

## **Policies and procedures regarding the use of the Codian Multi-Point Control Unit (MCU)**

The Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources (IANR) is fortunate to have a network of Polycom videoconferencing units. The maintenance, scheduling, and use of these communication devices are not trivial matters. Many have learned to use the systems in point-to-point conferences, where their expectation of quality may depend on the importance of the meeting. A number of technical issues can arise during these conferences and we accept a certain amount of risk that things may not go well.

Today, the videoconferencing network increasingly is being used to connect multiple sites in meetings where we expect high quality video conferences. CIT wants to support you in that expectation. We have concluded, based on our experience, that high quality conferences can only be accomplished by implementing certain policies and procedures. This document will address videoconferences where three or more connections are necessary and the Codian MCU (Codian is a brand name) menu is used.

A MCU, like the Codian, links multiple videoconferencing sites into a single videoconference. The MCU, or “bridge” as it is sometimes called, is required for multipoint conferences with three or more participants. (Exception: Some videoconferencing equipment has built-in, limited multipoint ability.)

UNL Extension and the University of Nebraska’s Computing Service Network (CSN) partnered to purchase the Codian MCU.

### **Policy**

1. Multi-point conferences will be supported from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. After hours conferences may be considered; however, there should not be an expectation for this service. Approval of after hours conferences would be based on availability of a consultant. Special arrangements may be considered.
2. An IT specialist or consultant will be assigned to answer questions and help you test the system before the conference begins. The consultant will be available during your conference to help resolve any issues that might arise.
3. Only Polycoms that have current software/firmware and that can be updated and maintained centrally, like the VSX Polycoms, will be supported on the Codian MCU. They are tested with the MCU. Since we don’t have the resources to guarantee a quality conference with other systems, we can not support any systems other than the VSX Polycoms. They must be registered and listed in the Codian MCU Master List and registered in the Global Management Server (GMS) (otherwise they won’t be listed on the registration page as an option) maintained by Cathy Fox. (Via Videos and web cams will not be supported on the Codian MCU, with the exception of Panhandle District internal conferences using currently owned Via Videos. Contact Carol Laurent to discuss this.)
4. The IANR Extension videoconferencing system and the multi-point control unit (MCU) are available for use by IANR Extension administration, faculty, and staff for communications related to its mission. At this time we do not have a business plan or the support staff to handle videoconferencing for non-IANR related video conferences.
5. IANR Extension faculty and staff should register to use the Codian MCU by completing the web form (listed below) at least five business days before the date of the conference.
6. *If use of the Codian MCU is cancelled with less than a 24-hour notice or a prescheduled videoconference does not occur, there will be a \$100 cancellation or no-show fee which will be the responsibility of the person(s) who made the reservation.*

## Procedure

To schedule a multi-point conference, go to: <http://www.ianr.unl.edu/polycom/>  
Fill out the form and submit the request.

The following information will be needed.

1. Name of person requesting the videoconference
2. Unit affiliation
3. Phone and e-mail (For communication between the requestor and the assigned IT specialist who will facilitate the videoconference)
4. Conference/meeting information
  - a. Meeting title or name
  - b. Date
  - c. Start time (allow 15 minutes before the conference for testing)
  - d. End time
5. Number of sites participating (Identify them using the check boxes.)
6. Contact person at each site and his/her phone number and e-mail (Each remote site must have a designated **point-of-contact** to set up and test the equipment before the conference.)
7. Additional information as necessary, especially if Powerpoint presentations or other technical considerations are necessary. In these instances, more than a weeks notice would be appreciated and may be necessary.

This submitted request will be e-mailed to Cathy Fox, Diane Schroeder, and Al Stark. A consultant will be assigned based on the unit affiliation. The consultant will call or e-mail you to find out more about your conference and how we might assist you. Your consultant is your **primary contact** and expects your questions and ideas. They also will be available during the videoconference to address technical issues.

Video conference IT support specialists and their assigned affiliations are:

Cathy Fox, [cfox@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:cfox@unlnotes.unl.edu), 5-6711 (from campus), 308-696-6711

**West Central & Southeast Districts, Extension Departments on East Campus, and Ag Hall Admin**

Diane Schroeder, [dschroed@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:dschroed@unlnotes.unl.edu), 402-584-3822

**Northeast & Panhandle Districts**

Al Stark, [astark@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:astark@unlnotes.unl.edu), 2-5615

**Extension Departments on East Campus**

If you have general questions regarding the videoconference system or these policies and procedures, please feel free to contact Cathy Fox at [cfox@unlnotes.unl.edu](mailto:cfox@unlnotes.unl.edu), Bob Losee at [rlosee1@unl.edu](mailto:rlosee1@unl.edu), or Roger Terry at [rterry2@unl.edu](mailto:rterry2@unl.edu).

## Tips for hosting a successful videoconference

Teaching or meeting in a videoconference is different from face-to-face settings. Your videoconference consultant will visit with you about some of these differences to help ensure you have a successful videoconference. You also may want to review the following tips, based on information from the Information and Educational Technology unit with K-State Research and Extension.

Using video conferencing generally **requires more structure** than face-to-face meetings or classes. Having multiple sites is a bit like juggling. You need to learn a few skills to avoid dropping a ball or two. If you're new to facilitating multi-point conferencing, you'll want to get some expert advice.

### 1. What to wear...

Wear this...	Not this...	Here's why...
Solid colors	Plaids, stripes, patterns	Every time you move, you distract your audience
Purple, blue, green, pastels	Red, black, white	Red and black "bleed." White makes for a glow-in-the-dark look.
Very simple jewelry, if any	Sparkly, jangly jewelry	Noise and reflected light draw attention away from you.

### 2. Prepare ahead...

The more you prepare, the smoother it goes. You and your technical consultant form a team that will work together to achieve a conference as close to flawless as possible. A successful videoconference, especially a multi-point video conference, is directly proportional to the amount of preparation and teamwork done in advance.

### 3. Plan ahead...

- Let attendees know you're **committed to a start and end time**. The Polycom equipment may be reserved for use following your conference.
- Develop a **tight agenda** and distribute it well before the meeting. Microsoft® Word® has excellent agenda templates that can help you stay on schedule.
- **Email your agenda** to participants or fax it to the remote sites and ask them to duplicate it.
- When many people will be attending at a remote site, ask someone to **facilitate the meeting** at that location. This person is not required to work with the technology, just help with site and people management.
- If you're going to use peripheral equipment, such as a laptop or VCR, schedule a test with your consultant.
- **Send any materials in advance** to remote sites.
- If you'd like to learn a bit about controlling the camera, set aside time for a short lesson from your consultant.