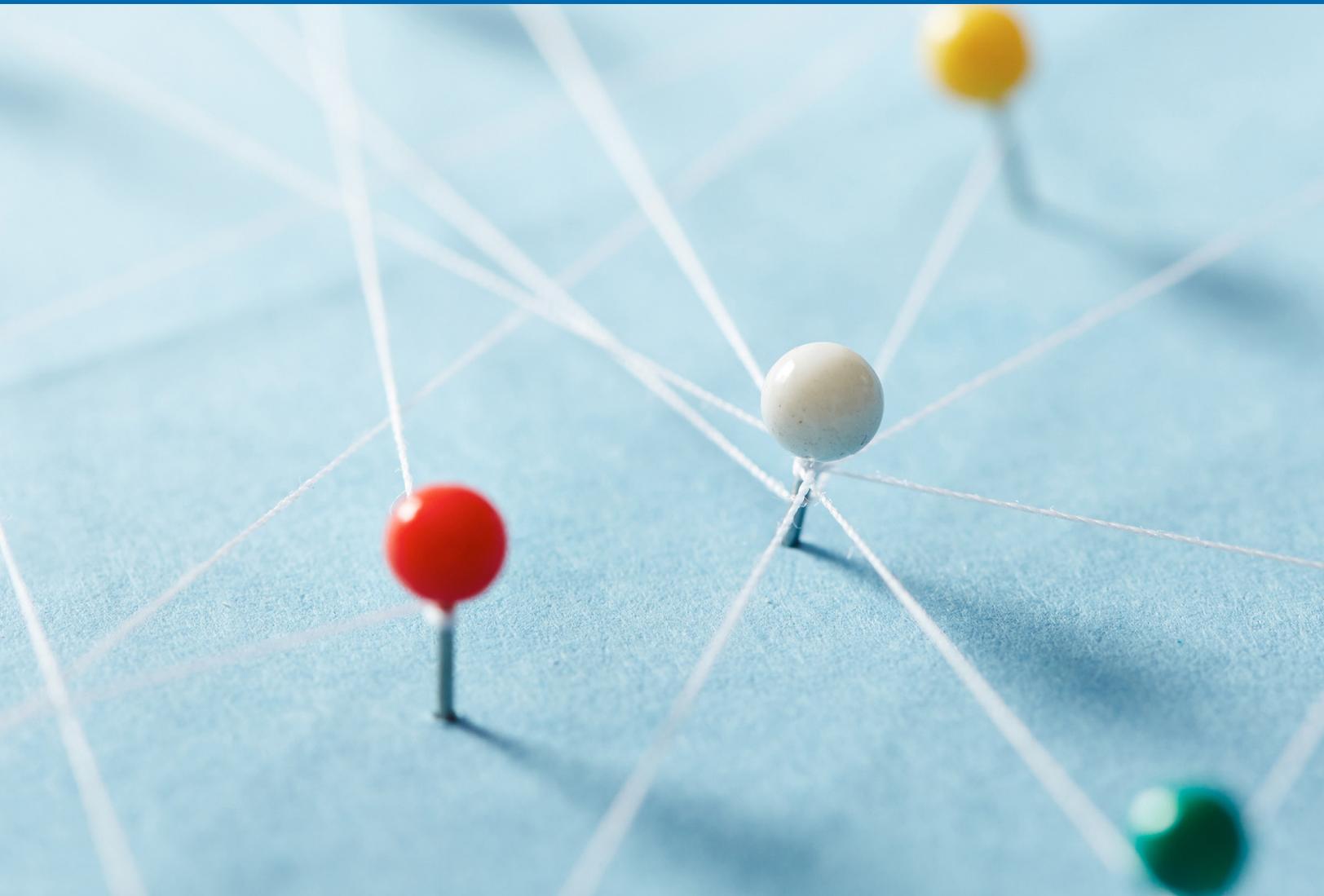


Panasonic's HD videoconferencing system offers quality and economy

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Panasonic's HD Visual Communications (HDVC) System is an ideal videoconferencing product for mid-size businesses that want the features of larger systems without the large price tag.

The HDVC System addresses the needs of a wide range of fields, including education, manufacturing, healthcare and finance. John Sneyd, Panasonic Canada's Product Specialist, Video Conferencing, offers an example.

"A manufacturing company might have three offices. The challenge of a mid-size business is that it won't necessarily have subject-matter experts in each of its Vancouver, Montreal and Toronto locations. It may have one subject-matter expert running around to each of those places trying to engage with people," he says.

The system would facilitate the expert's regular and convenient collaboration with those offices from any location, cutting down travel and helping to accelerate the decision-making process.

The system comes in two models: the KX-VC1300, which can connect with people at up to four sites including the home site; and the KX-VC1600, which comes standard with six-site capability and can be upgraded to 10. Unlike some other systems, both models can bridge multiple connections without the additional purchase of a multi-point control unit (MCU).



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LIFELIKE SOUND AND PICTURE

Panasonic has leveraged its expertise in chipset technology for its TVs, displays and Blu-ray players to provide the system with lifelike sound and picture, capturing the nuances of facial expression and tone that are essential to clear business communication.

Most senior managers don't come from an IT background. They want a system that's easy to use for scheduled and ad hoc videoconferencing. The KX-VC1300 and KX-VC1600 keep it simple with a remote control similar to their home TV remotes and which feature intuitive functionality.

Videoconferencing access is not restricted to set locations. The system can be used anywhere from boardrooms to product development sites to exhibition halls, as it operates via cable LAN or wireless (Wi-Fi/LTE) connection or through other mobile Internet/Intranet access products.

Colleagues, clients and suppliers also can download the HDVC Mobile app to enable access on an iOS or Android mobile device or a Windows PC (this requires a one-time licence purchase). They can join a videoconference from a factory, their home, or while on a business trip.

MANAGING BANDWIDTH FOR A SMOOTH EXPERIENCE

The videoconference experience can be less than ideal if the highest-quality full-HD 1080/60p signal requires more bandwidth than some sites can consistently accommodate due to the ebbs and flows of network traffic. “If the bandwidth is fluctuating down, a 1080p videoconference won’t look good. It can be frustrating when you see a lot of blockage or jitter,” Sneyd notes.

So to maintain a stable connection, rate control for the system and for HDVC Mobile estimates network congestion and controls the amount of data to be transferred, preventing packet losses and suppressing image and audio disruptions. Video and audio communication is possible at a minimum 256 kbps per site.

Profiles can be set up for meetings so that only certain sites can join, preventing unwanted interruptions. Audio can also be muted at all but one site, allowing the company president to deliver a smooth, town hall-style videoconference.

The system can connect with sites equipped with other manufacturers’ communications systems that comply with H.261, H.263 and H.264 international video compression standards. The KX-VC1300 and KX-VC1600 can function as primary or secondary units. Given the cost savings of Panasonic’s product, this offers an economical means of system expansion.

Video and audio communication is possible at a minimum 265 kbps per site.



The KX-VC1300 can transmit an image of the home site plus a PC document image and receive the image of a distant site plus a PC image (monitors are sold separately). Screen layout options include showing a single site in one large window, or multiple sites in windows of varying sizes.

The KX-VC1600 offers a Triple Monitor function that can additionally display a home location's image to itself. Both models allow videoconferences to be recorded by plugging in a third-party recording device.

EASILY CONTROLLABLE CAMERAS

Two HD Communication Camera models are sold separately. The GP-VD131 offers an 85° horizontal angle of view and 3x optical zoom, while the larger GP-VD151 has a 56° horizontal angle of view and 12x optical zoom, allowing for optimal frame adjustment as needed. Each camera provides Full HD images and is operated by the remote control.

In a demonstration in Panasonic's Mississauga office, a GP-VD151 located outside a Panasonic factory in Japan provided a clear, live feed and could be easily controlled via the remote with panning, tilting and zooming capabilities. These features could be used just as effectively for touring an exhibit-hall booth.

A secondary camera can be connected to the system, or, unique to Panasonic, a consumer video camera can be connected via HDMI. So if two sites are videoconferencing about an electronic device that isn't working properly, one site can train a camera on the device's motherboard so both sites can see it up close and troubleshoot the problem.

Also available for separate purchase is the KX-VCA001 digital boundary microphone, which contains four built-in mics that reproduce the position and direction of speakers' voices in the listeners' side speakers. Up to four of the units can be connected together for meetings in larger spaces involving numerous participants.

The KX-VCA002 analogue boundary microphone provides a more compact, economical alternative that delivers high-grade stereo audio. It's an attractive choice for businesses conducting videoconferences in smaller three- or four-person huddle rooms.

Just as Panasonic has created a visual communications system that is both economical and easy to use, it has brought the same approach to product support. It doesn't charge for software assurance: patches and upgrades are free. The hardware comes with a two-year warranty and Panasonic offers local technical support in Toronto.

Panasonic is constantly enhancing product specifications and accessories. Specifications subject to change without notice.

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