Voice and Video IP Assessments FAQs

How does Voice and Video IP differ from data IP?
The difference between Voice/Video IP and Data IP lies in the manner of delivery. When data is delivered across an IP network in packets, some of those packets may reach their destination immediately, some a tiny bit later, and some may be lost altogether. In the data world, such a disorderly delivery process is not an issue because data packets are present and reassembled easily without affecting the quality of the message. So while the delivery of data may not be pretty, that's all right, because it's the final, fully-assembled result that matters. When transmitting a voice audio stream or video stream over an IP network, *delivery matters*. Variances in packet delivery time and lost packets significantly effect the quality of the message being delivered, causing an effect known as "jitter". It is estimated that 75% - 85% of existing IP networks that were designed for data transmission would fail to deliver VoIP (or Video), because they do not have the capability to deliver packets in the manner required.

What is an Assessment?
An assessment is the first step in the process of building a network that will support both data, video and voice traffic. Through a combination of planning and testing, an assessment will help a business to prove that their network is equipped to handle Voice or Video IP traffic prior to the deployment of their IP solution.

What is the purpose of an Assessment?
One of the most expensive technology mistakes a business can make is to discover that their network cannot deliver voice or video transmission after deployment. An assessment provides the necessary planning and testing to prevent such a mistake from occurring.

What is involved in an assessment?
Two basic components comprise an assessment – planning and testing. Planning typically occurs in the form of a Convergence Readiness Strategy. The most thorough Convergence Readiness Strategy will examine matters such as quality of service (QoS), connectivity, equipment, and bandwidth. Most importantly, the Convergence Strategy contains recommendations for preparing the network to deliver IP packets. Testing occurs after the recommendations made within the Convergence Strategy have been implemented but prior to the actual deployment of the IP solution. During the testing, a IP simulation is performed to test and prove that the Convergence Strategy has properly prepared the network to deliver voice or video IP packets.

Voice and Video IP Assessments and ScanSource Security

What types of assessments does ScanSource offer?
Because each IP deployment calls for a different level of planning and testing services, ScanSource Communications presents different assessment offers – Standard and Complete. A Convergence Engineer performs the assessments remotely. The documents detailing these offers may be found on the ScanSource Communications website under Reseller Support>Technical Resources>Professional Services.

Do all assessment offers include planning assistance?
No. Only the Complete Assessment offers planning assistance in the form of a Convergence Readiness Strategy.

Do all assessment offers include testing?
Yes. All offers include testing, which includes simulating Voice or Video IP traffic across the network. This simulation produces the metrics used to determine overall IP quality.

Do all assessment offers include quality of service (QoS) testing?
No. Only as part of the Complete Assessment will the Convergence Engineer review router and switch outputs to verify proper functionality of QoS. With other offers, this is the responsibility of the end-customer support team.

Are the assessments performed on-site or remotely?
Advancements in testing software have allowed IP metrics to be gathered remotely, and consequently, all IP Assessments are performed remotely. For an additional cost, the Complete Assessment may be performed on-site, to accommodate clients with a special need for on-site assistance.

How are the assessments priced?
For all offers, pricing is dependent on two factors: the total number of sites in the project and the total number of VoIP endpoints in the project. A site is defined as any location with a different mailing address. An IP endpoint is defined as any device that connects to the LAN and uses the IP protocol.

How may we order an assessment?
These offers may be ordered through your sales rep.

What support is required by the reseller or client during an assessment?
The reseller or client must be able to provide the time and knowledge required to load applications onto a PC, modify power settings, and modify NIC card settings. The Convergence Engineer will assist with these tasks. Also, the reseller or client must have data router, switch and/or firewall knowledge of passwords and login capabilities, must be able to perform show commands and capture outputs into a text files.

What happens if the assessment does not pass?
The Standard and Complete IP Assessments includes one free retest within 2 weeks of the original test. The client will have the opportunity to correct the network problems that are causing the failure prior to retesting. If the IP Assessment fails a second time, additional services will need to be purchased.

What technology is used to complete an assessment?
One of two types of software applications is typically used to complete an assessment - Net IQ's Vivinet Assessor or Viola Networks' NetAlly. With either software application, voice traffic simulations are applied to the network for approximately 72 hours. The simulations will not interfere with the client's day-to-day operations.

Why Choose ScanSource Communications for an IP Assessment?

Expertise
Our hands-on consulting, detailed documentation and tailored recommendations help clients triumph over the difficult process of building a Voice and Video IP network.

Responsiveness
We are there to support you through the sales process, planning, testing and final recommendations. Plus, most of our assessments are started within 48 hours of purchase order receipt.

A Selection of Offers
By providing several assessment offers, we are able to provide the correct amount of support to meet an individual client's needs and thereby also provide the best value.

Automatic Quotes
Sales reps can figure the price of our assessments independently, freed from the time consuming process of custom quoting. It is simple to use our pricing matrix to calculate a project price and take it to the selling table.

Quality of Work
Our Convergence Engineers follow a proven assessment process so that every customer receives the same first-rate service and deliverables.

Attractive Pricing
All of our assessments are priced aggressively and include some of the most competitive entry prices available.

One-Stop Shopping
We help you to improve company-wide efficiencies by making it possible to purchase an assessment and hardware from same place.