



“The Mirial ClearSea solution solves a lot of problems for our partnered school boards and districts in Canada.”

Kevin Cougler, National Program Manager, Virtual Researcher On Call

Customer profile

Name: Virtual Researcher On Call program by Partners In Research

Country: Ontario, Canada

Website: www.vroc.ca

The Virtual Researcher On Call (commonly known as VROC) is an educational initiative of its parent organization Partners in Research. Partners In Research is a Canadian charity whose mission includes helping the youth of today become the leaders of tomorrow primarily in the areas of Health and Natural Sciences, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics. The goal of VROC is to enhance student’s experiences in the classroom through the adoption of cutting-edge technology.



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Business need

VROC was started in 2005 with the aim of **connecting classrooms with researchers in their laboratories** or offices so that students could benefit from real time knowledge and relevant information from the scientific community. VROC soon realized that **video conferencing was going to play a really important role in the program** and started investigating the different options including proprietary tools such as MSN and Skype and standards based H.323 equipment.

“Surprisingly it turned out a lot of schools boards and **school districts had H.323 video conferencing equipment**, although they were often in the principals’ office and not in the classrooms” says Kevin Cougler - National Program Manager, Virtual Researcher On Call. “Our challenge in the early days was to **convince schools to bring the equipment to the classroom and give educational value to it.**”

The program worked very well since the beginning but unfortunately, in a district with 100 to 150 schools, only 5 might have access to video conferencing units at the most and **VROC wanted to expand from the very small percentage of students in Canada they were reaching**. They needed to have some kind of product that allows a school with appropriate bandwidth and a webcam and audio solution to participate using a good computer. **VROC found the solution in ClearSea desktop video conferencing.**

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Solution

After evaluating different solutions, VROC decided to adopt ClearSea to expand the reach of its programs. ClearSea works on **Macs** and **PC’s** as well as on **Tablets** and **Smartphones*** with the ability to connect to existing standards-based **SIP/H.323 video appliances** and solutions; supporting **far-end camera control** and data collaboration whether on **LAN, WiFi, or 3G/4G** thereby greatly **enabling access from and to anyone**. “It worked very well during this first year” says Kevin Cougler. “It’s very easy to teach people how to use it and the test call avoids people calling my office for technical testing.”

Results

ClearSea played a key role for the flagship VROC Reaching Every Student initiative and for the production of a new series of podcasts such as This Week in Technology & Education, This Week in Science & Education and This Week in Engineering and Education.

Reaching Every Student’s goal is to involve every student in Canada in a **live video conferencing experience with a specialist** during class time while the podcasts are available as on demand content. VROC records video conferencing sessions with experts and an educator who helps other teachers to understand the value of the information. “ClearSea plays an important role in the production of our podcasts as we **invite to participate people that might be anywhere** from their laboratory to their homes” says Kevin Cougler. VROC has already held sessions on hundreds of different topics in many schools across the country. At the moment 50 podcasts have been recorded and overall they’ve been downloaded or viewed more than 10,000 times.

What’s next

While carrying on the existing programs, VROC is looking at how to introduce the use of different devices such as tablets and smartphones. “Recently I had the opportunity to use the ClearSea mobile app from Mirial. **The experience was so good with audio and video for both members that I will be exploring ways to use mobile conferencing** in VROC programming such as a scientist showing different parts of their lab.”

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