Title:
Bridging Time, Connecting Lives: History Of Video Conferencing

Word Count:
569

Summary:
Once upon a time, video conferencing did not exist. If you want to speak to
several people, you'd have to climb up the apex of a hill and loudly invite them
to visit your cornfield. While therapeutic and easy, shouting can, nevertheless,
be exhausting. Soon, people grew tired of shouting, so they tried communicating
by telegraph. However, talking by clicking sounds was not very user-friendly.
For a while,the telephone seemed the best solution. The invention of the
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Article Body:
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be exhausting. Soon, people grew tired of shouting, so they tried communicating
by telegraph. However, talking by clicking sounds was not very user-friendly.
For a while,the telephone seemed the best solution. The invention of the
television, however, opened the doors to better and even more dramatic means for
communication. It was not long before video conferencing was developed, and in
time, it became the most virtual form of person-to-person communication.
Ironically, the history of video conferencing did not start with video
conferencing.

Talking Televisions
The history of video conferencing really began with television. Thanks to the
invention of television, analog conferencing became possible. The term "analog"
means "copy." Simply put, this form of conferencing consists of a cable that
connects two TV systems. While analog conferencing is extremely basic, many TV
stations continue to use it.

The Future Then
A fake helicopter ride to view a model of New York City was not the only exhibit
during the 1964 World Fair. A milestone in the history of video conferencing

took place, and this milestone goes by the name video conferencing. About half a decade later, in 1970, At&T unveiled its Picturephone video conferencing gadget. With a hefty monthly charge $160 and payphone calls costing about 10 cents, the Picturephone was simply too pricey.

Enterprising Ericsson
1976 was another red-letter year in the history of video conferencing. On this year, Ericcson gave a demonstration for the first trans-Atlantic LME video telephone call. This motivated other companies to polish their own video conferencing models, in the hope of striking gold. The result was the creation of new video protocols. These were never included in products that were marketed to the public, however.

That same year, a Japanese company successfully created video conferencing between Tokyo and Osaka, covering a distance of about 325 miles.

A Very Expensive Chat
The next era of the history of video conferencing unfolded in the early 1980s. At the time, video conferencing products were still novelty items, and they cost an arm and a leg. Consider these:

1. In 1982, Compression Labs' video conferencing unit cost a whopping $250,000, with lines that had a $1,000 per hour price tag.

2. In 1986, PictureTel unveiled its own video conferencing component, which costs a "mere" $80,000. Its hourly line fee was $100.

3. In the late 1980s, Mitsubishi created a phone with a still-picture. The picture was black and white, and both parties had to clam up while the picture was transmitting. Understandably, the unit only stayed on the market for a couple of years.

The Net Catches the Video Conferencing Bug
Several technological breakthroughs in the 1990s were instrumental in improving video conferencing systems. For example, video files could be made more compact, allowing videoconferencing from the comfort of one's desktop computer. Also, Internet Protocol, or IP, became more complex. IBM unveiled another black and white video conferencing system in 1991, but this time the pictures moved, and they could be viewed on a PC. Eventually, breakthrough software allowed video conferencing to be enjoyed through programs such as MSN messenger and Yahoo messenger.

What lies next in the history of video conferencing? No one knows. One thing is

certain, however: video conferencing has a big and bright future ahead.