



GOVERNMENT

NETWORK INFRASTRUCTURE

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Students in Nunavut connect with Cisco's TelePresence



Nestor E. Arellano

@nestorarellano

Published: April 2nd, 2014



Connected North makes TelePresence technology available to remote Nunavut classrooms

The grade school students in a small classroom watched intently as the instructor mixed the corn syrup with ammonia, water, dirt and chips of dry ice to create a homemade comet. As the instructor went on to explain the composition of comets, one of the kids raised his hand and asked him how dry ice is made.

It was all like a typical grade school science class, except the students in frigid Iqaluit, Nu. were watching and interacting via video link with the instructor who was hundreds of miles away somewhere else in Canada.

Cisco Inc.'s TelePresence is traditionally deployed in enterprise organizations to facilitate videoconferencing, but a program called Connected North is bringing the company's high-definition, two way video communication system to young learners in Canada's far north to provide immersive and interactive education and health care service to remote Aboriginal and Inuit communities.

Related Link : [Cisco-new ways to collaborate](#)

The Government of Nunavut and Cisco Canada formally launched the program Wednesday but a pilot project that began in September last using prioritized satellite bandwidth donated by Canadian Internet service provider SSI Micro Ltd. already successfully connected in real-time, grade 6, 7 and 8

students in Iqaluit's Aqsarniit Ilinniarnvik School with various teachers, experts and other students throughout Canada. The program also involves Partners In Research's [Virtual Researcher on Call \(VROC\)](#) program which brings live researchers into classrooms through the use of videoconferencing.

After yesterday's announcement, two additional schools — the Deh Gah School in Fort Providence, Northwest Territories, and John Arnalukjuak High School in Arviat, Nunavut — will be joining the program in September this year.

Nunavut is about a four-hour plane ride from Toronto. Its temperatures are below the freezing point for eight months and very remote. Dropout rates average around 75 per cent by the time students reach grade eight and the territory's number of mental health issues is higher than in the general Canadian population.

Authorities hope to put a dent on these numbers by making Internet connectivity more readily available educational institutions and healthcare facilities.

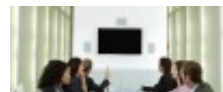
Related Articles



Cisco cuts price of videoconferencing to US\$3,999 — or less

It isn't often that you hear Cisco Systems officials talk about going down market with a product. But that's what the company is doing with its latest video conferencing end points. One in

 Published on: March 12th, 2014 Howard Solomon @itworldca



Canadian video conferencing platform gets expanded

A Canadian videoconferencing company has enhanced its platform for service providers and system integrators with a new Windows desktop client and more cloud-based on-demand services. Magor Corp. of Ottawa said Tuesday that the

 Published on: March 4th, 2014 Howard Solomon @itworldca



Cisco upgrades TelePresence management tools

Imagine not having to call the IT department to make those last minute adjustments just as your videoconferencing sessions is about to start because one of the participants is having trouble to connect

 Published on: March 19th, 2013 @itworldca

“The physical geography of our communities is always a challenge and Connected North allows us to literally connect our classrooms with expertise in other jurisdictions,” said Paul Quassa, Minister of Education, Nunavut. “This means, for example, we can have two-way interaction between a scientist and students in real time.”

So far, early results have been encouraging.

A study by York University in the impact of the program indicates that students and teachers have a positive view of the initiative. As many as 89 per cent of students reported that remote learning experience made science more enjoyable and 81 per cent said they felt they learned more in virtual sessions than they did through traditional classroom methods.

Connected North is also focused on bringing psychiatric and youth mental health services to Northern Aboriginal and Inuit communities via TelePresence video links, according to Nitin Kawale, president of Cisco Canada.

That part of the project will involve the RBC Foundation, Cisco and Tele-Link Mental Health Program developed by Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. Tele-Link will use videoconferencing and other technologies to provide Nunavut residents access to specialist services.

Other partners in the Connected North program include:

- Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
- The Department of Education of the Government of Nunavut
- The Department of Health of the Government of Nunavut
- York University
- Sheridan College
- Canadian North



About Nestor E. Arellano

Toronto-based journalist specializing in technology and business news. Blogs and tweets on the latest tech trends and gadgets.

Follow

