

Collaboration Meeting Room (CMR) Cloud

On a Thursday afternoon, four people joined a Cisco WebEx meeting to plan this brief. The meeting organizer connected from a laptop in her office, in RTP, North Carolina. The writer joined from a home office near Los Angeles. The Cisco IT project manager in charge of CMR Cloud deployments joined from a laptop in a conference room in San Jose. The three of us turned on video with the click of a button. So far, nothing out of the ordinary. Then another content expert joined her colleague in the conference room. Better to join the WebEx session from the room's Cisco TelePresence system instead of a laptop, they decided. That way they could sketch out concepts for the writer on the whiteboard.

Just a month earlier, joining a WebEx session from a video conferencing system (like Cisco TelePresence) or audio conferencing system (like Polycom) took some work. When issuing the invitation, meeting organizers had to individually select each video or audio system from a pull-down menu—for example, SJC -> Conference Room 1 -> Cisco TelePresence System A. “We couldn't spontaneously move to a different conference room and expect to join from a video or audio conferencing system,” says Charu Saksena, Cisco IT program manager. “Instead, the meeting organizer had to reissue the invitation with the specific video and audio conferencing systems listed. In the meantime, everyone else on the call had to wait.”

But this time, Charu joined from the telepresence unit in seconds, simply by entering the 9-digit meeting ID and password on a tablet connected to the unit. The difference? We've begun using a WebEx feature called Collaboration Meeting Rooms-Cloud, or CMR Cloud. CMR Cloud makes it much simpler to schedule meetings for people joining from video endpoints and audio conferencing systems. “With CMR Cloud, it's just as easy to join from a video conferencing or audio conferencing system as from a laptop or mobile device,” says **Lainie van Doornewaard**, Cisco IT service manager.

CMR Cloud made that Thursday meeting simpler or richer for everyone who joined:

- **The meeting organizer** didn't have to take any extra steps to allow people to join from a video conferencing system. Our WebEx invitations now automatically provide two ways to join: the usual link for people joining from computers and mobile devices, and a link or number to dial for people joining from video and audio systems. When we invite people to our WebEx Personal Rooms, we don't even have to enter the full address, such as cisco.webex.com/meet/princessleia. Instead, we simply type @webex, and the full WebEx meeting details are added to the meeting invite automatically. We couldn't have done that without first turning on the CMR Cloud feature.
- **The presenters** had the flexibility to join a WebEx session from any video or audio conferencing system in any conference room or desktop unit—and to change their minds at the last minute. “If we decide we need someone else in a meeting, we can forward the invitation without worrying whether they're joining with a laptop or a video endpoint,” says van Doornewaard. “It's no longer necessary to ask the meeting organizer to modify the invitation.”
- **The writer** could watch a whiteboard presentation from her home office as if she were in the conference room. While joining WebEx from conference-room telepresence was possible before we enabled the CRM Cloud feature, we rarely did it because of the hassle.

Cisco IT rolled out CMR Cloud in waves based on the location as well as the WebEx Enabled TelePresence usage over the past few months. We'll measure success by how many more people turn on video when joining Cisco WebEx sessions. Video makes communications more accurate because people can see facial expressions, body language and, in this case, whiteboard presentations. “If you make something easy, people want to try it,” says van Doornewaard. “We've made video much easier by enabling CMR Cloud.”

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