SYPP Center's Guide to
Tech Specs and Basic Features for Webinars

Forget what you heard—it doesn't take a techie to run a webinar. Running a webinar challenges a person's ability to plan a successful event, not their ability to program a computer. With most of the work involving behind-the-scenes coordinating of content, people, and resources, the time spent immersed in tech lingo is usually just in the beginning when shopping around for a webinar service. Having basic knowledge of computer use and a machine with enough muscle to put on show is the just the beginning of delivering an important subject matter to an audience and one step closer to connecting an **audience** to the **presenter**. Here we go!

Resources Check! Inventory of Tech and Personnel

Ready to create webinar magic? Verify the following tech specs and take a step forward.

Webinars are best viewed and operated using:

- high-speed internet connection
- computer with a current **operating system** supported by the webinar service
- compatible browser with the latest **JavaScript** or **Java** plug-in
- conference phone and telephone line or microphone and speakers in a room free of interferences, foot traffic and any other possible distractions

Reliable Internet service is extremely important for a webinar presenter. A slow network or weak Wi-Fi connection can create problems such as causing delays or ending the webinar unexpectedly.

Don't expect the computer to run on autopilot. Hosting a webinar requires more than an updated machine. One dedicated person is needed to operate the computer and carry the presentation. Additional presenters are optional, however, two persons operating separate computers are recommended for ease of controls and moderating the presentation. These two are known as Host and Assistant Host. It's always good to have a sidekick in case technical issues appear out of nowhere or addressing the audience becomes overwhelming. The trusty co-host on the other computer can serve as a backup in case of a browser crash or a connection problem. There are ways to avoid these issues, and a reliable computer and connection is a start.

Audio, Visual, and Accessibility

A webinar is not your typical conference call. Webinars are all about combining audio and visual elements, along with interactive features to create a unique experience for the audience. Here are essentials to explore when selecting a webinar service:

- free audio connection for webinar participants via **integrated audio** using a toll-free phone number or **Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP)**
- pre-loaded PowerPoint slides
- **desktop sharing**
- **rich media**
- webcam **live streaming**

- real-time **file sharing**
- **web accessibility** features such as closed captioning or subtitles

Interactivity

Interaction during a webinar is important for presenters and audience members. There are different ways to keep the audience engaged, and this is important to building a positive relationship with them. Here are some features offered by webinar companies to enhance basic presentations:

- hand raising buttons
- instant polling
- chat boxes for Q&A and feedback
- audience visibility
- moderated Q&A segment
- activating or muting audio (often used to put the audience in "listen-only mode")

Registration / Promotion / Follow-Up

Let your webinar be seen, heard, and remembered. Webinar companies offer various options for customization to brand your webinar just like the rest of your organization's products and materials. Consider the power of a neatly designed e-mail invitation with a catchy subject line, a logo or photo, event information, and more. Upload contacts into the webinar system and openly invite the public or limit registration to a specific audience. Create **campaign URLs** to track the source of sign-ups and make it easy to distribute the invitation via **social media**.

After invitations have gone out, dress your presentation slides with custom colors and images via PowerPoint templates or your own, while remembering the "keep it simple" mantra in mind. Upload the slides with confidence using a pre-load feature or use desktop sharing.

At the conclusion of the webinar, send a follow-up message, electronic documents, and the recording to attendees or anyone who may have missed out.

Recording, Editing, and Archiving

A webinar's shelf life is determined by you and your **hosting** service. Webinar companies offer recording, editing, and hosting options to polish things up before sharing with the world. Cut out the long pauses or strange background noises. When near-perfection is achieved, distribute the final product through e-mail, hosting, and downloadable podcasts. Once it's out, there may be opportunities to track how many times it's been replayed, depending on the webinar service.

Evaluation

Use evaluation features to receive feedback, learn about the audience, and compile reports. Pre- and post- tests and surveys, registration lists, survey responses, chat transcripts, campaign URL reports, and participation monitoring tools can help you understand your audience needs, interests, and geographic locations. This is valuable information to share with project funders, if needed.

Glossary

Audience
The audience is who the webinar is designed to reach. These are the people who join the virtual room of the webinar presentation, and they can take on many different characteristics. Webinar audience attendees may vary in interest level, participation level, physical location, professional roles, and industry. Audiences fluctuate from each webinar depending on subject matter, advertised objectives, and other reasons.

Browser
A browser is a program used to access the web. Internet Explorer, Firefox, Safari, and Chrome are examples of commonly used browsers. Everyone has a favorite browser or one they often use at work. Browsers are not created equal and do not all always support all types of webinar technology.

Campaign URL
A campaign URL is a special link created by the webinar manager to count webinar registrations from a specific source. It's a way of tracking referrals by a presenter or agency, and some webinar companies offer this feature. For example, a campaign URL is assigned to one presenter to promote the webinar through a Facebook page. The webinar manager is able to count how many people were brought in by a specific presenter's Facebook page.

Desktop Sharing
Desktop sharing is a feature that allows a webinar presenter to share their screen with an audience during a webinar. Typically, presenters use desktop sharing to show their PowerPoint presentation slides that are open on their computer. Desktop sharing makes the presenter's desktop visible to the audience, including an open browser window or any open program. Webinar companies offer the option to pre-load slides or only give the option to use desktop sharing. The benefit of desktop sharing is being able to share something spontaneous with the audience (like a YouTube video that is relevant to a question being asked), but it often slows down the presentation depending on the viewers' connection speeds and is a common source of presenter error of sharing unwanted e-mails from an exposed Outlook or personal desktop wallpaper photos.

File Sharing
File sharing is a way to share downloadable files with a group of people. Some webinar companies offer instant file sharing during a webinar to give the audience access to downloading resources on the spot. The alternative to instant file sharing is adding materials to webinar invitations or follow-up messages. These documents may include agendas, slides, notes, etc.

Hosting
Hosting is a type of service that allows the webinar producer to retain webinar recordings, keep them online, and have the ability to share them. Some webinar services offer hosting to keep webinar files online for a specified amount of time.

Integrated audio

Integrated audio is a webinar feature that allows a webinar audience to listen to the presentation using their computers only and without a telephone. Digital data through integrated audio eliminates long distance fees usually incurred with phones. This integrated audio system can simplify the process for webinar attendees by enabling listening and viewing capabilities with a one-step login process without having to dial separately and enter passcodes. Many webinars offer integrated audio as well as a toll-free phone number for anyone who prefers to dial-in.

Java

Java is a computer programming language that enables programs to run on multiple platforms, such as Windows and Mac operating systems. By enabling Java, webinars can be viewed through programs that are launched through a browser. Having the latest version of Java on a browser is a typical webinar requirement.

JavaScript

JavaScript is a computer programming language that enhances the web browsing experiencing. Unlike Java, JavaScript cannot run programs alone. It is responsible for creating interactive elements in web pages such as image slideshows, pop-ups, and advanced forms. Having the latest version of JavaScript enabled on a browser is a typical webinar requirement.

Live Streaming

Live streaming is sharing a live video broadcast. Depending on the webinar interface, an audience can watch the presenter while viewing the presentation slides.

Operating System

An operating system, which is often referred to as "OS," is computer software that makes it possible for computer programs to run. The OS is made up of system files that make it possible for the computer to run. Windows and Mac are examples of operating systems that have a unique graphical user interface with a desktop and file management system.

Presenter

The presenter takes on a role of facilitating a webinar for either a designated segment or the entire show. A presenter is responsible for creating content for slides, making a dynamic presentation, starting a conversation around the topic for a meaningful Q&A session, and to meet objectives set before the webinar by covering all topics listed in the invitation. Webinars can have multiple presenters which may include the host who takes on multiple roles.

Rich Media

The term rich media describes content that is usually interactive in nature. Go beyond a basic text-heavy presentation and enhance a webinar with use of images, animations, audio, video files, or a live feed. Rich media may be embedded in slides or presented via desktop sharing, depending on webinar service capabilities.

Social Media

Social media is responsible for social interaction on the web, thanks to mobile and web-based applications that allow instant sharing of content and messaging. Facebook and Twitter are widely-

used, valuable social media apps for both personal and business purposes. Social media is a way to grow a webinar audience, share upcoming and past webinars, and connect with potential presenters.

VoIP
VoIP or Voice over Internet Protocol takes the place of an analog telephone in web conferencing. With a VoIP headset or a combination of a microphone and speakers, a user can receive audio and speak during a webinar. This is a digital process that replaces the need for a telephone and a dial-in number to receive webinar audio.

Web Accessibility
Web accessibility makes it possible for people with disabilities to use the Web with enhancements such as optimized web development standards, assistive technology, and closed captioning services. Webinars can also be accessible to people with disabilities, thanks to companies that offer these features.

Wi-Fi
Wi-Fi is technology that allows a device to connect to the internet wirelessly. A Wi-Fi connection is great for browsing the web using a smartphone, tablet or laptop computer, but it is not ideal for hosting a webinar.

This tool was launched at the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) 2012 for SYPP Center's presentation, "Planning a Long Term Relationship with Webinars".

For more information about webinars, please contact SYPP Center, sypp@chla.usc.edu or visit http://www.chla.org/sypp.

SYPP Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Webinar Planning Tool

WEBINAR [**web**-*uh*-nahr]
noun

A presentation, lecture, workshop, or seminar that is transmitted over the web. A key feature of webinars is their interactivity – the ability to give, receive, and discuss information.

If you are part of an HIV prevention agency that is considering holding webinars, then this tool is for you. It is a starting point for discussion within an agency about how and why webinars could be used and what agency-specific needs are. Using this tool can help your agency make smart, intentional decisions and use limited resources efficiently.

Holding webinars requires entering into a contract with a webinar service. This tool does not endorse any particular company or provide recommendations on which service to choose. However, it includes terminology that is generally used within the industry and will help you to make an informed decision when choosing your webinar service.

The terminology and features listed in this tool are commonly used in beginner- and intermediate-level webinars. For additional background information and definitions, please see the attached Webinar Tech Specs and Glossary of Terms.

This tool and associated materials have been developed by the Center for Strengthening Youth Prevention Paradigms (SYPP Center), an HIV prevention, capacity building assistance provider (CBA) housed in the Division of Adolescent Medicine at Children's Hospital Los Angeles and funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. SYPP Center provides CBA services, such as technical assistance and consultations, around webinar development. To inquire about CBA services, please contact Mia Humphreys at mhumphreys@chla.usc.edu or (323) 361-3117.

Visit www.chla.org/sypp/webinars to register for upcoming events and view archived presentations.

Purpose (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ Hold meetings (community advisory boards, materials review panel, committees, work groups)
- ☐ Training
- ☐ Technical consultation or assistance
- ☐ Promotion (agency, project, event, etc.)
- ☐ Share information with stakeholders or target audience
- ☐ Facilitate collaboration

Resources

Personnel / Roles (Name appropriate persons to fill each role.)

- Producer (organizer, follow-up): _____
- Host (emcee, moderator): _____
- Assistant Host (tech support, operator): _____
- Presenters: _____
- Evaluator: _____

Technology

- High-speed Internet connection (wireless not recommended)
- Computers with current operation system and browser (for internal roles)
- Conference phone/telephone line OR microphone and speakers for VOIP

Venue

- Quiet space is required. Where will you conduct webinars?

  _____

Annual Budget

- Webinar service (could include audio, online, recording, archiving, live tech support costs)

  $ _____

Frequency

- How often will you conduct webinars (Quarterly, monthly, as needed)?: _____

Target Audience

Populations (Check all that apply.)

- ☐ HIV counselors, testers, linkage to care workers, case managers, and health educators
- ☐ Medical providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, etc.)
- ☐ Behavioral health providers (clinical psychologists, LCSWs, therapists, drug/alcohol counselors, etc.)
- ☐ Consumers: _____
- ☐ Other population(s) served: _____

Participation Prerequisites or Closed Groups

- ☐ Needed
- ☐ Not needed
- ☐ Varied

Continuing Education Credits

- • Are you required to provide these? For whom?

Maximum Size

- ☐ 25
- ☐ 100
- ☐ _____

Features (Mark selections as "Need" or "Want.")

Visual

N W
- ☐ ☐ Pre-loaded
- ☐ ☐ Desktop sharing
- ☐ ☐ Pre-loaded videos
- ☐ ☐ Animations
- ☐ ☐ Live streaming
- ☐ ☐ Video conferencing
- ☐ ☐ Desktop sharing of applications, files, etc.
- ☐ ☐ _____

Interactivity

N W
- ☐ ☐ Hand raising button
- ☐ ☐ Instant polling
- ☐ ☐ Chat boxes
- ☐ ☐ Muting / unmuting audience members
- ☐ ☐ Audience visibility
- ☐ ☐ Moderated Q&A box
- ☐ ☐ File sharing
- ☐ ☐ _____

Recording / Editing / Archiving

N W
- ☐ ☐ Recording
- ☐ ☐ Editing
- ☐ ☐ Archiving
- ☐ ☐ Podcasting
- ☐ ☐ _____

Audio

N W
- ☐ ☐ VOIP
- ☐ ☐ U.S. call-in number
- ☐ ☐ International call-in number(s)
- ☐ ☐ Toll-free
- ☐ ☐ _____

Accessibility

N W
- ☐ ☐ Closed captioning
- ☐ ☐ _____

Registration / Promotion / Follow-Up

N W
- ☐ ☐ Customized invitations
- ☐ ☐ Customized registration questions
- ☐ ☐ Participant screening
- ☐ ☐ Scheduled reminders
- ☐ ☐ Campaign URLs
- ☐ ☐ Customized follow-up messages
- ☐ ☐ _____

Evaluation

N W
- ☐ ☐ Pre-test / survey
- ☐ ☐ Post-test / survey
- ☐ ☐ Downloadable reports (e.g. registration
- ☐ ☐ list, test / survey results, chat transcript)
- ☐ ☐ Campaign URL report
- ☐ ☐ Participation monitoring
- ☐ ☐ _____

Evaluation

Data required for reporting purposes

Data needed by funder:

_____

_____

_____

Data required for goals / objectives:

_____

_____

_____

Notes

SYPP Center's Guide to
Screening a Webinar at Your Agency:
Make It a Date

Webinar screenings are a simple group activity to build capacity at your agency. They provide an opportunity to bring back information and best practices to your workplace. The ability to access presentations from across the nation is one of the many benefits to utilizing webinars at an agency.

Planning a screening is like planning a date; the venue and the people who are present will affect the outcome. As the webinar screening host, you can facilitate an enjoyable, social learning experience for colleagues. Consider the tips below as you plan your first or next webinar screening.

Play matchmaker
(Know who to invite)

Part of having a successful screening includes being intentional with who is present, depending on the topic of the webinar. The more familiar you are with the programs in your agency and the work your colleagues do, the easier it will be to match them to specific webinars. Based on their area of work and interests, you can suggest specific scheduled webinars.

Make your relationship official
(Send an e-mail invite)

Send an invitation such as an Outlook request to colleagues via e-mail. Helping them recognize this as an event (whether optional or required) will allow them to plan the webinars into their schedules. Calendar files make it easy for them to save the date.

Make a reservation
(Register for the event)

Reserving a spot in the webinar will ensure that you have access on the day of the event. Forgetting to register for the webinar will leave you with a room full of people and no presentation to screen. Some webinars have a cap on the number of people that can view the live presentation. As the saying goes, the early bird catches the worm. Logging in late can leave you locked out due to some webinars with an audience size limit.

Send a reminder to colleagues 30 minutes before the screening. Due to busy schedules or missing the original invitation, people may sometimes overlook events.

SYPP Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles

Set the mood
(Have the appropriate equipment)

Reserve a conference room with audio and visual equipment (computer, projector, conference phone). Be mindful of lighting and background noise. Minimize distractions that take away from the audience's webinar viewing experience.

A way to a person's heart is through their stomach
(Provide snacks)

Light refreshments and snacks make a difference, especially if the webinar is right before lunch. This also adds to the social vibe. Small snacks will provide fuel for the participants and help them listen and share. If possible, give colleagues the option to bring their food if the screening takes place during the lunch hour.

Be attentive and ask the right questions

Acknowledge and address the questions from your audience. If you do not have time to ask them during the webinar program or if the opportunity was not available at the time, write questions down so they can be emailed to the presenter later. The purpose of a webinar is to interact with the presenters as well as among your group; you can play a role in keeping the audience engaged.

Plan on a discussion afterwards

Get feedback and thoughts from the viewers. How does the webinar change, support, or challenge the work they currently do, and what is it that they would like to see? Webinar screenings can also inspire a new way of implementing or approaching current projects.

Kiss and tell
(Share your experience)

Highlight what you learned at the webinar in staff meetings. This is an opportunity to share new knowledge and offer new resources to your colleagues. Doing this can also help recruit others to join future screenings and lead to capacity building within your agency. Remind people to print out certificates of participation (if applicable) and to add these webinar trainings to their personal logs.

This tool was launched at the United States Conference on AIDS (USCA) 2012 for SYPP Center's presentation, "Planning a Long Term Relationship with Webinars".

For more information about webinars, please contact SYPP Center, sypp@chla.usc.edu or visit http://www.chla.org/sypp.

SYPP Center at Children's Hospital Los Angeles