CONFERENCE CALLS

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Product Updates

WebMeet B – Hosting Your Own Webinars

Quick check your IN-BOX!! How many invitations have you received this week (or this month?) to attend a webinar about a great new product or service?

Have you taken the leap and checked out the hottest new craze in "Meet-And-Greet" sales promotions?

If you haven't, then it's time to check it out!

Forum Communications lets you host your own Marketing Webinar Events with WebMeet B browser-based web-conferencing.

You may already be implementing this hot new sales medium, but paying a fortune every month for a conference service.

Are you a slave to your conference service, paying thousands each month, just for the web conference seats?

With Forum's proven reliability, our web and voice conferencing products continue to meet the highest standards in the industry, with new features and options added to meet your changing needs. You owe it to yourself to compare what you are spending now for web conferencing. You can save $5-10,000 each month.

Sympozium/Blast-911 Moves Forward

Forum Communications products continue to evolve to meet and exceed your needs. As we demo and install our Sympozium product line for more customers, your feedback helps us to stay leading-edge:

The Sympozium-based products now include the ability to enter a DTMF code to acknowledge receipt of an emergency message and indicate their preference. For example, the call recipient may be asked to press '1" if he/she will attend a meeting, press '2' if not. The server automatically tallies the digits and summarizes the results and posts them for easy access.

Forum continues to work with all levels of first responders to provide our full menu of emergency communication, notification and first responder options.

An Elder Care Sandwich

Just like death & taxes are unavoidable, for most of the Boomer generation, assuming responsibility for an elderly parent, disabled relative or spouse is inevitable. Critical decisions are on the line. Emotions, medication and judgment may cloud the decision-making process. For many, the challenges have already begun.

Whether you are an only child, or come from a larger family, or a mixed family, an event like a stroke or fall or dementia, can require long term care. A husband and wife may need to be separated based on care requirements. A father's natural children may prefer to move Dad closer to their homes. If Mom's children are his stepchildren, it is natural that they would want Mom near them for regular visiting and medical decisions. If an estate, a home and mortgage are involved, all parties are advised to hire legal counsel to see what the local laws (and social security) stipulate concerning disposition of the couples finances. Not everyone will see eye-to-eye on what is in the patient's best interests.

Who has guardianship of which parent? Who has medical power of attorney? Or standard power of attorney? If you have been through this you know that it can be extremely complicated. With so many people and emotions involved at a time like this, everyone wants to be fully informed and insure that the patients' rights are being protected. But it is also essential to get as many of the affected parties together as soon as possible because hospitals and insurance restrictions usually require an immediate decision about aftercare placement.

The Mediator II from Forum Communications is an ideal tool for law firms that handle eldercare and family law. Say one sister lives in New York State, her brother lives in Minneapolis. Say their step brother lives in New Mexico and the parents both live in Wisconsin. The courts may assign an advocate for each of the parents. That's a lot of family and a lot of different lawyers. One parent may be of sound mind, but not able to care for the other.

The Mediator II lets each of the children and their lawyer break-away from the main conference call for a sidebar. A judge or mediator may want to talk privately with the parent, or with the individual children. With point-and-click control, the Mediator II gives the Judge/Host power over the main conference and the individual sidebar calls.

The Mediator II was presented to the Texas Association of Mediators at a recent conference in Austin, Texas.

Business Campus Security

Since before 9/11, Forum Communications has played a very active role in providing emergency communications systems to government agencies, news media and regional utilities to stay connected in any type of crisis.

More and more business campuses are looking for ways to connect their security teams via Forum's reliable ALERT products. The ALERT Plus system can be bundled with the Blast-911 to cover both immediate on-campus contacts AND provide voice/text messaging to the surrounding neighborhood.

In a major crisis, like Katrina, businesses and call centers transfer their business to alternate sites. The Blast-911 can be programmed to locate thousands of employees via text and voice to let them know that a Continuity Program had been implemented, particularly when that plan would activate their home offices, change their work assignments or require immediate deployment to another regional location.

The ALERT Plus rings to "must-answer" desks across the facility, to local first responders, to emergency radio and cell phone contacts for immediate coordination of efforts. Connecting every corner of a business campus lets the dispatcher or command center gather real-time status for better decision-making. An ALERT Plus emergency conference call provides the multi-point voice communications essential when personnel are in harm's way, to clear them out of an area, or to assign the appropriate team and equipment to a "hot spot."

The Blast 911 can be programmed to initiate the ALERT Plus call, or the dispatcher can select which duty stations or support agencies need to be involved. Forum continues to work with our military and private sector customers to maintain our place as your single source for first responder technology.

Return on Investment

Expect 1.5 million New Telecommuters in '06

Knowledge workers and technology companies are still miles ahead when it comes to telecommuting. A recent international study estimates more than 80 million home-based workers telecommute. The astronomical growth of telecommuting in the post-911 era has slowed, but is expected to continue to grow (3.7% here in the USA and 5.5% worldwide) over the next three years.

While the percentage may not be impressive, it does mean the addition of 4.5 million telecommuters between now and 2009! That's a lot of home offices, internet hook-ups AND teleconference customers!

With the increase of retiring and pre-retirement Baby Boomers and the number of older workers who prefer to work part-time from home, the number of actual telecommuters vs. telecommuter "full-time equivalents" may double or triple the actual number of people, connections and market growth. The benefit of maintaining the knowledge of these valuable employees is immeasurable.

Host your daily and weekly meetings on Forum's teleconference servers and you can save thousands a year on mileage and drive time. Increase productivity by adding Forum's new web conference collaboration options (WebMeet and Sympozium). Call us for a free demonstration, 972-680-0700.

Business Continuity Planning

There are many things that any business can learn from other's mistakes. Specifically, there are many things that can be learned from delays and other criticisms that became national headlines when the federal emergency management processes went under a microscope in the wake of Katrina.

National Finance Center was flooded, and it's still closed as of Mid-February. Restoring and/or replacing their hardware and network is estimated to take at least six months. Meanwhile, the NFC is sharing crowded space with a vendor backup site in Pennsylvania and has resources scattered all over the rest of the country.

Virtual private networks, tele-workers, and T1 lines linked together with the equivalent of intranet duct tape can easily erode the cohesiveness of a well-rehearsed disaster plan. The lesson: it pays to THINK BIG! Two major weather events, one-after-the-other demonstrated that a shared-service model for continuity of operations services can be inadequate for a total disaster. The functions of the NFC proved too big and too broad to share. You can look at in two different ways:

find a bigger backup site…or plan your continuity programs in "cells" that can be relocated across the country without destroying the cohesiveness. The cell theory gives your continuity management team the tools it needs to implement a geographically diverse response team without the element of confusion.

As we all know, it is tough enough to concentrate on being efficient when workers are worried about the safety of their families and having a home to go back to.

If your Business Continuity Plan needs a review, contact Forum Communications (972-680-0700) about our full menu of emergency conferencing products, including on-campus crash systems, web/voice servers and emergency notification products.

Special Feature

Convergence and Diversity: Looking for a Role Model

The more things change, the more they stay the same.

"Convergence" is a term that has been used and abused for many years. The definition of convergence continues to evolve, as solutions evolve. While "diversity" and "convergence" may appear to be at opposite ends of the spectrum, our world culture continues to evolve to acknowledge and value the diversity of regions & specialty niches that enrich our lives.

Identifying and responding to shifting focus and demands becomes a "push-me/pull-you" for CIO's and CTO's everywhere. How do we find and manage "balance" in our short-term response and long-term planning?

One example: President G.W. Bush's post-911 directives move toward integration of our intelligence and protection agencies under the Department of Homeland Security umbrella. Leadership and operations challenges have plagued the re-organization and progress since the inception of this long-overdue suggestion. Creating a synergistic organization out of so many diverse agency missions, and blending multiple infrastructures and agency procedures into a cohesive whole, DHS is probably the most dramatic example of the challenges of any convergence effort and the most dramatic example of how vested we all are in our own particular diversity.

In the wake of Katrina and Rita, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff has announced another 10% budget increase for the controversial Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The national outcry to improve response continues to put pressure on both federal and private agencies.

Another example: Habitat for Humanity International took 25 years to build its first 100,000 safe, affordable homes, and only 5 years to build the next 100,000. They too have seen challenges grow in leaps & bounds. Recently, Habitat leaders and volunteers pitched in to assist with the Gulf Coast rebuilding, by building and shipping wall frames to the region. While Habitat's mission is not to be a first responder, volunteers and sponsors accepted the challenge to assist the residents of New Orleans when the national spotlight showed the world just how dramatic the poverty levels are in that region. What makes the difference? Enthusiasm? Faith? One Mission? Passion?

More than 50 humanitarian organizations (including Habitat) and 2,000,000 individuals have joined the ONE campaign to combat poverty and provide much-needed healthcare to our global world. A few familiar names support the efforts: Bill and Melinda Gates, Bono (U2), Christian

performer Michael W. Smith, NBA All-Star Dikembe Mutombo and agencies including Bread for the World, World Vision, Global Health Council, The Better Safer World Coalition, CARE, International Medical Corps, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam America, Plan USA, Save the Children US, World Concern, and World Vision, the National Basketball Association, Rock the Vote, and the Millennium Campaign.

Surely, our government and business leaders can learn from so many who have put their diversity aside to stay focused on results. Maybe we all can.

For more information on the organizations mentioned, visit http://www.one.org or http://www.habitat.org.

Emergency Communications and Readiness

Homeland Security Office Invests in the Future

According to a year-end report by Homeland Security Research Corp., a strategic consulting firm, the buying power of the homeland security market expanded from $7 billion in 2001 to $46.2 billion in 2005.

The firm predicts that between 2006 and 2010, we will see a more systematic building of the national security infrastructure with a much greater reliance on the private sector, including focus on the mitigation and containment of catastrophic terror attacks. The market is expected to grow to $178 billion by 2015.

The report also expects to see funds and efforts plugged into the following areas: 1) more concentration on intelligence, 2) reducing the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction and 3) the emergence of new market leaders.

Three Billion Available for Local Programs

According to Conference Committee Reports from the Department of Homeland Appropriations Security Act, in Fiscal Year 2006 over three billion dollars are available for state and local programs, from $10 million to fund the Rural Domestic Preparedness Consortium to $655 million in grants for Assistance to Firefighters. Specific urban and rural areas are targeted for transit, port and trucking security funds, and $55 million set aside for training grants.

Emergency management professionals are voicing concerns over lack of preparedness for mass-evacuations like those from New Orleans and Houston in the storm-ridden south last year. A recent article in Homeland Protection Professional brought attention to the people factors as well as the planning and resource factors involved in any mass evacuation. With changes in weather patterns and more intense and frequent storms, they recommend that cities and states need to learn from recent events and figure out how to do better when faced with the next emergency.

Year In Defense

Forum Communications provides a full menu of emergency communications and ENS servers for Crash and Instant Messaging. For a brief overview of critical conferencing applications, visit the Product Showcase in the recent edition of "Year In Defense."

Dealer's Corner

Markets Are Growing!

Statistics in a new industry report says that the telecom market is expanding. Telecom equipment and software sales rose 5.4 percent last year to $165.7 billion, with the sale of wireless devices accounting for much of the growth. Other areas driving growth are convergence, unified communications, and wireless services, as well as IP and IP-hybrid equipment.

Growth is expected at 10% in 2006!

- Another report estimates that the web conferencing market will grow at a 27.4 percent compound annual growth rate (CAGR) through 2011. What are the key factors driving this growth? What are the strongest investment opportunities for investors in the market?
- In 2004, approximately 26 percent of revenues in the web conferencing market were generated from the small & medium business segment. What does this mean for large businesses in the marketplace? How can software vendors effectively capture this growing market segment?
- The software industry is currently experiencing a high level of consolidation activity as companies that were previously acquiring small market players are now being purchased. What factors are driving this market trend, and is it likely to continue into 2006?

Had Your Annual Check-Up?

The backbone of American commerce is the "Sales Department." The saying is old, but true, that nothing happens in our economy until somebody sells something.

For the past two years, the Warranty Renewal Program at Forum Communications has been making it easier and easier for our product owners to maintain extended support agreements on their Confer III, ALERT and Consortium systems. We also recommend this as an ideal time for our dealers and our end users to sit down and assess how your teleconference system can help take you to the next step. We welcome suggestions from our dealers on how we can make this process "friendlier" for you. Please forward your comments and requests to us.

Many things can happen in one year:

- New conferencing products and software upgrades are released
- Personnel moves, promotions, transfers
- Right-sizing or maternity leave moves workers to home offices
- Competitive influences require more travel
- Increased travel equals more remote conference calls
- Competitive influences require more meetings and less travel
- Increased training requirements
- Market positioning is revised
- New marketing programs utilize web conferencing to replace Open House events.

Facts you need to keep in mind and how to turn them into opportunities:

FACT: Forum's WebMeet and Sympozium products let you host webinars for training and marketing events.

HOW TO: Email your invitations, provide a reason to register and attend, host a half hour webinar, streamline your prospecting and qualifying process with Forum's web tools.

FACT: Customer's may have increased incentives to buy, expand or upgrade their conferencing technology, NOW.

HOW TO: Call and ask them! Create a list of new features that interest you and talk about them, such as how the Confer systems now have an attendance report option. This may be a good time to upgrade a Confer system to add GUI controls and blast-dial functions to an existing system, or more ports. How about a trade-up to a Consortium or Sympozium? Both have many new features to increase efficiency and provide secure access to your calls.

FACT: More travel means employees have to work harder to accomplish what they used to do in the office.

HOW TO: While many executives are widely using PDA's, on-line databases and schedulers along with other tools, this may be a good time to help your customers assess how they can use conference calls this year to eliminate some of that travel, or to schedule daily team meetings to track progress and eliminate delays while the boss is on a road trip? They may need to add blast-dial functions and scheduling to implement that smoothly. Guidelines and accountability may have to be enforced by management's example. It is difficult for some to change a one hour water-cooler session into a five or ten-minute conference call. Is it worth the increase in productivity in today's market? That's up to your customer to decide.

RE-Use and RE-Cycle Technology

The U.S. Postal Service is considering a nationwide recycling program for computer and telecommunications equipment.1 Your local community may already have a recycle program for old PCs and outdated cell phones.

Depending on the size and culture in your community you may see any or all of the following:

- Private-sector companies that refurbish and re-sell used equipment
- Women's shelters recycling cell phones for personal emergency calls
- Retail locations and mail-order companies recycle and refill toner/ink cartridges
- Non-profit agencies accept old PCs and peripherals for half-way houses & other training centers.

You may also have city-sponsored program for technology collection, primarily to keep old technology out of our landfills. Some programs may even break parts down into base components to recycle the plastic and metals involved.

You may work with companies that built their business on re-furbishing and re-selling legacy telephone systems or computers, knowing that what their large customers had outgrown might be a perfect and affordable fit for their small and growing business clientele. If you are supporting your legacy customers (or you may be a legacy customer trying to squeeze another year out of your system) take a close look at Forum's extensive Product Menu. Our products are designed for maximum flexibility. Our Confer line can be connected to analog ports. We offer hybrid conferencing systems that let you connect to analog and T1, or T1 and VoIP (SIP). Our WebMeet B web conferencing product can bring your existing voice-conference capability into the new millennium. We offer many options for large and small business solutions! Ask Forum Communications how we can help to extend the life of your communications infrastructure.