

Video conferencing usage charges set to tumble by more than 50%

ACT Teleconferencing sets benchmark in the ISDN video conferencing market

The Australian subsidiary of ACT Teleconferencing, Inc. (Nasdaq-ACTT), a leading independent worldwide provider of audio, video, data and web-based conferencing products and services, has thrown down the gauntlet and launched the most cost-effective videoconferencing solutions available in Australia.

Because of the strong relationships that the ACT holds with some of the worlds leading carriers, it has negotiated significantly lower pricing for the ISDN requirements associated with videoconferencing. The announcement will have a profound impact on the take up of videoconferencing for business productivity gains in Australia.

The company is supporting the launch of this initiative with aggressive marketing activity. Full pricing models will be available late March. Stage one, focusing on reduced international videoconferencing offerings is being followed by stage two, where the Australian market will be able to enjoy dramatically reduced inter-state videoconferencing alternatives from ACT.

For the last 15 years, there has been a virtual monopoly in the ISDN market here, said Peter Eeles, Asia Pacific Managing Director, ACT Teleconferencing. And, more surprisingly, ISDN pricing has basically stood still since the late 80s. Were talking pricing levels up to four to five times higher than what other ISDN providers offer the global market.

Eeles has announced savings of over 50 per cent in videoconferencing services involving links with other countries. We have leveraged economies of scale through ACTs global relationships with the worlds leading carriers and can now pass this onto our Australian customers.

Eeles gives the example of a videoconference meeting taking place between Sydney, Hong Kong, Singapore, UK and USA offices, run out of Australia, currently attracts an ISDN cost of approximately \$1,274.00 for one hour at 128 kbit/s. ACT can offer the same videoconference links up to 50% or more off the current price because of its capability to utilise ACTs global platform and leverage the ISDN costs from providers other than Telstra.

ACT has access to multiple conference platforms over a dozen locations globally. From our Australian operations centres, we can activate a call from any of our platforms around the world, said Eeles.

Over the last 18 months, the move towards IP in the videoconferencing world has been widely publicised. I believe this is due not so much to IP as the technology driver, rather it is as a result of shunning the usage costs associated with videoconferencing specifically the ISDN component, says Eeles. Recent years have seen videoconferencing end point hardware come down in price dramatically. What has not moved (since the 80s) has been the price of ISDN it has not kept pace with the decrease in pricing experienced with other technologies. This has naturally forced the user to explore IP technology to reduce videoconferencing usage costs, says Eeles. But users need to consider that other issues arise with the adoption of IP as the videoconferencing platform. These include Quality of Service, investment capital required, upgrading of WANs and LANs, as well as end points, for IP capability.

Beyond these issues, it is possible that the IT manager within an organisation will not accept videoconferencing taking place on his/her data network. [ISDN is a discreet network not impacting existing communications networks.]

Eeles is confident that this new cost structure will relieve organisational pressure to get more value out of videoconferencing. Companies can undertake virtual meetings more often and more economically now and will be in a stronger position to reconsider videoconferencing costs against travel budgets.

Uniquely, we can also offer organisations the ability to conduct small or large-scale videoconferences from more than 3,500 sites in 1,125 cities worldwide, through our subsidiary Proximity, concluded Eeles. What this means is that this dramatic price reduction will also benefit those organisations that outsource completely their videoconferencing requirements. We really are the only conferencing service provider offering a total solution with a full range of voice, video and web - conferencing services in 40 countries around the world.

About ACT Teleconferencing

ACT Teleconferencing, Inc. (Nasdaq-ACTT) is a leading independent worldwide provider of audio, video and web-based conferencing products and services. Established in 1990, ACT Teleconferencing provides unmatched coverage around the world with 15 service delivery centres and sales offices in nine countries.

ACT is the only conferencing company with integrated global audio and video conferencing platforms that provide uniform international services, uniform billing and local language services.

ACT's comprehensive suite of applications enable organisations to collaborate with customers, team members, investors and employees locally as well as globally for increased productivity, lower travel expenses and more efficient communications. ACT technology and custom-built applications enable organisations to reach their communication goals around the globe with ease.

For the third year in a row, ACT has been named to Deloitte & Touches Fast 500 program, a ranking of the 500 fastest growing technology companies

sin the USA.

ACT Teleconferencing clients in Australia include Compaq, National Meat Federation, ABN Amro, University of Queensland, CSR, AMP, Woolworths, Westfields, Lend Lease, Ernst & Young, Arnotts and KPMG.

For more information about ACT Teleconferencing visit the company's website at www.acttel.com.