Best Practices for Hosting an NIU Webinar

1. **Meeting hosts should attend training if they are going to be hosting high profile events**. Adobe Connect is really easy to use and so the average user can jump in, start a meeting, and usually have no problems. However, this is still a fairly new and sophisticated technology, so NIU eLearning Services provides training. We have training from beginner to advanced, even custom training for special uses. Refresher training is also recommended as the software is constantly being updated with new features. Training can take place in our lab or over Adobe Connect. Our website also has links to recorded training from Adobe. http://elearning.niu.edu/collaborative/connecthelp.html

2. **Let "us" know about high profile events at least a week in advance so we can monitor the server, and be available if help is needed.** This will also help us schedule software updates, which means we won't update the software the day before a high profile event. Email dcl@niu.edu and less us know about your high profile event.

3. **For a live event the meeting host and all presenters need to always (i.e. for every event) log in no less than 15 minutes, preferably 30 minutes before you go live to check out your equipment and the site's performance.** While everyone should do this every time, it is the seasoned professional who is most likely to get into trouble if overly confident. Logging in prior to an event will give you time to check everything out, upload slides or other documents, and run the audio wizard to make sure your microphone and speakers are working properly. I have had dozens of things go wrong when it comes to audio on my computer including: Microsoft windows updates messing up my audio drivers, my dog chewing on my head phone cables, kids took my speakers cable, etc.

4. **High profile events should be hosted from an NIU campus computer using a hard wire connection.** While wifi works great 99% of the time it is slower and more likely to drop connection to the internet. Meeting guests can slow down, even drop off and may barely notice, but if the host drops off the meeting can potentially close down and knock everyone off. Recordings are also interrupted. NIU's network is more stable than home cable modems (see best practice #6). However if you must hold a meeting from home, hard wire in and have a co-presenter at another location.

5. **Everyone who has access to the microphone needs to wear headphones.** While webinar software is getting better all time at canceling out echo, everyone will have a much better experience if all "presenters" are wearing headphones (ear buds work well too). For some reason we get a lot of rebellion on this best practice. It is preferable that you use headphone with a built-in microphone background noises and keyboarding is less likely to get picked up.

6. **I hate to say this but a technologist's version of Murphy's Law goes something like this: "technology fails when you need it the most". So have a plan B!** I can think of two plan Bs I have used over the years. The first is to have an alternative computer I can access quickly to see if it works better. You might also want a co-presenter so if one of you can't get on the other can still run the meeting. In case of a total system melt down we also recommend you set up an ITS Meet Me number, and save your Powerpoint as a .PDF to email to participants as a backup. While not as high tech as a webinar the telephone has been around a long time and tends to be very reliable (this does not include cell phones). A Meet Me number is free and so it is something I always order as backup when I am hosting an important webinar. Call 815-753-0963 to set up your Meet Me number several days before your webinar.

For more information about Meet Me: http://niu.edu/its/phones/fac_staff/meet_me_conference.shtml