

UC for Business 5.0 Executive Conference

Whitepaper

NEC's UC for Business Executive Conference solution provides advanced Unified Communications that delivers business benefits across the entire enterprise, through 5 key functionality sets. This paper addresses the Executive Conference desktop telephony application.



Save time and improve collaboration with easy conferencing

Audio conferencing technology has been around for a while, but most solutions are not exactly easy to use and often involve 3rd party providers – adding costs to the telephony bill.

With Executive Conference as part of your UC for Business solution, scheduling a conference call becomes so quick and intuitive that it easily turns into a time-saving alternative for endless group email trails.

Collaboration across the enterprise will improve, and instead of having deadlines extended and decisions stuck somewhere in email jail, your organization will avoid latency and improve efficiency and productivity.

With Executive Conference you will avoid unnecessary telephony costs, and make things very straightforward for all parties. Scheduling conferences – even instant ones – is as easy as sending a calendar appointment. Internal and external participants can join in with a click of the mouse, or by dialing a free phone or other familiar number. And if a small group wants to split away to have a quick discussion by themselves, and then join up with the others again – then that's simply arranged through 'drag and drop'.

Executive Conference will reduce frustration for your employees, speed up business processes, and improve communications throughout the enterprise.

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Overview

Audio conferencing is turning into an ever more popular business solution as it enables staff to quickly consult colleagues or customers, and results in rapid decision making.

UC for Business (UCB) version 5.0 provides Executive Conference, a UCB licensed module – to provide audio-conferencing for up to 64 internal and external parties, via your UCB application.

How does Executive Conference work?

Executive Conference is available on SIP-capable NEC supported telephony platforms, and utilizes Aculab SIP voice ports.

A single license is required for each concurrent conference participant.

Conferences can be set up and viewed inside Console, Agent Desktop, Executive Desktop and Executive Insight. Participants are alerted with conference invitations and reminders. Console operators can organize conferences and transfer the host role to another user.

Business Drivers and Benefits

- Conferencing is the “green” solution to global consultation – eliminate the fuel consumption and carbon emissions along with the cost of travel
- No more costly conference bridges
- No 12-digit phone numbers that get lost, forgotten, or misdialled
- Executive Conference is run from your own office, so you can set up whatever access you need for outside callers, including free phone numbers
- Operation is easy – there is no reason for anyone to miss a conference call because they don't know the details; they just phone your office and get connected
- Administration is straightforward and flexible, meeting your business and security requirements
- No more reluctance to seize the moment when a conference call is the fastest solution to any issue: UCB's single point user application

means your executives and knowledge workers are already confident with all functionality operation and promptly initiate a conference when the need arises

- Executive Conference provides great flexibility for participants and organizers. Last minute attendees can now be added easily and painlessly as soon as they call in – even on mobile or from outside the office

Requirements












- UC for Business Version 5.0
- Executive Conference is currently supported on NEC and Cisco Unified Communications Manager¹.
- CTI Server Requirements: There is potential to run up to 32 ports on a single (high traffic configuration) server; however this is dependent on your site configuration and load.

Important: Please contact your NEC Account Representative before proceeding so this can be assessed and calculated for your specific site requirements.

¹ Each PBX type has specific requirements. Please contact your NEC Representative who will advise what these requirements are.

Why not Video Conferencing?

Executive Conference is the cost effective and practical alternative to video conferencing. People use video conferencing because they need some control over what is happening. With its easy to use graphical interface, Executive Conference provides almost all the functionality of video – without the head shots – or the hassle of camera equipment at each location.

Functionality	Video Conference	Executive Conference
Who is present?		
Who was invited?		
Who just arrived/left?		
Who is talking?		
Where are they?		
Body Language		
Additional equipment not required		

Executive Conference Functionality

The developers of Executive Conference designed a solution to solve all the well known pain points of audio conferencing:

1. How do I start a conference?
2. Can I turn this phone call into a conference?
3. There's a conference on, how do I get on it?
4. Who is present on the line right now?
5. Who was actually invited to attend?
6. Who was that who just arrived/left?
7. Who is that talking?
8. Who else is in the Conference room?
9. Can I turn that person up/down/off?
10. I need to invite another person...

11. Here's someone ringing me now, how do I bring them into the conference?
12. I need to consult privately with another person
13. I do not think this person is a legitimate participant
14. Can I continue talking to a subset of the conference after the main call breaks up?
15. I want to get all those people back for another discussion

Read about all the features of Executive Conference below to see how NEC addressed these concerns...

Organizing a Conference

- Participants can be any mix of internal, external, using IP or other lines. Each participant uses a port, so if you have 30 ports at your site, you could have 3 simultaneous conferences of 10 parties each, 2 of 15 – or one conference of 30
- Scheduled and Recurring conferences are available as well as ad hoc
- Booked or scheduled conferences automatically reserve resources for that time so that they are available when required. Anyone else attempting to initiate a conference at that time is advised they are unable to do so (unless sufficient licenses are available)
- Easy wizard conference setup
- Use the Desktop Search Bar to simply drag Phonebook entries directly into your active or scheduled conference
- Create “Conference Rooms” in the system that can display all the participants who joined the conference from the same phone
- Define PIN access for any conference
- Super-users can have their own PIN to initiate conferences via the phone
- Executive Conference offers the option to create a calendar meeting event that can be emailed to participants²

² This feature is currently available for Microsoft® Outlook® only

- Organizers are automatically the host, at initiation, but can transfer the host role to any participant
- The organizer or host is the only participant able to drop other people out of the conference, or end the conference for everybody

Starting Your Conference

- When you're ready to start and not everyone has arrived, send a reminder to all parties and they can just click to join
- Convert your current call to a conference so you can add more parties
- Actively introduce any person (e.g., someone who is slow to dial in) to the conference.
- Introductions to the conference are private; YOU can still hear the conference in the background, but your conversation with the newcomer remains private until they accept the invitation and join the conference
- Conference participants inside the office get 'toaster' screen pops alerting them that they have been invited to a conference. Each participant can choose to 'snooze', decline, or join immediately
- Executive conference plays the name of each participant as they arrive AND leave the conference. Internal participants are automatically recognized, and the system will have their names recorded; external participants are asked to record their own names to be played to the conference. Regular external participants can be added to the Phonebook so that their Calling Line ID is recognized, and their names automatically played on entry
- Any participant of an active conference, calling from a recognized Calling Line ID, will be invited to join the relevant conference as soon as they are answered by the system. For example, a user expected in a conference just calls their own, or any voice mailbox on the system; they will hear "You are scheduled to participate in a conference, <Weekly Management Meeting>. To join, press 6"
- If you're an internal user who can't remember the PIN, just log into your own mailbox, using your mailbox PIN, and your identity is

confirmed; you are then prompted to press 6 to join the conference

- Console operators provide a central facility for 'lost' conference participants; when a booked participant calls the main office number, their Calling ID is recognized and a "Transfer to Conference" button displays on Console
- Send an email invitation either when creating a conference or any time before it begins to book your attendees

While you're on a Conference

- See from each button who is attending the conference
- You can see the people who were invited, but declined the invitation to attend
- In the 'Conference Room' buttons, you can see all the participants in this room, including those who were invited but didn't attend
- Each Desktop participant can adjust the volume of the entire conference as they hear it
- The input for each user can be adjusted for the entire conference, including muting out noise of any participants (for instance if someone puts the conference on hold, all get hold music)
- At the end of your conference – or any time during – you can split your conference into groups based on pre-defined "regions". Drag participants into any region you wish, and then select "split" to break up the conference. You can also re-merge the regions at any time
- "Look who's talking!" – the current speaker's button lights up to help you identify unknown voices³. A meter indicator on this button and on any other participants' buttons also identifies other contributors at the same time, so that you can see clearly not only who the loudest participant is at that time, but also which others might be trying to make their point
- Hold a private conversation with someone else in the conference, or split the group in two for discussions

³ Available in 5.0 SP3

- Conferences can be recorded⁴ either ad hoc, at any time during a conference (based on permissions), or as part of the wizard setup. Recordings are then available via the Conference History list for all internal participants, and can also be exported as required for circulation to external participants.

⁴ Available in 5.0 SP3

Examples

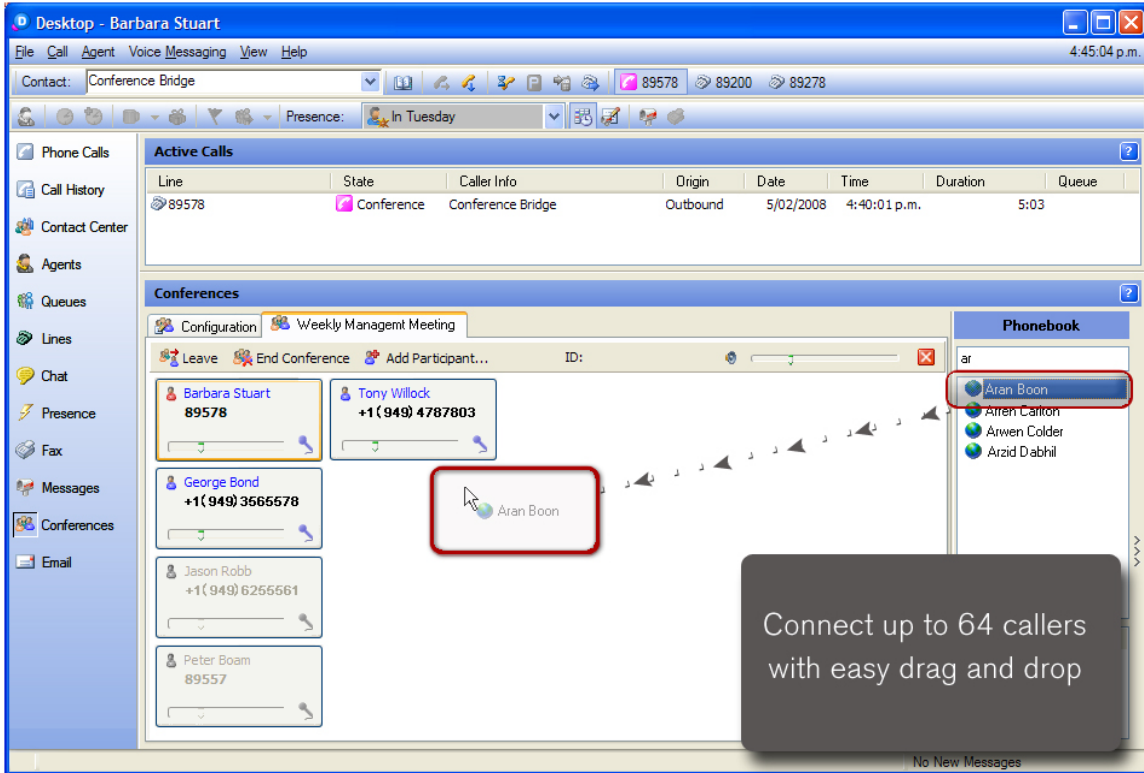


Figure 1. Drag callers from the Phonebook Search bar directly into a Conference

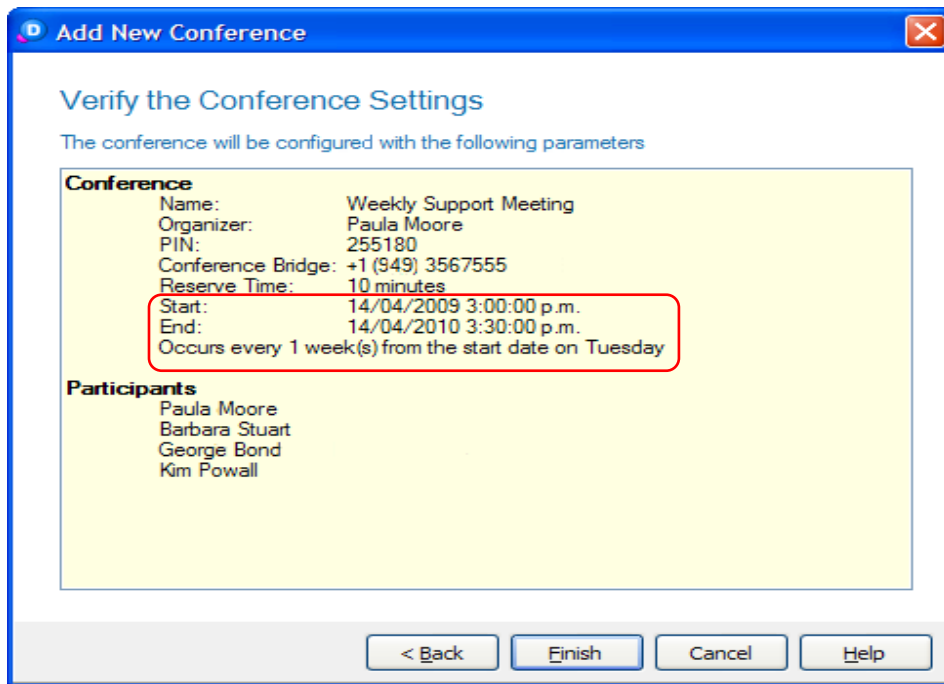


Figure 2. This conference is scheduled to recur every Tuesday at 3pm.

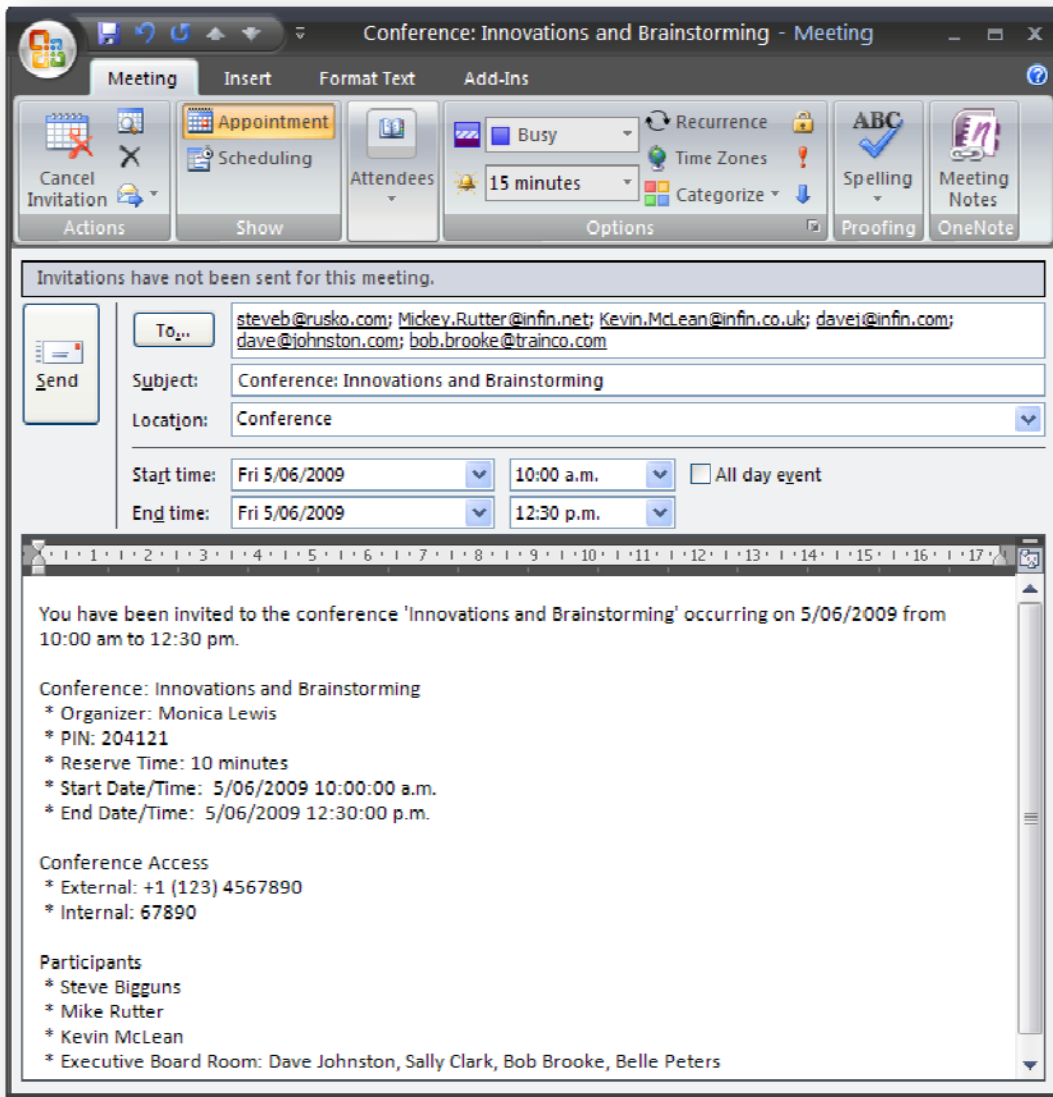


Figure 3. The organizer can choose to email participants a conference invitation that will automatically create an appointment in their calendar with all the conference details.

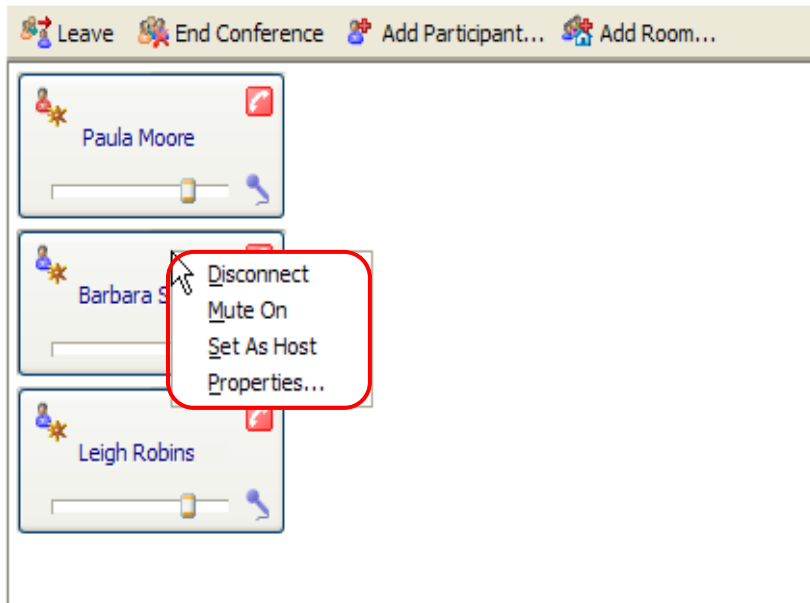


Figure 4. The organizer or host can remove any party from the Conference, transfer Hosting rights to another participant and adjust the Mute option. Users can adjust their own, or use keys on their phone.

1 Conference regions toggle button

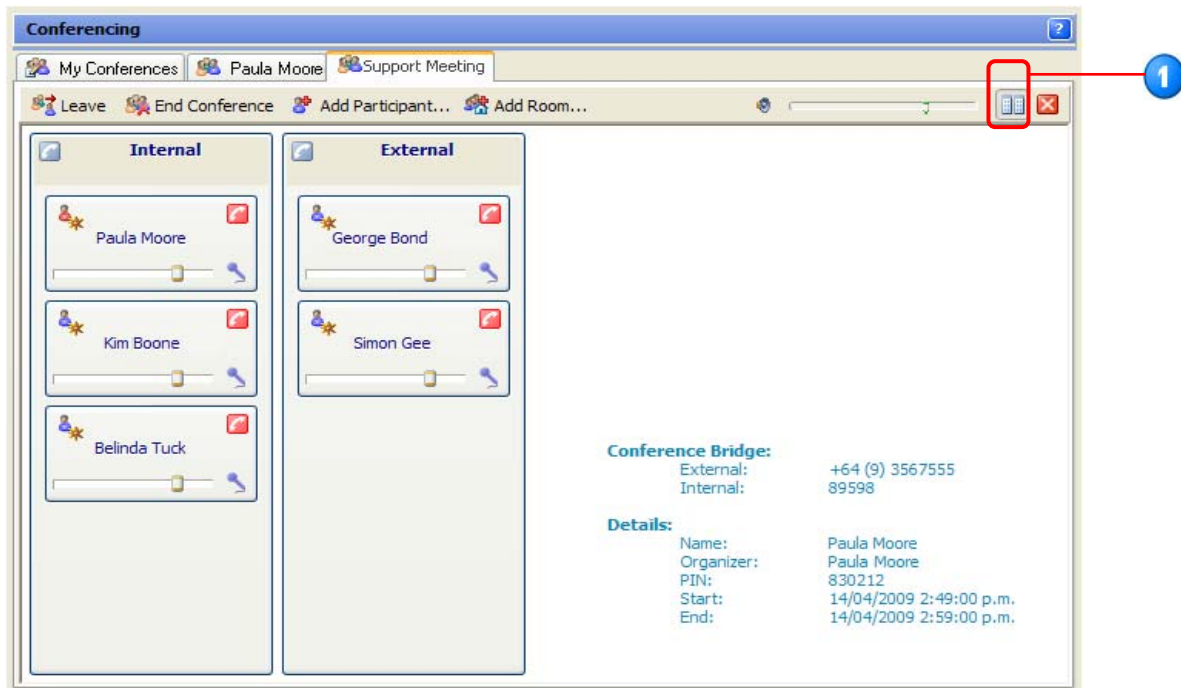


Figure 5. Regions allow for a conference to be split into two separate regions, allowing a private conversation within each region. To move a user drag their participant button between the regions. To rejoin all participants, right click and select Merge Conversations.

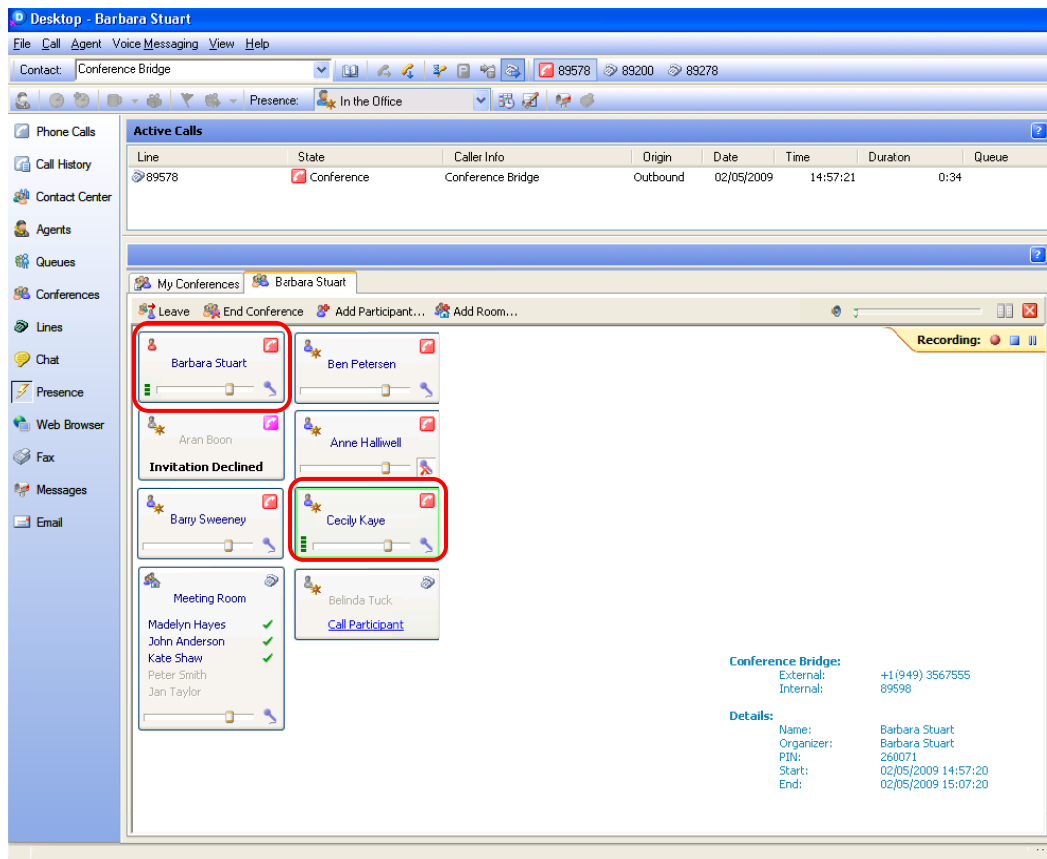


Figure 6. “Look Who’s Talking” – The button of the participant currently speaking is highlighted, with a meter showing their volume relative to the second loudest participant at that time. In the image above, Cecilia is loudest, with Barbara making a quieter contribution.

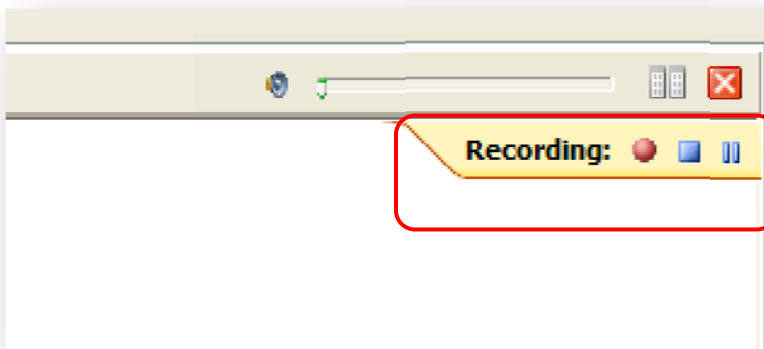


Figure 7. Conferences can be recorded either ad hoc, at any time during a conference (based on permissions), or as part of the wizard setup. Recordings are then available via the Conference History list for all internal participants, and can also be exported as required for circulation to external participants.



Figure 8. Each participant (within the office) will receive a “toaster” pop at the appropriate time inviting them to join the conference. Information shown includes the organizer, other participants that have already joined and participants that are invited but are still inactive.