

## Chapter 17

### Best Practices for Web Conferencing With Adobe Connect Pro

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In my role as an Electronics Specialist at the University of Colorado Denver, I'm often asked to provide technical assistance for Adobe Connect Pro. Adobe Connect Pro is web conferencing software that enables its users to share documents, files, chat, and broadcast live audio and video. People use Adobe Connect Pro for a variety of reasons including teaching a course, demonstrating a particular task, collaborating on documents, software training, and event distribution. However, these are just a few examples of the ways people use Adobe Connect Pro—the possibilities are really endless. In the following chapter, I will discuss some tips on how to use Adobe Connect Pro—and really web conferencing in general.

#### Planning

For a successful Adobe Connect Pro web conference, preparation is imperative. The first thing you need to do is to determine the purpose of your web conference and exactly what content or materials you would like to share with your audience. For instance, you can share:

- PowerPoint presentations
- Screen share to display documents, applications, files or websites
- Audio or video

Establishing the purpose for your web conference will help you plan accordingly. If you decide to share PowerPoint presentations or documents, then you should gather all necessary files prior to your web conference. You should also run an Adobe Connect Pro connection test on your computer to ensure that your computer and network connections are equipped to provide the best possible Connect meeting experience. A connection test can be conducted at the Adobe website:  
[https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/common/help/en/support/meeting\\_test.htm](https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm).

If you plan to share audio or video from a webcam or a microphone during your web conference, you should set it up and test it before your web conference. Be aware that setting up a webcam with a microphone, or another video or audio source, may require the installation of separate software, and therefore, take additional time to setup. This is something you will want to address prior to the start date and time of your web conference.

I also strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the functions of Adobe Connect Pro prior to your meeting, or even better, conduct a presentation rehearsal. Gather all necessary equipment and files and test all of the functions of Adobe Connect Pro that you plan to use, such as your designated web link used to enter the meeting, audio, video, screen share, recording, etc. And for the actual web conference, I highly recommend that you have a separate laptop that will not be used for presenting but simply as a way for you to login as a web conference participant to see exactly what your participants are viewing. I also highly recommend using a wired

Internet connection, as opposed to wireless, whenever possible to ensure a more stable connection.

Also, be sure to distribute any information that your web conference participants may need (e.g., the web conference meeting URL and any audio conferencing dial in number, if applicable) before the web conference begins. This will hopefully ensure that your participants are able to successfully connect to your web conference and minimize any technical issues that may cause a delay in starting the web conference. Instruct your participants to connect to the web conference prior to the actual start time so that there is adequate time to address any technical or connection issues.

### **PowerPoint Preparation**

If you plan to share a PowerPoint presentation as a designated meeting host or presenter, when you login you will be prompted to install the Adobe Connect add-in. Depending on the speed of your computer, this should only take a minute or two. If you run the previously mentioned Adobe Connect Pro connection test on your computer, it will ensure that you have the necessary add-in installed.

When creating a PowerPoint presentation for Adobe Connect Pro, be conscientious of the font sizes you select to ensure that your web participants will be able to read your slides. The same principle applies for using intricate pictures, graphics and non-standard fonts. Since Adobe Connect Pro uses its own reader to view the presentation, in order to make sure all participants can view the content, it is best to use simple fonts, graphics, and animations. This is another instance when rehearsing your presentation and even logging in on a separate computer, as a participant, will be beneficial so that you can see your presentation just as your viewers will.

### **Screen share**

Adobe Connect Pro enables you to share your computer screen with your viewers. In other words, screen sharing enables your audience to view what you have on your computer screen. You can share documents or even a PowerPoint by either doing a screen share or by uploading the documents you want your users to see directly to Adobe Connect Pro. But according to the Adobe Connect Pro website, (<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/faq/>): “When presenting or collaborating, it is a best practice to upload documents to the meeting rather than use screen share. Advantages include easy organization and preparation for presenters, a better and higher fidelity viewing experience for participants, lower bandwidth requirements, and improved collaboration and annotation with the whiteboard.”

However, often you may find yourself making last minute changes that do not enable you the time to upload your files to Adobe Connect Pro or a question might come up during the web conference in which you need to share your screen (i.e., do a screen share) to demonstrate something. More often than not you should not have any problems with doing an impromptu screen share. However, if you know in advance that you need to do a screen share and use a specific piece of software, then you should strive to open any applications you will use prior to the beginning of your presentation to avoid any delay waiting for them to open.

If you choose to utilize the screen share option, it is recommended that you use the screen resolution of 1024x768 to ensure that your participants can see your screen without demanding too much computer network bandwidth.

As a meeting host, you can also optimize the room bandwidth based on the type of network you are connected to, such as DSL or LAN. Your web conference

participants also have the option of selecting a connection speed based on the type of network they are connected on, such as DSL or LAN. These selections should help optimize the quality of the display for participants while balancing the network bandwidth requirements.

### **Audio**

Adobe Connect Pro enables you to share audio with your participants. To add audio to your web conference there are a few options:

- Use a USB microphone, headset, or webcam with a microphone
- Use a telephone and audio bridge (not available on all systems)

If you choose to connect a webcam or microphone to your computer, the Adobe Connect software provides an audio setup wizard. Be sure to run this setup wizard and test prior to your web conference to make sure that your microphone is working correctly.

Although Adobe Connect Pro enables multiple hosts and presenters to add microphones, I recommend limiting the number of open microphones at one time to minimize the possible confusion caused by multiple individuals trying to talk all at once. Using a meeting moderator or agenda may also help organize the order of a web conference and help avoid these issues.

There is more than one Adobe Connect Pro server at our university. One of them has an audio bridge—which provides users with ability to dial in with a phone to get the audio—and one of them does not. There are benefits to using the integrated audio conferencing service in Adobe Connect Pro. For example, you can easily mute individuals, or all, audio connections if necessary. This can become helpful if a participant mistakenly puts his or her audio conference line on hold and hold music begins broadcasting to your entire meeting. If you are using an audio bridge in Adobe Connect Pro, be sure to instruct your audio conference participants not to put their phone line on hold.

### **Video**

To broadcast video for your meeting, the setup process is similar to setting up a microphone. You can choose to use an external USB webcam connected to your computer or a built-in webcam (if your computer is already equipped with one). There are also video to USB adapters that you can use to connect various cameras to your computer, as long as you have the correct software drivers installed. Once you decide on a camera to use, simply select your camera and preview it to ensure that it is working correctly. Be aware that broadcasting video for your meeting can increase the necessary bandwidth required by your meeting participants.

### **Running a Web conference**

As previously stated, I strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the functions of Adobe Connect Pro prior to your meeting. Also distinguish the differences between meeting user roles, such as host, presenter, and participant, so that you can appropriately assign these roles based on the desired level of function permissions. Setting up an additional laptop to view the meeting as a participant is also strongly recommended.

If applicable, allow time during your meeting for a question and answer period. If possible, assign a moderator, or someone to handle the Q&A and chat pods during the meeting, so that they do not distract you from the presentation.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

Using Adobe Connect Pro can be beneficial because it enables individuals regardless of location to participate in a meeting, receive training, or view a presentation. All they need is a web browser and the Adobe Flash Player, which are typically already installed on most computers. Participants just click on a URL to be instantly connected to a meeting. If you work at the University of Colorado Denver and would like to learn more about using Adobe Connect Pro please contact either Educational Support Services or CU Online. However, if you work elsewhere, be sure to check out what web conferencing software your institution has available. Many of the best practices addressed in this chapter can help you deliver worry free web conferences regardless of the application used.

### **Additional Resources**

Best Practices for Adobe Connect Pro web conferences:

[https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/\\_a295153/connectbestpractices/](https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/_a295153/connectbestpractices/)

Web conference Roles and User Interface Overview

[https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/\\_a227210/roles](https://admin.adobe.acrobat.com/_a227210/roles)

For Participants: Participating in Your First Connect Pro Meeting (PDF):

<http://seminars.adobe.acrobat.com/vqs-participatemeeting/>

For Hosts or Presenters: Sharing Content During a Meeting:

[http://help.adobe.com/en\\_US/AcrobatConnectPro/7.5/Using/WS0A9F9AB5-C032-457a-9350-16CBF56C4489.html](http://help.adobe.com/en_US/AcrobatConnectPro/7.5/Using/WS0A9F9AB5-C032-457a-9350-16CBF56C4489.html)

### **Bio**

Joizianne Mestas is an Electronics Specialist in the Educational Support Services department at the University of Colorado Denver. She provides technical support to faculty, staff and students for distant learning courses delivered through videoconferencing. She also provides assistance with classroom equipment, computer support and web conferencing assistance using Adobe Connect Pro. She has a MA in Information and Learning Technologies with an emphasis on Adult Learning from the University of Colorado Denver, as well as a BA in Technical Communications from the Metropolitan State College of Denver.