



The Wainhouse Research Bulletin

ONLINE NEWS AND VIEWS ON VISUAL COLLABORATION AND RICH MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

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NetworkIP Rolls Pre-Paid Conferencing Ira Weinstein, iweinstein@wainhouse.com

At WR, we've watched 800# meet-me conferencing come down in price to less than a dime per minute – for volume users. However, occasional users still pay upwards of \$0.30 per minute per line, or \$180 for a one-hour conference with 10 participants. This is where NetworkIP comes in. Although they may not be a household name, NetworkIP is the wholesale company behind many of the pre-paid calling cards (especially international) available at your local supermarket and convenience store. (In this sense they are similar to West, a calling card company that recently acquired InterCall and ConferenceCall.com.) Their annual revenue is roughly \$150M, they connect more than 800,000 calls per day, and currently have more than 350 million (not a typo) PINs in service. Now they've turned their attention to pre-paid calling-card conferencing.

NetworkIP's new service provides pre-paid 800# meet-me conferencing for less than \$0.10 per minute per line. One NetworkIP reseller, Teleconvene, already offers this service for only \$0.08 per minute per line. Therefore, our above-mentioned \$180 conference call would cost less than \$50 using this service.

To activate, users simply charge their PIN with enough money and start dialing. There are no contracts and no commitments. Cardholders also have access to a web-interface that provides call control, dial-out, muting, full call detail records (ideal for expense accounts), and even a real-time counter of minutes left on the calling card. To sign up for the service, check out www.teleconvene.com. To be a reseller, contact swalters@networkip.net.

Here's What Ira Thinks:

I tested this service and was pleased with what I heard (or didn't hear actually). There were no audio artifacts so common with discount long distance services. (This is a PSTN, not a VoIP service.) The quality was as good as I've heard from any conferencing or LD provider. Also, the web interface was uncluttered and easy to use. This offering follows the trend of "easy to buy, easy to use, easy to afford" services within the conferencing space. At these prices, I'd expect some larger companies to abandon their current CSP. And look for nickel pricing coming soon.

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