

# Lync 2013 Customer Solution Case Study



## Media Company Provides Executives with Flexible Communications Options



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Senior Director, Operations and Technology, News America Inc.

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States  
**Industry:** Media

### Customer Profile

News America Inc. (NAI) is the principal US subsidiary of News Corporation, one of the world's largest media companies. NAI provides legal, financial, IT, and other corporate services from its headquarters in New York City.

### Business Situation

NAI wanted to promote user adoption of Microsoft Lync Server meeting capabilities so that it could retire its web conferencing service.

### Solution

NAI deployed Microsoft Lync Server 2013, which delivers enhanced conferencing capabilities, including multiple video streams and easy access for external users.

### Benefits

- Delivers easy communications
- Promotes flexible workplace
- Improves availability

When Hurricane Sandy struck New York City, the 400 employees who work at the global headquarters for News Corporation were unable to get to their offices. Thankfully, it had deployed a Microsoft unified communications solution, so employees could work effectively from any location with an Internet connection. Recently, News Corporation upgraded its communications solution to Microsoft Lync Server 2013, which enhances the conferencing capabilities that employees use daily and provides a more intuitive user interface. With Lync Server 2013, the company expects to increase adoption of videoconferencing and to provide a more reliable solution to help reduce downtime for business-critical tools.



## Situation

News Corporation, a diversified global media company, produces and distributes news, sports, and entertainment through television stations, cable networks, newspapers, movie studios, book publishers, and Internet ventures. Its principal US subsidiary, News America Inc. (NAI), houses a corporate office that provides legal, financial, and human resources services. Based in New York City, NAI has about 400 employees.

The IT team at NAI strives to provide the best possible infrastructure for the corporate executives and the rest of the staff at the corporate office. It is challenging to support a workforce that is frequently out of the office and extremely busy. They are therefore not willing to experiment with new technologies that don't provide immediate value.

Employees at NAI primarily depended on email to communicate with each other and with contacts outside the organization. As instant messaging (IM) became popular in the early 2000s, employees installed public IM clients so that they could chat with

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*Infrastructure Manager, News America Inc.*

colleagues. NAI installed its first Microsoft communications solution to replace these public IM clients. The Microsoft IM client was easier to support and provided presence information and public IM support for all employees. NAI also deployed the Microsoft Live Meeting hosted web conferencing service.

Having presence information available for all of the staff was a welcomed addition as NAI continued to upgrade the solution to deploy additional capabilities. NAI deployed Microsoft Lync Server 2010. Many other divisions of News Corporation also deployed Lync Server and NAI had established federation with them to enable easy communication between the divisions. “Our divisions have autonomy to make their own IT decisions, so we don't always have the same solutions, but Lync federation has been a huge success and has helped to spread adoption of Lync Server across the company,” says the Senior Director of Operations and Technology at News America Inc.

The staff at NAI has widely adopted Lync for instant messaging and desktop sharing. “We are federated with most every News Corporation business unit and that has been a big plus to cut down on email,” says the Senior Director. “We would like people to

use more of the Lync capabilities, especially for online meetings and videoconferencing.”

## Solution

To promote a wider adoption of Lync capabilities, NAI has deployed Microsoft Lync Server 2013, which provides enhancements to overall usability, reliability, and additional capabilities for conferencing and chat.

### Conferencing

Employees at NAI like videoconferencing because they can see the reactions of other people during meetings. Through Microsoft Lync 2013, they can see up to five concurrent video streams during a meeting, which improves their videoconferencing experience by showing the body language of the speaker and other participants at the same time. Employees can select a primary video stream of interest to keep “pinned” to, or active on, the screen, see all participant names, and easily identify the active speaker. Meeting participants can change the view of the conference to see the video, the presentation, or both. With their web cams, participants can also see a video preview of themselves before joining the meeting.

For external partners and customers attending meetings with NAI, Microsoft Lync Web App provides a great experience. Lync Web App is web-based and runs in most browsers on PCs or Macs. It requires a simple browser plug-in that participants can install without needing administrator access. Meeting attendees receive full voice, video, and, desktop sharing capabilities as if they had the Lync 2013 desktop client. During meetings, both employees and external participants can use the desktop sharing features to collaborate. They can also use the whiteboard feature to hold a virtual whiteboarding session where every participant can add ideas or content.

### Instant Messaging and Presence

NAI originally deployed a Microsoft communications solution to provide instant messaging capabilities, which continue to remain important. With Lync Server 2013, NAI can expand the federation with public IM networks by adding an XMPP gateway to enable employees to chat with outside contacts who use IM clients such as Google Chat and Skype.

Employees no longer have to open a separate window for every new IM conversation. Instead chat sessions with both internal and external colleagues are organized in tabs in the Lync 2013 client. The tabbed organization helps to avoid desktop clutter, especially for the executives at NAI who often deal with multiple issues at the same time.

Through the Lync 2013 client, employees can more easily locate and communicate with contacts. They can pause the mouse on a contact's picture to display that person's contact card, which includes presence information, status note, location, and

organizational details. Employees can view contact cards from within any Microsoft Office application.

NAI has also deployed persistent chat rooms, which employees can access through the Lync 2013 client. Teams can use persistent chat to meet and collaborate in virtual rooms in real time. The discussions are searchable and persist over time, so people can easily and efficiently share information.

### Deployment and Management

Because employees at NAI depend on the communications capabilities in Lync, the company took advantage of the high availability configuration options for Lync Server 2013. "We deployed enterprise pools at two sites. Each pool has two servers, and we can failover between the sites seamlessly," says the Infrastructure Manager at News America Inc. "We also have two Microsoft SQL Server 2008 databases at each site, which use database mirroring to stay synchronized." NAI also deployed Lync Server Edge server roles to enable Lync communications from outside the company firewall. All of the server roles are virtualized except for SQL Server.

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Infrastructure Manager, News America Inc.

IT staff can easily manage the server pools through the Lync web-based management console. "We can choose the pool we want to manage and then force a replication between the pools rather than making the same

changes multiple times," says the Infrastructure Manager. NAI is using role-based access control to provide limited administrative rights to its help-desk staff for day-to-day management tasks.

## Benefits

As NAI employees have experienced the benefits of a Microsoft communications solution, adoption has increased. Lync Server 2013 delivers enhancements to videoconferencing and a more intuitive user interface that employees can use to build stronger connections and be more productive.

### Delivers Easy Communications

The primary objective for IT solutions at NAI is to make the lives of the News Corporation executive staff easier. Lync does that by providing multiple modes of communications and making it easy to transition between them. "People use Outlook frequently during the day, and with the availability of presence information and the Lync contact card, they can initiate a call or IM without leaving an email message," says the Infrastructure Manager. "Anything that helps employees get in touch with somebody is a welcomed feature and drives adoption."

After employees initiate a call or IM, they can easily escalate conversations to the next level, such as a videoconference or a desktop sharing session. "Going from an IM conversation to sharing a desktop and then adding audio in a couple of seconds is really nice," says the Infrastructure Manager.

Through the Outlook calendar, employees can add Lync meeting with just one click, which also helps to drive adoption. With the improvements to videoconferencing, employees prefer Lync meetings. "The Lync gallery view was a big hit with our staff because it brings so much value in seeing the reactions of everyone in the conference," says the Senior Director.

Employees also welcome changes to the Lync 2013 client. "Tabbed conversations in Lync have really provided a better user experience," says the Infrastructure Manager. "Our employees really like having a single IM window instead of several all over the desktop."

NAI also believes that persistent chat will make communication easier. The IT staff at NAI is currently using persistent chat to preserve project information and facilitate help-desk responses.

### Promotes a Flexible Workplace

The highly mobile workforce was a primary reason for deploying Lync, which has helped employees stay productive no matter where they are working. "The availability of presence information has really helped our staff because people can see when someone is online and available," says the Senior Director. "Before we had Lync, working from home or at another of our offices in New York was not readily accepted, but now since we can see presence and communicate immediately, people can work from wherever they need to be."

### Improves Availability

For the IT organization, the high-availability and disaster-recovery options are a great benefit. NAI did not deploy Lync Server 2010 in a high-availability configuration, so it had to plan downtime for maintenance on the servers. This led to inconvenient working hours for the staff. "With the fully redundant Lync Server 2013 deployment, we have a lot more flexibility in our operations. We can do maintenance without impacting users," says the Infrastructure Manager.

## Microsoft Lync Server 2013

Microsoft Lync Server 2013 ushers in a new connected user experience that transforms every communication into an interaction that is more collaborative and engaging—and that is accessible from anywhere. For IT, the benefits are equally powerful, with a highly secure and reliable communications system that works with existing tools and systems for easier management, lower cost of ownership, smoother deployment and migration, and greater choice and flexibility.

For more information about Microsoft Lync Server 2013, go to: [www.microsoft.com/lync](http://www.microsoft.com/lync)

## Jabra

Jabra offers a complete portfolio of corded and wireless devices that are “optimized” for Lync. These devices are tested by Microsoft and built to offer a rich and integrated experience for Lync users. Jabra enables users to derive the full business productivity, efficiency, and cost benefits they expect from Lync through enhanced voice collaboration based on device simplicity, reliability, and ease of use.

For more information about Jabra devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.jabra.com](http://www.jabra.com)

## Logitech

Logitech delivers the advanced, business-grade audio and video performance needed for a superior video calling experience. Logitech webcams and video calling solutions are designed especially for business, with the highest-quality optics and sensors across all price points.

For more information about Logitech devices tested and qualified for Lync, visit: [www.logitech.com](http://www.logitech.com)

### Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
  - Microsoft Lync Server 2013
  - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 SP2

- Microsoft Office
  - Microsoft Lync 2013
  - Microsoft Outlook 2010

### Partners

- Jabra
- Logitech



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2. For more information about News Corporation visit the website at: [www.newscorp.com](http://www.newscorp.com)

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