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Trends in the Consumption of Conferencing Technology

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Trends in Conferencing

Technology is rapidly changing, as are the ways we use and consume it. This is true for all different areas of technology including the conferencing and collaboration space. As the technology behind conferencing has advanced, so have the trends of how and why it is used in different business settings. There are so many options when it comes to choosing a reliable conferencing platform and it's important to understand which options are available and why certain trends exist with each possible platform.

Free Services:

To start, there are free conferencing services. These are often used by small businesses or new businesses that need to utilize remote collaboration and host meetings, but don't yet have the budget to allocate towards a better quality conferencing provider. This has become a useful trend in these areas of business and has allowed new businesses and entrepreneurs to participate in the essential functions of remote collaboration without the stress of additional ongoing expenses. Unfortunately, the free conferencing trend can only go so far in regards to quality and functionality, which is why, eventually, as most businesses grow and begin conferencing more they switch to paid-for collaboration options.

Subscription-based Services:

When it comes to paid-for conferencing, there are multiple options out there - each with their own trends of use. The first is a subscription-based hosted service with a pay-per-user or pay-as-you-use model. This type of conferencing is generally consumed by companies with a small number of users that don't do all that much conferencing, have minimal need for security and/or a majority of external callers. Since these calls are hosted in the cloud the users have little control over security matters. While using a subscription based hosted solution will give your advanced features and better overall call quality than a free conferencing service, it can also get very pricey very quick if it is being used extensively at a per-minute rate.

Proprietary (Managed Cloud) Solutions:

On the other hand, for companies that are doing a lot of conferencing it is a common trend to explore the option of owning ones solution for the sake of eliminating recurring fees. One of the options for owning a solution is called a Managed Service Offer (MSO), which means that the solution is owned but housed off premise at the Sonexis co-location. This is an offer that is utilized by those companies doing a lot of conferencing but that do not have the space or manpower to house the solution on-premises at their own location and/or do a lot of external conferencing. In this situation, the conference bridge is still being hosted in the cloud and outside of your company's network but since you own it, the server is dedicated to your business alone – meaning you can be sure that no one but you has access to it, which adds peace of mind while operating within a cloud environment.

Proprietary (CPE) Solutions:

The last trend that is seen in regards to owning a conferencing solution is to house the bridge on-premises, within your network and behind your firewall. Again, this is commonly seen for companies that conference heavily (and internally) and recognize the value of investing in a solution as opposed to a hosted service, but also need a level of security that cannot be offered in the cloud. Along with the cost and security benefits of owning an on-premises bridge, there are many advantages in relation to integration that make the choice even better. When the system is on-premises it is able to tie in to user databases and applications (Outlook, Lync and Skype for Business). In addition, at Sonexis, our on-premises conference bridges are hybrid enabled, meaning they are tied to a Disaster Recovery (DR) bridge that is located in the cloud to still give you access to conferencing even in the case of a natural disaster or outage at your location.

CONCLUSION:

After reviewing all the possible options available in the conferencing and collaboration space, it is clear why these trends exist. Many factors come into play for choosing the best solution or service but the benefits of each are clear. Based on cost, usage, security and even business maturity, each option displays the trends that have been set for any combination of circumstances and shows why certain options have been used in specific ways repeatedly.



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