Tips for Presenting Virtually

Sound: Acoustics

If you can be in a carpeted room, or a room with something on the floor like an area rug to help absorb some of the natural echo that happens in a room with hardwood or cement flooring. A quick tip for a cheat on this is to just spread around a bunch of clothing items (ie. coats, sweaters, blankets) on the floor to absorb a lot of the acoustic echo that bounces off harder floors.

Sound: Microphone

If you have a good microphone on your laptop or computer, then the sound quality should be just fine. If you are concerned about the sound quality you currently have, then picking up a microphone at Staples or any computer store that you can plug in to your computer and have just outside of the video frame is a great solution. Another great solution is a headset or ear buds with a built-in microphone.

Video: Lighting

The most important rule is that the lighting should be coming from in front of you or off to the side of you, not behind you. Sitting in front of a window or a lamp that can light your face well from the front is the best way to make the video brighter. Windows should be avoided altogether in the view of the camera, as they cast shadows and cause reflections. A great solution for lighting is to purchase a ring light, they are economical (I got mine for $30) and they clip on to your desk or computer (depending on the model) and it can cast a nice light on your face if you are in a darker room or the lighting from outside isn't strong enough from a window.

Video: Camera

The most optimal solution is to have a webcam. A decent camera runs anywhere from $50-$100. I use Logitech (one of the most popular brands) and it really makes a dramatic difference on how it filters the video stream. If you are not able to use a webcam, then making sure that the lens on your laptop camera is cleaned so that it is free of fingerprints or debris which can make the image appear "scratchy".

Video: Framing

The best positioning when presenting virtually is to have the bottom of the video frame right at your chest level. There should not be too much space above you, so centering yourself in the middle of the frame as much as possible. If you are using your laptop camera, avoid tilting your laptop screen, it makes for a strange viewer experience to be looking up or looking down at the presenter.

Video: Background

Avoid anything too cluttered behind you if possible, it can be a bit distracting to the viewer. A wall behind you is the best bet, and as a tip, if it is possible, you can pin up a sheet on the wall behind you if you want to change the background color. Avoid at all costs using those virtual backgrounds that are available on Zoom and other platforms. They eat use a lot of the bandwidth on your stream and can make your connection quite choppy.

Internet & System Bandwidth

You will want to be using as strong an internet connection as possible. If you can be hardwired in, that is best. If you are using WiFi, just make sure that you close all programs on your computer that are not required to be operating and ensure that there is as little activity on your wifi connection in your household as well. Anything that can cause disruptions to the internet will help keep the video from being glitchy.

Where Do I Look?

I get this question a lot. Where do I look when I am presenting? Is it ok to look at my notes? Of course! Imagine you are presenting on stage; you would likely have your notes at the podium and refer to them. But the instinct when on stage is to look up and make eye contact with the audience from time to time. The same should be true virtually. You can cheat the system by having your notes set up on your computer screen so that they are just under your camera so that it keeps your chin up and your face forward while speaking. You should not feel compelled to have to look straight forward 100% of the time, that does not look natural! It looks far more relaxed and natural if you allow some minor movement throughout your recording. 😊

Presentation Tools

There are some great presentation tools available online! Here are a few that we have found helpful to virtual presenters.

REMOTE CLICKERS
Your presentation can be uploaded to a website and then simply use a remote clicker to switch through your slides. This is very handy if you are presenting at an event where you have technical support and someone else can share this screen on your behalf. http://www.slidesclicker.com

REMOTE TIMER
If you want to keep on time but you don't want to use your phone, you can use a remote timer on your computer screen so that you can keep an eye on it without having to look down or away at another clock or phone. https://www.online-stopwatch.com/countdown-timer/

TELEPROMPTER
If you want to be able to appear "off book" and look right at the camera when presenting, you can use a teleprompter on your computer. This would allow you to copy and paste your presentation text into the software and have it scroll up for you (at a speed of your choosing!) and allow you to read the content they way do on the news. https://cueprompter.com/

PRE-RECORDING ON ZOOM
If you want to use Zoom to pre-record your presentation, here is a "how to" video that will show you how to best use Zoom to set up and record yourself. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WmMSXOQVQs4

PRE-RECORDING USING POWERPOINT
If you want to record yourself directly into your PPT slides, you can do this right in PowerPoint. You can choose to record audio only, or you can have yourself visible next to your presentation with your camera. Check out this "how to" video to show you the steps to pre-record using PowerPoint. https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/record-a-presentation-2570dff5-f81c-40bc-b404-e04e95ffab33?ui=en-us&rs=en-us&ad=us

PRE-RECORDING USING TEAMS
If you are comfortable using Teams, you may wish to record your presentation using that platform. Check out this "how to" video to show you the steps to pre-record yourself. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kul6fphW5Ss

PRE-RECORDING USING TEAMS
If you prefer using Google products and services, you can pre-record yourself using **Google Meets**. Check out this "how to" video to show you the steps to pre-record yourself. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYDu3Ar2kUQ