

Creating a physical VC suite

Introduction

1.1 Environment

The environment for videoconferencing requires particular attention if the highest quality sound and vision signals are to be transmitted and received. This is equally true whether sophisticated, dedicated videoconferencing equipment or the simpler desktop plug-in cards are being used.

The requirements for large group teaching are much more demanding than those for straightforward meetings, but the basic principles remain the same. In the interests of simplicity, only videoconferencing rooms used for meetings will be considered in detail here, but where it is felt that points relevant to a teaching network are important these will be specifically mentioned.

Where an integrated videoconferencing system e.g. a rollabout or set top box has been purchased and installed then not all of the following will be applicable. Some information has been included to assist those sites designing their own system around a separate CODEC (COder/DECoder).

To achieve good results certain room parameters need to be controlled quite tightly, especially those affecting noise intrusion, internal reverberation (echoes), and lighting.

1.2 Health and Safety

Before considering the technical requirements of a room for videoconferencing the health and safety issues need to be addressed.

The safety advice given in this document is offered in good faith but it is the responsibility of individuals/organisations following any or all of this advice to ensure that they comply with all of the relevant safety, legal and statutory regulations.

All electrical wiring and installation will need to comply with the IEE wiring regulations¹ and be carried out by qualified staff.

Air conditioning/handling equipment will also require installation by experienced staff to ensure the quality of air is adequate and the temperature, humidity, etc. are of an acceptable standard.

Acoustic treatment of rooms will need to be carried out with materials that satisfy the relevant building regulations, so it is essential that this work is supervised by qualified staff.

** The Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Wiring Regulations 16th Edition (with amendments) available from: The IEE, P.O. Box 96, Stevenage, Hertfordshire, SG1 2SD **

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