

Videoconferencing Tips

Meeting Preparation

- Arrive well before your videoconference starts to ensure everything is setup, ready to go, and you understand how to use the system.
- Turn off or mute all devices which could cause unwanted noise distractions
- Minimize distracting glare and uneven lighting by pulling the shades on windows and doors and covering glass-framed wall hangings. You should minimize combining outside light with indoor fluorescent lighting to prevent problems with the videoconference camera and the quality of your image.
- Make sure the room has adequate lighting, typically what would be used for standard office work. If it's too dark, the other sites won't be able to see you clearly.
- Consider setting up a back channel for communication to the other site(s) such as with Instant Message client or email. This allows for communication without interrupting the discussion.
- Wear neutral, muted, or pastel solid colors. Avoid plaids, stripes, polka dots, very bright colors, and the colors white or red—they can cause distracting effects on screen.
- Keep all doors closed and/or ensure your location is free of distractions and background noise.
- If you are using Jabber ensure you have completed the quick setup and confirmed your microphone, speakers and camera are working properly.
- If you are participating in a multi-point connection consider dialing in 15 minutes early to allow you time to work out any last minute video or audio issues.

Communicate Effectively

- If participating in a multi-point connection state your name upon connection. This also serves as a brief audio check for you.
- Speak in a normal voice. There is no need to shout.
- Talk towards the microphone. Do not turn your head from side to side while talking or your voice will fade in and out at the remote site.
- After completing your initial audio check, try not to ask "can you hear me?" or anything like that. Assume that everything is working fine. You will be interrupted if something is wrong.
- When possible, keep your microphone muted when you won't be speaking for several minutes or more. Un-muted microphones can be the single most important problem communicating during a videoconference meeting.
- Be natural, but limit excess movement to avoid looking jerky on screen. If you walk around while speaking, remain in a small area and walk slowly.

Etiquette

- When videoconferencing with many sites, start your comment by saying your name and location (for example, "This is Nils at Baylor.") Doing so helps the video equipment switch to your site and also helps other sites identify who is speaking before the video monitor catches up. You may also consider using nameplates that are readable by the far end site(s).
- When your microphone is on, be careful with side conversations and do not rustle papers or make tapping sounds near the microphone. Any sounds you make will be heard by the other sites and can be distracting.
- Direct your questions to a specific site, and preferably a specific individual. Expect a few extra seconds of delay in getting an answer because of the technology and distance involved (at minimum, un-muting the microphone).
- Eliminate echo. This should be accomplished through your initial test with a technician. If others are complaining of echo, eliminate audio from reaching your microphone by inserting a pair of headphones or earbuds into your headphone jack. If this is not possible, keep your microphone muted until you have to speak, and then quickly mute it when you are finished.
- If possible position your camera close to your monitor or video display. Look directly at the camera as often as possible. This will give the remote site the impression that you are looking directly at them.