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ITV Insight

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Supporting the 2-year College Interactive Video Community

Spring Update

Well, Spring is in the air and, having recently returned from Whistler, I can also report that there has been some snow falling on at least a few of the mountains here in the Northwest. I figured I needed to get moving on this edition of the newsletter so it wouldn't end up being as late as the snow was this year! As usual, I have gathered for you some news that has accumulated over the past few months, as well as a few new flurries mixed in. Thanks for reading!

Polycom Equipment Update and End of Life Information

Polycom recently announced the end of life plan for some of the older models in its product line. These include the ViaVideo II, Viewstation EX and FX, VS4000, and iPower 9000 systems. Active sales for all of these except the ViaVideo II will end on September 30, 2005. Active sales for ViaVideo II and availability for all of the above products will end on December 31, 2005. Polycom generally offers support options for five years after the end of life, and can be expected to do so for this group of systems. Also, software upgrades for these products will not occur after December 31, 2005.

Fortunately, integration of the VSX line of systems is becoming easier in both the ISDN and IP environments and the ITV representatives at various K-20 institutions have installed VSX endpoints while gaining experience with the systems along the way. Also, Polycom has begun to release software updates for the VSX products, and this has helped as well.

Polycom recommends the PVX software or VSX3000 as replacements for the ViaVideo II. There are a few things you may want to consider related to these recommendations. First of all, PVX only works on Windows XP if you are using a webcam. The documentation states that PVX will work with Windows 2000 SP4 if you have a ViaVideo, but I would think most users of PVX will be operating with a webcam. Also, you will need a reasonably fast PC to run PVX, especially if you use the more advanced features such as H.264 video. You will need to have a 2.2Ghz Pentium (or faster) and 512MB of RAM for optimum performance. The VSX3000 is considerably more expensive (\$5,000 - \$6,500 list) than ViaVideo II although it does include a 17" LCD flat-panel display, manually-adjustable camera, microphones, and integrated speakers as part of the package.

Polycom recommends the VSX7400 and VSX7800 as replacements for the Viewstation EX and FX, respectively. I recommend asking the vendor to demo the product regardless of the make and model you choose, so that you know the system works with your K-20 connectivity and meets your institution's needs.

For those who are interested in obtaining more comparative information about the Polycom VSX product line, I have a very useful document available showing comprehensive information by product along with associated graphics, and some of the older models (such as the EX and FX) mentioned above are included for comparison. Anyone in the Community and Technical College sector who is interested in receiving this file can contact me. I decided not to send it out to all of you at once due to the file size, which is over 12MB, but will gladly share it with you as the need arises.

...And Yet Another Note from Polycom!

We received another piece of news from Polycom recently that some of you may already know about, but I thought it would be good to share with the group for those who - like me - weren't aware of it. Because the V.35 interface has become a legacy standard and some issues have been encountered when using the V.35 interfaces with newer systems, Polycom is offering the VSX series PRI interface at the V.35 interface price to K-20 locations only. Your reseller will need to tell Polycom you are at a K-20 location and mention Candace Johns' (Polycom's Vertical Territory Manager for the Northwest) name when ordering the system in order to receive the discount. I also need to mention that the PRI interface will not be an option for locations that have two ITV endpoints connected to a single Ascend, as only a single system can connect to a video line using a PRI interface. However, I have spoken to a number of locations recently that have transitioned to a PRI interface for individual ITV systems, often to replace Ascend units that have reached the end of their usable life.

Purchasing Contract for ITV Endpoints

I've received several calls recently about the question of whether or not we currently have a purchasing contract for K-20 ITV endpoint equipment. The Department of Information Services purchasing contract has expired, but Educational Service District 112 recently negotiated a new contract that other K-20 institutions can use as well. The link to the web page containing the PDF document with pricing and other details is <http://www.esd112.org/edtech/bids/2005a/videoc>

[onf.html](#). Also, one level up from this link is <http://www.esd112.org/edtech/bids/2005a/index.html>, and here you can find purchasing information about additional A/V equipment, such as document cameras and projectors.

K-20 Acceptable Use Policy

As our network grows and changes, it's a good idea to pause once in a while and review specific policies and procedures that helped bring us this far in the first place. The K-20 Acceptable Use Policy falls into this category. The purpose of the AUP is to ensure that the network continues to be used in the manner originally intended and legislated. While K-20 is changing and connectivity options are increasing, the spirit and intent of the AUP remains consistent. The network was created as an enabling technology to be used by educational institutions, including students, faculty, and administrators. For a review of the policy's details, please go to the following link: <http://www.dis.wa.gov/K20/topc/aup.htm>.

Staffing Changes Here at the State Board

I will close by letting you know there is a staffing change happening here at the State Board. I will be leaving my current position for a new opportunity as the ITV representative for the K-20 Program Office. My last day at the SBCTC will be May 12th, 2005. I will still be supporting the K-20 ITV community, albeit from a slightly different perspective.

I want all of you to know how much I have enjoyed working with everyone in the CTC sector and how much I appreciate everything you do to maintain, improve, and advocate for interactive video in our system. Replacing me will be Peter Savin, who has worked in the IT department here at the State Board for some time. Peter is very adept at working with both people and technology and I am happy to know I will be turning over my responsibilities to someone so capable. I've appreciated having the opportunity to work with and get to know each and every one of you and I look forward to supporting the K-20 community in my new position as well.

Upcoming Events:

The K-20 Network Board Meeting is taking place on Thursday, June 9th, from 1:30 – 5:00 PM.