Web Conferencing

What is Web Conferencing?

Web conferencing provides live audio/video communication between two or more locations using a computer, via the Internet. Typical use cases are to conduct meetings, training, or presentations when dedicated video conferencing is not available or possible.

In a web conference, it is common for each participant to sit at their own computer and connect to the web conference via the Internet and a phone or VOIP. VOIP uses the Internet for real time audio communication and eliminates the need for a telephone.

Where can I have a Web Conference?

While most web conferencing is from your personal laptop at your desk, there are a few conference rooms that have new equipment that allows groups to conduct meetings using web conferencing. This is useful when remote participants do not have access to a traditional video conference room, you have a small group at your location, or have a large number of remote participants. Utilizing a special device, we can connect the room’s Video Conferencing camera to a built in computer allowing for pan, tilt, and zoom control so your video is no longer anchored to a laptop camera.

These rooms utilize built-in phone systems for their audio connection to allow for maximum room microphone coverage and less echo, a common issue with Web Conferencing from a laptop.

We advise any participant using Web Conferencing from their laptop to wear a headset. USB headsets with an integrated microphone and headphones are best, but even headphones-only devices can help eliminate echo and excess noise for all participants. Many of our ETS team members use the Logitech Clear Chat USB headset. This headset is affordable, Mac and PC compatible, and utilizes an inline mute switch for quick audio control.
Supported Web Conferencing Platforms:

Cisco Webex is the supported web conferencing platform of UCSF. You can find resources for Webex on the UCSF IT Web Pages HERE [1].

UCSF is also testing a new platform called Zoom. While not officially supported by ITFS as of now, ETS technicians can help with basic Zoom troubleshooting and how to integrate with room AV.

Useful USB Devices for Web Conferencing:

Audio:

Jabra 410, 510, and 810:
These devices are all USB based and allow for better microphone pickup with small groups and help eliminate echo. The 410 is the smallest and ideal for no more than 8 people. The 810 is the biggest and can handle 15 people seated around the microphone.

Video:

Logitech C920 and the Logitech Conference Cam Connect:
Both devices will increase the field of view compared to a laptop web camera. They allow you to use a video angle that does not look directly at one person. The C920 is a fixed angle of view, where the Conference Camera has some minor pan, tilt and zoom camera control. They both have an integrated microphone but only the Conference Cam has a speaker.

Wired Internet Connection:

We recommend, when possible, to be on a wired internet connection when using web conferencing. The stable internet speed will help with overall quality. We advise you to avoid slow internet cafes and public wifi areas not on campus, as they are not secure, usually slower, and can have negative effects for all attendees in the web conference.

Common Digital Communication Definitions:

Terminology is one of the biggest hurdles in the ever changing word of Digital Conferencing. Using the correct terms can help support and scheduling better understand what you are trying to do.

**Video Conferencing** - provides real-time two-way audio/video communication between two or more locations. Video Conferencing requires specialized equipment on both ends for a successful connection. See Video Conferencing [2] for more details.

**Web Conferencing** - provides live audio/video communication between two or more locations.
to conduct meetings, training, or presentations via the Internet. In a web conference, it is common for each participant to sit at their own computer and connect to the web conference via the Internet and a phone or VOIP (which uses the Internet for real time audio communication and eliminates the need for a telephone).

**Webinar** - a specific type of web conference that is typically one-way (speaker to the remote audience with limited remote audience interaction). There can also be a live audience in the room with the presenter of the webinar. Polling participation may be integrated into webinars to allow for some remote audience participation. (Currently there is no supported solution for this at UCSF but [Content Capture](http://edtech.ucsf.edu/video-services/class-capture) has been used to accomplish this in part.)

**Webcast** - is essentially "broadcasting" over the internet or streaming. In webcasting, an audio and/or visual content source is distributed simultaneously to multiple viewers/listeners. This content is usually distributed live and is usually non-interactive. See [Content Capture](http://edtech.ucsf.edu/video-services/class-capture) for more details.

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Links:
[1] https://it.ucsf.edu/services/web-conferencing-webex
[3] [http://edtech.ucsf.edu/video-services/class-capture](http://edtech.ucsf.edu/video-services/class-capture)