

ENTERPRISE CONFERRNCING

USER BEHAVIOR & IMPACT REPORT



Introduction

Remote meetings, or conference calls, have become an important, day-to-day activity in most businesses around the world. In 2016, people spent 163 billion minutes on conference calls in the United States and the United Kingdom alone.¹

In certain circumstances, face-to-face meetings remain invaluable and irreplaceable. However, the benefits of meeting remotely are beyond reasonable dispute. Busy executives can save time and money otherwise devoured by travel, and also benefit from more flexible home-working arrangements.

But, underlying all the marketing promises and industry buzz, what are our real attitudes to the conferencing tools we're given? What's our comfort level with the mix of audio, web and video technologies on offer? Do they hinder and frustrate us in our daily lives as well as help? Where should the industry look to provide a better experience to frequent users? And ultimately, what is the impact to productivity and a company's bottom line?

Methodology

LoopUp sought to better understand the realities of conference calling in the enterprise, and commissioned Sapio Research to survey 1,000 frequent users in the United States and United Kingdom about their conference call practices and the challenges they regularly encounter when hosting remote meetings. Respondents participate in at least one conference call per week, and work at companies ranging in size from no less than 50 employees, to over 1,000 employees.

Summary

Despite advances in conferencing technology, the majority of business people rely on an antiquated method for joining conference calls: dialing in with numbers and codes. Because of this, they waste 15 minutes on a typical conference call getting the meeting started and dealing with distractions throughout, and leave the business vulnerable to security breaches.

That wasted time also comes with a steep price tag for businesses, costing over £26 billion (\$34 billion) a year.

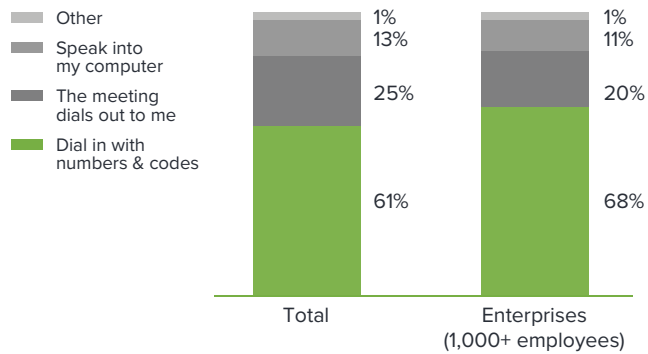
Key Findings

Dial-in still dominates conferencing

Although widely regarded as a poor user experience, the majority of business people – 61 percent – still dial in with numbers and codes to join their conference calls. This number increases to 68 percent for users in enterprises with over 1,000 employees.²

55%

of respondents say their conference calls are used for discussions business-critical to their role



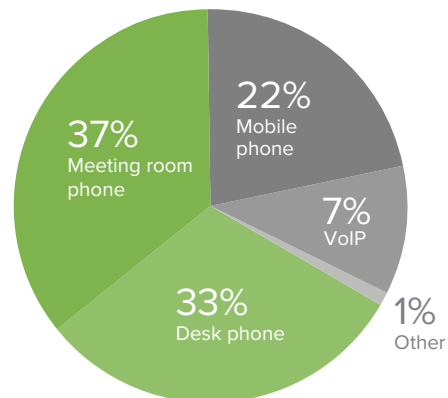
Method for joining conference calls

Risk aversion is often a key factor here. In the heat of the moment in a business meeting with important guests, most people are unwilling to use technologies they're uncomfortable, or unfamiliar, with. While dial-in conferencing presents a poor user experience, to most people it is familiar and reliable. A safe bet.

Additionally, over 70 percent of conference calls are taken from fixed-line phones, either desk phones or conference phones in meeting rooms (37 percent). Only 22 percent of people regularly take conference calls from their mobile device, and only 7 percent regularly join via voice-over-IP (VoIP). This reliance on fixed-line phones over mobile and VoIP underscores the criticality of high-quality audio on enterprise conference calls.

55%

of conference calls usually include external attendees

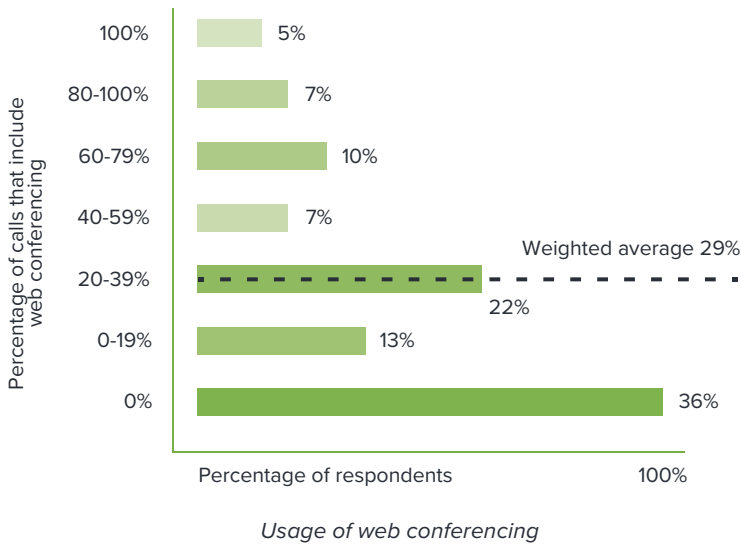


Device used to join conference calls

² n = 520 out of 1,000

Web conferencing is woefully underutilized

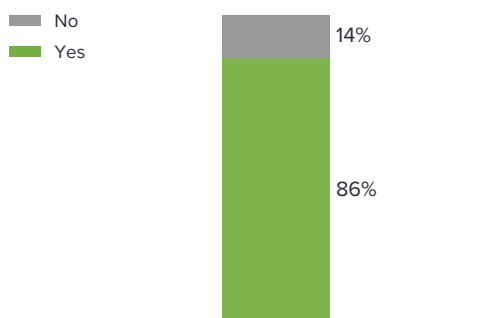
Despite the long-standing availability of web conferencing tools for the enterprise (where the host presents something visual), only 29 percent of conference calls utilize a web conferencing component. This means that 71 percent of enterprise conference calls are either audio-only or involve participants sharing relevant materials via email.



71%

of conference calls don't include a web conferencing component

Product complexity is clearly a deterrent for web conferencing. In fact, 86 percent of people would do more web conferencing if it weren't more difficult than 'emailing out the slides.' Additionally, 63 percent of people report waiting over five minutes for everyone to get set up on web conferencing tools before the host is able to present.



Respondents that would use web conferencing if it were easier

63%

of respondents report waiting over 5 minutes to get web conferencing tools set up

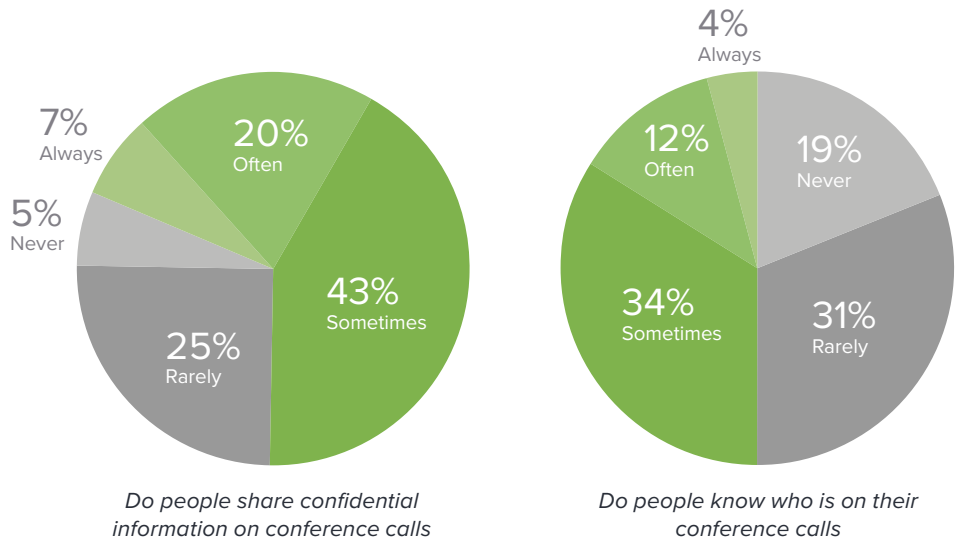
In many businesses, feature-rich web conferencing technologies are more often utilized by early adopters and specialist users – those who have a particular business need, like hosting webinars or running a remote service desk. In those instances, users may be more willing to accept training on how to navigate specific features and functionalities because they are critical to their job. However, the majority of business people are simply uncomfortable with web conferencing tools.

66%

of respondents used the same passcodes to dial in to calls for a year or more

Security on conference calls is often overlooked

Conference calls present a significant, and often, overlooked security gap in the enterprise. While 70 percent report that it's quite normal to discuss confidential information on conference calls, over 50 percent report that it's also normal not to know who's on those calls.



Did you know?

In 2012, the FBI admitted to hosting a conference call with Scotland Yard and other foreign police agencies regarding the joint investigation of a hacker group. They later found that the hackers themselves had been on the call.

How did the eavesdroppers gain access to the call?

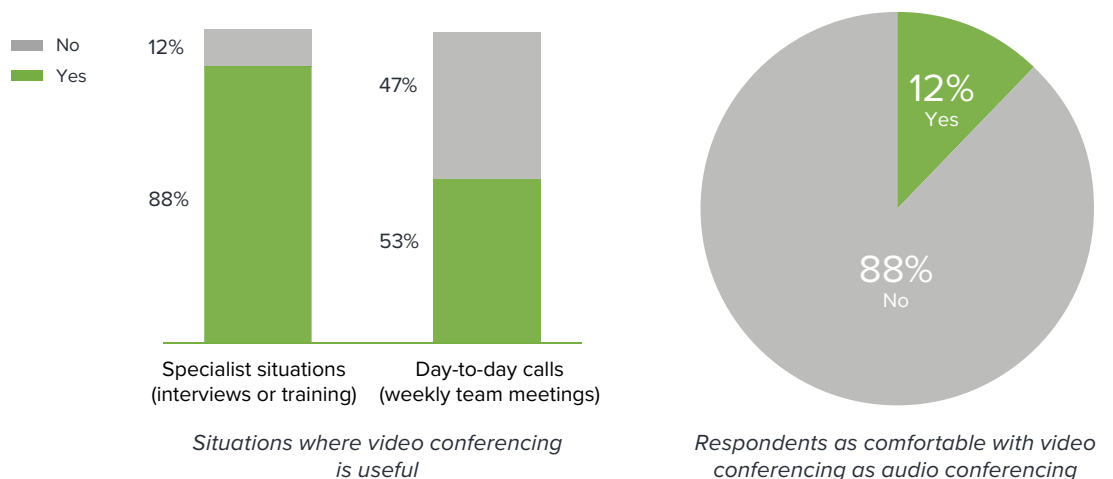
Simply by using the dial-in details from an email they obtained.

Source: *The New York Times*

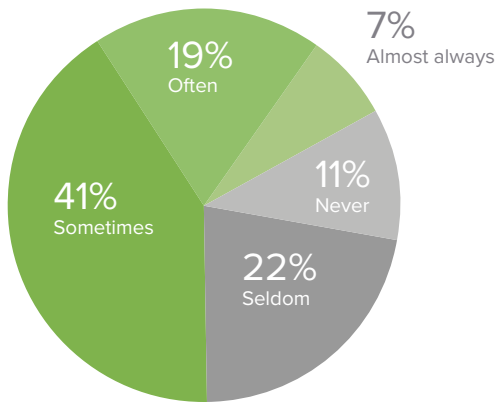
With the vast majority of users relying on traditional dial-in for their conference calls, this security hole isn't surprising. Dial-in conferencing naturally leads to a lack of visibility and control over meetings, as users cannot see who's joined or take action to remove unwanted guests. Tools with web-based UIs can help in this respect, but are used only in the minority of cases.

Video conferencing has promise, but not yet mainstream adoption

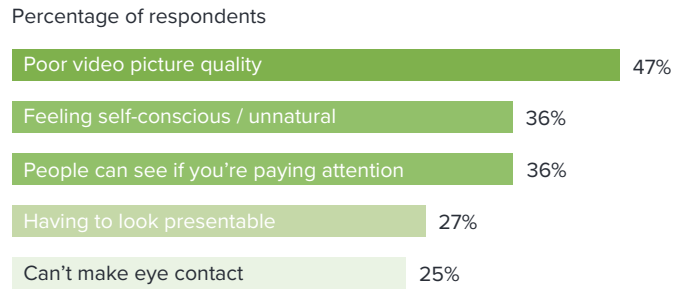
While the vast majority of people – 88 percent – believe that video conferencing has a place in certain situations such as interviews and training, only 53 percent thought it was useful for day-to-day meetings, and strikingly, only 12 percent feel as comfortable on video calls as they do on audio calls.



Video quality is a primary irritation that turns workers off from video conferencing, in addition to feeling self-conscious and knowing that people can see whether you're paying attention or doing something else. Of those surveyed, 67 percent say that these concerns impact their willingness to participate in a video conference call.



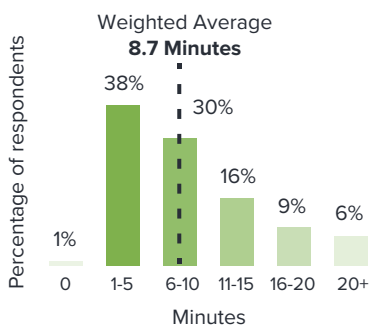
Extent that frustrations with video conferencing impact willingness to participate



Top frustrations with video conferencing

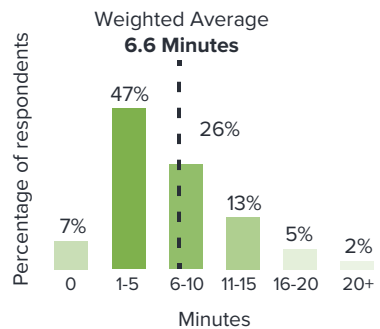
Loss of productivity is real, and it has a financial impact on businesses

The frustrations common to conference calling, while seemingly anecdotal, have a real impact on productivity. People report wasting 15 minutes on a typical conference call struggling to get the meeting started, overcoming challenges with conferencing technology, and dealing with avoidable distractions. These issues often stem from a lack of visibility and lack of control during meetings.



Minutes wasted getting conference calls started

15
Total Minutes Wasted



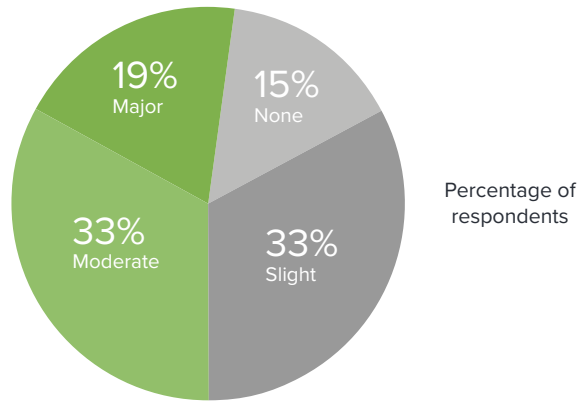
Minutes wasted on distractions during conference calls

Did you know?

According to a study conducted at University of California, Irvine, it takes an average of 23 minutes and 15 seconds to get back on track once you've been distracted.

Source: *Lifehacker*

Additionally, 52 percent of people report that these distractions have a moderate to major negative impact on the productivity of the meeting, their enthusiasm to participate, or their ability to concentrate.



Negative impact of conference call frustrations on:
 Ability to concentrate during meeting, enthusiasm to actively participate, ability to get through the entire agenda, or overall productivity of the meeting

This wasted time also poses a significant potential cost to business, amounting to over £26 billion lost per year in the United Kingdom and United States alone.³ Since 2015, the cost of wasted time on business conference calls has increased by 46 percent (up from £14 billion).⁴

46%

Increase in the cost of wasted time on conference calls since 2015 (up from £14 billion)

CALCULATING THE COST OF WASTED TIME ON CONFERENCE CALLS



163B

Each year, business people spend **163 billion¹ minutes** on conference calls. That's over **1.43 million working years²**!

15 Minutes

The average conference call is **38 minutes³** long, but **15 minutes⁴** of a typical call are wasted getting started and dealing with distractions.



£26B (\$34B)

Considering the average yearly salary for workers in the US and UK is **£47,644⁵**, that means businesses lose a total of **£26 billion (\$34 billion)** in wasted time on conference calls!

1 Wainhouse Research 2016 2 Based on average of 114,000 working minutes per year 3 LoopUp customer data 4 Enterprise Conferencing: User Behavior & Impact Report 5 Based on figures from Bureau of Labor & Statistics and Adzuna

Conclusion

While innovation abounds in the conferencing and enterprise collaboration market, day-to-day conference call practices in the enterprise haven't evolved in step. The majority of business users are still dialing in to conference calls, rather than leveraging web-based solutions. This leads not only to a poor call experience, but insecure and inefficient meetings that ultimately cost businesses money.

While many business people see potential in web and video conferencing solutions, most are put off by overly-complex products or unreliable audio and video quality.

Businesses seeking to encourage users to move toward more visual, web-based conferencing should consider:

- Business people who regularly host conference calls are often risk averse and unwilling to use unfamiliar software in the heat of the moment when hosting remote meetings. Look for a provider that delivers a simple, intuitive user experience for both hosts and guests.
- Complex products can deter users who don't require extra functionality in their regular day-to-day usage, and most professionals have neither the time nor inclination to attend training. Look for a conference call service that emphasizes user adoption and usability over feature expansion.
- User experience issues and conference call security can be improved by moving users away from dial-in. Look for dial-in alternatives (such as dial-out, where the service calls the user when they're ready to join) that offer visibility and control over attendees.

Appendix

This report looked at how business users interact with conferencing tools on a regular basis, along with the challenges they encounter when hosting conference calls. Survey participants came from a mix of industries, job roles, comfort levels using technology and more. Here is a snapshot of the demographic splits that comprised the participant pool.

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Gender

58% Female
41% Male

1% Undisclosed



Age

The majority of respondents were between **25-44 years** of age (71%).

18-24 (9%), 25-34 (43%), 35-44 (28%), 45-54 (13%), 55-65 (6%), 65+ (1%)



Role

The majority of respondents (**83%**) held some type of management or supervisory role.

Respondents worked in varying departments, with the majority coming from IT (**17%**), admin (**10%**), and sales (**9%**).



Industry

- Tech / Telecomm **16%**
- Healthcare / Pharma **13%**
- Retail **11%**
- Finance / Banking **9%**
- Manufacturing / Distribution **9%**
- Education **8%**
- Government **5%**
- Construction / Architecture **5%**
- Professional Services **5%**
- Charity / Social Services **4%**
- Art / Design / Fashion **3%**
- Hospitality **2%**
- Other **10%**



Company

Of those surveyed, **32%** worked at companies with more than 20 office locations.

51% came from companies of 1,000 or more employees.



About LoopUp

LoopUp (LSE AIM: LOOP) is a premium remote meetings solution that makes it easier to collaborate in real time. Streamlined and intuitive, LoopUp anticipates the needs of business users, while delivering the quality, security and reliability required in the enterprise. LoopUp integrates with the common tools you use every day, like Outlook, and doesn't offer features you don't need or require training. Over 2000 enterprises worldwide, including Travelex, Kia Motors America, Planet Hollywood, National Geographic, and Subaru, trust LoopUp with their remote meetings.

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