

Reach out and touch someone

Don't you just hate conference calls? The scenario is always the same. You and some colleagues **gather** in a room. In the middle is a black **contraption** with **speakers**.

You call other participants and spend the next hour desperately talking into the box. On those rare occasions you actually hear someone, you can't quite figure out who is talking ... is that the voice of Thorbjørn from Trondheim or Bill in Boston?

But look for something called **telepresence** to **ease** the **confusion**. Life-sized screens are placed across from where you're sitting. You call your colleagues, and instead of just hearing their voices you can see them, too. The end result is a virtual **round table** – you may not be able to **reach out** and pat your colleague on the back, but you can thank each other face-to-face for a job well done!

If this weren't enough, many smart firms have **put** the Internet to **work** on company desktops. Say you're working on a document with a colleague in London. With the help of web conferencing, there is no need to work over the telephone or head for the conference room and its telepresence solution. Instead, you just **launch** the web conferencing application on your computer, and meet online. **VoIP telephony** allows you to speak freely, the webcam lets you see each other – and together you can share and work on the document in real time. Cooperation, brainstorming and sharing just hit the information superhighway via your own desk.

In an age where companies are operating in a global arena, the developments made recently in connecting colleagues from **distant** offices is truly **astounding**. The next step involves transporting these **capabilities** from **solely** an internal company function to the external environment. Forward thinkers are figuring out ways to **employ** the high-tech tools to better communicate with customers and suppliers.

Of course, security is a **concern**, and companies are actively looking into ensuring that digital traffic is safe. But, all risks aside, it looks like a real **breakthrough** has been made in making distance less of an issue. Captain James T. Kirk would be proud.

Glossary

astounding	surprising
breakthrough	an important new discovery
capability	the ability to do something
concern	something that worries you
confusion	a situation with a lot of activity and noise, in which people do not know what is happening
contraption	a piece of equipment or machinery that looks funny or strange
distant	far away
ease	make easier
employ	to use something
gather	come together and form a group
launch	to make a computer program start
put to work	to make someone or something work
reach out	move forward or upward in order to touch
round table	in a round table discussion people meet and talk in an equal way
solely	only
speaker	the part of the sound system where the sound comes out
telephony	the science of transmitting the voice over a telecommunications network
telepresence	making distant people feel present and part of local activity by using telecommunication technology
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol: technology used to make telephone calls via the Internet

Did you know? AAC Global offers Live Online Training – personalized, interactive language coaching with an experienced language trainer, all in a virtual classroom. Contact us at info@aacglobal.com to find out more!