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**Dynamic Web Conferencing and Presentation Skills
For Effective Meetings, Trainings, and Learning Sessions
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Web conferencing increasingly is becoming part of our communication toolbox through a variety of free and paid services as we use it to conduct meetings and provide workplace leaning and performance opportunities with colleagues near and far. While not completely replacing our face-to-face workplace encounters, the use of web conferencing tools is proving effective in overcoming many of the constraints we face in terms of travel costs, time, and producing positive, long-term results. What is often lacking, however, is an understanding of the presentation skills which take full advantage of the possibilities offered through web-conferencing.

The following resource list is intended help those new to web-conferencing familiarize themselves with its possibilities while calling attention to basic and innovative elements of contemporary presentation styles.

For help in exploring web-conferencing and presentation skills which meet your organization's needs, please contact [Paul Signorelli & Associates](mailto:paul@paulsignorelli.com) at paul@paulsignorelli.com.

A Sample of Web-Conferencing Resources

Martin, Michele. *9 Lessons I Learned from Running My First Webinar*.

Accessed December 11, 2009 at

<http://michelemartin.typepad.com/thebambooprojectblog/2008/01/what-i-learned.html>

Michele Martin, whose popular [The Bamboo Project blog](#) lucidly explores technology and learning strategies, provides a primer for those completely unfamiliar with the mechanics of conducting effective online presentations. Among her nine tips are: expect to spend much more time preparing an online presentation than is required for face-to-face work; write a script; have back-up support during the live, online event; and don't hesitate to deviate from the script.

Phone:
415.681.5224

E-mail:
paul@paulsignorelli.com

Website:
www.paulsignorelli.com

Publicare Marketing Communications. (2009). Unique Around the World: Vendor-Independent Review of Web Conferencing Solutions. Accessed December 1, 2009 at http://www.webconferencing-test.com/en/webconference_home.html.

Publicare, a German-based marketing and communications company created in 1994, offers a detailed “vendor-independent review of web conferencing solutions” with links to 25 web-conferencing providers and reviews of what each offers. While some of the links are to German-language versions of the sites, those looking for English-language versions can begin with Publicare’s list and easily use online search engines to locate the non-German sites. What is very helpful about the site is that it includes a comparative review of the top five providers it lists and provides extensive information about the number and scope of features offered, the effort required to set up the software, system requirements, and brief conclusions about each of those five providers’ products. Links to individual reviews for the remaining 20 providers are clearly marked to the right of each provider’s name, along with an overall comparative ranking score for each company.

WebEx. (2009). How Do I...? Accessed November 18, 2009 at http://support.webex.com/support/howdoi.html#anc_hdi60.

WebEx is notable not only for being one of the most respected and popular providers of web-conferencing tools available, but for its extensive online tutorials which are available free of charge, and the tutorials serve not only to show how WebEx works but also to introduce viewers to the capabilities of much of what is great about web conferencing today. The “Meeting Center” section of the WebEx site provides basic information including how to set up and start meetings, interacting within and controlling online meetings, and using audio capabilities. The “Training Center” section of the site includes tips on scheduling, setting up, and starting online sessions as well as guidance on facilitating, presenting, and communicating. The “Event Center” section includes an entire subsection on interacting during web-conferencing events, and other links from the WebEx “How Do I...?” page explore other elements of what WebEx offers its users.

Wikipedia. (2009). Web Conferencing. Accessed December 18, 2009 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_conferencing

This brief Wikipedia article defines web conferencing, describes some of its standard features, and provides links to other articles introducing a variety of software and service providers including Adobe Acrobat Connect, Dimdim, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Office Live Meeting, ReadyTalk, and WebEx.

Web-Conferencing Providers with Demonstration Videos or Introductory Pages

Adobe Acrobat Connect. (2009). High Impact Web Conferencing and Elearning with Adobe Acrobat ConnectPro. Accessed December 1, 2009 at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/demo/>

Adobe connect provides a brief introductory video which introduces viewers to what web-conferencing offers in general and how Adobe's product leads users to creative presentation styles.

Dimdim. (2009). Video Tour. Accessed December 1, 2009 at <https://estore.dimdim.com/user/affiliateSubscription?PID=2265358>

Dimdim's two-minute online introduction is far more than a sales pitch. By including a recording of Dimdim's chief marketing officer addressing viewers while demonstrating how the product works, he provides an effective example of online presentation techniques. Among the web-conferencing tools explored are the desktop- and document-sharing functions and white board feature used by presenters and web-conference participants; elements allowing presenters to engage in live online browsing and the ability to pull YouTube videos and poll results drawn from other services into Dimdim sessions; live chat functions and recording capabilities so that sessions can be archived for later use; and widgets which are automatically created to allow for sharing of sessions via other social networking tools.

GoToMeeting. (2009). GoToMeeting: Online Meetings Made Easy. Accessed December 1, 2009 at https://www1.gotomeeting.com/en_US/pre/quickTour.tmpl

The GoToMeeting introductory video provides another overview of what the product and other web-conferencing services offer while using a series of images which, in quick succession, show examples of what users see in web-conferencing settings.

Microsoft Office. (2009). Microsoft Office Live Meeting. Accessed December 1, 2009 at <http://office.microsoft.com/home/video.aspx?assetid=ES102403191033&width=884&height=540&startindex=0&CTT=11&Origin=HA102403231033>

Microsoft Office's introduction to its Live Meeting software follows a user through the process of setting up a web-conferenced meeting, uploading PowerPoint slides into the web-conference, sharing documents with others attending the session, and using a live video feed so attendees can see him. The presentation also shows how others join the meeting, test their own equipment before joining the conference, and modify what they see on their own monitors.

Palbee. (2009). Palbee Demonstration Video. Accessed December 1, 2009 at <http://www.palbee.com/index.aspx>

Downloading the Palbee video (to gain sound which might otherwise not be provided while the demonstration is viewed) provides a playful example of how simple graphics can enhance a web-conference presentation. Although the video combines live action with prepared cut-outs, it's easy to see how creating a slide presentation with equally creative images could liven up any meeting or learning opportunity in an online environment.

TalkShoe. (2009). TalkShoe: Your Community Is Calling. Accessed December 1, 2009 at <http://www.talkshoe.com/se/about/TSAbout.html>

TalkShoe, the only resource described here which does not include video capabilities, is effectively used for live online interactive discussions, conversations, podcasts, and audioblogs. The TalkShoe website provides an overview of its services, which include the audio capabilities, a live (typed) chat function so participants can send written messages back and forth while conversations are underway, and a recording function so discussions can be archived for later use.

Vyew. (2009). Vyew "overview." Accessed December 1, 2009 at <http://vyew.com/site/product/vyew-in-action/uses/#meet-present>

The Vyew demonstration site provides yet another approach to explaining web-conferencing: it provides a written description of the service against a background visual showing what users see during a web-conference session.

Presentations and Facilitation Online

Elbaum, B., McIntyre, C., & Smith, A. (2002) Essential Elements: Prepare, Design, and Teach Your Online Course. Madison: Atwood Publishing.

Bonnie Elbaum, Cynthia McIntyre, and Alese Smith, all affiliated with [the Concord Consortium](#) in Massachusetts at the time their book was published, offer what they consider to be the seventeen essential steps of preparing online learning sessions which will keep instructors and learners equally engaged. The book opens with a section on preparing an online course and includes tips on how to build a course outline, set clear deadlines to encourage effective learning, and planning for quality. The middle section of the book moves into elements of designing a course which helps students maintain their focus, develop effective collaborations which foster learning, and literally stay on course. The concluding section on how to teach online is followed by an extensive checklist which summarizes the contents of the entire book for anyone involved in developing and delivering online learning opportunities.

Hofmann, J. (2004). *The Synchronous Trainer's Survival Guide: Facilitating Successful Live and Online Courses, Meetings, and Events*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

Jennifer Hofmann, an e-learning consultant and president of [InSync Training, LLC](#), combines summaries, tips, and examples to familiarize trainers and others with the challenges of creating and conducting successful online sessions. The introductory chapter to the book includes a valuable and detailed table of features commonly found in live online learning environments; the table is accompanied with illustrations to help readers understand how each feature works. The second chapter, "Facilitating in the Synchronous Classroom," is a wonderful primer which outlines facilitators' roles in directing learning while helping participants communicate and collaborate online; reminds presenters and facilitators that flexibility and an ability to work well in stressful situations are key components to success in online presentations; and discusses key resources—including the use of a producer or assistant—for those engaged in online presentations. The remainder of the book provides suggestions for facilitating effective communication, managing the online learning environment and technology, and conducting online meetings and other live events. Among the appendices are a "Synchronous Software Features Checklist," "Synchronous Classroom Management Checklists," additional "Recommended Resources for Synchronous and Blended e-Learning," and a glossary of terms for those unfamiliar with online learning.

Kuhlmann, T. (2007). *The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Rapid E-Learning Pro*. Retrieved February 26, 2009 at <http://www.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/free-ebook/>

With a strong focus on meeting learners' needs, [Tom Kuhlmann](#) uses his more than fifteen years of experience in the training industry to explore the benefits of using rapid e-learning tools. He briefly reviews topics including e-learning vs. e-information; designing effective quizzes which contribute to the learning process; providing just enough information to inspire learners while inspiring them to "locate additional resources when they need them" (p. 27); and creating effective performance-based courses. In the context of describing rapid e-learning authoring tools provided by the company for which he works, he offers guidelines to anyone interested in producing their own e-learning modules: use a tool which "leverages" PowerPoint (p. 34); use a quiz tool; add interactions; obtain more than one product; and value "quality ease of use" (p. 35). Sections on audio, video, and graphics complete this introduction to rapid e-learning techniques and leave readers with the foundations for further exploration in the field of e-learning.

Palloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace: Effective Strategies for the Online Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt, building from work which began while they were Ph.D. students in 1993, offer online presenters an educators' view of how to create and sustain effective online learning opportunities which lead to communities of learning. Their

focus is on “teaching and learning” rather than on technology (p. xvii); the result is rewarding and inspirational. The first of the two sections of the book concentrates on the philosophy and mechanics of developing communities of learning online; the second section explores hands-on methods for producing those communities and includes explicit guidance on how to inspire collaboration by providing learners with clear guidelines as well as effective facilitation and feedback (pp. 111-125). A chapter on transformative learning (pp. 129-143) makes a strong case for how effective online learning can be by providing learners with time for engagement and reflection, and also reminds readers that effective online learning is a learner-centered process (p. 135). Sample course outlines, syllabi, lists of learning objectives, and online course guidelines make this an indispensable tool for anyone involved in online presentations and online learning.

For more information, please contact Paul Signorelli & Associates at paul@paulsignorelli.com (latest update completed January 23, 2010)

