LifeSize® Results™

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NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC™

The National Geographic Society uses LifeSize HD video to reduce travel, stay green

Cutting down on carbon emissions while reducing inter-office travel, HD video communications is a big win for the NGS

Organization

The National Geographic Society (NGS), Washington, D.C., USA

National Geographic is one of the largest non-profit scientific and educational institutions in the world. Established in 1888, its interests include geography, archaeology and natural science, the promotion of environmental and historical conservation, and the study of world culture and history.

Today, the Society reaches more than 325 million people worldwide each month through its official journal, National Geographic, and six other magazines; National Geographic Channel; television documentaries; music; radio; films; books; DVDs; maps; exhibitions; school publishing and children's education programs; interactive media; and merchandise.

Headquartered in Washington D.C., the Society also has offices in California, Connecticut, New York, Texas, Michigan, Illinois, Colorado and London.



The National Geographic Society's photography is some of the most broadly recognized in the world.

CHALLENGE

To significantly reduce both international and domestic travel while keeping with the Society's environmental iniatives and historical mission to promote the conservation of the earth's resources.

SOLUTION

A combination of more than 15 LifeSize® Room™, LifeSize® Team MP™ and LifeSize® Express™ systems deployed across the globe, including the LifeSize® Networker™ product for seamless ISDN to IP connectivity.

RESULTS

Increased usage of video communications among all departments, increased productivity and significant travel reduction, lessening the Society's environmental impact.

Challenge

The NGS has always had a deep commitment to the planet and environmental awareness. Its magazine National Geographic Green Guide (on newsstands and online at www.thegreenguide.com), for example, is a wealth of information on conservation, green living and teaches simple, everyday practices we all can use to make the world a little greener. Historically, National Geographic's mission has been to "increase and diffuse geographic knowledge," while promoting the conservation of the world's cultural and natural resources. Society President and CEO John Fahey, Jr., says National Geographic's goal is to inspire people to care about the planet.

And these principles are of the utmost importance to the scores of writers, producers, editors, photographers, (and many, many others) who make the Society what it is today. At the NGS headquarters in D.C., these ideals are practiced around the office, too.

The Society had used video communications in the past, mainly as a means to converse internally with colleagues in field offices, but the perception around the office was negative. The systems were old and clunky, and the poor quality left them almost completely unused.

But with Society locations around the United States, travel between the offices has become more and more frequent in recent years as the Society continues to grow. In 2007, over $300,000 was spent on travel, just from headquarters to the NGS office in Carmel, California.

The Society needed a way to bring remote locations together without the environmental, financial and time-consuming burden of travel. A communications solution would allow for real-time collaboration between offices with crisp, high definition audio and video and seamless data sharing – all possible without ever stepping foot on an airplane.

Solution

Eddie Dornack, Manager of Presentation Facilities, led the quest to find a video solution that best suited the Society's needs. After seeing demonstrations of different video manufacturer's products, LifeSize was the clear choice.

"The quality of the LifeSize systems simply blew the other guys away, even at low bandwidths like 384k," Dornack said.

Dornack implemented LifeSize Room and LifeSize Express systems in 20 locations in the US and Europe. For IP to ISDN connectivity, he also chose the LifeSize Networker product, as some of the international sites are currently ISDN-based.

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>
> – EDDIE DORNACK, MANAGER OF PRESENTATION FACILITIES

The majority of NGS's systems were installed in formal conference rooms, while others are cart-based, so they can easily be moved around the office. The D.C. location for instance, is made up of four buildings with multiple floors, so being able to move the systems around was a plus for Dornack and his team.

"People expect Tom Brokaw, Nightly News-like calls," Dornack said. "If it doesn't have that level of quality, no one will use it. This is like you're sitting in the same room with the person on the other side. "

Results

Since the implementation, departments throughout the organization are asking for systems to be installed in their areas. Not only meeting with remote colleagues, NGS employees are beginning to use the technology with outside vendors and customers as well. The Human Resources department also included a how-to video guide in an employee newsletter.

"It's a snowball effect," Dornack said. "People were disillusioned by the systems we had previously. The quality was horrible, your call was almost always dropped and you had to be a rocket scientist to use the remote. Now with LifeSize, the audio and video are crystal clear, the remote control is simple and very easy to use. We are reducing travel while increasing productivity, and people love it. "

The next phase of implementation will be a set of portable systems in cases, which will be shipped to photographers and editors working on stories in remote locations. As long as they have internet connectivity, they can easily share images and data and collaborate real-time with colleagues back in the U.S.

"Being green is more important to us than money or travel savings," Dornack said, "and HD video is a green technology. LifeSize was a win, win, win situation for us."



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