Organizing a Public Webinar with Webex

By Bart Verswijvel

The major part of a Learning Snack consists of a webinar delivered by an expert. For the webinars we used the web conferencing tool Webex.

In this document you find some pieces of advice to host and organize webinars with Webex.

MEETING TYPE

The web conferencing tool can be used for different types of online meetings. It can be used for a **CLOSED MEETING** with an *workable* maximum about 10 participants. The interaction between the participants of this type of meeting can be oral (audio channel) and in a more or less informal way.

The meeting type for a Learning Snack is a **PUBLIC WEBNAR** with up to 200 participants (maximum of license type). For practical reasons, the interaction between the participants and between the participants and the speaker will be written communication and will take place in a *backchannel*. Also to bear in mind is that with public webinars there is also communication with an audience who cannot take part in a synchronous way. (see below)

ROLES

These are the basic roles for the staff of a public webinar:

HOST: The host is the main organizer of the webinar and plays a role BEFORE, DURING and AFTER the webinar. (see below)

SPEAKER or PRESENTER: The person (expert) who presents the content of the webinar to the audience. In most cases the presenter is at a different location than the host.

HOST ASSISTENT(S): In some cases the host one or more assistents during the webinar. For more complex online meetings (online conferences or trainings) Webex can assign the role of e.g. panellist or poll manager.

PREPARATION – some weeks/months before the webinar

The host needs to prepare the public webinar and communicate with the speaker as well as with the potential audience

PREPARATION WITH SPEAKER

In most cases the host and speaker(s) will be at different locations to deliver the webinar. It is important that the host takes the take the time to have a training with the speaker inside the platform of Webex before the actual webinar takes place. First of all the good functioning of hardware and internet connection needs to be checked. Host and speaker need to have a headset and a (built-in) webcam.

Also important is to think about the way the content will be delivered. Basically there are 2 options: sharing a presentation (PowerPoint) and/or sharing the desktop (computer) of the presenter who can then open documents on his computer or open a website etc.

Presenting with a simple *Powerpoint* works best. To be avoided are Powerpoint animations and showing videos in general. Also good to know is that URLs are not *clickable* for the audience when part of the Powerpoint. The solution to sharing a weblink with the participants is to type it in the chatbox (it is clickable there) or to simplify by using a URL shortner (and modify the title of the automatic shortening).

In this example both URLs lead to the same online video:

<p style="text-align:center">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWEwv_qobpU</p>

<p style="text-align:center">http://bit.ly/co-learning</p>

To increase the interaction and to make the webinar more lively, the speaker should integrate polls. Polls are a built-in tool in Webex. (Participants with a tablet quite often have difficulties to take part in these polls, however.)

PREPARATION WITH AUDIENCE

The webinar needs to be promoted through different communication channels. For Living Schools Lab we used the platforms (website and Community of Practice), e-mail (Digest) and social media. Since the webinars are public, social media are important. Teachers who are active on Twitter and in Facebook groups have a profile of a potential participant to the webinar. Repeated posting about the webinar in these social media channels is important. Tweetdeck (http://tweetdeck.twitter.com) is a handy tool to schedule tweets.

Participants need to enrol for the webinar. We use Google Form (http://bit.ly/lslwebinars) for the registration to collect data like the participant's name, the school or institute and of course the email address for delivering the details to get access to the webinar.

PREPARATION – 2 days before the webinar

Two days before the webinar the host notifies the participants and sends them the Webex weblink. When booking a Webex link the system gives you the necessary details in an email you can forward to the participants.

This email can be customized. You can embed the information in your own design of email. For LSL we added the link to a short Webex tutorial: http://bit.ly/tutorialwebex.

You can forward this invitation to others.
Hello,

Bart Verswijvel invites you to join this WebEx meeting.

What do innovative schools look like? Headlines from the 2014 audit survey
Tuesday, 9 September 2014
17:30 | Europe Summer Time (Brussels, GMT+02:00) | 3 hr

Join WebEx meeting
Meeting number: 951 480 778
Meeting password: webinar

Add this meeting to your calendar.

Can't join the meeting? Contact support.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Please note that this WebEx service allows audio and other information sent during the session to be recorded, which may be discoverable in a legal matter. By joining this session, you automatically consent to such recordings. If you do not consent to being recorded, discuss your concerns with the host or do not join the session.

PREPARATION – 1 hour before before the webinar

The host should be present approx. 1 hour before the start of the webinar.

The host can have a final test with the speaker.

The host can notify last minute registrations and send final reminders on social media.

The presentation must be uploaded and the welcome slide must be displayed. This welcome slight must contain necessary details as shown in the example below.

JUST BEFORE THE RECORDING: the unofficial start

To avoid post editing of the recording it is advisable to have an *unofficial* and unrecorded introduction with content that applies only to participants who are present at the webinar *in real time*. The recording should be as compact as possible and only focus on the topic.

The unofficial introduction can include the following elements:

Encourage audience to use the chatbox as a backchannel where they can introduce themselves at the start and communicate during the webinar by commenting and by posting questions.

Explain that the chatbox has the feature to send messages to Everyone and also to 1 of the participants in particular.

Encourage participants to communicate with *the outside world* and send tweets with the **#lsl_eu** hashtag.

Explain rules of the house: muted microphones for participants.

Explain that webinar will be recorded.

AFTER THE WEBINAR

After the webinar the host interacts with the speaker to give feedback.

The host shares the recording. In Webex there are 2 ways of sharing:

Providing the streaming link
It will show the recording of the webinar in a similar way as the actual webinar.

Sharing a converted videoclip
The recording can be converted to an mp4 or WMV movie and if necessary be post edited. The recording can be uploaded to YouTube, Vimeo or another service. Afterwards the video clip can be embedded. You can choose to integrate the talking heads and or the chat discussion.

This last type is more attractive as in many ways.

The actual presentation can be hosted and shared, with the consent of the speaker, on a service like Slideshare (www.slideshare.net).