

RHUB TM-200 Web Conferencing Appliance: Almost As Good As Being There

By Brian Sheinberg, ChannelWeb

With the economy in a downturn, businesses are thinking twice about travel expenses, especially for meetings and presentations. As a substitute, many are turning online to Web conferencing. While relatively less expensive than most trips, these services are still costly. San Jose, Calif.-based RHUB (Real-Time Collaboration HUB) Communications is perfectly positioned to take advantage of the situation with its line of Web conference appliances.

We've had the low-end model TM-200 installed in the Test Center for a few days and are very impressed with the ease of installation and quality of performance it brings to the table.

At 9 x 6 x 1.4 inches and weighing 2.4 pounds, the TM-200 is slightly larger than a SOHO router and is nearly effortless to install. A small grey box with five status LEDs in the front, the back has only an RJ-45 Ethernet connection, the AC adapter jack and a nine-pin serial connector. There is also a pin-hole reset button. Connection consists of running a network cable between the LAN and the device and plugging in the



power adapter. The serial connector is for a console cable reserved for support uses.

Once installed, all we had to do was log on to the device from a Web browser on the network and finish the configuration. Although the management console is very intuitive, the administrator manual does a good job of explaining, with illustrations, the three types of deployment: Outside the Firewall; Inside the Firewall and accessible by users outside of it; and Inside the Firewall and not accessible from outside of it. We chose the second, which offers the most usability.

While not necessary, reviewers set up a free, hosted DNS with DynDNS.com and followed the directions embedded in the configuration screen of the console. After that, we created user accounts, forwarded the necessary ports on our router (also explained simply in the administrator

guide) and did a quick read of the user manual to see what the appliance is capable of.

Within minutes, we had a meeting up and running with attendees being able to see everything on the host's computer screen that they wanted us to see.

In this type of meeting, called an interactive meeting, it is just as easy for the host to turn over control of his or her PC, or turn over hosting duties to another person in the meeting.

Another meeting type is a seminar, where the host can't turn over control. One big difference between RHUB's implementation and its competitors' is that users only have to download and install a client on the TM-200 if they are hosting. Attendees can use any Web browser, on any operating system.

Besides interactive meetings and seminars, the meeting can also be con-

figured as remote control, which allows the host to take over control of the attendee's computer as soon as they join the meeting, and remote access, which allows the host's computer to be controlled unattended. Respectively, these meeting types are great for support technicians and accessing a work computer from home or the road. In testing, they all worked without incident.

All meeting types give the host the option of creating a password that attendees need to enter and can be scheduled in advance or started impromptu. Pre-populated e-mail invitations can be sent out to attendees

with a URL and access code if desired. Additionally, all RHUB appliances include audio conference call service at no extra cost. Although it is not a toll-free number, this is a nice feature that makes the appliance a complete, one-time purchase product.

Including the \$995 TM-200 model, RHUB currently offers four different



models of the appliance, the larger two of which are 1U rack-mount chassis. The most basic TM-200 has a default capacity of two meeting

rooms and ten concurrent users between them, and can be upgraded to a maximum of four rooms and 20 users. The largest of the devices starts with 50 meeting rooms and 200 concurrent users, expandable to 200 rooms and 2,000 users.

RHUB estimates that the products pay for themselves in three to five months compared to subscription-based competitors, and after some quick Web shopping, we would tend to believe it. The extremely easy installation and almost flawless operation make it a no-brainer for any company needing the services it provides.

R★HUB

RHUB Communications Inc.,
4320 Stevens Creek Blvd., Ste 126
San Jose, CA 95129
Tel: 888-633-8155
408-899-2830
Fax: 408-516-9612
www.rhubcom.com
info@rhubcom.com