
VidyoDesktop Review

Vidyo Desktop is a highly scalable and quality product. The VidyoDesktop software client is essentially a web browser controlled application that is automatically installed during your first videoconference (VC). It is free to install and is required on your computer or laptop to enable communication with other Vidyo clients. In addition to the client software, a VidyoPortal (a hardware based device) will need to be available (or purchased) to allow the Vidyo clients or any other Vidyo appliance to communicate.

VidyoDesktop has many of the features you would expect from a typical VC application, these include:

- Direct Call (Point to Point) to Vidyo clients in resolutions up to 1440p
- Display up to 8 participants in multipoint calls to Vidyo clients in resolutions up to 1440p
- Screen sharing and pop out shared data to a separate window or second monitor
- Automatic NAT and firewall traversal
- The ability to prioritise Video or Audio when bandwidth is compromised
- Searchable and customisable user directory
- Interface with products such as Microsoft® Outlook™, Adobe® Connect™, IBM Sametime®, and Microsoft® Lync™

Testing

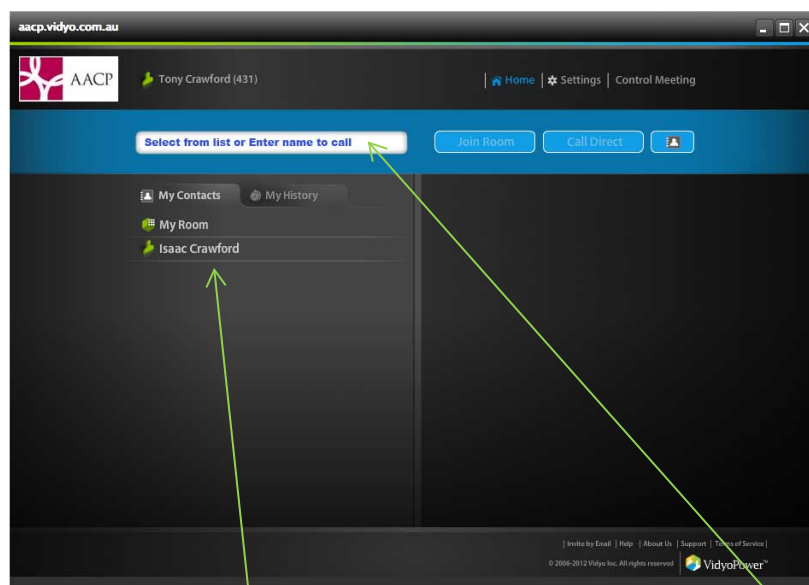
I organised a trial of a VidyoPortal to test the VidyoDesktop software via one of the Vidyo resellers. I then received an email informing me of my URL (e.g. aacp.vidyo.com.au/admin) to configure my VidyoPortal. This was as simple as entering the URL into our browser address bar and when prompted, entering the supplied username and password. Once in the admin area, I could setup users either by individually creating them or via a batch import; this later allows clients to search and create user directories for future VC consultations. The admin area also allows you to create virtual meeting rooms, later used for distribution via email to desired clients. The admin area is not intended for general users but is required for initial setup and ongoing overall portal configuration and control. This admin area is quite basic but required me to resort to the manual to understand how the product is intended.

Once the admin area had been configured, this allowed my users to connect to the portal. My users were then able to log into their account and install the VidyoDesktop client software. Users simply enter the URL (e.g. aacp.vidyo.com.au) into a supported browser or click on an emailed link, and then log in to their personal Portal using the preconfigured username and password. They are then prompted to install the Vidyo client software. Note: As the installation of software is required at this stage, administrator access to the client computer may be necessary to complete the install. Once the client software is successfully installed, the user is able to enter into their user Portal control page. The user portal is quite easy to navigate around and has the ability to direct VC call a preconfigured user, control their meeting room, join a meeting room, search preconfigured users and create address books for frequent or desired callers. Other security options such as changing

your password and creating a pin for your meeting room can be easily accessed through this interface.

Overall, testing went well, although like any other new product, practice is needed to feel comfortable and confident with the product. I would recommended several test runs with an experienced VidyoDesktop user to familiarise yourself with the features and procedures required by the product. There is also plenty of tutorials available (see the Vidyo website), which is always worth perusing prior and during your first few VC with VidyoDesktop.

The User Portal



Direct calls can be established by simply inputting the desired user name into the search field or choosing the name from your address book, and then clicking on the Call Direct button. The VidyoDesktop client software is automatically initiated and assuming the desired user picks up, you are up and running.

Meeting rooms are virtual rooms created on the VidyoPortal that can connect and display up to 8 participants simultaneously. The meeting initiator has the ability to control user's functionality, e.g. mute, mute all, connect and disconnect. A meeting rooms also gives outside users who do not have a listing in your preconfigured directory the ability to connect with you. For example, if you need to VC a patient or several concurrent patients, you can generate and send them an email with a URL to your meeting room all from within the User Portal. When they click the room link they will be directed to a login web page and prompted to input their user name and install the VidyoDesktop client software. From there they will be automatically connected to your meeting room be able to connect to any future VC you invite them to.

An additional Microsoft Outlook toolbar can also be installed (Windows only), which can be used to schedule, initiate and organise meeting participants and connect to participants, directly from within Outlook, if desired.

The VidyoDesktop Client Software



When a VC has been established, the VidyoDesktop software is visible and has several typical icon based menu options to control the conference. Most of these options include:

- Layout - configure the screen placement of the participants
- Full Screen - maximise and window the VidyoDesktop
- Share - Screen share your desired program, e.g. pictures and test results
- Toggle - Display or hide the screen sharing image on your screen
- Self view - Turn on or off your self view window
- Volume - Turn on, adjust or mute volume
- Mic - Turn on, adjust or mute your microphone
- Privacy - Turn on or off your camera
- Disconnect - To disconnect you from the VC
- Far End Camera Control - Control a PTZ camera at the far end (only visible when a compatible camera is available)

Many of these options are self explanatory and with a little practice become second nature to operate. I found all the options worked reliably and as intended, and I found the screen sharing quality was excellent.

VidyoDesktop also has the ability to VC with any of the Vidyo products. These mainly include:

- VidyoMobile - Android and iOS Devices
- VidyoPanorama - Vidyo's larger telepresence solution
- VidyoRoom - Vidyo's smaller telepresence solution
- VidyoReplay - Vidyo's conference recording and webcasting solution
- VidyoGateway – Video Conferencing Interoperability Solution (connect to other brands such as Polycom and Cisco systems)

Video quality

I found that VidyoDesktop video quality was above average for desktop software VC solutions. The ability to control the Audio and Video priority is a useful feature especially where bandwidth was limited. Picture quality was high and coupled with a good quality external HD web camera, much higher video quality was achieved. In practice I found careful consideration needs to be taken when purchasing an external web camera for a Mac, as many cameras manufacturers do not write drivers for Mac and some of the cameras features may be unavailable, e.g. auto white balance and colour control.

Pricing

Although VidyoDesktop is free to install, it requires a VidyoPortal and licensing to connect to, which will need to be purchased and maintained. Depending on the size and scalability of the intended users this will cost usually in excess of \$25,000 for the initial year and an ongoing probable annual cost in excess of \$10,000. Additional Vidyo product options may vary this dramatically. Vidyo pricing can be obtained from resellers via the Vidyo website.

Summery

I found the VidyoDesktop a little confusing at first but after several attempts (and finally reading the manual) found it to be reliable and of high quality. Its native ability to transverse firewalls (which can be the biggest hurdle to concur when communicating with VC equipment) is highly advantageous. One concern with the Vidyo product range is that only a licensed user is able to initiate a VC with an external participant e.g. If a practitioner who is not a member of a VidyoPortal would like to VC with a Vidyo product, they would need to be invited into a room by a licensed Vidyo user. I would recommend this product to a larger organisation intending to VC with many clients.

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