

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT

ConferenceMe

What is ConferenceMe?

ConferenceMe allows almost anyone with high speed Internet access, a Windows-based PC, Microphone, Webcam and headphones or headset to attend a H.323 video conference. A high-speed Internet connection is required. Cable or mid-to-high rate DSL will provide the best results.

Can I use ConferenceMe with a Cell Phone provider's air card?

Yes, but due to the widely varying conditions and the relatively low speed of most cellular air cards, OET recommends using a PC and a high-speed Internet connection. Quality of connections through air cards has been mixed, with 4G connections working much better than 3G. If a connection is unsatisfactory, connecting audio only is an option. When attending a conference using an air card, it also helps to remain stationary during the conference to minimize signal drift.

Can I use ConferenceMe over WiFi?

Yes, WiFi works well in most environments, but a hard-wired connection will almost always yield better results.

Does ConferenceMe work with Apple products?

No, it does not run on Apple computers or mobile devices (Blackberry, iPad, or iPhone) at this time. There is a solution for Macintosh by subscription. Contact your account management team for further information. Polycom has recently introduced an H.323 compatible client for the iPad-2. This will connect to OET's bridges, but has had limited success with direct connections to systems running anything but the latest available software. WiFi connections are preferred. Follow the air-card recommendations if using a cellular connection.

Do I need to install software to use it?

Yes, a small executable file with some Java code. You will need administrator rights to the PC to install it.

How do I get into a conference?

A URL will be sent by the conference scheduler to each scheduled ConferenceMe participant via email. When you follow the link, there will be an option to install the software if you have not yet done so. There is also an option to auto-join if you've already installed the software. Access the ConferenceMe options and settings via the Windows Start Menu under Tandberg or Cisco.

Does it cost anything to add a ConferenceMe port into a conference?

Customers with an advanced video subscription may add up to three participants per conference. More can be added by contacting the video reservation center through the OET Service Desk by phone, 651-297-1111, option 4, or toll free at 1-888-717-6638, or by e-mail, service.desk@state.mn.us. Customers without an advanced subscription will be billed as though the ConferenceMe attendees are off-net sites.

Do I need to do anything before inviting a ConferenceMe user?

For best results, contact the OET Service Desk and request a certification test. Certification tests are billable at \$35 for a maximum of 30 minutes. The vast majority of certifications take 15 minutes or less. Difficult certifications lasting longer than 30 minutes may be subject to additional charges equal to the current technical support rates.

I am behind a firewall, will this be a problem?

Generally no, ConferenceMe has had excellent success working without involving the local firewall administrators. The certification test will normally uncover any possible firewall issues.

What is OET's recommendation for Webcams?

As long as the camera is compatible with your laptop or desktop PC, operating system and has the proper mechanism to attach it to your monitor, it will most likely work. We also recommend getting a camera capable of HD (720p is sufficient). When purchasing any webcam, be sure the performance specifications of your PC match or exceed the camera's requirements. Make sure the camera's USB type is compatible with your PC. OET has tested cameras from Microsoft, Logitech, Polycom, Cisco, and HP. Intellireview is a helpful site with reviews of several webcams.

I have more than one camera – can I choose which one to use?

Yes, from your computer's Start menu, go to All programs, and then Cisco or Tandberg, then select "Configure ConferenceMe." You can then choose your video and audio sources and a maximum bit rate.

Can a ConferenceMe attendee use or see Dual Video (people plus PC Screens)?

Yes, however, you may need to click the Next Participant icon (looks like two monitors side-by-side with one behind the other) to view content. This may need to be done if H.239 is used or not. ConferenceMe participants can send duo-video, but will only see their desktop locally while sending content. When they stop sending their desktop, video will return.

Can ConferenceMe users see Continuous Presence (aka: Hollywood Squares):

Not recommended. If there are more than three rooms, the ConferenceMe attendee will see the split screen view in a small box at the upper right of the screen or on half of the screen, depending on your layout choice. ConferenceMe conferences should be set to Voice Switched for best results.

What is the quality of a ConferenceMe connection?

ConferenceMe is a "best-effort" service. Generally, connections are quite good. However, ConferenceMe attendees connect using the public Internet (data connections without specific quality of service), so no quality assurances can be made. Quality may vary from connection to connection. A ConferenceMe user may have a very successful connection on one occasion while a subsequent one may be of marginal or poor quality. For best results, keep the number of PC applications running on your PC to a minimum during ConferenceMe calls.

What are the most common problems encountered with ConferenceMe attendees?

1. Echo: It is imperative that ConferenceMe attendee use headphones, a headset or an echo cancelling USB audio conference device like a Polycom Chat Series device or equivalent. All attendees are encouraged to keep their microphones muted unless they are speaking.
2. Frozen or Tiled Video: Suggest to the attendee that they shut down any other non-essential programs running on the PC while using ConferenceMe. Another option is to disconnect, adjust ConferenceMe's maximum connection speed, and reconnect.
3. Far end is unable to see my PC's camera: Make sure no other program or application is trying to use the webcam, like Skype, Lync, Vidyo or Office Communicator. Verify you can see your own image in the self-view window of the application that came bundled with your camera.
4. Other conference members are having trouble hearing me: Try a different microphone or isolate the one in use from any source of vibration or air handler noise. Having the microphone lie on the table or monitor can induce noise. If you suspect this is the source of noise, try setting your microphone (or webcam if not integrated) on rubber feet, or foam/felt pads.

What is the minimum PC required to use ConferenceMe?

Windows XP (SP2 or Greater), Windows Vista (S1 or better), and Windows 7. The PC should also have a Dual Core processor or better, and 1GB RAM or better with XP and 2GB with Vista and Windows 7. The more muscle your PC has, the better, of course!