

Enterprise Events Team Automates Video Capture

Cisco Live Virtual team used TelePresence Content Server to capture event sessions without a camera crew in the room.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	
Cisco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networking • San Jose, California • 71,825 Employees
BUSINESS CHALLENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend Cisco Live session content to more customers and partners by publishing it online • Make the virtual experience compelling by adding video • Minimize costs of session capture
NETWORK SOLUTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cisco TelePresence C Series Codecs in meeting rooms • Cisco TelePresence Content Server, Cisco TelePresence Management Server, and Cisco TelePresence Video Communication System in operations center at event venue
BUSINESS RESULTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captured video from 45 sessions over four days, without technicians in the rooms • Reduced recording costs by 75 percent, saving US\$100,000 • Gained ability to scale with existing staff levels

Business Challenge

Cisco Live events, held around the world, offer education, training, and professional networking opportunities to Cisco customers and partners. Tens of thousands of IT, networking, and communications professionals attend the events each year to share insights on emerging technologies and their potential to transform the way people live, work, learn, and play.

Travel costs and busy schedules prevent some people from attending in person, prompting the launch of [Cisco Live Virtual](#), an interactive community featuring on-demand and live content from Cisco Live events around the world. “Cisco Live Virtual makes the presentations available to more people, and also promotes in-person attendance,” says Staci Clark, global marketing strategy manager for Cisco Live. “It’s an important tool for sharing content and keeping our audiences engaged year round.” The Cisco Live Virtual site currently has 85,000 subscribers, most whom are customers and partners.

For the first two years, the Cisco Live Virtual team engaged a production company to record audio of selected sessions, synchronizing the audio with the presenter’s slides. High costs included production crews for each room, travel expense, shipping

expense for multiple road cases of gear, laptops for each room, and long post-production times. In addition, the process could not scale to record more sessions and did not capture video to engage a virtual audience.

For Cisco Live 2011 in Las Vegas, Nevada, the Cisco Live team wanted to explore how to add a video window of the speakers alongside the presentation, with the goal of minimizing the difference between a virtual and in-person experience. “Sending a film crew into each room is cost-prohibitive, especially for free online viewing,” Clark says. “To add video and share more sessions online, we needed an automated solution.”

Network Solution

For Cisco Live 2011, the Cisco Live team automated video capture of 45 sessions held in four rooms, using Cisco TelePresence and Enterprise Video Content solutions. Cisco TelePresence C Series Codecs in each of four rooms captured video, audio, and speaker presentations. These systems connected over a Gigabit Ethernet network at the event venue to an operations room containing a Cisco TelePresence Content Server, Cisco TelePresence Management Server, and Cisco TelePresence Video Communication Server.

Before Cisco Live, a technician simply entered the session names, rooms, and start and stop times into Cisco TelePresence Management Server, which acted as the “brains of the environment,” according to Gerson. A few minutes before each session was scheduled to begin, Cisco TelePresence Content Server instructed the in-room codec to begin recording. Each recording session used 2.5 Mbps of bandwidth on the LAN.

Each Cisco TelePresence Content Server can record from up to five rooms at one time. Cisco Live Virtual team brought in two servers, one more than needed, using one for video capture and the other for transcoding.

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— Dan Gerson, Virtual Content Manager, Cisco Live

“Cisco TelePresence Content Server automated video capture, eliminating the need to have a production crew in each room for the entire session,” Gerson says. “It reduced our session-capture costs by 75 percent and enabled us to bring a video-enabled experience to tens of thousands of Cisco customers worldwide.” The technician assigned to the event could see recording status in every room from the Cisco TelePresence Management Server dashboard, verifying that the codecs were functioning properly. “We had our own VLAN, so I could log on to the content server from any part of the building to monitor recording status,” Gerson says. Throughout the day, a local audio-video production company checked audio and video input levels, which tend to fluctuate.

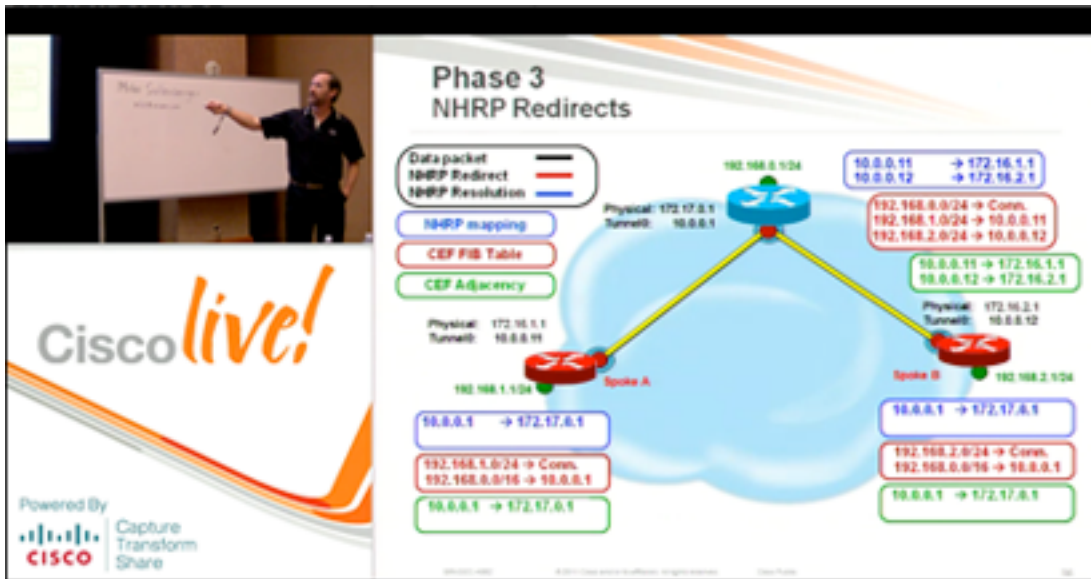
The same technician who captured video also provided post-production editing, using the simple interface. After the initial transcoding, the technician trimmed the beginning and ending of the presentation and then uploaded the final H.264 MP4 file for viewing on [Cisco Live Virtual](#).

Business Results

More than 7500 customers and partners who could not attend Cisco Live 2011 viewed at least one of the 45 sessions recorded with Cisco TelePresence Content Server during the event. The sessions remain available to the entire community of 85,000 subscribers.

A Richer Virtual Experience

People who view the sessions online can now see the presenters in addition to hearing them and seeing their presentations. “Our goal is making the experience for virtual attendees as close as possible to the experience for in-person attendees, and video helps to close the gap,” says Gerson.



Clark adds, "Video also gives virtual attendees a better idea of the Cisco Live experience, which could encourage more people to attend Cisco Live events in person."

Scalability to Record More Sessions with Little Incremental Cost

Just two technicians captured and transcoded video from 45 sessions. One set up the operations center before the event, and another managed Cisco TelePresence Content Server and initiated transcoding of each session with a few clicks. "Despite never having used the content server before, the technician was proficient on the very first day, because of the easy-to-use interface," Gerson says.

Compared to having technicians in each room, the Cisco TelePresence Content Server solution cost 75 percent less per session, amounting to \$100,000 savings at Cisco Live 2011. "The cost savings will increase proportionately as we record more sessions at future Cisco Live events," Gerson says. The only incremental cost to record in more rooms will be for the codecs in each room, plus one additional Cisco TelePresence Content Server for each additional set of five rooms capturing video at the same time.

Faster Online Publishing

The ease of transcoding enabled the Cisco Virtual Live team to publish sessions online within 48 hours, faster than the 72 hours needed for previous events that did not include video. For future Cisco Live events, the team will bring in multiple Cisco TelePresence Content Servers for transcoding, making the sessions available online even sooner. "A two-hour presentation finished at 11 a.m. could be available for viewing the same evening," Gerson says.

Noninvasive for Presenters

The Cisco Live team took care to not remind presenters they were being recorded, helping them feel at ease. Cisco TelePresence Content Server started the in-room recording process automatically, eliminating the need for technicians to cue presenters that recording was beginning.

PRODUCT LIST

- Cisco TelePresence Content Server
- Cisco TelePresence Management Server
- Cisco TelePresence Video Communication Server
- Cisco TelePresence C-Series Systems

Next Steps

At future events, the Cisco Live Virtual team will be able to record hundreds of events with the same manpower needed for the 45 sessions. “The Cisco TelePresence Management Server automatically starts and stops the recording, eliminating the need for additional personnel and reducing the possibility of human error,” says Gerson.

Nor will it take any longer to configure the additional Cisco TelePresence C-Series systems used for session capture. “With Cisco TelePresence Management Server, we define network connectivity, audio inputs, video inputs, and camera settings just once for all rooms, and the configuration is automatically pushed to all devices,” Gerson says. “We’ll save 30 to 60 minutes of setup for each room.”

The team is also considering using the Cisco TelePresence Management Server API to link to the session scheduling tool. This will eliminate human error while entering recording times, and also save time for staff.

For More Information

To learn more about Cisco TelePresence solutions, including Cisco TelePresence Content Server, visit: <http://www.cisco.com/go/telepresence>



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