Unit 6: Video Conferencing

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**Introduction**

For this assignment, I provided myself with a bit of a thought exercise to help facilitate my comparison of two video conferencing tools. I tried to imagine this assignment from a business perspective. Say my company, Southeast Alabama University (SAU), tasked me with picking a video conference program to be the standard for the university. Currently SAU holds contracts with Microsoft and uses their products on all university computers. Given that university employees already use Microsoft Office, the university plans to use Office 365 for it video/web conferencing needs. Some in upper administration though, would like to explore other programs in order to compare costs and other features. Not very explicit in terms of a thought exercise, but I felt a bit of framework would assist in my analysis.

So for this assignment, I will compare Microsoft Office 365 to Nefsis. I chose Nefsis because this was the video conferencing tool I uploaded to the class Webliography and Nefsis claims to be, according to the company website, “The Best Internet Video Conferencing Online Services for Business”.

**Microsoft Office 365**

Much more than just a videoconferencing program, Microsoft Office 365 packages many of Microsoft’s business programs (Microsoft Office, Lync Online, SharePoint Online, and Exchange Online) into one cloud-based program. Microsoft Office 365 strives to be an all-in-one productivity tools that can be utilized by businesses of all shapes and sizes. In terms of video conferencing capabilities, currently Microsoft Office 365 uses Lync Online for both video and web conferencing. Microsoft Office 365 allows users to share desktops and give live presentations online. Given Microsoft’s recent multi-billion dollar purchase of Skype, additions to the conferencing feature may be pending, but this is purely speculation on my part.

The main selling point for Microsoft Office 365 seems to be how easily it integrates with existing Microsoft products. Employees already accustomed to Office, for example, can use 365 with little to no additional training. Also, Microsoft Office 365 offers users the option to access the program from mobile devices: even iPhones and iPads. These can be seen as clear advantages over Nefsis. Along with low per user cost (which could be as little as ten dollars per month per user for an average-sized institution), these features would appeal greatly to the administration of SAU.

**Nefsis**

Like Microsoft Office 365, Nefsis is a cloud-based program; however, unlike the all-encompassing nature of Office 365, Nefsis is a pure conferencing tool. Nefsis offers a free “Basic” service for the home that would be comparable to Skype, but a business of any size would need Nefsis Professional.

Nefsis Professional offers unlimited multipoint, full-HD video conferencing, along with the ability to share desktops. Nefsis only work for Windows, so compatibility issues should not be a problem. Nefsis, however, does not current support mobile devices. Also, there seems to be more of a learning curve with this program over Office 365. In terms of a pure videoconferencing program, there is not much of contest between Nefsis and Microsoft Office 365: Nefsis wins hands down. Given, however, that Office 365 provides many other services in addition to video conferencing, requires little out of the box training, and costs much less than Nefsis, I am positive SAU upper administration would pick Microsoft for its video conferencing needs