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Managed Services

Case Study • North Carolina Information Highway



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## Challenge

The North Carolina Information Highway (NCIH) is a dedicated statewide network providing data and videoconferencing services. Video applications which are supported over the network include distance learning for K-12 and higher education, state agency meetings, statewide training activities, emergency response assistance, public hearings and community connectedness.



Currently, the NCIH supports approximately 100 video sessions daily and over 15,000 yearly. Virtually all the major players in the state — the Governor's Office, Controller's Office, University of North Carolina System, Community College System, Department of Public Instruction, state agencies and local governments have a Statewide Connectivity Strategy and lean heavily on NCIH to achieve that strategy.

The NCIH provides a large set of data services to its constituents and has supported more than 180 ISDN-based videoconferencing sites since 1998. By summer of 2004 it had investigated how to deliver IP-based videoconferencing to its almost 2,200 IP customers. Understanding the complexities of introducing IP-based conferencing and the potential impact on data services, the NCIH knew that it needed to draw on operational, integrated, and strategic support.

## Solution

The State's solution was to bring in AGT to help manage the shift to IP conferencing and the introduction of an entirely new menu of services, including H.323 conferencing, gateway services, and H.323 bridging.

AGT provides onsite staff with remote backup support and supports an array of products, ranging from Polycom MGC MCU, PCS and WebOffice to a Ridgeway firewall and NAT traversal server. AGT essentially supplements the NCIH Video Network Services team, providing staff that, to the team, is an extension of their internal



K-12 special conferencing event.

employees. The AGT staff conducts backups, firewall configurations, documentation and training—and are just a phone call away from even deeper technical support at AGT's network operations center.

One very important component of AGT's value was the willingness to place staff onsite, which helped address data security issues. This also has provided AGT with a better understanding of the organization and its culture, as well as its network architecture.

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## Result

Moving to IP has meant more than just adding the 30+ sites that currently use IP videoconferencing. It has allowed the ITS VNS group to respond to its users, who were asking for a menu of services from which to choose. IP-based sites may now "buy" services based on hours of usage or on unlimited usage plans; the flexibility the IP-based network offers has resulted in lower cost of entry and a more minimal investment for users. At the same time, those sites now can access the existing ISDN-based network through the gateway for classes, meetings, and other applications that already were in place. The plan is to move all of the ISDN-based sites to IP over time, while offering new services such as web conferencing.

This case study was authored by an independent research firm—Wainhouse Research. For more information, visit [www.wainhouse.com](http://www.wainhouse.com)