

Stay Informed

Secure your Audio Conferencing System

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Stay Informed; Secure Your Audio Conferencing System!

With a geographically dispersed workforce, audio conferencing has emerged as a convenient and highly functional tool to keep the lines of communications open. Its popularity can be attributed to its versatility in being able to bring together information from different points in real time improving efficiencies all across the organization.

Audio conferencing often involves sharing of confidential information that is critical to a company's competitive advantage in order to attain synergies. An intelligent balance between the productivity and operational efficiency gains of the organization has to be attained and conferencing has to be secure. **Protecting shared information is crucial.** There is no equivalent to that.

However, there are a lot of concerns about data security and breaches brought about by recent news of documented fraud and sensitive data being compromised. While companies do not want to give up the efficiencies of audio conferencing, these fears cannot be attributed to paranoia and ignored. The risk is real and the mitigation has to be done to secure data and protect information at all costs.

Preventing unauthorized access to your conference and limiting disruptions should be the prevailing concern for security. There are many companies who use third party conferencing service providers for their conferencing requirements. These raise the question of whether the conversations are completely secure or there are being compromised by unauthorized people participating in the conference.

Features that help Data Security

A conferencing solution that acknowledges data security as a priority will ensure confidence in its efficacy. Therefore when purchasing an audio conferencing system, it pays to comprehend what features to look for in order to make the process of security as foolproof as possible when sensitive information is shared. Layers of security should ensure that the threats of data breaches are contained.

The most efficient way to prevent unauthorized access to your conference and limit disruptions to is to have their own conference bridge inside their own network. Since this is not always possible and for those who use third party conferencing providers, knowing what features to look for in the audio conferencing system is thus invaluable.

Entry announcements

The most basic features to expect would be the entry announcements. This maybe a beep when someone enters or exits from a conference and as an advanced feature, a recorded name played to alert the moderator of the invited participants when they enter or leave, which, asserts the presence or absence of a participant.

One great feature to have will be the ability to remove uninvited guests using the moderator web interface, where the moderator is able to view the list of participants in the conference and easily disable access to unwanted guests. The ability to hear a named head count and a roll call feature allows determining those who regularly attend and those who do not.

Lock and Unlock Conference

Features that allow the moderator to lock the conference once it begins and unlock the conference at the end of it prevent even the operator being privy to the conference. Similarly the moderator has the authority to start the conference when he logs in, and end it when he leaves, and this prevents the port from being used for other purposes than intended as well as the account from incurring charges from unwarranted usage.

Passcode Verification

Advanced audio conferencing systems offer Passcode Verification where separate moderator and participant access PINs are generated. The moderators also have the authority to generate newer participants PIN's rather than adopt the one given by the conference provider. In this way, even if the older PIN has been compromised, the newer PIN prevents any unauthorized participant.

Individual unique PIN's to identify participants would be useful in case of large conferences to identify those joining the conferences. Ability to recycle or change the participants PIN's any number of times from the moderator web interface ensures that Ex-employees do not have further access and do not take information to the competitor company.

Lounge Feature

Sophisticated audio conferencing systems present a "lounge feature", where participants are brought into a lounge area and the moderator or operator can pre-screen them and then usher them into the conference. Typically, it's a two-stage entry process which weeds out unauthorized participants before the conference takes place thereby securing it. Operator assisted calls, another version of the two-stage feature, is one where the participants who dial in are greeted by an

operator and they can be pre screened based on a criteria before sending them into the conference.

Authentication and Access Codes

Conferencing systems that offer User name and password authentication of accounts to access the web moderator interface and call details ascertain that only permitted parties enter the conference mode. Access codes that expire at the end of scheduled calls closes out the conference and ensures its safety. Real time web access interface for the moderator, when available, allows the moderator to observe all the details of how many participants are connected, their caller ID etc and change anything if needed by merely a change of setting.

Dial Out Conferencing

Dial Out conferencing features, where only the invited parties are called, may be executed by either the moderator or with the help of an operator. Dialling out to participants is a definite way to ensure security, since only those needed are called upon.

There have been numerous incidents of documented number of highly exposed breaches, losses, and leaks of confidential and sensitive information at call centres, banking industry, legal institutions etc. Breaches not only end data losses but also cause loss of goodwill and reputation for the enterprises that have taken long-term efforts to be built.

The need to protect real time information is critical and knowledge of what to look for when a conferencing system is to be selected will be beneficial. These features ensure that audio conferencing is carried out with more confidence when it comes to guarding privacy.