



Executive Interview with Dan Tanel, Chief Technology Officer of BCS Global Networks, a fast-growing global company offering a managed service for Telepresence and videoconferencing



11 March 2010. Dan Tanel, has been Chief Technology Officer of BCS Global Networks since 2004. As BCS Global's Chief Technology Officer, Dan Tanel is responsible for helping drive the company's technological innovations and strategy, in line with BCS Global's corporate goals. During his career, Dan has lead numerous initiatives involving the design and implementation of next generation networks and advanced IP based communication and collaboration services to service providers and enterprise customers. Dan is a key proponent at BCS Global for advocating technologies and new business models aimed at driving adoption of Video Communications in the marketplace.

Dan is well known in the industry as a far-sighted thought leader. He is author of the BCS Global White Paper "Evolving towards a B2B Global Video Network". The reader will find his discussion with the Editor very thought provoking. You can get a copy of this whitepaper from: www.bcsglobal.com.

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Editor: What is the mission of BCS Global and what did you do in the technology arena to achieve it in 2009?

Dan: As a global leader in the managed video conferencing service industry, our mission is to set newer and better visual collaboration standards for our customers all around the world. Our objective at BCS Global is to make video communications an effective, easy-to-use business communication tool, just like using the telephone, and to provide the capability to connect to virtually any video end-point located anywhere in the world irrespective of the service provider or type of video equipment.

We offer a complete set of managed services and a 24x7 global help-desk to support our customers worldwide. Our flagship product, Virtual Presence is a suite of services that enables organizations to maximize the return on their video technology investments. Virtual Presence provides a consistent and high quality user experience, utilizing BCS Global's next generation video infrastructure.



In terms of BCS Global's key achievements in the technology area, two things come to my mind:

1. The first one was to extend our managed service capabilities to include Telepresence systems from TANDBERG and Polycom within our Virtual Presence service offering. BCS Global is now a certified managed service provider for both the TANDBERG and Polycom Telepresence solutions.
2. The second is the launch of PSVN (Public Switched Video Network), a BCS Global initiative aimed at building a framework to facilitate videoconferencing service providers and carriers to seamlessly inter-connect their B2B Video Exchanges to a Public Global B2B Video Network. We believe that this trend in the videoconferencing world is similar to the telephony industry, where the PSVN, just like PSTN (Public Switched Telephone Network), will create a framework to allow disparate B2B Video Exchanges to inter-connect and facilitate video end-point communication to any other video end-point irrespective of the type of video equipment, network or service provider, time of day or geography.

Editor: What is the BCS Global "Global Video Exchange" service and where is it available?

Dan: BCS Global owns one of the world's fully deployed Global Video Exchange, which enables users across the world to meet instantaneously regardless of their video end-points, network provider or type of connection.

We have invested significantly in our own IP core network dedicated to transmitting video with a very high QOS and using MPLS throughout for this purpose. We have established POPs and local offices in Toronto, New York, London, Hong Kong and Shanghai.

In these Points of Presence, we deploy network inter-connects with various carriers along with video infrastructure that allow us to deliver the following services: call control, multi-point bridging, MPLS – IP VPN services, ISDN gateway access, Internet gateway access, end-point directory, and network management and monitoring services. This means that our service is both redundant and highly reliable.

For example, if most of the participants in a multi-site call are located in Asia-Pacific, we will initiate the call using an in-region MCU in Hong Kong or Shanghai. The POPs in each region enables our Service Assurance team to provide the highest level of service with local staff. We have measured our success rate in establishing and completing video calls at over 99.5.



Editor: What are the key features of BCS Global's VNOc (Video Network Operations Centre)?

Dan: The key features of our VNOc are:

1. 24x7 Global Help Desk: Live video and audio help desk services, available 24/7 globally, always attended by a qualified Video Engineer.
2. Proactive Monitoring: Our network and video operations professionals in the VNOc monitor video infrastructure, network and video end-points 24x7, and in case of any performance issues, based on the severity levels, the issue is ticketed, escalated and resolved (even third party issue escalation and resolution is supported)
3. Device Management: BCS Global has invested significantly in people and technology for remotely managing the videoconferencing systems (end-points) and infrastructure devices (video bridges, MCUs, gateways, gatekeepers, etc.). This includes maintaining an up-to-date list of all deployed systems, managing, tracking, and performing global software upgrades, defining and storing system configuration information, performing system testing as required, and resolving all technology issues.
4. Option for Customer-Hosted or BCS-Hosted Infrastructure: BCS Global VNOc can support both environments, offering the flexibility to host the customer infrastructure or let the customer use BCS' infrastructure.
5. Ease-of-Use: We recognize that ease-of-use is a key ingredient that drives adoption of videoconferencing within an enterprise; to make this possible, in addition to our core services, we offer value-added services like operator assisted call launching, call scheduling, call monitoring and call recording services.

Editor: You offer two types of managed service: shared service and dedicated. Which is the most popular?

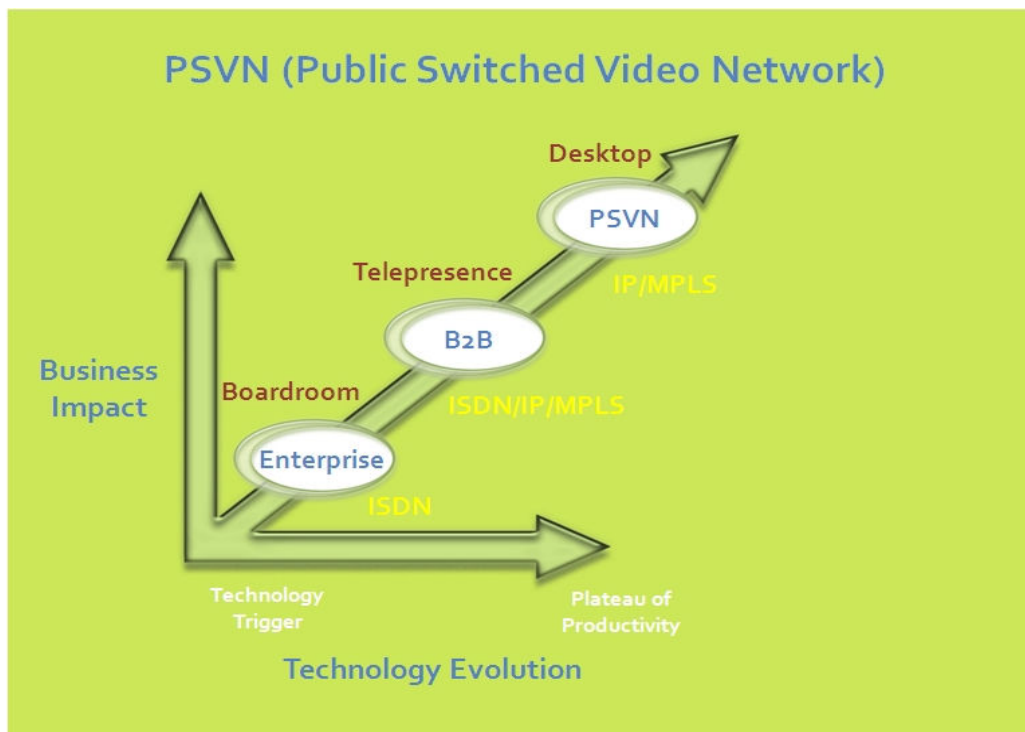
Dan: Our heritage is the BCS Hosted model where customers access video and network services resident in the BCS cloud. In the past 12 months, we have seen an increase in the number of Customer Hosted deployments and BCS Global is well geared to support both the options. In terms of popularity, the Customer-Hosted option has been gaining ground, and the current percentage for these two deployment options from the BCS perspective is approximately 50% each.



Editor: Can Telepresence systems make managed service calls?

Dan: Yes quite simply if they use the same vendor's equipment and are both on our network. We can connect Telepresence endpoints of different vendors such as the Polycom RPX series and TANDBERG T3 and T1 Telepresence systems using our network and MCUs. And TANDBERG Telepresence systems will soon interoperate well with Cisco Telepresence systems. But all this is at an early stage of development. Cisco has proposed a first step towards standardising inter-operability; this will be very useful if widely accepted and adopted.

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Editor: So far we have talked about video links within a company. Can your Global Video Exchange service make connections with other companies - customers and suppliers for example.

Dan: Yes we can provide inter-company connections (as opposed to intra-company connections) but we have to distinguish between two cases. If both companies are customers of BCS Global, then this is simple; we link them over our network.

If the other company is a customer of another managed service provider or carrier, then it is more complex to arrange a connection with the quality that IP core MPLS networks achieve. At the present time, the networks of different managed service providers and carriers are islands with few links between them.

None of us providers want to remain as islands, but the situation today is that in many cases we can only inter-link with other providers' networks by using the Internet or ISDN. This is not a good enough link for High-Definition videoconferencing and certainly not high enough QOS for Telepresence connections.

Editor: So can you establish inter-company calls with companies that are the clients of another Video Exchange provider?

Dan: We are expanding the necessary links as fast as we can. As of today, we can offer IP core MPLS network access to the carrier networks of: Allstream, Cable & Wireless, Colt, Level3, MASERGY, Rogers Telecom, Shanghai Telecom and Telstra.

We are talking with other managed service providers and we expect to announce an interconnect link with one of them soon. These are private links not public links. But if you recall the history of the PSTN, establishing private links was the first step to establishing public links.

The vision of inter-linking private networks remains unrealised today, even for VoiP let alone video. So we decided as BCS Global Networks to exercise some thought leadership on the issue. We have published a White Paper on PSVN (a Public Switched Video Network) entitled "Evolving towards a B2B Global Video Network" which I authored.



Editor: What does this White Paper on a PSVN propose?

Dan: It advocates a framework for inter-linking video networks together. There are many technical issues to consider. To name a few: Connectivity, Bandwidth and QoS; Inter-connection; Protocol Inter-operability (SIP and H.323); Equipment compatibility; Security; Dialing Plan; and Video Managed Services Cooperation. Your readers should read it to find the details.

As the demand for inter-company video communication between enterprises increases, the need to inter-connect different video exchanges that now function as islands becomes imperative and now needs high priority consideration.

Editor: What support has this PVSN proposal won from carriers and managed service providers?

Dan: It is very early days. But many of those who must be the actors in this evolution share our vision and are beginning to consider what this framework implies in terms of their technology development and investment. That is the first necessary step.

Customers need automatic and seamless connection between private networks so that they can have all the benefits of inter-company video meetings as simply as they enjoy intra-company video meetings today. Establishing a Public Switched Video Network must be our ultimate goal.

Editor: Thank you for these thought-provoking insight

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