



Education

Daily use

- Meetings between laboratories and companies
- Selection panels for the recruitment of teaching staff and researchers
- Governance meetings for several regional and European projects
- Distance education

Solution

- Polycom® HDX™ 7000 room telepresence solution
- Polycom HDX™ 8000 room telepresence solution
- Polycom RMX® 2000 conference bridge
- Polycom CMA™ 4000 conference management solution
- Polycom CMA™ Desktop solution
- Polycom RSS 2000 recording and streaming server
- Polycom Video Media Center™ (VMC™) 1000 content management solution
- Polycom Video Border Proxy (VBPT™) 5300 converged network appliance

Results and Benefits

- Fosters a sense of belonging to the university
- Facilitates a dialogue between staff and students
- Improves teachers' quality of life, saving time and minimising CO2 emissions

The University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne focuses on interactive multimedia communications

The University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne (URCA) was founded in 1548 and comprises eight Research and Training Units (UFR - Unité de Formation et de Recherche), a University Centre, two University Institutes of Technology (IUT – Institut Universitaire de Technologie), a School of Engineering, a University Teacher Training Institute and a Higher Institute for Technical Training. It is a multi-disciplinary university offering 142 different degrees to approximately 22,200 students in several campuses spread over the five main cities in the area: Reims, Troyes, Châlons-en-Champagne, Chaumont and Charleville-Mézières.

Video conferencing, a recent and already strategic development

Multimedia communications are a fairly recent development at the URCA as they were introduced a few years ago. They operate using collaborative platforms, Java and webcam, and even though the system has not been extensively used throughout the campus, it has already increased awareness of the numerous options visual communications offer. The first requests were received two years ago in relation to Agro/Resources training and for the governance meetings of the IUTs at Reims, Châlons-en-Champagne and Charleville-Mézières.

The management team, under the impetus of Michaël Krajecki, Vice-Chancellor responsible for TICE (Information and Communication Technologies for Education) and distance learning, soon realised the value and the structural opportunities offered by visual communications (video conferencing). This type of system can support the objective of fostering a sense of belonging to the university in students, rather than to the city where it is located. "We would like to change the way students choose their university and move away from geographical issues to focus on educational criteria," confirmed Jean-Bernard Jouin, Director of the Computer Resources Centre at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne.

The governance body very soon discovered the collateral benefits of the tool. As well as facilitating exchanges between students and teaching staff, video conferencing also means that lecturers travel less between the campuses and cities that are part of the URCA. In turn, this avoids lengthy car trips, produces less CO2 and reduces tiredness and the risk of accidents.

A well-thought-out solution and organisation

A single manufacturer was chosen to implement the solution in terms of infrastructure and terminals, with the quality of the sound offered by Polycom

"Polycom's structural solutions are helping us with our objective to foster a sense of belonging to the university, rather than to the city where it is located."

Michaël Krajecki, Vice-Chancellor TICE, University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne

"In the world of education, sound quality is paramount, especially for students. For this reason we decided to use Polycom, a company that pays special attention to this aspect of communications."

Jean-Bernard Jouin, Director of the Computer Resources Centre, University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne

systems being the conclusive argument. The URCA has been fitted out with all the necessary tools for communicating, as well as for recording and broadcasting.

"Rooms have been set aside, technical support has been centralised and computer staff trained at each site on how to use the Polycom® CMA™ 4000 solution to plan conferences", Romuald Arnold, Systems Engineer and Network Administrator at the Computer Resources Centre informed us.

In order to guarantee the highest level of security with regard to the IP network, all calls from or to the outside will transit through the Polycom VBP™ 5300 NAT/firewall transversal solution, where all address translations will take place.

Finally, the URCA is going forward in stages following a well-established plan. Firstly, they are installing all the infrastructure terminals, then setting up the support systems, and then launch the system for use with a few selected users or projects. The next stage consists of a wider communication about solution and its possibilities, and training the highest number of potential users, using video conferencing, of course!

Current applications

At the URCA, there are three main types of applications: governance meetings, distance learning, and collaboration between laboratories and companies.

Governance meetings also include the area of project management, in particular intra-university, but also external and even international meetings. Monthly meetings held to monitor a European project covering six sites, including a motorway company in Belgium and a firm in Luxembourg, are examples of this type of application. Multi-site video conferencing has also been successfully used by selection panels for the recruitment of research and teaching staff, because there is now a statutory obligation to include several universities on the panel as well as a recent legal move to include a remote panel. In addition, candidates can also be located in a university that is not part of the panel or can even be at home. Video Conferencing can also be used for working meetings between members of a same project or institution, such as IUT Léonard de Vinci which is managed by Reims while the units are in Reims, Châlons and Charleville-Mézières.

The URCA believes that distance learning is the most promising area, because it adds value: for teachers, students, it adds value for teachers, for students, and to the institution's image and educational offer. One of the first experiences that has been

extremely successful (in the Agro/Resources department) was the organisation of a professional degree between three institutions: the Reims campus, the Lycée Forestier de Croigny and the Lycée d'Avize (which specialises in wine growing). Depending on the modules in question, the teachers and students are located in one or other of the three sites, with each site in turn acting as the 'broadcaster'. The process was further complicated by combining it with the teaching of languages, as teachers were obliged to teach in English using video conferencing, which is then recorded on the Polycom RSS™ 2000 recording and streaming server for subsequent on-demand broadcasting from the Polycom Video Media Center™ (VMC™) 1000 content management solution.

Future projects

Even whilst working to increase the use of the terminals and the infrastructure installed, the URCA is already envisaging new types of usage.

At Troyes IUT, for instance, which uses audio-visual materials fairly extensively, certain teachers and staff who do not wish to use the video conference room to make a video call are now connecting directly from their office on a PC equipped with coder/decoder software Polycom CMA Desktop and a webcam.

The URCA also wishes to take advantage of the ubiquitous nature of the video conferencing tool to extend its teaching range and offer additional modules thanks to the time saved by not having to travel between campuses and the possibility of teaching simultaneously at several sites.

Longer term, the URCA is also envisaging combining its IP telephony, which is due to be installed over the coming months, with the video conferencing terminals and infrastructure, thereby fully embracing a unified communications system.

For more information

For more information on how Polycom solutions can help your organisation, visit our website at www.polycom.com or contact the Polycom sales department.

Polycom Worldwide Headquarters
4750 Willow Road
Pleasanton, CA 94588
1.800.POLYCOM or +1.925.924.6000
www.polycom.com

Polycom EMEA
270 Bath Road
Slough, Berkshire SL1 4DX, UK
0800 015 2882 or +44 (0)1753 723000
www.polycom.co.uk

