GENERAL

The video conference system vPoint HD is a software based solution, which is operable with the system software Windows XP and 2000. In the LAN area video conferences up to 1.5 Mbps are possible.

At the time being there are three versions available, which are all protected from unauthorized access with a USB dongle. The standard version basically consists of the software only. In the Professional version a headset and a USB camera (Logitech Quick Cam) are included. The Executive version provides the user amongst other useful utilities with a PTZ camera and a table microphone. This, however, is reflected in the price.

The hardware requirements are moderate and are to be met by modern PCs without problems. The demands of H.264 use are, however, a little higher: here you have to use a hyper thread compatible CPU, an Intel Centrino CPU 1.2 GHz, an Athlon XP 2600 or an Athlon 64 2800.

vPoint HD was tested at the VCC in November 2004.

INSTALLATION

The installation is done quickly and without problems. It should be carried out as administrator, so that the system is available to all users. The different settings (like setting up a user name) can be made by every user individually (also see configuration instructions).

If there is an older version of vPoint on the PC, it should be uninstalled before a new installation.

When using the Logitech Quick Cam camera included in delivery, the software should be installed first, and the camera started afterwards. If it is done the other way around, the "Plug'n'Play" recognition of the system software is confused, which leads to an unnecessary additional effort. This camera should be connected to a USB 2.0 supply, as otherwise the original driver of the camera is not used. The Windows driver, which is used instead, provides a worse quality.

TEST

The default bandwidth should be changed to 256 kbps, which is standard with H.264. With other video modes there are much more favourable bandwidths (up to 1536 kbps). If H.264 is used, the participating devices adjust the bandwidth to 256 kbps for your connection anyway.

In menu point [network/directory] the default setting for log on to the Internet Location Server should be changed (untick), since the IL server can be read by spammers and no doubtful offers can be made.

The screen view can be switched to different modes, which to some extent are very similar to the "look and feel" of Windows.

The quality of video conferences with this software based tool depends more than with other devices on the underlying hardware and the general settings of the system software. Especially in the audio quality of vPoint HD is directly affected by changes in other programmes.
The most important change compared to the forerunner model is the elimination of T.120. This possibility of cooperation is not provided as a standard option. Instead of this, there is now a solution for the transmission of documents. When using this option the desktop of the releasing computer is transmitted completely. If the receiver also uses vPoint HD, he sees the received screen instead of the video picture and the received video picture instead of one's own image. This solution is qualitatively not satisfying and not to be recommended for daily use. The situation is improved a little, if the conference partner uses a major VCON system (e.g. HD 5000).

This solution is called HD Dual Stream and according to manufacturer information also works with TANDBERGs Duo Video. Unfortunately we were not able to test this, as we do not have a device of this firm.

Working together with other devices generally works with good sound and video quality. Dialling up the MCU of the DFNVideoConference service sometimes did not work in the first attempt, but the second one always worked. The MCU conferences also ran in good quality.

### CONCLUSIONS

The vPoint HD is a software based VC system, which can be recommended as a workstation for mere video and audio conferences. It works especially good in cooperation with a well equipped computer. The lack of the T.120 component is not very pleasing, since the user capabilities regarding "Cooperative work" are very restricted.

**Technical Data**

Producer: VCON
Distributor: Pan Dacom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supported Standards</th>
<th>H.323</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sound Coding</td>
<td>G.711, G.722, G.723.1, G.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video Compression</td>
<td>H.261, H.263, H.264 (sending up to 256 kbps; receiving up to 1 Mbps)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thanks to VCON and Pan Dacom for supplying the test.