

# CONFERENCE CALLS

Volume 11 Number 1

Spring 2003

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## PRIVACY REGULATIONS

The Department of Health and Human Services HIPAA regulations (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) went into effect April 14th, implementing tighter regulations on protecting the privacy of patient and employee information, including electronic, written AND oral communications.

If you are in the health industry, health insurance industry, health care providers or support organizations affected by this regulation, the law mandates that you develop and implement "appropriate administrative, technical and physical safeguards" to protect the privacy of your patients. This regulation also requires protection of employee privacy.

### WHAT ELSE IS AFFECTED?

The Privacy Rule does not require soundproofing of rooms, nor does it go so far as to require encryption of telephone systems. The regulation does require detailed written privacy procedures and a designated "Privacy Officer" to educate your employees about the new privacy protection procedures.

Now is a good time to review how you host your conference calls. Is your organization using a service bureau to host your conference calls? Those calls may be monitored by the service bureau, or even recorded for quality control.

What is your liability? If those oral conversations are not protected by reasonable precautions on your part, your organization is open to civil liability and federal criminal penalties. When you purchase a Forum system, you control the conference bridge and protect access to all conference calls, as you do for other critical resources.

## **CONFER ECS - GLOBAL CRASH BLAST**

Forum Communications, in conjunction with PBX manufacturers, interconnect companies and public safety offices, has developed a value-conscious Emergency Collaboration System (CONFER ECS).

Ideal for homeland defense, emergency response, medical response, plant safety, police, school and corporate security, the CONFER ECS is the most advanced system of its kind.

The CONFER ECS allows you to immediately connect your emergency response team in an interactive conference call. Similar to the “command and control” of the military, the CONFER ECS lets you update status, make decisions and implement contingency plans in “real time.”

This unique system provides a graphical user interface to allow easy configuration of operating parameters, including programmable dial-out numbers and security requirements to meet your unique needs.

You may want to initiate dial-out to your emergency response team as soon as you call your ECS phone number or you may require a special security code to initiate the Blast Dial (ports go off hook and call out to your pre-arranged list of “callers”).

You may want to clear all current calls to give instant priority to a crisis call (Global Crash Blast). You may need the flexibility of hosting multiple response calls (Crash Blast) simultaneously to numerous response teams. CONFER ECS pricing makes it practical for any size organization.

Most systems with Crash Blast capability start at \$50,000 or more. The Confer ECS system starts under \$20,000 and grows from 16 to 72 ports. This is the ideal replacement system for “red phone” solutions that many municipalities and local governments have struggled with for decades. Visit [www.forum-com.com/Downloads/ECSBrochure.pdf](http://www.forum-com.com/Downloads/ECSBrochure.pdf) before your next crisis.

### **USER TIP OF THE MONTH: CONSORTIUM BLAST DIAL FEATURE**

Many organizations are receiving funds for emergency response preparedness and are turning to Forum Communications for solutions. This is a timely opportunity to look at your conference requirements and bundle emergency response funds from your security budget with conferencing dollars to maximize results for your entire organization.

We have received calls from loyal Consortium users who have decided that NOW is the time to ensure rapid response to their emergency response calls via Consortium. For many this allows them to tap into special response budgets to expand their existing systems.

By request, here is an outline of how to set up a conference call to Blast Dial on your Consortium system.

Open an existing or create a new conference call.

On the Details page, select “unrestricted” which makes the call available 24/7. Set the end date to one or two years in the future. Make sure to select the correct number of ports to support your team and any other participants you may need to call.

On the Options page, make sure that you select the button to allow for dial-outs, and the button to allow the chairperson to initiate blast dial. Create a Moderator code that will be easy for all team members to remember.

On your Participants page (or Guest page), make sure to select the emergency team members and add them to the participant list. You may wish to edit the list to verify that 24/7 or "must answer" phone numbers for individuals or specific departments are active.

Save the changes to the conference call.

When you initiate your weekly "test crash" or a real emergency call, your team leader (or anyone else you designate) can dial the conference bridge, enter the moderator number, #, and then press 23# to initiate blast dial-out. This can be programmed to speed dial for fastest results.

You may also wish to utilize the dial-out function (37#) to add other resource members to your call, or to get updated information from community or national alert offices. You need to have chairperson or moderator privileges to utilize the Blast Dial or Dial-out capabilities.

For special applications, please call Forum at 972-680-0700. Forum also offers refresher training courses for you and your team. Call us for more details or go to [www.forum-com.com/Downloads/Training.pdf](http://www.forum-com.com/Downloads/Training.pdf).

## **Good Time to Review Your Support Agreements**

If you use your Forum bridge for mission critical applications we suggest you renew your support agreements to ensure that you have continued support protection in the event of a local or national disaster.

## **DEALERS! Sell Conference Bridges!!**

Where did the money go?

Market trends still continue to show reduced travel expenses, more remote employee locations and larger monthly conference bureau charges.

Fourth Quarter numbers show businesses spent \$800 million dollars for conference calls in 2002. Numbers for Q1 2003 are expected to continue at 30-50% growth rates.

Ask your customers if they use a conference service. If so, how much do they spend a month? Over a few hundred dollars, tell them about Confer. Over a few thousand, tell them about Consortium

## **FORUM USERS BRAINSTORM**

Forum's Marketing and Engineering Departments is teaming up to host several User Group meetings for Consortium and Confer customers.

This creates a "forum" for feedback: requests for new features and enhancements, comparing notes on conference applications and management tips.

Reservations are already full for our first "Confer Users Group," May 2nd. Our Consortium groups have been very popular. Our next date, May 9th is filling up rapidly! Email Forum if you would like to join an upcoming call.

## **CONFER III SUCCESS**

Our corporate offices are located in Richardson, Texas in an area known as the Telecom Corridor because of its technology base and variety of telecommunication companies.

When our organization started 12 years ago, we set a map on the wall and began to indicate the locations of our bridges. To this day, visitors to our offices on Glenville Drive get to view maps of the U.S. and the World that show where our conference bridges have been installed.

Since the introduction of our CONFER III system last Fall, over 150 systems have been sold and we are starting to count the states all over again:

- Alabama
- Arizona
- California
- Colorado
- Florida
- Hawaii
- Iowa
- Louisiana
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- Michigan
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- New York
- North Carolina
- Ohio
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Texas
- Utah
- Virginia
- Washington

Several CONFER III systems have shipped to Canada, and Forum's latest solution has also been welcomed in South & Central America, with systems in Peru and Nicaragua

## **MIGRATING TO YOUR NEW BRIDGE**

The more conferencing you do on your own conference bridge, the more money you save...not only in increased productivity and efficiency, but several thousands of dollars per month to replace the service bureau expenses.

For some customers, converting users from the more expensive services is an on-going challenge. "How do we educate our end users?" We asked the experts, our Consortium customers for their best hints. To provide access to the

largest number of users, utilize the Consortium web page for conference set-up and scheduling. Users are assigned passwords & PIN numbers to set up their own calls. Frequent users may have an "unscheduled" or "instant conference" call scheduled for them, available at any time they need it. Here are some other tips from a recent Consortium User Group meeting:

1. Target key managers and present information to them on the ROI by using your on-premise conference bridge.
2. Build the commitment from managers to make the in-house conference service mandatory for their team.
3. Work with Human Resources (and other departments) to identify ways to broadcast information on how easy the system is to use. Your company may be happy to put information on your conference bridge in the new employee packets, or even in payroll envelopes!
4. Utilize your intranet web browser, internal newsletters and electronic mail to demonstrate the savings and benefits to the company.
5. Use your internal company newsletter or email to broadcast success stories. Interview high traffic users or create a list of frequently asked questions with feedback from your Help Desk.
6. More of the same! Always be looking for creative ways to "get the word out"!

Remember, when you install a Forum conference bridge you save money that can be targeted for new programs or technology. You also dramatically improve the security on ALL your corporate conference calls. Pat yourself on the back and let others know about your smart business decision!

Use all the ports you want, we'll build more!

## **NEW TEAM MEMBERS**

Steve Crowell, Chief Financial Officer, has been involved with Forum Communications for the past year and a half. He was designated as CFO early this year. We value his leadership in financial analysis and most recently in streamlining internal processes and updating system software.

Cheri Gilmore has over 20 years in the phone biz! She joins our team as Global Account Manager, working with dealers and select government accounts. Recently working for Intecom (EADS) here in Dallas, you may already know her. Please welcome her!

Jennifer Kershaw joins Forum Communications from Intel. She and her husband relocated to the Dallas area from Phoenix. Jennifer is responsible for Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Invoicing and Collections.

Please forward your success stories to us. As we continue to grow, we are updating our "Forum Brag Book" and want to include your application. Forward your everyday successes, your "million minute milestones," and more.

## **Conferencing: It's better than being there**

CONFERENCE CALLS is a non-registered publication of Forum Communications International which is printed for the purpose of distributing product information and conference application

stories to the interconnect and user markets. Application stories will be accepted. Printing is at the discretion of Forum. Stories which identify customer's names must include written permission to use their name, signed by an authorized officer of that company.