

NLR and Internet2 to Develop Unified Cisco TelePresence Service for Research and Education

Successful Proof of Concept Demo Held Between Harvard University and University of Peking, China

Cypress, CA and Ann Arbor, MI - February 8, 2010 -- Internet2 and NLR have announced that they have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) agreeing to collaborate on developing and deploying a unified Cisco TelePresence service offering for the research and education community. Recognizing the powerful benefits of TelePresence for enabling new levels of collaboration and for breaking down geographic barriers among researchers and educators – nationally and internationally – the two organizations will be combining their respective expertise and reach.

NLR operates a Cisco TelePresence Exchange, located in Kansas City, Missouri. Over 70 Cisco TelePresence systems in institutions in 12 U.S. states and 3 other countries are already or will soon be linked in to this Exchange and will now be able to use the joint service to have conferences between Internet2 and NLR members. Internet2 and NLR plan to work together to further develop this exchange to expand its capabilities.

“By working together, NLR and Internet2 are able to make this transformational, collaboration platform more widely accessible to a broader segment of researchers and educators,” said Grover Browning, NLR Director of Engineering and Operations. “And as more people and institutions are on the TelePresence network, the more valuable it becomes for all members of the community.”

“The research and education community that Internet2 and NLR serve place a high value on bringing people together through remote collaboration technologies that are increasingly required as researchers move rapidly from working in local laboratories to participating in worldwide projects,” said Rob Vietzke, Internet2 Executive Director of Network Services. “By collaborating with NLR we can help to catalyze the adoption of this important enabling technology.”

NLR and Internet2 have already successfully collaborated to enable a TelePresence session over their respective networks. NLR’s TelePresence Exchange connected four Cisco TelePresence units at the Guanghua School of Management at the University of Peking, China to the NLR network and professors from Internet2-member Harvard University were able to interact with counterparts in China. Two of the TelePresence units are deployed on the University of Peking’s main campus in Beijing, one on the Shanghai campus and another will arrive soon at the Shenzhen location.

“With TelePresence, our objective is to overcome geographic boundaries and distance to collaborate face-to-face with educators and researchers in the U.S. and other countries,” according to Mr. Yaowei, Administration, Guanghua School of Management, University of Peking. “We were very pleased at the joint efforts and support of NLR and Internet2 to initiate the first demonstration of this capability over TelePresence, a joint session with Harvard University.”

“Harvard University is looking at TelePresence to foster a broad range of academic, research and business programs. The joint collaboration between Internet2 and NLR and the exchange allow us to leverage our existing external connectivity to reach out to other institutions in the US and abroad. Our joint effort to enable TelePresence between the University of Peking and Harvard University exceeded our expectations,” said Leo Donnelly, Senior Network Architect, Harvard University.

Last week at the ESCC/Internet2 Joint Techs Conference hosted by the University of Utah, Internet2 and NLR provided a presentation on the new, joint offering, what TelePresence offers the research and education community and how institutions can begin to take advantage of TelePresence.

More information on the new, NLR and Internet2 Cisco TelePresence service, including how current Internet2 and NLR members can access it, will be made available shortly at www.internet2.edu and www.nlr.net. Information on previous work on incorporating Telepresence in higher education can be found at www.nlr.net/telepresence-faq.php.