



News release

AASTRA BRINGS IMPROVED COLLABORATION AND PRODUCTIVITY WITH ITS VIPR VIDEO CONFERENCING SOLUTION

Updates to Virtual Presence video conferencing solution deliver enhanced face-to-face calling and document sharing in one place

[City], 6th January 2009 – Aastra has announced key updates to its **V**irtual **P**resence (ViPr™) video conferencing solution providing additional security features in the form of AES (Advanced Encryption Standard) to encrypt all media streams and expanding collaborative functionality through integration with Microsoft Live Meeting. ViPr™ is a secure, high quality, remote communication and collaboration system enabling sharing of documents, multi-media content and real-time applications. A touch screen and an intuitive interface provide unparalleled ease of use, ensuring a ViPr call is as good as a face-to-face meeting, with the benefit of having no travel time or expense.

“We’ve designed ViPr with a number of key objectives in mind – to improve employee collaboration and increase staff productivity, while reducing costs and administrative burden. These new updates provide users with much more collaborative functionality including the ability to transfer files, conduct whiteboard sessions, chat and more. However, what makes ViPr different is that it completely integrates video conferencing with the communications technologies that you have on your desk top. It can serve as your desktop monitor, phone and conference screen all at once,” said Keith Huthmacher, Director of Engineering, ViPr Technology at Aastra.

ViPr was the industry’s first SIP-based video communications solution integrating seamlessly into any IP telephony system including bridges to PBXs and PSTN. ViPr has the capability for simple multiparty calls which are as easy to establish as a phone call. In addition, ViPr’s conferencing model eliminates the need to purchase additional expensive infrastructure to support multiparty calls.

Based on the H.264 standard, ViPr provides high quality resolution at low bandwidths and maintains virtual presence at all bandwidths, regardless of the number of participants. The ViPr solution is available in multiple configurations from personal desktop units to rack-mounted or table-mounted conference room models. It is currently deployed in several industries and applications including federal government, state and local government, distance learning and healthcare.

“Aastra’s commitment is to deliver open, standards-based communication solutions to the enterprise and large campus environments. We’re very excited to bring this latest generation of SIP-based video communications solution to market, We believe there is a clear ROI for this solution. Customers are already using it for distance learning and training, remote medical diagnosis, secure remote depositions and testimonies, and global broadcasts of live performances. The applications are only limited by one’s imagination, and we’re anticipating more innovative uses daily.”

- ENDS -

About Aastra Italia S.p.A.

Aastra Italia S.p.A. is the Italian business unit of Aastra Technologies Limited, (TSX:“AAH”), a leading company at the forefront of the enterprise communication market. Headquartered in Concord, Ontario, Canada, Aastra develops and delivers innovative communications products and applications for businesses. Aastra’s operations are truly global with more than 50 million installed lines around the world and a direct and indirect presence in more than 100 countries. Aastra is entirely dedicated to enterprise communications and offers one of the most complete portfolios of unified communications solutions individually tailored to satisfy its customers’ requirements. These range from feature-rich call managers for small and medium businesses and highly scalable ones for large enterprises, integrated mobility, call center solutions to a wide selection of terminals. With a strong focus on open standards, Aastra enables enterprises to communicate and collaborate more efficiently. For additional information on Aastra, visit our website at <http://www.aastra.it>



Crawford County Court USA

Customer Success Story

Aastra ViPr™ provides
video telephony and
multimedia communication
to the county courts

The county of Crawford is in northwestern Pennsylvania, USA. With a population of around 100 000, the county covers nearly 1 000 sq miles. The public officials who run the county's courts are committed to the swift delivery of justice, without overburdening the taxpayers. This philosophy means they are happy to use technology for initiatives where it can be an advantage.

The Crawford County Information Technology Services (ITS) Office supports county offices and departments. ITS handle 19 servers, more than 300 workstations, and all the network equipment required to support both county departments and the wide area network (WAN).



Remote offices connect to the main network using digital subscriber lines (DSL) offered by local service providers. The ITS Office maintains the Crawford County Network (CCN) internet website, the county intranet, and various other connections to state systems. The county network provides the local hub for the Pennsylvania Justice Network (JNET), a secure virtual system for the sharing of information by authorized users from municipal, county, state, and federal justice agencies.

Crawford County is one of the largest counties, territorially, in Pennsylvania. Any time government employees must leave their offices to attend meetings at another location, it costs both time and money.

A true asset

Video conferencing was just another complicated technology before Crawford County Commissioners installed the Aastra ViPr™ Virtual Presence System. Now, judges, lawyers, and defendants quickly and easily use ViPr™ conferencing for a variety of hearings and procedures.

Crawford County is a large area with courts and offices widely spread. Tim Kelley, Director of Information Technology, Crawford County Court, explains the situation the organization faced: "We've had video conferencing for nearly a decade. But the quality, especially the lack of synchronization between audio and video, made it difficult for people to communicate."

Video conferencing which was too complicated to use, or to learn, or took too long to set up, was never going to be widely used. Also, the quality issues the court faced, particularly issues with video/audio synchronization, meant that people were reluctant to use the system when it came to something as important as legal proceedings. John Shuttleworth, Court Administrator, underlines these concerns: "A judge must assess the manner of the individual standing before the court. If the video shows the person's lips moving and no sound comes out of the person's mouth, the judge feels as if he or she may be missing something important."

The decision was made to seek a solution that would ensure the video conferencing system is a true asset to the county. Kelley evaluated next-generation video conferencing technology to see if there was a service capable of achieving these goals.



"We paid close attention to the quality of the video, especially the system's ability to maintain synchronization between the video and audio. ViPr™ was the only one that had that fixed."

Tim Kelley, Director of Information Technology, Crawford County Court

High quality

Aastra ViPr™ is high-resolution video telephony and multimedia communications technology that enables point-to-point and multipoint conferencing in real time over Ethernet/IP or ATM networks. The benefits of the solution were readily apparent, such as the real-time aspects of the system, the video feed did not drop out and there were no lags in transmission.

Based on cost, quality, and ease-of-use, Crawford County chose the Aastra ViPr™. Tim Kelley describes the decision making process: "We paid close attention to the quality of the video, especially the system's ability to maintain synchronization between the video and audio. ViPr™ was the only one that had that fixed."

The quality of fully synchronized video and audio transmission provides what traditional video conferencing products have failed to deliver, true presence. With ViPr™, users react and interact as they would in face-to-face communications, reaping the benefits of ViPr™.

The solution has enabled Crawford County Court to save time and money, John Shuttleworth elaborates: "The court is eight miles from the jail. In this part of the state, in the middle of winter, there could be a foot of snow on the ground. Regulations state that two deputies must be assigned to transport for even one prisoner. The trip to the court house might take 20 minutes, or it might take an hour, round trip, in bad weather — all for a 15 minute parole violation or bond reduction hearing."

Use of ViPr™ allows the police to spend more time protecting citizens and less time escorting prisoners to and from the courthouse. Prisoners get their 'day in court' faster. Judges hear more cases in less time with fewer scheduling and logistical issues.



"Really anyone can use it. If you can set up a conference call on a telephone, you can set up a video conference with ViPr™."

Tim Kelley, Director of Information Technology, Crawford County Court

Tangible results

ViPr™'s graphical user interface is easy for non-technical people to learn and use. The desktop terminal is controlled by a touch screen instead of a complicated remote control device. ViPr™ is on a cart and is used in any courtroom, on any day of the week, sometimes in all three courtrooms in the same morning. ViPr™ can be used in the courthouse or the jail — anywhere a network connection exists. Tim Kelley sees the simplicity of the solution as a benefit: "It is so simple to use that really anyone can use it. If you can set up a conference call on a telephone, you can set up a video conference with ViPr™."

The solution has brought major cost savings. ViPr™ uses the existing county fiber optic infrastructure, which enabled the county to replace a USD \$85 000 system with one that cost less than half that price, eliminating three ISDN lines as well. The number of prisoner transports from the jail to the courthouse and back has been reduced by almost half.

Government agencies will always be under pressure to use the taxpayers' dollar as wisely and efficiently as possible. Both Tim Kelley and John Shuttleworth see an important role for ViPr™ in enabling Crawford County to meet the technical and logistical challenges that impact on the cost of justice. Due to the ease with which Crawford County Court personnel have accepted and used the ViPr™ system, a reasonable investment is already generating tangible returns.

Highlights

Customer

Crawford County Court, USA

Customer Objective

- Cost efficient, reliable video conferencing

Aastra Solution

- ViPr™ Virtual Presence System

Customer Benefits

- Easy-to-use solution
- Enhanced cost savings and time efficiency
- High quality audio and video
- Reduced number of prisoner transports.



Mobile Surgical Services New Zealand

Customer Success Story

Aastra ViPr™ provides
the ideal platform for
mobile surgery

Mobile Surgical Services in New Zealand installs Aastra Virtual Presence (ViPr™) videoconferencing solution through advanced partner Zintel Enterprise, New Zealand.

A publicly funded company, Mobile Surgical Services delivers state-of-the-art surgical services to New Zealand's rural communities. Together Aastra and Zintel implemented videoconferencing units at Mobile Surgical Services head office in Christchurch as well as its mobile surgical units, which travel around New Zealand's North and South islands.

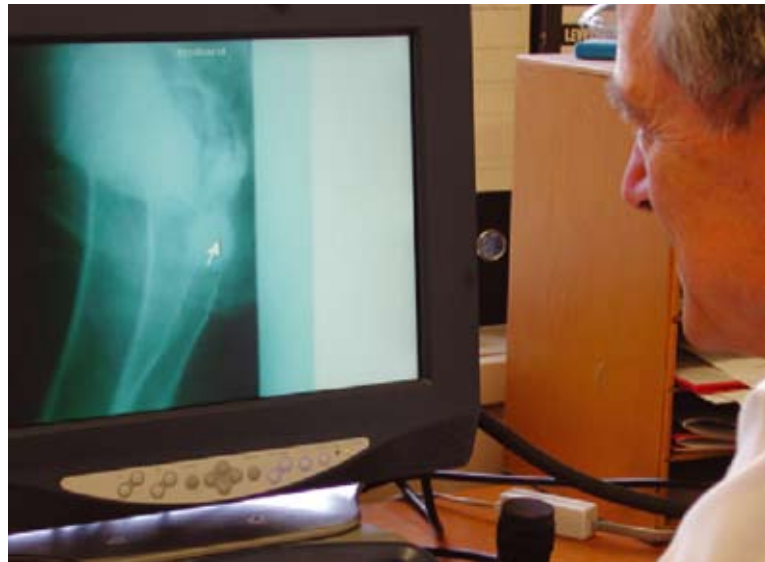
Improving patient care

Healthcare providers are under constant pressure to improve the quality of patient care, serve more markets and at the same time control costs. Mobile Surgical Services was feeling the pressure and like many other key players in the healthcare industry decided to turn to interactive video communications to improve efficiency and services. Mobile Surgical Services chose Aastra's ViPr™ solution because of the high quality pictures produced as well as the robustness of the entire solution. Another important reason for choosing ViPr™ was its growing global reputation. This was particularly relevant as the customer will soon be looking to expand its teleconferencing solution to include colleagues in the USA and UK.

Mobile Surgical Service's unit is a roaming bus which provides a day surgery service to remote communities eliminating the need for rural patients to travel to main centers for low risk operations. The bus was built by Mobile Surgical Services and the healthcare provision it offers is fully funded by the Ministry of Health. It was launched in 2001 and has been traveling the length of New Zealand delivering enhanced access to local surgery since March 2002. A critical element to the delivery of these services is the ability to virtually teleport medical experts to colleagues in the New Zealand mobile operating theater. Fredrik Thundberg, Product Marketing Manager, Aastra explains: "ViPr™ is the perfect solution for Mobile Surgical Services, providing the infrastructure to deliver this teleporting service and allowing employees to share knowledge and provide a better service to patients."

Virtual consulting

Aastra ViPr™ provides a cost effective method for enhancing service delivery and improving operations and with its intuitive graphical user interface is as easy to use as a telephone. Users can access and fully utilize the feature-rich functionality with no formal training establishing real time, face-to-face, multiple party conferences within minutes.



**"ViPr™ is the perfect solution for
Mobile Surgical Services"**

Fredrik Thundberg, Product Marketing Manager, Aastra

Aastra Telecom Sweden AB
SE-126 37 Hägersten, Sweden
www.aastra.com

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Ratu Mason, Account Manager, Mobile Surgical Services, explains the advantages of the system: "Most importantly our patients gain greater access to quality healthcare services, but we can also increase our productivity and make better use of our medical experts time and resources. As the first to implement a ViPr™ videoconferencing system in New Zealand, Mobile Surgical Services is in a great position for the future".

With its ability to support communications during routine, chronic, and acute medical procedures, ViPr™ is an ideal tool for a range of specialties, including cardiology, dermatology,

dentistry, psychology, psychiatry, ophthalmology, pathology, pediatrics, and radiology. In addition, numerous devices can be connected to the system, including EKG equipment, X-ray film digitizers, ultrasound and imaging equipment, in fact virtually any device with standard audio/video outputs.

A highly secure and reliable video appliance, ViPr™ meets HIPAA privacy regulations, as well as other strict standards established for use in hospitals and other clinical environments. As such, it is a valuable tool for physicians who are unable to examine a patient in person.



"As the first to implement a ViPr™ videoconferencing system in New Zealand, Mobile Surgical Services is in a great position for the future."

Ratu Mason, Account Manager, Mobile Surgical Services

Sharing knowledge

Aastra ViPr™ facilitates a wide variety of telemedicine applications for Mobile Surgical Services, including remote diagnosis and expert consultation and collaboration. Mason outlines the importance of the solution: "One of the key aims of ViPr™ is to extend the reach of medical services to under-served rural areas. This is exactly what Mobile Surgical Services has set out to do and this technology supports us perfectly, considerably enhancing our services by enabling access to specialists who are usually only available at larger medical centers." ViPr™ also allows off-site physicians to perform emergency diagnoses, observe patients in isolation, perform consultations for patients in high-risk or secure areas, and provide a variety of other services all in real time.

The solution has brought numerous benefits to the people in the remote areas which Mobile Surgical Services serves, but it also has the potential to significantly improve the customer and its employees' future prospects. ViPr™ can facilitate distance learning for continuing education in one on-one or classroom settings, enabling employees to meet CME requirements and eliminating the need for remote personnel to travel or move in order to have access to classes. High-quality mentoring is also available via ViPr™, giving associates and residents in remote locations the opportunity to learn from and consult with specialists on a regular basis. Live communication between operating rooms to the 'outside world' eliminates the need to have dedicated staff for outside operating room communications and Physician practice staff in disparate locations can be connected virtually for staff meetings, minimizing travel time and maximizing patient time. The customer is planning to extend use of ViPr to its global partners, which will increase the pool of available knowledge further and is a true testament to the success of this solution.

Highlights

Customer

Mobile Surgical Services, New Zealand

Customer Objective

- Enhance mobile local surgery services in rural New Zealand

Aastra Solution

- Virtual Presence (ViPr™)

Customer Benefits

- Virtual access to a range of specialist knowledge
- Enhanced patient care
- Improved training possibilities
- Cost and time efficient.



"This technology supports us perfectly, considerably enhancing our services by enabling access to specialists who are usually only available at larger medical centers."

Ratu Mason, Account Manager, Mobile Surgical Services

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