Librarians’ Preference of Virtual Meeting Platforms

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Brick & Click: Academic Librarians Conference 2013
from TF to All Participants: We've tried the phone - no sound. We've reconnected, tried different browsers, done the sound check - we surrender. We'll hope to be able to hear the recorded version later. I've done Webex many times, so this is disappointing.

from LC to All Participants: Clearly there is some technical issue here

from LL to All Participants: This is so frustrating

from BB to All Participants: What happened? I just lost the picture

from KR to All Participants: No slides here, no visual, no audio...I'm done

from MC to All Participants: This is why we use Google Hangouts.

from CA to All Participants: I agree - Google hangouts is great!
Virtual participation in professional organization and other committee meetings outside of one’s home institution continues to increase as time and money for travel to these events decreases. As the profession moves into a model of increased virtual communication, questions arise as to the best platform and tools to be used for the most effective method of communication. This study seeks to determine which platforms are currently being used, which platforms are preferred by organizers and participants and which platforms will best serve the needs of the committee. Results of this study on preferences for virtual platforms can help individuals and organizations make decisions on the best tools for this method of communication.
So...what do we currently know about virtual meetings?

- Web-based Virtual Platform Reviews (CNET, PCmag, ComputerWorld)
- ALA Policy Guidelines & FAQs for Virtual Meetings- http://www.ala.org/acrl/resources/policies/chapter8#83two
- **Current literature primarily focused on:**
  **Videoconferencing for reference and instruction,**
  **Virtual teams in a business setting,**
  **Transition of f2f to virtual,**
  **Benefits of virtual meetings**
Survey data collected April-May 2013

246 Started the survey
174 Finished the Survey, 70.7% completion

50.6% of them prefer virtual meetings
Demographics: Age, Race, Region

- 92% of the participants were 30 years or older
- 88% of the participants identified as white, 7% black, 5.4% Asian, 4.6% Hispanic
- All regions of the United States were represented with the smallest percentage from the Northwest and the largest from the Northeast
Professional Background

- Most participants (80%) identified as academic librarians
- Most participants (79%) had been a librarian for over 4 years
Why are people meeting online?

Primary reasons groups hold virtual meetings:
- To increase participation among member who cannot meet f2f (90%)
- Cost effectiveness (70%)
- Time pressing issues (38%)
- Online features offer a better option (20%)

Primary reasons why people are choosing to participate in virtual meetings:
- Travel fund limitations (74%)
- Too much time away from work (61%)
- Inconvenient meeting time (57%)
- Travel is too much trouble (31%)
Online versus Face-to-Face

Is meeting online sufficient for you?  
Most say yes (90.8%)

Do you like meeting online?  
Most say yes (85.8%)

Do you prefer meeting online?  
A little over half (50.8%)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platforms Used by Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Hangouts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Collaborate/ Elluminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GotoMeeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Connect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebEx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vyew</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yugma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teleconferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Readytalk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear Window</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anytime Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LiveMeeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join.Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AnyMeeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIMBA (Blackboard tool)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifesize (Logitech)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polycom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Lync</td>
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<tr>
<td>ooVoo</td>
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<td>iCohere</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Platforms Used Most Often

1. WebEx - 26.8%
2. Adobe Connect - 24.2%
3. GotoMeeting - 14.0%
4. Google Hangouts - 12.1%
5. Blackboard Collaborate - 8.9%
6. Skype - 7.6%
7. Elluminate - 5.7%
8. Yugma - 0.6%
9. Facebook
10. Zoho Meeting
11. All Other Responses
Platforms That Serve Participants’ Purposes the Best
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I strongly prefer Adobe Connect to GoToMeeting.</th>
<th>I have used the trial version of go to meeting and LOVED it!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hangouts are the easiest to invoke, don't require an installed system like Elluminate or Collaborate</td>
<td>I feel Google Hangouts offers greater functionality - such as the ability to share screens - and it is free!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype, WebEx, Adobe Connect are the platforms I find work the best for collaborative work</td>
<td>Love Adobe!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Features (screen sharing) (interactive) (collaboration ease)</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of use/setup</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No preference (if it works or it is what is offered/selected) or unsure</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost effective (free)</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality (how well it works)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no barriers to use/access/works on mobile (downloading, software, licensing, web-browser use)</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported/provided by institution</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stability/reliability/secure</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interface (looks better, intuitive or preference for informal)</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent on the meeting/training/tech</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical of virtual meeting software</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reasons for selecting one platform over another**
Age Profiles

- 25-29 years old (18 people)
- 30-39 years old (75 people)
- 40-49 years old (57 people)
- 50-59 years old (61 people)
- 60 years old or older (31 people)
Skyler Skype
(data from 5 ppl)

Age ranges from 25 -- over 60 years old

40% prefer f2f option; 40% virtual option; 20% teleconferencing

Skyler meets with 7-14 people on average (60%)

Uses Skype (40%), Webex (40%) & Adobe Connect (20%) most often

Features of Interest:

- Voice Mute (75%)
- Phone-in Feature (75%)
- Screen Capture (50%)
Elsie Elluminate (replaced by Collaborate) (data from 11 ppl)

40-49 years old (27%) & 60 years or older (27%)

Most prefer to meet virtually (63%); f2f (36%)

Most of Elsie’s meetings have 7-14 people (70%)

Uses Elluminate (40%) most often; GotoMeeting (20%); WebEx (20%); Skype (20%)

Features of interest:

- share/coll doc (90%)
- rec option (72%)
- phone-in (63%)
Blake Blackboard Collaborate
(data from 12 ppl)

Mostly 50-59 years old (33%); 40-49 (25%)

Prefers meeting virtually (66%); f2f (33%)

Most of Blake’s meetings are 7-14 people (60%)

Use Blackboard Collaborate most often (90%); Skype (9%)

Features of interest:

- share/coll doc (75%)
- rec option (58%)
- shared whitebd (58%)
- unlimited (50%)
Gomer GotoMeeting (data from 20 ppl)

60 years or older (30%); 50-59 (25%); 30-39 (25%); 40-49 (20%)

Prefer meeting virtually (55%); f2f (40%); teleconferencing (5%)

Most of Gomer’s meeting have 4-6 people on average (47%); 7-14 (35%)

Uses GotoMeetings most often (73%); WebEx (10%)

Features of interest:

- share/coll docs (78%)
- rec option (73%)
- phone-in (63%)
- voice-mute (57%)
Mostly 40-49 years old (38%); 50-59 (33%); 30-39 (19%)

Prefers meeting online (52%); f2f (38%); teleconferencing (9.5%)

Webster meets with 4-6 people on average (44%); 7-14 (33%)

90% use Webex most often but also use Gotomeeting (5%) & Skype (5%)

Features of interest:

- rec option (85%)
- share/coll doc (81%)
- phone-in (71%)
- shared whitebd (61%)
Goldie Google Hangouts (data from 25 ppl)

Mostly 30-39 years old (52%); 40-49 (24%)

Prefers meeting virtually (60%); f2f (32%); teleconferencing (8%)

Most of Goldie’s meetings are 7-14 people on average; 4-6 (33%)

Uses Google Hangouts most often (69%); Adobe Connect (13%); Skype (8%)

Features of interest:

- f2f camera (80%)
- share/coll doc (68%)
- voice-mute (60%)
- rec option (52%)
Mostly 30-39 years old (40%); 40-49 (28%)

Prefers meeting virtually (57%); f2f (38%); teleconferencing (3%)

Adele meets with 7-14 people on average (60%)

Uses Adobe Connect most often (76.9%); WebEx (11.5%); Gotomeeting (7.7%)

Features of interest:
- rec option (88%)
- voice mute (76%)
- save discussion op (53%)
Online Features Considered Most Important
Top 5 Features/Top 5 Platforms

**Recording Option**: Adobe Connect, Blackboard Collaborate/Elluminate, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, WebEx

**Share a Document**: Adobe Connect, Blackboard Collaborate/Elluminate, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, WebEx

**Collaborate on a Document**: Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, Blackboard??

**Voice Mute**: All

**Phone-In**: Adobe Connect, Blackboard Collaborate/Elluminate, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, WebEx

**Unlimited attendees**: None, ranges from 5-1000

**Shared WhiteBoard/Drawing space**: Adobe Connect, Blackboard Collaborate/Elluminate, Google Hangouts, GoToMeeting, WebEx
Virtual Meeting Considerations > Requires planning and training; Exploration is helpful; Productive meeting require certain skills

Situational Dependent > There is no one-size-fits-all platform; Sometimes less complex is best

Face-to-Face Advocates > Virtual lacks introductory connection; virtual interaction is not the same; Last resort option

Technology Critiques > Cameras are distracting; Too many platform options; Cost/technology barriers get in the way; Technical issues are annoying

Audio Frustrations > Everyone speaks at once; No one knows when to speak; Echo effect and other technical difficulties are frustrating; Unpredictable sound glitches

Advantages/Hopeful Remarks > Ability to multitask; Virtual is comparable to f2f; Saves time and money; Hopeful for more sophistication in the future
The Future