vMeeting Symphony is the core product offering designed for a web portal focussed deployment. The modules that make up this software bundle are as follows:

- vMeeting Audio
- vMeeting Video
- vMeeting Notifications
- vMeeting Moderator
- vMeeting Authenticator
- vMeeting Administrator
- vMeeting Reporter

1.2 vMeeting Groupware

vMeeting Groupware is the core product offering designed for a desktop collaboration application deployment for either Microsoft Outlook or Lotus Notes. The modules that make up this software bundle are as follows:

- vMeeting Audio
- vMeeting Video
- vMeeting Notifications
- vMeeting Moderator
- vMeeting Administrator
- vMeeting Reporter

1.3 vMeeting Connect (Web Conferencing)

vMeeting Connect is an optional module that can be integrated with either vMeeting Symphony or vMeeting Groupware to provide end-users with the ability to run and participate in a web/data conferencing. The modules that make up this software bundle are as follows:

- vMeeting Web/Data

2. vMeeting Modules

The following section outlines key features of each of the vMeeting modules that make up the software bundles listed above:

2.1 vMeeting Audio

vMeeting Audio ultimately provides end-users with the ability to schedule and attend audio conferences. This module facilitates the workflow necessary for users to schedule and configure audio conferences and access these conferences at the nominated time in the case of reserved conferences, or in an ad-hoc manner in the case of reservation-less conferences.

Feature summary

- User based scheduling and attendance
- PIN code protection of conferences
- Two-level PIN authorisation – Chairperson & Participant
- Dial-in/Dial-out conferences
- Conference roll call
- Entry and exit names or tones
- Automated resource/conflict management

2.2 vMeeting Video

vMeeting Video provides end-users with the ability to schedule and attend video conferences. This module facilitates the workflow necessary for users to schedule and configure video conferences and access these conferences at the nominated time in the case of reserved conferences or in an ad-hoc manner in the case of reservation-less conferences.

Feature summary

- User based scheduling and attendance
- PIN code protection of conferences
- Endpoint conference initiation
- Dial-in/Dial-out conferences
- Transcoded conferences
- Continuous presence conferences
- Entry and exit names or tones
- Automated resource/conflict management

2.3 vMeeting Notifications

vMeeting Notifications is an integrated module that makes it possible for a conference organiser to compile and send E-mail and/or SMS notifications to invited participants in an expedient manner. Users simply select the names of the participants from the scheduling interface and vMeeting Notifications takes care of the rest. All the relevant information such as the date and time of the conference, the description, the video site locations (if relevant), file attachments, etc are automatically compiled into the e-mail notification and distributed to each of the participants. In the case of vMeeting Groupware, participants will receive a meeting invitation, which can either be accepted or rejected.

Notifications are sent to participants whenever a new conference is scheduled, when conferences are changed or modified in any way and when conferences are cancelled. It is also possible to renotify users of a conference. This is a useful feature that allows organisers/a chairperson to resend e-mails where some time may have elapsed between the date the conference was scheduled and the actual conference date.

E-mail notifications are simply distributed as a result of the integration with an organisations SMTP server/service. In the case of SMS, this is made possible using Vantage's SMS provider. Vantage recognises that many organisations will have preferred suppliers in reference to SMS and hence the module sub-component can be modified to leverage any such relationships.

Feature summary

- Select participants from a user list
- Distribute conference schedule notifications (E-mail & SMS)
- Distribute conference change notifications (E-mail & SMS)
- Distribute conference cancellation notifications (E-mail & SMS)
- Distribute conference re-notifications (E-mail & SMS)
- Distribute Calendar invitations (vMeeting Groupware module only)

2.4 vMeeting Moderator

vMeeting Moderator offers a powerful set of in-conference control features to the chairperson. These features are designed to assist the chairperson with the overall meeting flow and administration of the conference.

The application of the supported features, in the context of video conferences, is particularly powerful when we consider that these features have in the past been in the domain of experienced and highly trained conferencing administrators.

Feature summary

- Display status of each party
- Connect and disconnect parties
- Increase/decrease the volume of the parties
- Mute/unmute audio and video parties
- Block/unblock audio and video parties
- Delete Parties from the meeting
- Lock conference functionality
- Put conference on hold
- Change name of the parties after they join the meeting
- Change personal video layout
- Extend conference
- Facilitate Question & Answer session

2.5 vMeeting Authenticator

vMeeting Authenticator negates the need to have dedicated personnel to manage user accounts. Direct integration with your directory service provides ability to authenticate users against the existing Windows Active Directory Service (ADS), or any LDAP compliant database for that fact. Using vMeeting Authenticator it is also possible to enable SSO (Single Sign-On) functionality which in essence results in users bypassing a secondary logon procedure. This assumes a user has previously been authenticated against a directory service. Therefore there is no need for users to once again log into vMeeting using the same credentials.

vMeeting Authenticator is only relevant in a web portal context and therefore only available with the vMeeting Symphony product suite.

Feature summary

- Windows Active Directory Service (ADS) compliant
- LDAP compliant

2.6 vMeeting Administrator

vMeeting Administrator is the backbone of the entire vMeeting software suite. The vMeeting Administrator module is designed for system administrators to serve two explicit purposes. Firstly, as a configuration management tool, that allows system administrators to fully configure the wider conferencing environment. Secondly, as a workflow management tool, where system administrators can fully configure the manner by which all users interact with the system, in so doing defining the user experience.

vMeeting Administrator supports what Vantage has termed workflow classes. The first type is called a “Class of User” workflow class. User classes are created by associating user accounts to specific groups. These groups in turn dictate the type of features that will be accessible to the user given a specific role. There exists a specific hierarchical relationship between key entities that ultimately define the user classes.

The second class is a “Class of Service” workflow class. Service classes are created by associating user accounts to specific reservation templates. This is achieved by associating desired templates (Reservation, E-mail and SMS) and resources to a Group and then in turn making an end-user a member of a specific group.

Ultimately, the combination of user classes together with service classes defines the end-users overall interaction with vMeeting resulting in the ability to fully customise the end-user experience.

Certain components of vMeeting Administrator are applicable in a web portal context and therefore only available with the vMeeting Symphony product suite.

Feature summary

- Web based administration & configuration tool
- User classes definition
- Service classes definition
- Organisation definition
 - Company Management
 - Group Management
 - User Management
 - Site Management
- Template definition
 - Reservation Templates
 - Email Templates
 - SMS Templates
- Hierarchical account creation management
 - Unlimited company accounts
 - Unlimited group accounts
 - Unlimited user accounts
 - Each user could potentially have a private portal

2.7 vMeeting Reporter

vMeeting Reporter provides users with the ability to interrogate conference data such as scheduled conference details as compared to actual conference participation. Administrators can interrogate details down to site and channel participation level if required. Utilisation can be tracked by cost centre therefore making it possible to extract information by cost centre as well as bill back usage to business units if so desired.

vMeeting Reporter is able to provide a depth of data unmatched by any other system by leveraging data in underlying CDR files (multipoint and point to point conferences) and via an XML translation process makes this data available in an open Microsoft SQL Server database. This further provides those organisations with heavy investments in cost centre tracking systems with the ability to integrate directly into vMeeting Reporter's SQL engine for dynamic linking of data.

Feature summary

- Web based reporting tool
- Provides scheduled and actual utilisation reporting
- Select data based on filtered settings
- Export data to Microsoft Excel
- Open standards database provides for integration into 3rd party applications and/or customer financial systems

2.8 vMeeting Smart E-mails

The vMeeting Smart E-mail module is a capacity management tool for monitoring user port and booked time usage specifically relating to reservation type conferences. This is achieved by making end-users and specifically conference schedulers aware of their resource utilisation habits. The vMeeting Smart Emails application engine interrogates the reservations database and compares scheduled resources with attended/used resources and in doing so determines percentage utilisations.

Users and/or system administrators are advised by E-mail if one of the following events occurs:

vMEETING – GENERAL OVERVIEW

Overbooking Alerts – relates to the scheduler’s ability to accurately estimate their requirements when reserving resources. For example, a user over schedules ports and unnecessarily ties up resources or a user schedules a meeting where the duration is excessive to their requirements and therefore consumes resources unnecessarily.

Non-attendance Alerts – relates to conference non-attendance. For example, a user schedules a conference and forgets to attend the conference or a user has scheduled a recurring conference and forgets to attend the third conference in the set.

Reminder Alerts – relates to reminder type notifications for recurring conference reservations due to expire. If a re-occurring meeting has been running for several weeks, it is possible to set a parameter that notifies the user that “n” meetings remain in the scheduled booking

Feature summary

- Generates three types of Smart E-mails for the following types of alerts:
 - Overbooking Alerts
 - Port under-utilisation
 - Duration under-utilisation
 - Non-attendance Alerts
 - Single Meeting Non-Attendance
 - Recurring Meeting Non-Attendance
 - Reminder Alerts
 - Recurring Conference Expiration Threshold

2.9 vMeeting Connect

vMeeting Connect is Vantage’s platform for web/data conferencing and is a fully integrated Flash based conferencing application from Adobe. Web conferencing is proving to be “the way” to augment voice and/or video conferencing with graphical content. With vMeeting Connect users can participate in a web conference without the need for any specialised equipment other than a PC, web browser and an IP connection. Anyone can initiate a web conference via the vMeeting MeetingRoom web portal and at the same time schedule voice and/or video conferencing resources.

Feature summary

- Remote Control/Application sharing
- Whiteboard & Annotations
- MS PowerPoint slide upload/thumbnails
- File upload/view attachments
- Participant roster
- Chat/Polling
- Flash based VoIP/Video

2.10 vMeeting Groupware

vMeeting has a Groupware module which provides seamless integration with Microsoft Outlook 2003. The vMeeting Groupware module provides the following functionality:

Scheduling vMeeting from Outlook – Users can schedule vMeeting directly from Outlook. Scheduling vMeeting is as simple as checking the “This is a vMeeting meeting” box on the “Appointment” or “vMeeting” form. When a user hits the send button, Outlook schedules vMeeting in real-time and adds vMeeting information to the body of the Outlook invitation. Outlook/Exchange then sends invitations to meeting invitees.

Notifying invitees – Outlook invitations are sent to meeting invitees for vMeeting meetings scheduled via Outlook, E-mail notifications are sent to non-Outlook users. If a user accepts the invitation, then the meeting will automatically populate their Outlook calendar. The invitations content is fully configurable and can include SMS notification if a mobile phone number is present in the Microsoft GAL.

Attendance Link – vMeeting invitations and notifications include an attend link URL. Clicking the attend link will take users directly to the meeting and easily attend the voice, video and/or data conference.

3. Attendance Modes

The vMeeting solution incorporates the ability to link attendance to conference server entry queues. If desired participants could in fact attend the same conference, however, the manner by which they arrive into the conference could be different for each and every user.

For example, User “A” could in fact be a new user and therefore not very confident in finding their way around an audio conference. They therefore ring an 1800 number that connects them with an operator assisted attendance service (a real human) whom subsequently adds them to their conference. User “B” on the other hand, has attended hundreds of audio conferences and simply dials a self-service 1800 number, follows the automated prompts, provides their vMeeting ID and is connected through to their conference where their audience awaits.

Each of these scenarios uses what is called an Entry Queue. vMeeting offers the ability to define unlimited entry queues. Each of these entry queues can be associated with a specific set of voice prompts (or IVR prompts), which provide instructions to the end-user on what to do next. It is important to note that IVR prompts could apply equally to a video or audio conference although more often than not they are predominantly used for audio conferences.

vMeeting simplifies this entire entry queue definition process by providing organisations with predefined sets of entry queues. This inturn reduces the time it takes to get up and running by leveraging Vantage’s extensive knowledge of meeting workflows and meeting solutions.