



XOPNetworks

Economical International Audio Conferencing Service

A Novel Approach

An XOP Networks White Paper

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this era of outsourcing and “off-shoring” many multi-national corporations have set up offices in various cities in India. The staff members in these corporations routinely use audio conferencing for conducting project review meetings with their Indian counterparts.

This paper describes how conferencing is typically conducted today, how much it costs and how these costs can be minimized using the novel approach now available through XOP Networks.

INTRODUCTION

India is 12 time zones ahead of the US. For example, when it is 10 am in Dallas, it is 8:30 pm (or 9:30 pm¹) in New Delhi. For this paper, we will use a fictitious company ABC, Inc. headquartered in Houston with offices in Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago. Its Indian outsourcing partner has its headquarters in Hyderabad and has other offices in Bangalore, Chennai, and Mumbai. Let us also assume that ABC, Inc. uses audio conferencing service provided by a Tier 1 Conferencing Service Provider (CSP).

THE CURRENT PRACTICE

All involved parties utilize a US number to dial into the conference bridge. In the scenario described above, participants in India make international calls and participants located in the US make domestic long distance calls to dial into the CSP's conference bridge.

The CSP bills ABC, Inc. for the use of the audio conferencing service on a per-minute, per-participant basis.

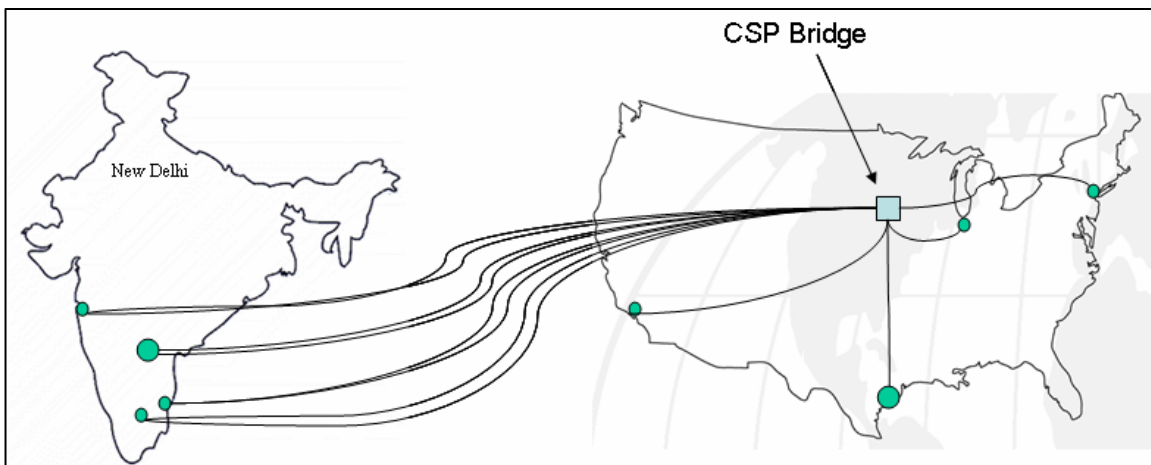


Figure 1. Current approach for International Audio Conferences.

¹ When Daylight Savings time is in effect.

Table 1 shows the average long-distance calling and audio conferencing rates prevalent today:

Table 1. Average long-distance calling and audio conferencing rates.

Call Type	Rate / minute
International call from India to US	\$0.20
Domestic long distance call within US	\$0.07
Domestic long distance call within India	\$0.03
Cost of conferencing service in US	\$0.10

Assume that an audio conference is held between eight people in India and four people in the US and that the audio conference session lasts for one hour. Table 2 shows the total cost of such an audio conferencing session using the CSP's bridge located in US.

Table 2. Cost of Audio Conference when hosted on a bridge in the US.

Description	Values
Number of Indian staff members	8
Number of US staff members	4
Call duration (minutes)	60
Rate for international call from India to US (per minute)	\$0.20
Rate for domestic long-distance call in US (per minute)	\$0.07
Conference calling charge in US per participant (per minute)	\$0.10
Cost of a conference call hosted on a bridge in the US	\$184.80

INTRODUCING XOP NETWORKS

XOP Networks is a boutique audio and web conferencing service provider. The company is headquartered in Dallas, Texas with a branch office in New Delhi, India. It has deployed audio conference bridges at both locations. The conferencing equipment used by XOP Networks uses a unique bridge-to-bridge calling capability. This capability allows a chairperson to connect conferences occurring on two separate bridges with one international call.

AUDIO CONFERENCING WITH BRIDGE-TO-BRIDGE CALLING CAPABILITY

Currently, several operators provide discounted calling rates for international calls from the US to India. Prices range from 7–10 cents per minute. The regular undiscounted rates can be as high as 50 cents per minute. Typically, the discounted calls require two-stage dialing through an IVR session. For the following discussion, we assume that a chairperson located in the US can use an 8 cent per minute discounted service to dial from the bridge located in Dallas to the bridge located in New Delhi.

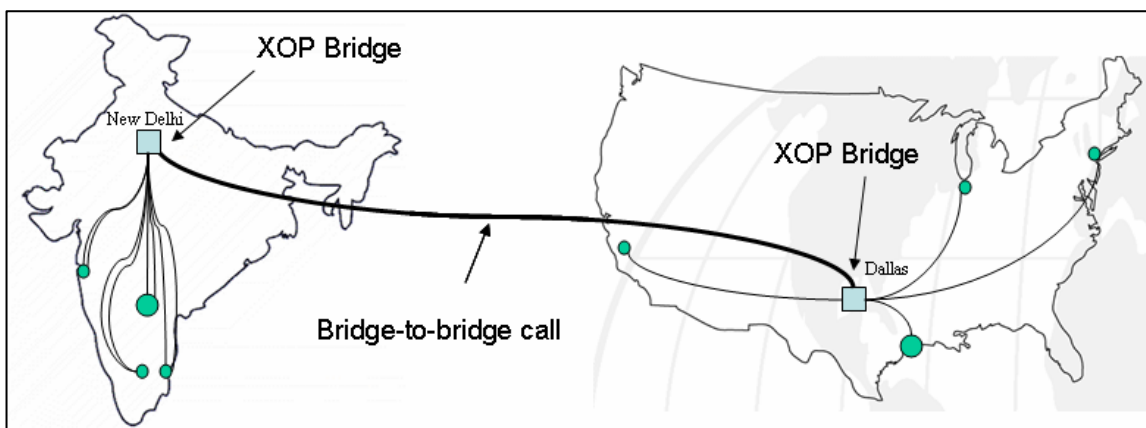


Figure 2. Audio Conferencing using XOP Networks' bridges-to-bridge call.

In order to set up a conference using bridge-to-bridge calling capability, the chairperson invites participants located in US and in India to two separate bridges, i.e., provides two separate dial in numbers and two sets of PINs. He/she can connect the two conferences ahead of time via the international call prior to the arrival of any of the participants. As participants arrive, they hear the same welcome tone as if they had dialed into a single conference.

The XOP bridges support several features that facilitate setting up and tearing down of the bridge-to-bridge international call. These include use of DTMF based in-conference controls for stepping out of an ongoing conference, abbreviated dialing of an international call through a discounted carrier allowing automatic insertion of chairperson's ANI², making the call either via TDM or over VoIP trunk and automatically disconnecting the call upon conclusion of the conference at either end.

² ANI – Automatic Number Indicator, refers to call originating number

Table 3 shows the cost of same audio conferencing session as considered in Table 2, but based on a bridge-to-bridge international call.

Table 3. Cost of Audio Conference when hosted on two XOP bridges: one in India and one in the US.

Description	Values
Number of Indian staff members	8
Number of US staff members	4
Call duration (minutes)	60
Rate for domestic long-distance call in India (per minute)	\$0.04
Rate for domestic long-distance call in US (per minute)	\$0.07
Cost of international call from US to India (per minute)	\$0.08
Conference calling charge in US per participant (per minute)	\$0.10
Conference calling charge in India per participant (per minute)	\$0.10
Cost of a conference call hosted on two XOP bridges	\$112.80

Comparing Table 2 to Table 3 shows that when using XOP Network's bridge-to-bridge calling capability, the overall cost of hosting a conference is reduced by at least 40 percent. **The percentage reduction is directly proportionate to the number of international calls that are replaced by a single international call.** Our experience shows that for larger conferences involving 10–20 people, the percentage reduction can be as high as 50–60 percent. The cost can be lowered further by the use of 'unlimited long distance' for fixed monthly charge plans now routinely being offered by several traditional and VoIP carriers in US.

CONCLUSION

By using the bridge-to-bridge calling approach described above, US corporations that routinely use audio conferencing with their Indian counterparts can maximize their teleconferencing budget. Even though the example considered in this paper highlighted audio conferencing with India, the scenario described is equally applicable to other countries as well.

Want to Learn More?

For more information, please visit our Web site <http://www.xopnetworks.com>

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