

**7B1 A Federated Approach to Distributed Video-enabled Meetings**  
Ted Hanss, Internet2, United States of America

**Abstract:**

This presentation describes the approach for interactive netcasting of the Internet2 Monthly Briefings and invites both comments on the architecture and participation in the efforts. We will cover the goals of Internet2's virtual briefings and the technical underpinnings, which are described as being "Powered by the Internet2 Commons", the community effort to establish production services and R&D efforts around collaboration technologies <<http://commons.internet2.edu>>. The presentation will provide details of the software and hardware in use, which stresses using multiple technologies with gateways, share statistics on user participation and network utilisation, describe challenges and experiences and suggest future research efforts that will facilitate enhanced and expanded use of video-enabled collaboration environments.

The in-person Fall 2002 Internet2 Member Meeting was cancelled after the events of 11 September. In its place we used several videoconferencing and streaming technologies to present two-thirds of the plenary and track sessions, attracting several hundred participants over four days from around the world. Since December 2001, we have run monthly virtual member briefings, 90-minute presentations with interactive audience participation and multiple speakers (distributed across five time zones at times).

Our intention is to have, by the end of 2002, an environment that supports people interacting with each other regardless of the underlying videoconferencing technology each uses. We will do this without dropping down to the lowest common denominator of audio and video encoding.

We have established a "director's console" in our Ann Arbor, Michigan offices to accept the feeds, introduce titling and other services and handle gateway services. We are working to automate this technology-neutral capability to offer a 24 hour per day network-accessible service. Some of the open issues are floor control among participants and the use of audio levels to determine which speakers are automatically brought to the forefront.

Middleware is another research area for the Commons, working with the Internet2 Middleware Initiative. During Spring/Summer 2002 we begin working on integrating the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP) into the Commons infrastructure, starting with modest interoperability tests. During the second half of 2002 we will also begin investigating authenticated access to Commons events using deliverables from the Shibboleth Project <<http://middleware.internet2.edu/shibboleth/>>.