

Company networks confront rising video tide

July 12 2011, by Glenn Chapman



A video conference in progress in Madrid, 2010. Companies are struggling to manage a rising tide of video use in workplaces, with employees expecting business networks to adapt to whatever mobile gadgets they prefer to use.

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"We see video being used more and more because they are very high impact and are such effective ways to convey company messages," said Melissa Webster, an analyst at International Data Corporation (IDC), a market intelligence firm.

"Companies start out trying to do it themselves sometimes and realize they need a real solution after some adverse event like hosting a live broadcast that goes down the tubes and swamps the network," she said.

Workplace uses of online video streaming have broadened in the past five years to include job training, skill certification, product launches, sales pitches and pep talks from [top executives](#).

A recent IDC survey found that companies are also looking for ways to internally share instructive or insightful videos that workers shoot using web cameras, smartphones or [tablet computers](#).

The increase in video use comes as workers want the freedom to watch them on Internet-linked [mobile gadgets](#) of their choosing.

Business [video platform](#) specialty firm Qumu on Tuesday will release a new product that promises to help companies prevent network data pipelines from being jammed with webcasts, training tutorials, and more.

A Harris survey commissioned by Qumu indicated that 61 percent of US Internet users believe people should be able to use whatever mobile devices they wish for work tasks such as email or viewing company videos.

"The bottom line is they are using it a lot but are not aware of the effect it has on the network," Qumu chief executive Ray Hood said of employees tuning in to video at work.

"And they want to make the choice about which tablet or smartphone they bring to work and use," he continued. "It is a wave that is going to wash over companies."

A Qumu Video Platform being released on Tuesday lets company networks stream video to various desktop and mobile devices while reducing the pressure on company Internet connections, Hood explained.

"What Qumu is doing behind the scenes is managing the content: who gets to watch what," Hood said. "It distributes the load across the network in an intelligent fashion."

For example, workers in a large office could simultaneously watch a chief executive speech or World Cup soccer match at their computers without overloading a company network.

Qumu would route one video stream into the office and then split the signal to be viewed on various computers, instead of having each machine reach out on the Internet for its own copy of the data.

Companies need to agree ahead of time to make video available to employees.

"You throw your hands up and say that for events like the royal wedding we aren't going to be able to stop them so we might as well join them and bring in a channel," Hood said.

Qumu has grown more than 65 percent annually for the past two years and customers include Nokia, Dell, and online auction house eBay.

"It's had a real positive impact on our communications culture," eBay rich media engineer Ryan Burnham said.

"Qumu's solution allows our executives to seamlessly broadcast meetings to diverse, distributed, global audiences for live and on demand participation," he added.

The decade-old Northern California company makes money selling services and software to companies and also licenses its technology.

"[Video](#) is now a mission critical capability becoming integrated into so

many business practices," Webster said.

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