

much travel they do, and their network's capabilities. There are still plenty of times when face-to-face interaction is more desirable, and often traveling to meet a client is essential for cultivating clients and closing sales.

Videoconferencing figures to have an impact on the business world in other ways, as well. More employees may be able to work closer to home and balance their work and personal lives more efficiently; traditional office environments and corporate headquarters may shrink or disappear; and

freelancers, contractors, and workers from other countries will become a larger portion of the global economy.

Sources: Steve Lohr, "As Travel Costs Rise, More Meetings Go Virtual," *The New York Times*, July 22, 2008; Karen D. Schwartz, "Videoconferencing on a Budget," *eWeek*, May 29, 2008; and Jim Rapoza, "Videoconferencing Redux," *eWeek*, July 21, 2008; Mike Fratto, "High-Def Conferencing At a Low Price," *Information Week*, July 14, 2008; Marianne Kolbasuk McGee, "Looking Into The Work-Trend Crystal Ball," *Information Week*, June 24, 2008; Eric Krapf, "What's Video Good For?", *Information Week*, July 1, 2008.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. One consulting firm has predicted that video and Web conferencing will make business travel extinct. Do you agree? Why or why not?
2. What is the distinction between videoconferencing and telepresence?
3. What are the ways in which videoconferencing provides value to a business? Would you consider it smart management? Explain your answer.
4. If you were in charge of a small business, would you choose to implement videoconferencing? What factors would you consider in your decision?

MIS IN ACTION

Explore the WebEx Web site (www.webex.com) and note all of its capabilities for both small and large businesses, then answer the following questions:

1. List and describe its capabilities for small-medium and large businesses. How useful is WebEx? How can it help companies save time and money?
2. Compare WebEx video capabilities with the videoconferencing capabilities described in this case.
3. Describe the steps you would take to prepare for a Web conference as opposed to a face-to-face conference.