

August 2016



Evaluation of the Logitech ConferenceCam Kit

Hands-on testing of a hardware / software bundle that adds group conferencing to small and medium meeting rooms.

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Background

With ~ 7,000 employees and generating ~ \$2B in annual revenue, Logitech is a leading PC peripheral manufacturer offering webcams, keyboards, standard and “gaming” computer mice, PC speakers, mobile speakers, tablet accessories, home control devices / remotes, and more.

Logitech is also a longstanding player in the video conferencing market.

- The company’s webcams have been used for desktop video conferencing for many years.
- In 2008, Logitech acquired SightSpeed, a small video conferencing service provider, for \$30M.
- In 2009, Logitech announced Logitech Vid, a video calling service based on SightSpeed technology and available free to Logitech webcam owners. Citing that other more widely used calling services (e.g. Skype) were available, Logitech shut down the Vid service in mid-2013.
- In 2009, Logitech acquired Lifesize, a Texas-based video conferencing vendor founded in 2003. In 2016, Logitech spun off Lifesize. Today, Logitech owns 37.5% of the shares in Lifesize.

In 2011, Logitech formed the “Logitech for Business” division offering a variety of products and accessories targeting business / enterprise users. Products within the “for Business” portfolio include keyboard and mouse combination devices, wireless mice, desktop PC speakers, mobile speakerphones, tablet accessories, business headsets (wired, wireless, noise canceling microphones, etc.), presentation devices with laser pointers, and more. In addition, the company offers solution-specific devices and peripherals such as keyboards optimized for Cisco Jabber and webcams optimized for Microsoft Lync.

In early 2012, the Logitech for Business division released its first product in a category that WR calls the “Group Conferencing Add-On” market.

Author’s Note:

The “group conferencing add-on solutions” market includes products designed and intended to enhance the audio functionality of personal devices (e.g. notebook PCs, tablets, and smartphones) or meeting room PCs to support a group environment.

Group add-on solutions typically include both microphone(s) and speaker(s) optimized for group situations. In some situations, for example when a user’s notebook PC is hosting the session, the mics and speakers are used in place of the BYOD device’s integrated mics and speakers. In other situations, for example when the session is hosted on an in-room PC, the mics and speakers act as the only audio ins and outs for the host device.

Note that some group conferencing add-on solutions also include a video camera, and as a result provide both enhanced (group ready) audio and video functionality.

Today, Logitech's line of Group Conferencing Add-On products includes the following:

- **ConferenceCam BCC950** – released in 2012, the BCC950 includes a 1080p-capable webcam mounted on a 9-inch extender stem with a motorized pan, tilt, and digital zoom, an integrated speakerphone, and a remote control for a list price of US \$250.
- **ConferenceCam Connect** – released in January 2015, Connect is an updated version of the BCC950 with a more attractive, more portable form factor available for a list price of US \$500.
- **Logitech CC3000e** – released in January 2014, the CC3000e is a split-system, USB peripheral solution that includes a motorized 1080p PTZ camera, a speakerphone (mic / speaker combination) base unit with an LCD display and control panel, and a connection hub available for a list price of US \$1,000. WR evaluated the Logitech CC3000e in October 2015.
- **Logitech GROUP** – released in January 2016, GROUP is the successor to and very similar to the CC3000e, but offers improved audio and video performance. GROUP is available for a list price of US \$1,000 (list price of US \$1,250 including two expansion mics). WR evaluated [Logitech GROUP](#) in February 2016.



*The Logitech ConferenceCam Product Line
(from left to right – ConferenceCam BCC950, CC3000e, and GROUP)*

- **Logitech GROUP Kit** – in early March 2016, Logitech announced a new bundle offering called Logitech GROUP Kit (referred to as Kit throughout this document).

In Q2 2016, Logitech commissioned Wainhouse Research (WR) to provide a third-party assessment of the Logitech GROUP Kit. To facilitate this effort, Logitech provided WR with a demo Kit system.

This document contains the results of our hands-on testing of the Logitech GROUP Kit solution.

The Logitech GROUP Kit

Logitech GROUP Kit is a pre-specified package of products including several Logitech devices and some third-party products. A complete Logitech GROUP Kit deployment includes the following:

- An Intel NUC mini-PC with the appropriate specs (Core i5 processor with Intel VPro, 8 GB memory, etc.) running Windows 10.
- A software application called QuickLaunch SE from Illuminari Tech
- A Logitech GROUP system
- A Logitech Wireless Touch Keyboard K400 Plus
- The customer's choice of personal / desktop conferencing applications (e.g. Skype for Business, Blue Jeans, Jabber, Zoom, etc.)



Logitech structured the Kit solution to address the following two challenges:

- **The DIY Feel** – many Do-It-Yourself group conferencing deployments consist of personal conferencing software (e.g. Microsoft Skype for Business, Cisco Jabber, Zoom, etc.) running on a dedicated PC in a meeting room. While cost effective, the desktop conferencing software acting as the user interface for these solutions is optimized for personal use and not for use in a shared meeting space. This results in a compromised workflow and a distinctly DIY feel.

To address this issue, Logitech Kit includes a license to a software package from a company called Illuminari Tech. This application, called QuickLaunch SE, acts as a group user interface riding on top of desktop conferencing software applications. The majority of this study focuses on the benefits of the group-centric features and user interface provided by the Illuminari software.

- **Channel Partner Value Add** – many group conferencing add-on solutions, including the Logitech CC3000e and GROUP offerings, are easy enough for customers to install themselves, without the support of a video conferencing channel partner.

Logitech GROUP Kit, however, is sold via channel partners only. In addition, the channel partner can add value by customizing the software (e.g. add the customer's logo, install specific conferencing applications, etc.) and providing end-user training as required. The net is that the Logitech GROUP Kit concept gives the channel partner at least some skin in the game.

Installing / Configuring Kit

Core Software Installation

When received by the end-user customer, the Intel NUC within the Logitech GROUP Kit package will include the following software pre-loaded by a distributor and/or channel partner:

- Windows 10 operating system
- Illuminari QuickLaunch SE software application
- Intel Unite wireless presentation software

For this assessment, WR received a pre-release version of Kit that required us to install the QuickLaunch SE and Intel Unite software ourselves. This process took ~ 15 minutes to complete. Typically end-users won't have to go through this part of the process.

Physical Installation

The physical installation of Logitech GROUP Kit involves connecting the GROUP camera, base unit, and hub, and the Logitech keyboard to the Intel NUC. The entire physical installation required less than two minutes to complete and was covered in detail in our [Logitech GROUP evaluation](#).

Conferencing Application Installation

To complete the installation and configuration, the WR test team then loaded the following personal conferencing applications on the Intel NUC:

- Microsoft Skype for Business client (and the entire Microsoft Office 365 software package)
- Blue Jeans Network client
- Cisco WebEx client
- Google Chrome Internet browser (in preparation for Google Hangouts testing)

We then ran each conferencing client and entered our credentials. We recommend that organizations create and use dedicated room logins for all applications instead of expecting the user to enter his personal credentials.

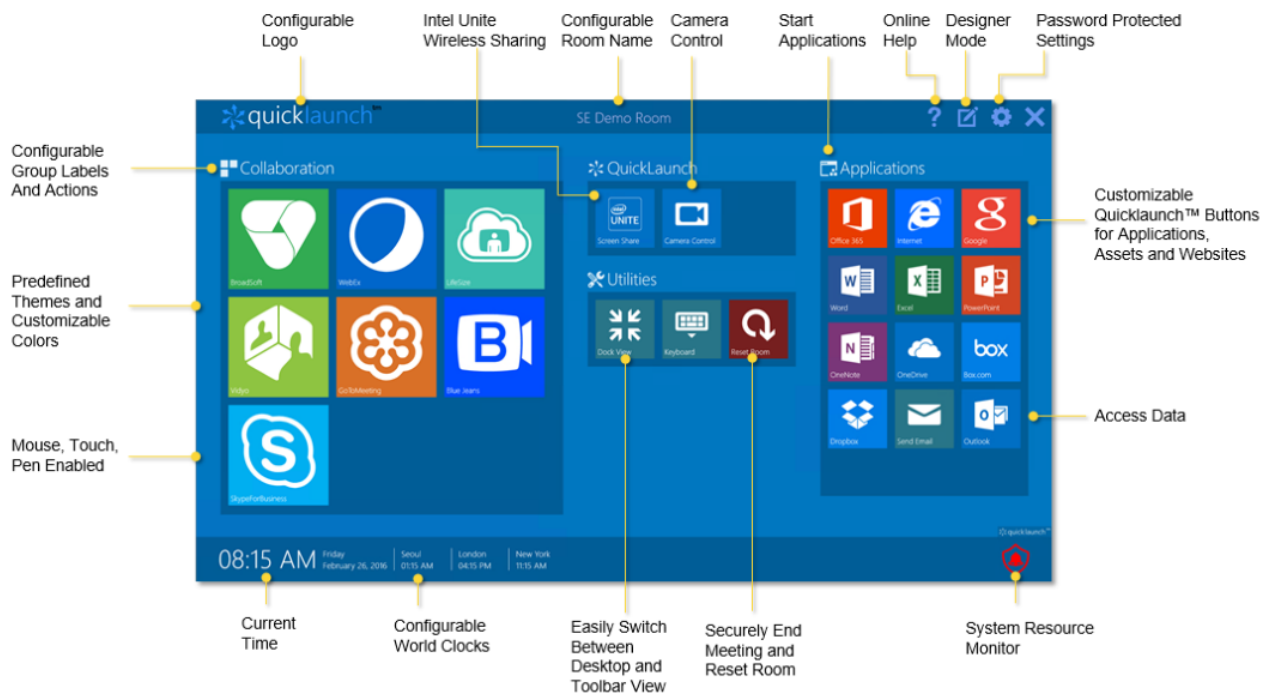
Finally, for each application we disabled the "Auto Launch at Startup" function to avoid having multiple conferencing apps running in the background simultaneously.

Illuminari QuickLaunch SE

The QuickLaunch SE software acts as the user interface for the Kit-based group conferencing solution. When powered up, QuickLaunch runs automatically and the QuickLaunch UI is automatically displayed, making the system feel more like a dedicated conferencing appliance than a standard PC.

The QuickLaunch User Interface

The screenshot below shows the elements within the QuickLaunch UI.



The QuickLaunch UI includes the following sections:

- The Collaboration Section intended to house icons for third-party collaboration apps
- The QuickLaunch Section which is pre-loaded with icons for Intel Unite and camera control
- The Utilities Section which is pre-loaded with icons to change views, access an on-screen keyboard, and Reset Room (read more below)
- The Applications Section intended to house icons for additional software applications (e.g. Microsoft Office applications, Internet browsers, Dropbox, etc.).

The user interface also provides some additional features / functions including:

- Access to various system settings (see the gear at the top right)
- The local date and time and the current time in several other locations (see bottom left).
- Access to design mode (more on this below)

QuickLaunch Design Mode

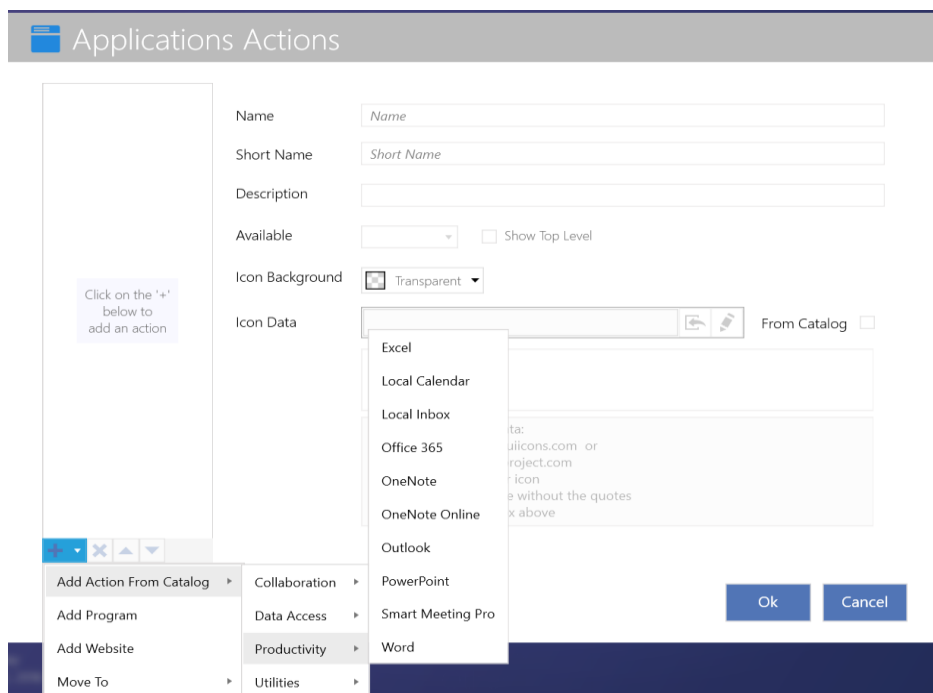
The next step in the installation process involved the customization of the QuickLaunch UI to provide one-click access to the installed conferencing applications. Note that the QuickLaunch configuration process is intended for admin / IT folks only. Generally speaking, the average end user should not need to change any QuickLaunch settings.

To configure QuickLaunch, the admin clicks on the "Design Mode" icon from the QuickLaunch screen. While not enabled by default, Design Mode can be password protected (recommended). When Design Mode is launched, the admin can take a tour of Design Mode features or enter Design Mode directly.



Within Design Mode, admins can customize the QuickLaunch UI by changing color schemes, adding applications and icons, changing section labels, inserting logos, defining application groups, displaying date / time for multiple locations, etc. Although the QuickLaunch UI is highly customizable, the basic layout (a large section on the left, two smaller sections in the middle, and a large section on the right) remains fixed.

The screenshot above shows QuickLaunch Design Mode including icons for the various conferencing applications (Skype for Business, Zoom, Google Hangouts, Pexip, GoToMeeting, WebEx, etc.) added by our test team. For convenience, QuickLaunch provides a library of commonly used icons.



The system allows the admin to define the behavior of each application (see screenshot below). For example, we configured the Skype for Business icon to automatically open Skype for Business, and the Google Hangouts icon to automatically launch Chrome and go to <http://hangouts.google.com>. This provided one-click access to each of our personal conferencing applications.

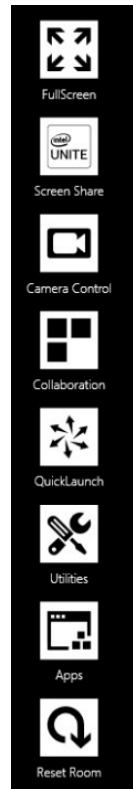
We then repeated the same process to create shortcuts for the applications (e.g. Dropbox, Microsoft Word, Outlook, Trello, etc.) in the “Applications” section. We also added a few other applications within the QuickLaunch and Utilities sections. Note that QuickLaunch automatically creates an icon for the Intel Unite software.

At this point our Kit-powered group conferencing system was ready for use.

Using QuickLaunch

The QuickLaunch UI makes it quick and easy for users to select their desired conferencing application. Once an icon is clicked, the system shifts to “Dock Mode,” which is essentially a standard Windows user interface with the QuickLaunch menu (see right) displayed on the right side of the screen. The system then runs the requested conferencing application.

We conducted numerous test calls using the QuickLaunch UI, the Logitech GROUP audio / video system, and the installed conferencing applications. For example, we clicked on the Skype for Business (SfB) icon, successfully conducted a SfB video call, ended the call, and then clicked on the “Full Screen” icon in the dock to return to the QuickLaunch UI. We repeated the same process with each of the installed conferencing applications.



Additional Power Features

Having completed the basic system configuration and a few video calls, we then tested some of the power features within the QuickLaunch system.

Room Reset Function

The Reset Room feature, available within the Utilities section, is designed to reset the system so it is ready for the next meeting or user. Once clicked, Room Reset does the following:

- Closes all open applications
- Clears all temporary files in all installed Internet browsers
- Clears the Windows cache
- Empties the recycle bin

This feature can be activated manually by the user or automatically every X minutes, but only if the system is inactive at that time.

The Room Reset feature worked quite well during our testing. However, note that this feature does not clear user credentials or chat history within applications.

Lock Down / Kiosk Mode

This mode blocks access to the underlying Windows operating system, giving system users only two basic options: launch and use pre-configured applications, or return to the QuickLaunch main screen.

WR tested kiosk mode and it worked as expected. That said, we would prefer the system to automatically return to the QuickLaunch main screen whenever an installed application is closed. As it stands today, the user must know to click on the Full Screen icon to get back to QuickLaunch.

While testing Kiosk mode, we found that if we minimized an application, we could no longer access the app while in Kiosk mode. This is especially problematic for applications that run in the background like Skype for Business. To resolve this issue, the user must reboot the system or disable Kiosk mode (likely password protected). Even the Room Reset function does not resolve this issue.

System Reboot Function

Within the QuickLaunch Settings menu, admins can define a time each day for the system to automatically reboot. Although the Room Reset function clears much of the environment, a full reboot is the best way to ensure a fresh system at the start of play each day. WR tested this feature and it worked as expected.

Configuration Templates

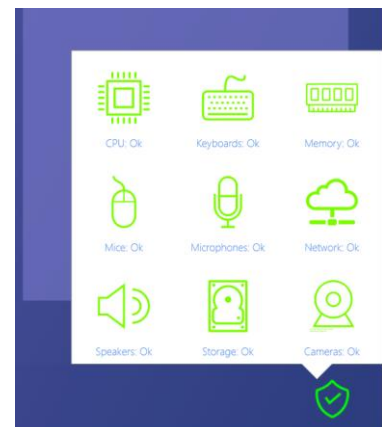
While not heavily promoted within the UI, our test team stumbled across a power feature that we believe will be of great value to enterprise customers. The system allows admins to save the current configuration to a file, and import that configuration onto other systems. Although we'd prefer the ability to push configurations over the network, this feature will save time and ensure a consistent experience across all Kit-enabled meeting rooms. Note, however, that this function does NOT automatically load the underlying software applications (e.g. Skype for Business, WebEx, Zoom, Blue Jeans, etc.) on the new system.

System Resource Monitor

The QuickLaunch UI includes an icon at the bottom right of the screen (see green shield with checkmark in screenshot at right) providing access to the System Resource Monitor which is powered by Intel VPro.

When the system is functioning normally, the icon will be green. When there is a problem, the icon will turn red. From the Settings Menu, Administrative users can set how often the System Resource Monitor runs a diagnostic check. Admins can also add and remove the components tested by the System Resource Monitor.

Clicking on the System Resource Monitor icon provides the user with rudimentary status information (see screenshot at right) about the system devices including the mouse, speakers, microphone(s), camera, etc. The information screen also provides status information about the host PC (Intel NUC).



WR tested this function by first disconnecting the GROUP's PTZ camera, and then the base unit, and finally the network cable. In each case, the System Resource Monitor properly detected the issue.

Important Note

System Resource Monitor does not consider application conflicts. For example, if two conferencing applications (e.g. Blue Jeans Network and Zoom) are running simultaneously and competing for the system camera, the icon will not turn red even though one application will not have video. This problem can be fixed by clicking the Room Reset function or via a manual or scheduled system reboot.

Intel Unite Application

As a part of this assessment, we also installed and tested the Intel Unite wireless presentation software, and specifically its integration with QuickLaunch.

To use Unite, the user needs to launch the Unite server application on the NUC by clicking on the Unite icon in the QuickLaunch section of the user interface.¹

To share content, the user must load the Intel Unite software client on his Windows or Mac PC or notebook. The user then enters the IP address of the NUC running the Unite server application and the 6-digit pin code displayed on the screen. A few seconds later, the user's desktop is displayed on the main display.

Overall, Unite worked as expected and allowed our test users to share content from both Windows and Mac notebooks on the display connected to the NUC.

¹ This assumes that the system administrator previously installed and configured the Intel Unite server application on the Intel NUC.

Analysis and Opinions

There's quite a bit to like about the Logitech GROUP Kit bundle.

- As described within our previously released evaluation report, we liked the Logitech GROUP solution as it provides a solid audio and video experience at an exceptionally strong price point.
- In addition, the Intel NUC mini-PC is extremely well suited to act as the host PC in a meeting room environment running conferencing applications.
- We especially appreciate the added enterprise management and security functions provided by the Intel VPro engine.
- And while not perfect, the inclusion of the Intel Unite wireless presentation system adds even more value to the Kit package.

The majority of this assessment focuses on the group-ready user interface provided by the Illuminari QuickLaunch application included within the Logitech Kit offering. Logitech included QuickLaunch in this bundle to resolve some of the issues often found in DIY group conferencing deployments. As shown in the table below, QuickLaunch does address many of these challenges.

DIY Challenge	Solved by Illuminari QuickLaunch SE?
Provide an "appliance" like feel (hide the OS)	Yes
Support customization of the look / feel	Yes
Block users' ability to load other applications	Yes
Provide big text / icons suitable for large displays	Yes
Offer quick launch of scheduled conferences	No
Offer quick launch of ad-hoc calls	No
Make it quick and easy to place a phone call	No
Close apps after use to avoid PC resource conflicts	Yes
Flush data after use for security reasons	Partially – does not clear user credentials or chat history

The net of the above is that the QuickLaunch application provides a customizable yet locked-down, group-friendly user interface for launching conferencing applications. However, it does not simplify the act of placing scheduled ² or ad-hoc conference calls.

Overall, we appreciate the flexibility and simplicity of the QuickLaunch UI. And we absolutely appreciate the low cost and performance of the Logitech GROUP Kit bundle. However, the UI's lack of support for joining calls with a single click is a glaring omission.

² Illuminari also offers a version of QuickLaunch that scrapes an Exchange / Office 365 or Google Calendar, finds scheduled meetings, and allows users to join those scheduled meetings with a single click. The version of QuickLaunch included in the Logitech GROUP Kit bundle, however, does not support this capability. Upgrades are available from Illuminari.

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About Wainhouse Research



Wainhouse Research, www.wainhouse.com, is an independent analyst firm that focuses on critical issues in the Unified Communications and Collaboration (UC&C). The company conducts multi-client and custom research studies, consults with end users on key implementation issues, publishes white papers and market statistics, and delivers public and private seminars as well as speaker presentations at industry group meetings.

About Logitech

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Logitech designs products that have an everyday place in people's lives, connecting them to the digital experiences they care about. Over 30 years ago Logitech started connecting people through computers, and now it's designing products that bring people together through music, gaming,

video and computing. Founded in 1981, Logitech International is a Swiss public company listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange (LOGN) and on the Nasdaq Global Select Market (LOGI). Find Logitech at www.logitech.com, the [company blog](#) or [@Logitech](#).

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