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July 15, 2002

WEB CONFERENCING

Keeping Track of Seats

by Heather Baldwin

If your company currently uses multiple Web conferencing vendors to satisfy their meeting needs and is frustrated by exploding usage costs, you may want to check out Pixion's new PictureTalk Hosted Services, a cross-platform interactive Web conferencing solution for large and small businesses.

PictureTalk Hosted Services, which is based on Pixion's client-server-client architecture, aims to address many of the frustrations companies experience with hosted Web conferencing, including the inability to accurately predict the cost of the service due to an inability to monitor usage.



"One Fortune 1000 company did an internal investigation and found sales was using WebEx, marketing was using PlaceWare, training was using Centra and product development was using Raindance," says Charles Orlando, Pixion's director of marketing. "The company was spending more than \$1 million a year due to the number of seats with all those different vendors, plus the cost of additional seats when meetings spilled beyond the seats allotted by their contracts.

Only passions, great
passions, can elevate the
soul to great things.
- Denis Diderot

In response, Pixion created a Seat Usage Monitor that allows users to track service usage in real time. Through the use of a fever bar, customers can see the number of seats currently being used versus the number in their license. They are automatically notified once the limit is reached. "Billing can see the overages and who authorized each one," says Orlando. Thus, he adds, organizations "can track costs and/or add seats more efficiently."

Other features of the technology designed to address customer frustrations include a Capture Frame presentation tool that lets presenters capture information in real-time from their desktop, and share or collaborate over the Internet with an unlimited number of attendees. As the frame changes color from red to

yellow to green, presenters know when their data is still transmitting and when everyone in the audience has received each slide. And PictureTalk Hosted Services works for Windows, Solaris and Macintosh, enabling full sharing and interactivity across multiple operating systems.

Finally, Pixion executives have put their money where their mouths are by guaranteeing a return on investment. "We're so certain our solution is the right choice that if customers don't get ROI in the first six months, the second six months are free," says Bob DeKoning, Pixion's president and CEO. Don't start counting all the money you'll save in those second six months yet - in some instances, DeKoning says customers are seeing a payback on their investment within one month.