

The WNY-HPNVI Sandbox: A Shared Collection of HPNV Infrastructure Components

Frequently Asked Questions

I. What is the WNY-HPNVI Sandbox?

- A. The WNY-HPNVI Sandbox, now under construction, is a collection of the more complex and expensive HPNV infrastructure components that will be made freely available to regional early adopters for non-production trials and development projects. It will afford regional early adopters an opportunity to stage proof-of-concept trials and resolve complex infrastructure and interoperability problems without investing in anything but endpoint components and end-user technical support. It will include H.323 Gatekeepers, an H.323 Gateway, H.323 MCU's, at least one H.323 test endpoint, high performance streaming encoders and stored content servers, low performance streaming encoders and content servers, deployable high performance streaming video encoder appliances for on-site event support, and a variety of ancillary equipment to support demonstration and trial events. A number of H.323 endpoints normally used for test and development activities will also be available for supported regional projects. The Sandbox will be located on one of UB's I2 connected networks for effective inclusion of global I2 sites. It will also be afforded the most direct routing of traffic possible from regional networks like the Hospital Consortium FDDI ring, the new RCN, BISSNET and others as they develop. Peering with local ISP's interested in supporting HPNV technologies will be sought.

II. What is available now? (Scheduled for 5/1/2000 release)

- A. I2 access, network hardware (10/100 switch), and rack space in an appropriate environment
 B. A RADVision NGK-100 Gatekeeper
 C. RADVision L2W-323 Gateway with low capacity Gatekeeper. Now equipped with one single-BRI 2x64Kbps WAN port and one 3xBRI 384Kbps WAN port. A second port of each type can be activated with additional ISDN lines and an on-loan Imux from ECMC.
 D. A PictureTel 330 Conference Server MCU. This is on-loan from PictureTel and may or may not become a permanent part of the Sandbox. Interoperability problems experienced to date are too severe for this MCU to support the Extended Grand Rounds project described elsewhere.
 E. A Cisco IP/TV primary stored content server.
 F. A Cisco IP/TV encoding broadcast server.
 G. A stabilized H.323 endpoint system with continuous motion and sound for 24/7 tests and trials.

III. What else is needed?

- A. A RADVision MCU (\$12K after matching funds offer)
 B. A RealVideo Server appliance (\$7K)
 C. A pair of VBrick bi-directional low-latency MPEG encoding appliances (\$9K at distributor cost)
 D. Maintenance of above (\$3K/yr)

IV. What are the priorities for Sandbox use?

- A. WNY-HPNVI supported tests, trials, and development projects
 1. The WNY-HPNVI supported Extended Grand Rounds Project
 2. WNY-HPNVI supported resolution of interoperability problems
 3. WNY-HPNVI supported resolution of deployment problems of general interest
 B. General non-production trial & development use by regional early adopters

V. How are projects selected for WNY-HPNVI support?

- A. Projects are selected and crafted that will maximize the benefit to the greatest number of regional early adopters with the least potential to interfere with the developmental nature of the assets required for the project. Thus, projects that include larger numbers of member institutions, those that address new common deployment and interoperability issues, and those that require WNY-HPNVI assets to be in a stabilized production grade mode for the least amount of time will be favored. Those that simply repeat prior projects with new sets of endpoints, that benefit smaller numbers of member institutions, and that require longer term static production grade asset

configurations and support will be least favored. The WNY-HPNVI staff Director has always and shall continue to develop supported project plans in close consultation with the membership in general and with supporting members in particular.

VI. **Who will maintain the Sandbox?**

- A. The UB WNY-HPNVI project budget and staff will maintain Sandbox components. Maintenance priorities will reflect usage priorities and will lean towards rapid inclusion of new releases, maintenance fixes, and other potentially destabilizing activity except during critical phases of WNY-HPNVI supported projects.

VII. **Will there be non-production support for general member activities?**

- A. WNY-HPNVI staff will support Sandbox assets for general member use on a best-effort and as-available basis subject to staff availability and priorities for use. Should the need arise, control operator privileges will be temporarily granted to suitably trained members to enable better support for specific activities provided that primary WNY-HPNVI projects are not thereby disrupted.

VIII. **Will there be production support for general member activities?**

- A. In general, there will not be staff available for production-grade support outside of WNY-HPNVI supported projects but members will retain free access to functioning Sandbox components at all times. Part of our intent, however, is to encourage experience and thinking that might lead towards a collectively funded production-grade professionally staffed Network Operations Center for fully supported HPNV infrastructure operation.

IX. **Are there any restrictions on permitted use of the Sandbox for general member activities?**

- A. Good-faith non-production use commitments to contributing manufacturers in exchange for partial or complete donations and loans.
 B. Absence of production support for general use.
 C. Destabilizing effects of upgrades, supported tests and trials.
 D. Priorities of use.

In general, however, notwithstanding non-production use commitments to contributing manufacturers, any reasonable, prudent, and non-interfering use will be encouraged.

X. **What will happen to the Sandbox if UB support of the WNY-HPNVI ends?**

- A. In the event that insufficient funds or staff are available from supporting institutions to continue to operate the WNY-HPNVI Sandbox, UB management will act in accordance with the wishes of contributors of record regarding disposition of assets purchased partially or wholly with donated funds. All components on-loan from members will be returned unless other written instructions are received.

XI. **How will funds donated by contributing members be managed and accounted for?**

- A. [Subject to refinement] Funds contributed to the WNY-HPNVI by members and member institutions shall be held in an appropriate University at Buffalo account (UBF, RF, IFR). Such funds will normally be solicited for specific purposes such as particular capital equipment needs or operating expenses. Contributors will be asked to review and provide written approval of general expenditure plans in advance and will be provided an opportunity to review actual expenditures on at least an annual basis. On a day-to-day basis, the staff Director will have signature authority for funded accounts. The staff Director shall be held accountable to the contributors to see that all expenditures of contributed funds fit approved expenditure plan(s) and shall prepare and present a complete annual review of all such expenditures.

XII. **Will donations of funds or equipment to the WNY-HPNVI be tax deductible on Federal and State tax returns?**

- A. [We need an accountant here, but the general answer is probably yes if funds are provided as an actual contribution. This will probably depend upon the nature of the transfer mechanism. That is, if a member is unable to make a contribution per-se and uses a mechanism like a purchase order for consulting services, then the contribution may not be tax deductible.]

XIII. **Can University employees make contributions to the WNY-HPNVI using direct salary deductions?**

A. That's a great question! We'll see if it can be accomplished without substantial overhead losses. How much did you have in mind?

XIV. **Are there any premiums for high level contributors?**

A. Argh.