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## REVIEWS



WebEx bolsters corporate communication

By [Maggie Biggs](#) , For InfoWorld Test Center  
January 21, 2000

COMPANIES THAT want to increase corporate communications and speed up workflow via online meetings and collaboration now have the opportunity to take a service-based approach. WebEx's Meeting Center Services provides a full-featured online meeting and collaboration service at a budget-minded price. Those choosing WebEx can flexibly choose features, support options, and fees based on individual requirements. All anyone needs to access the service is a Netscape or Microsoft browser, Version 4.x or later.

WebEx's Standard service facilitates online discussions, document presentation, and application sharing, as well as Web surfing in groups. For a slightly higher fee, the WebEx Pro service adds features such as video and remote control. Both services can include integrated teleconferencing via call-in or call-out for an additional fee.

Sites that need to leverage online meetings and collaboration may already be evaluating product-based solutions, such as Microsoft NetMeeting. WebEx is more cost-effective than investing in the time, licensing, staff, and support you need with a product-based approach.

Other types of online meeting and conferencing solutions, such as those offered by PlaceWare and Contigo, offer value for sites that need to provide online demonstrations or presentations. However, WebEx offers a more full-featured service than these rivals.

When considering an outside service, I am always concerned with reliability, performance, support, and available training, among other things. WebEx supplies redundant server and connectivity capabilities. However, I would like to see the company go the extra distance and offer session-level fail-over for sites that might be using the service for business-critical meetings. WebEx company officials indicated that since their service launched one year ago their uptime statistics have remained at 99.85 percent.

During my tests, WebEx functioned just fine in Digital Subscriber Line or faster client connectivity settings. However, those using dial-up clients may not find the speed as fast as they might like.

I was pleased to see that WebEx includes business hour support in the purchase price. Sites that need extra support, such as a moderator during meetings or 24-hour support, will need to pay an additional fee. The company also provides individual service-level agreements based on customer needs.

I found WebEx to be a compelling way to increase communication and speed up workflow -- especially among highly distributed teams. If you are considering an investment in collaboration tools, WebEx is well worth a test drive.

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### BOTTOM LINE

WebEx Meeting Center Services 3.5

#### BUSINESS CASE

Organizations that want to boost productivity and information sharing via online meetings and dynamic collaboration should investigate WebEx as a cost-conscious service.



#### SUMMARY

WebEx is a Web-based meeting and collaboration service with flexible customization options, good reliability, and features designed to increase communications and workflow.

#### PROS

- + Increases communication
- + Built-in redundancy
- + Customizable
- + Service-level agreements
- + Share documents and applications
- + Supports online discussion and polling

#### CONS

- Some browser limitations
- No session-level redundancy

#### SPECIFICATION

Top-notch support options; expanded 24-hour support available

#### COST

Standard service, \$100 per concurrent user per month; setup fees range from \$1,500 to \$6,000

#### COMPANY

WebEx Inc., San Jose, Calif.(877) 509-3239 (toll-free); [www.webex.com](http://www.webex.com)

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