

## Now we're talking: Survey reveals major adoption of virtual collaboration technology

In the U.K., an overwhelming nine out of 10 large companies are using some form of virtual collaboration technology to enhance the quality of communication within and beyond the business. Of those, nearly two-thirds use some element of video or Web collaboration in addition to audio conferencing.

So finds a survey of U.K. manufacturing and service businesses undertaken by tech research specialist **Vanson Bourne** on behalf of unified collaboration and communications services provider **Genesys Conferencing**.

### Key findings:

- 90 percent of businesses employing 1,000+ staff use a conferencing/collaboration tool. For businesses with 3,000+ staff, this rises to 96 percent.

- 74 percent of these enterprises use integrated multimedia conferencing tools to some degree, with only 26 percent exclusively using audio conferencing solutions. This is especially strong in manufacturing businesses, where 81 percent of respondents are using multimedia tools.

- Companies also are using virtual collaboration tools more frequently. Nearly one-third (29 percent) of respondent businesses are using virtual conferencing on a daily basis, with a further 45 percent every week.

- 30 percent of respondents say they would use their conferencing solution more frequently if it could more effectively replace face-to-face meetings, while 25 percent pointed to the need for peer groups to use it more often. The ability to see

tangible evidence of cost savings and ascertain ease of use are seen as significant barriers to greater usage—by 22 percent and 14 percent respectively—with only 5 percent expressing an environmental concern in wanting to see tangible evidence of reduced carbon emissions.

The aforementioned priorities were exactly mirrored by those businesses that have yet to implement a virtual collaboration solution, but plan to do so within the foreseeable future.

"Companies have long recognized the value of collaboration tools," says Jerona Noonan, a director for Genesys Conferencing, "but for many

businesses, usage was restricted to audio conferencing and a relatively small number of power users. Those businesses with easy-to-implement and easy-to-use multimedia tools such as GenesysMeetingCenter typically achieve greater benefits in terms of operational cost savings, lower carbon emissions, and improved work/life balance for their employees as a result of much higher [adoption] by staff across the enterprise." ■



## New version of CATIA helps satellite maker meet strict project deadline

Nearly every software implementation project starts with the same question: How will this new system improve the business?

At the recent *European PLM Summit* hosted by the **World Trade Group** in Toulouse, France, Jérôme Mollieux, a project methodology and training manager for satellite manufacturer **Thales Alenia Space**, indicated that adopting a new version of the CATIA CAD package from **Dassault Systèmes** is making it easier to meet a stringent project deadline.

The company has just 24 months from contract signing to launch a six-ton spacecraft containing 40,000 parts and 12 kilometers of electrical wire into operational orbit, where it will be required to perform flawlessly for 15 years—without after-sales maintenance.

The upgrade from CATIA 4 to CATIA 5 is reducing development times while enhancing product quality by providing access to 3D data throughout the company, Mollieux says.

CATIA 5's Power copy feature, for example, speeded development time and cut errors. The use of 3D mock-ups aided operator familiarization during manufacturing and assembly, and kinetic

simulation of assembly processes detected "clashes," or tolerances that are too close. Overall, budget control and adherence to satellite launch windows improved—with a like-for-like comparison between CATIA 4 and CATIA 5—showing substantial quality gains and a 12-percent reduction in development time frames.

Targeting specific business functions within the company, the long-term goal is to marry revised business and design processes to the capabilities offered by the new CATIA 5 tool. Ultimately, most of the company's 7,200 worldwide employees and 11 industrial sites will be impacted, although the project so far embraces just 300 design engineers in France and another 100 in Italy. ■



Photo courtesy Thales Alenia Space