

INTERNET-BASED VIDEOCONFERENCING for 3RD-AGE LEARNING

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THE QUESTIONS

- Why has this new tool suddenly become feasible?
- What can it be used for?
- What are the benefits?
- What equipment is needed?
- What technical expertise is required?
- What's the best software?
- What does all this cost?
- Will socialization be undermined?
- Where can we learn more?
- Other questions???

THE REVOLUTION

THAT WAS THEN

- Webcams were scarce
- Bandwidth limited/expensive
- Computer literacy low
- Little experience with VC
- Clunky/expensive software
- Technical expertise a must
- Rudimentary A/V equipment

THIS IS NOW

- Webcams almost universal
- Bandwidth expanding/cheap
- Boomers more “techno-hip”
- 3rd-agers Skyping/Facetiming
- Intuitive/cheap software
- Minimal expertise required
- Upgraded A/V equipment

THE BENEFITS

- Can bring in out-of-town speakers
- Can serve members with mobility issues
- Organization's administration facilitated
- Reduced need for meeting space
- Able to interact with other communities
- Support for the Green Agenda

THE “LOW-HANGING FRUIT”

- Holding committee meetings (especially in January)
- Interviewing potential speakers
- Bringing out-of-town speakers into the lecture hall
- Mounting virtual* study groups/lectures
- Having emergency back-up if a speaker
- Teaching computer literacy

*Virtual” = everyone at their home computers, no physical classroom involved

MORE CHALLENGING USES

- Videocasting (“livestreaming”) the AGM to the membership
- Videocasting talks from a classroom/hall to home computers
- Videocasting lectures/talks into retirement home common rooms
- Joint panel discussions involving two classrooms
- Mounting overflow rooms for popular events
- Taking MOOCs (free online courses) as a group

USES OF RECORDING

- Having back-up when a speaker is a no-show
- Enabling members to practice their presentations
- Allowing absent members to see a talk afterwards
- Helping prepare meeting minutes
- Promote your program on the website

TAN'S POTENTIAL USES

- Enabling remote parts of Ontario to participate
- Holding travel-free Executive and other committee meetings
- Mounting virtual workshops on a variety of subjects
- Bringing out-of-province speakers to the biennial symposium
- Videocasting all or part of the symposium
- Coaching local groups on how to start up a TAL
- Sharing talks with TAL start-ups
- Interacting with other TAL provincial/national networks

PERSONAL USES

- Keeping in touch with grandchildren
- Bringing together far-flung family at holiday time
- Having coffee/beer with an ill/lonely friend
- Consulting your lawyer
- Exchanging language lessons
- Conducting business (if still in the work force)
- *Etc., etc., etc.*

ZOOM SOFTWARE

- Used by TAN's working group for the last four years
- Also the videoconferencing solution of choice for third-age learning organizations in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.
- The company's recent IPO embraced by the stock market
- Reliable, intuitive and user-friendly but with many advanced features
- Extensive technical support
- Free for one-on-one meetings and bringing in speakers
- The paid version costs only CAD\$20/month

TAN'S VC WORKING GROUP

- Researches how videoconferencing can enhance LLL programs.
- Resolves implementation issues (software, equipment, etc.)
- Helps TAN organizations with videoconferencing experiments.
- Acts as an information clearinghouse for TAN's membership.
- Prepares instructional materials and hold training events.
- Provides videoconferencing support for TAN events.
- Reach out to third age learning groups beyond Ontario.

CONCLUSION

Internet-based videoconferencing
may or may not be ready for prime
time, but it's definitely the wave of the
future!

TO LEARN MORE

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