



CIO Guide: The Future of the Conference Room

How Technology Innovation and a Changing Workplace Are Driving a New Paradigm in Enterprise Collaboration

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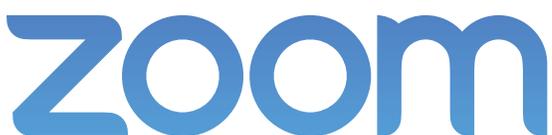
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By using a cloud model for meetings and collaboration, organizations can significantly lower costs, reduce complexity, and improve the user experience and accessibility. For many forward-looking IT and business leaders, it’s not just the future of the conference room that is in the cloud—it’s the present.

A paradigm shift is taking place in how organizations support collaboration and meetings through video conferencing and unified communications technologies. The era of elaborate conference rooms with expensive on-premises video conferencing equipment and dedicated networks is giving way to new models that are much more cost efficient and accessible. These new models, leveraging cloud computing and Internet connectivity, are permanently reshaping the nature of the corporate conference room for now and the future.



Sales of traditional enterprise telepresence and video conferencing equipment were flat last year, according to the research firm Infonetics, which noted that its report for the third quarter of 2014 painted “a dim picture for the market.”¹ It’s not that demand or interest in using video conferencing and unified communications is slipping—in fact, it’s just the opposite. The technologies and tools are moving from the premises to the cloud. As noted by Infonetics: “There has been a rise in cloud multipoint conferencing services adoption, which has led to a decline in infrastructure sales.”²

There are several interrelated factors driving this shift, in particular:

- **Changes in the workplace:** Workers are more mobile and more likely to be working out of the office—from home, on the road, from a local coffee shop. They have near-ubiquitous connectivity to the company through the Internet and are typically using more than one type of device to communicate. At the same time, workplaces are “always on,” so workers need tools that enable fast, simple, secure, and effective collaboration from wherever they are located, using whatever device is most convenient.
- **Changes in the workforce:** It’s not just the workplace that’s changing rapidly, it’s the workforce as well. As of 2015, millennials represent the largest generation in the U.S. workforce, and 28% claim they are already in management positions.³ These workers, as well as those of other generations, have expectations for technology that are driven largely by their experiences in the consumer world. They want solutions that are agile and adaptable to their needs. Most important, the solution just has to work—with no hassles and no complications.
- **Advances in the technology:** Legacy video conferencing and telepresence rooms are expensive to purchase and maintain, and they are not necessarily welcoming environments. On the other hand, innovative cloud-based solutions transform the conference room into a virtual

as well as physical space, driving new levels of simplicity, accessibility, and cost-efficiency that are more in sync with the needs of today’s workplaces and workforces.

Why the Future of the Conference Room is in the Cloud

Organizations are increasingly relying upon video conferencing as a vital tool in enhancing collaboration and improving productivity. In a recent survey of business decision-makers in mid-to-large enterprises, respondents reported that video was used in 45% of all of their conferences. Those who collaborated most frequently said video was used in more than 80% of their meetings.⁴

At the same time as video is becoming increasingly critical, the dynamics of collaboration are changing quickly. According to the survey cited above, 54% of meetings already include remote participants attending via audio, video and/or Web conferencing, and that percentage is likely to grow. Again, for those who said they collaborate most frequently, 80% of their meetings involve remote participants.⁵

For IT leaders and business decision-makers responsible for conferencing and collaboration, the new reality is that they must modernize their video conferencing and collaboration solutions in order to support the changing workplace. That means deploying solutions that connect across platforms, increase user participation, improve the quality of meetings, support mobility, ensure security, and drive improvements in total cost of ownership (TCO).

Legacy conference rooms were not designed to support mobile workers using tablets and smart phones, and they don’t easily accommodate the myriad ways in which people prefer to collaborate now that they can be more agile and mobile. For example, many users prefer huddle rooms and informal conference rooms. But because of the way telepresence and video conferencing technologies have typically been deployed, these rooms often lack video and other collaborative tools that users require. When asked by Wainhouse Research how usage

1 “Videoconferencing Market Goes Flat,” Enterprise Networking Planet, Jan. 14, 2015

2 Ibid, Footnote #1

3 “The 2015 Millennial Majority Workforce,” Elance-oDesk and Millennial Branding, Oct. 29, 2014

4 “The Collaborative Enterprise,” Wainhouse Research sponsored by Logitech, Jan. 28, 2015

5 Ibid, footnote #1

would change if their huddle rooms were better equipped, 63% of respondents said they would use more video conferencing and 56% said they would use more content sharing.⁶

Cloud-based solutions not only address these challenges with technology that is easy to deploy, but they also offer an alternative to legacy conference rooms that are extremely attractive from a financial standpoint. Solutions that cost as little as \$149 per year in subscription fees can deliver the features and functionality of on-premises systems that can cost in the range of \$40,000.

What's more, cloud solutions are simpler to scale and manage for IT, and are more adaptable to the changing needs of remote and mobile users without sacrificing security.

Some cloud solutions also support legacy conference rooms, so organizations don't have to worry about walking away from their existing investments while building next-generation video conferencing capabilities in the cloud.

What the Cloud Conference “Room” of the Future Looks Like

In thinking about the conference room of the future, it's probably best to think in terms of a virtual room and not a physical room. In the conference “room” of the future, users will be able to participate from any location, using any device, with equal access to all of the common tools they require for effective real-time collaboration. Key characteristics of the conference “room” of the future are:

- **Accessibility from any device and any location**, including personal computers, laptops, smartphones, and tablets, as well as existing conference room systems as needed.
- **Ease of use and ease of deployment**, using cloud service models to eliminate the need to purchase and install specialized equipment.
- **Low cost and predictable pricing**, with host-based subscription models that deliver the conference “room” at a fraction of the cost of on-premises or per-minute models.

⁶ Ibid, footnote #4

- **A high-quality user experience**, including video and audio that “just works” without dropping calls or otherwise limiting the ability of users to collaborate in real time.
- **A full set of collaboration tools**, including features such as high-quality screen sharing, annotation and co-annotation, whiteboards, mouse and remote control, and group messaging.
- **Robust security** with encryption, SSO support, role-based access controls, meeting host controls, and on-premise deployment option.

Zoom: The Future Is Now

While this article has been focused on the future of the conference room, the reality is that the technologies enabling organizations to modernize their video conferencing and collaboration initiatives are available now. In fact, they are being used with great success by more than 115,000 companies that have deployed cloud-based video conferencing from Zoom.

Zoom offers a modernized approach to video conferencing and collaboration that leverages cloud models to help organizations improve the user experience and expand user access, while delivering a much more cost-effective solution that doesn't sacrifice security or quality. Customers have found that they can hold a multi-site video conference at a cost that is more than 80% lower than other solutions. With Zoom, organizations can leverage existing legacy conference room systems or build new solutions in the cloud.

Today's workers are absolutely ready for the conference room of the future. They are more mobile, using a wide range of devices and depending on collaborative tools to be more efficient and productive. They want easy-to-use solutions that just work. If your organization is ready to address their needs—while at the same time simplifying deployments and significantly reducing costs—[please visit Zoom for a live demo](#).

Zoom unifies cloud video conferencing, simple online meetings, group messaging, and a software-based conference room solution into one easy-to-use platform. Our solution offers the best video, audio, and screen-sharing experience across Windows, Mac, iOS, Android, Blackberry, Zoom Rooms, and H.323/SIP room systems.

Start Zooming today at <https://zoom.us>.