



The IT Buyer's Guide to Web Conferencing

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THE IT BUYER'S GUIDE TO WEB CONFERENCING



INTRODUCTION

*Introduction by David Guthrie,
Chief Technology Officer for PGI*

The market for collaboration technologies has exploded in recent years. Wainhouse Research forecasts that by 2016, the global Web Conferencing Market will reach nearly \$2.5 billion in revenue, with a five-year compound annual growth rate of 6%. The flexibility and availability of these tools are facilitating more efficient business across the globe, tearing down geographical barriers, and giving companies of all sizes the ability to shorten sales cycles, reach into new and emerging markets and above all, collaborate more effectively.

For the IT Professional, a web conferencing solution, like any software acquisition, must balance any number of pros and cons. With the proper tool, IT departments can expect:

- Easy company-wide deployment and maintenance;
- Administrative access and controls;
- Flexible mobility options;
- Global availability; and
- Industry-grade security and compliance.

By taking collaboration to the cloud, companies can ease deployment burdens and get the right conferencing tool in the hands of their employees faster and more effectively. Coupling a secure, cloud-based back end with an intuitive, easy-to-use product can dramatically lessen the time IT teams spend on both implementation and support issues.

At PGI, we're uniquely positioned to identify and address the collaboration needs of businesses ranging in all sizes and across all industries. We've been developing innovative communication and conferencing solutions for over twenty years. We're the only conferencing provider that built our own audio bridges and wrote our own audio bridge code. And our technology leadership and products have won countless awards for innovation and excellence. We are uniquely focused on providing the best audio, web and video conferencing user experiences for all users – across the globe.

We know the questions to ask when purchasing a web conferencing solution—because we're the ones who get asked.



**Telecommuting on the Rise –
Powered by advances in conferencing
technologies, telecommuting has grown
73% across all sectors since 2005.**

Source: Telework Research Network

4 QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE BUYING A WEB CONFERENCING SOLUTION

How Does It Help Me Save Money?

At the end of the day, the true measure of any software acquisition is quite simply dollars and cents. The benefits of web conferencing, telecommuting and flexible, remote work options are numerous and include reduced travel costs, reduced recruiting and hiring costs and reduced employee turnover. For IT departments, an integrated, cloud-based collaboration tool offloads a great deal of work onto the provider, allowing for a more strategic focus and more efficient resource allocation.

Additionally, your choice of provider will dictate quite a bit about pricing structure. Do they provide a complete, integrated, industry-grade audio and web solution or will audio support incur additional fees? Do they charge for mobile licenses or are they included? Does the product include various avenues of support, such as live chat, email and user communities or will building out a support system cost your IT department additional money and time? All of these issues can drastically affect the costs incurred when making a web conferencing purchasing decision.

How Easy Is It To Deploy?

Deployment can be a big hurdle with a new software acquisition. No one wants to wait months after making a buying decision to get software and infrastructure in place to start seeing the benefits of your new tool. Luckily, cloud computing has all but eliminated lengthy deployment times. While there may be some specific tailoring to your organization—its firewalls and server architecture as well as specific user needs within your enterprise—the tools themselves are effortless to access and the computing and processing burdens are handled by your solution vendor instead of your own network.

How Easy Is It To Use?

Web conferencing has traditionally been difficult for the average user to grasp. Overly technical interfaces and download requirements force employees to either seek out IT for support or abandon their new tool for comfortable fallbacks like phone and email. However, with a cloud-based solution, everything is accessed through the web browser with ***no downloads required for guests to get started***, significantly lowering the support burden on your IT staff.

How Secure Is It?

Industry-grade security and compliance features are an essential component of any software purchasing decision. IT departments work diligently to protect employee and customer data, and the last thing they need is the added worry of potentially violating privacy or compliance regulations with an unsecure communications tool. Web conferencing solutions include a number of features that have to be properly secured, such as file sharing, chat and audio and web recording. Before you begin to fully evaluate a tool, be certain that it meets your specific company's needs for secure and compliant information transmission.

Technical Difficulties

According to Wainhouse Research, more than half of web conference meetings start over 5 minutes late because of:

- Technical difficulty
- Software download/install delays
- Difficulty joining the meeting
- Missing materials/credentials

The cost of these delays in terms of salary and lost opportunity is incalculable. That's why survey respondents rank ease of use as the most critical web conferencing component—even above reliability, price, features, vendor support and brand.

ESSENTIAL WEB CONFERENCING FEATURES

Implementation Assistance

Even with the easy deployment that cloud solutions provide, your company has unique IT needs and concerns that should be identified and addressed before any solution is purchased. A web conferencing provider should work with you to identify your specific needs by assessing your business's infrastructure and capability in order to provide a tailored solution that seamlessly integrates with existing systems.

PGi employs a unique Implementation Services Team comprised of support and solutions engineering veterans who will work with you to customize your implementation and on-board and train your employees to ensure your workforce is making the most of your new collaboration tool. The Implementation Services Team will arm your IT department with the tools and knowledge necessary to successfully manage your web conferencing solution.

Audio Integration

With all the file sharing, screen sharing and video streaming available in web conferences, it can be easy to forget the importance of a reliable, consistent and easily accessible audio experience. Many web conferencing providers simply outsource their audio to third party vendors, often sacrificing quality and consistency in the process. Regardless of the size of your business, having a globally available, industry-grade audio experience with multiple points of access integrated with your web conferencing solution is vital to ensure clear, productive communication and, therefore, productive meetings.

GlobalMeet® is powered by PGI's global, industry-grade audio infrastructure that is over twenty years in the making. GlobalMeet provides a world-class audio experience, complimented by

intuitive web conferencing features to provide the only complete, all-in-one audio and web conferencing experience on the market today.

Administrative Controls

Maintaining control over your company's software is essential to ensuring the safety and stability of your entire network and, frequently, the security and compliance of your employees' information. A flexible web conferencing solution will give you full administrative access, allowing you to provision access to the tool or even access to specific features across departments or at the individual employee level. This kind of control is particularly important for certain industries, such as financial services and healthcare, where there are strict regulations on which features are allowed during virtual meetings.

Mobility

Your IT department is likely already dealing with the challenges of the BYOD movement and the balancing act between allowing an increasingly vocal and technologically equipped workforce to use their personal device of choice while maintaining security and stability within your organization's network. Mobile workforces are growing across the globe and, in order to promote employee adoption and productivity, your web conferencing tool must be able to support your flexible workforce on their smartphones and tablets. Additionally, the increased power and sophistication of mobile device hardware and software means that you don't have to settle for a limited mobile meeting experience; a web conferencing app should include all the capabilities of its desktop counterpart, including video streaming, file sharing, chat and more, empowering your road warriors and digital nomads with access to the same collaboration tools as their in-office colleagues.



Mobile Workers Unite

By 2015, there will be an estimated 1.3 billion mobile workers worldwide.

Source: IDC

ADDITIONAL FEATURES

Availability/Scalability/Uptime

One of the strengths of cloud-based collaboration is the availability and scalability of the deployments. However, it's important to thoroughly vet a potential provider's cloud services on a variety of criteria. The ability to provide redundancy and resilience in the event of technical difficulties or disasters is essential to preventing business interruption. A web conferencing solution also should be able to quickly and efficiently scale to match the ever-changing needs and demands of your business.

Global Reach

Communications technologies such as web conferencing break down global boundaries, allowing companies to experience truly global reach like never before. If your employee or customer base spans multiple countries and languages, your collaboration provider should be able to offer a variety of services to facilitate your company's global presence. Localized software versions, native language support and local dial-in numbers and audio bridges are just a few of the international conferencing features designed to lower the support burden on your IT staff.

Multiple Avenues of Support

Google has brought the Age of the Informed Consumer, and software consumers are now accustomed to quick and easy access to information, especially for support and troubleshooting. It's vital for both your employees and your meeting guests to have multiple avenues of support for any meeting problems that may arise. Common support avenues you can expect include real-time chat, email, phone support and online customer forums.

PGi: THE MEETINGS EXPERTS

THE GLOBALMEET DIFFERENCE

When designing GlobalMeet, PGi brought to bear years of meetings experience, industry-leading technical expertise and our unparalleled audio infrastructure in order to create the simplest, most intuitive and most reliable web conferencing tool on the market today. GlobalMeet offers:

- An all-in-one audio and web solution, powered by PGi's own global audio network;
- Cloud-based collaboration with effortless deployment and maintenance;
- A dedicated Implementation Services Team to assist with implementation, employee training and arming your IT team with the tools and knowledge to effectively manage the software;
- Industry-leading mobile apps for the most popular smartphones and tablets, bringing fully featured web conferencing experiences — with no additional fees for mobile users;
- A truly global network, offering product localization, native language support and prompts, local dial-in numbers, local audio bridges and network redundancy; and
- Multiple avenues of in-product and out-of-product support, including real-time chat, email, phone support and our online customer forum, the GlobalMeet Community — all included with your GlobalMeet license.

Ready to experience simply better meetings for your organization? Contact our team of collaboration experts by clicking here

[CONTACT US](#)

Additional Resources



View the Video

Watch this video to hear PGi Chief Technology Officer David Guthrie discuss how GlobalMeet provides a

secure environment for collaboration and why cloud-based solutions provide easy implementation for IT departments and the best possible meeting experience for hosts and guests.



Read the Report

Read about how PGi's processes and practices are designed to ensure system

security, integrity and business continuity in this report, *Learn How PGi Addresses Security, Resilience and Business Continuity*.



Get the eBook

See how today's hottest trends – BYOD, social business, mobility, globalization and social

media – create a new landscape for modern business collaboration in our eBook, *The Future of Business Collaboration*.



THE MEETINGS EXPERTS

PGi.com