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Best Practices for a Successful Conference

A lot more goes into a successful video conference than the pressing of a few buttons. One bad link in the chain and your whole meeting can come crashing down! Check out our tips below on how to avoid an online meeting disaster and make sure your video conference is a success!

What do I need?

1) **A headset.** You might think they look a little strange, but besides an internet connection, there is no more important factor in any conference than audio quality. When you start speaking, the last thing you want to hear is yourself talking back at you. If you can't get your hands on a headset, at least use a pair of headphones to eliminate that nasty echo. Your fellow participants will thank you.

2) **A webcam.** It isn't much of a video call if your fellow participants can't see you! Quality webcams are inexpensive and can be purchased at almost any electronics store or online. Most laptops come with them. Webcams almost always have a microphone embedded.

3) **A strong Internet connection**. Your network connection is everything. Wireless channels can get clogged up, bringing your connection to a crawl, so wired connections are preferred. Recommended speeds for a video call are 1.25mbps upload, 1.5mbps download.

4) **A good computer.** This one is pretty obvious. Everything you see in a video conference is put together through a process called video rendering which takes a lot of processing power. While you don't need the absolute latest and greatest hardware, in the era of HD video your old laptop from 2005 just won't cut it! Minimum computer requirements are a 2Ghz dual core processor and 4Gb of RAM.

What do I do?

1) **Find a quiet place.** Remember that microphones can pick up an awful lot! That corner seat at the coffee shop might seem quiet to you, but everyone else will hear every chair squeak and cup clink.

2) **Mute your microphone when you're not speaking.** If you're engaged in the conversation, you'll want to keep that microphone on so you can speak comfortably, but if you're not speaking for extended periods, eliminate the chance of audio echo by remembering to mute!

3) **No windows!** It might be a beautiful day outside, but it's better to tell that to the participants instead of showing them. Sitting in front of a window sends your camera's backlight compensation into overdrive as it battles the sun to capture an image. The sun always wins - you'll end up looking like a shadow. It's fine if you face the window, but don't point your camera there!

4) **Lights… Camera…** As we just talked about, lighting is a big deal in any video call. Don't hide yourself in the shadows or your camera won't pick you up! If it's a bit overcast outside, or nighttime, turn the lights in the room on—just make sure that the light source is above or behind the camera!

5) **Tidy up!** Optional, but remember you are on video! Your participants likely want to see you, not your dirty laundry.

6) **Test first!** Before you start the meeting, go into the settings menu and make sure you test out your microphone and can see yourself on the video tab!

If you're uncomfortable with hosting or participanting in a video call, get in touch with UIT by emailing ithelp@yorku.ca so we can help you out!

For more information including User Reference Guides and Recommended Hardware, visit us online at yorku.zoom.us