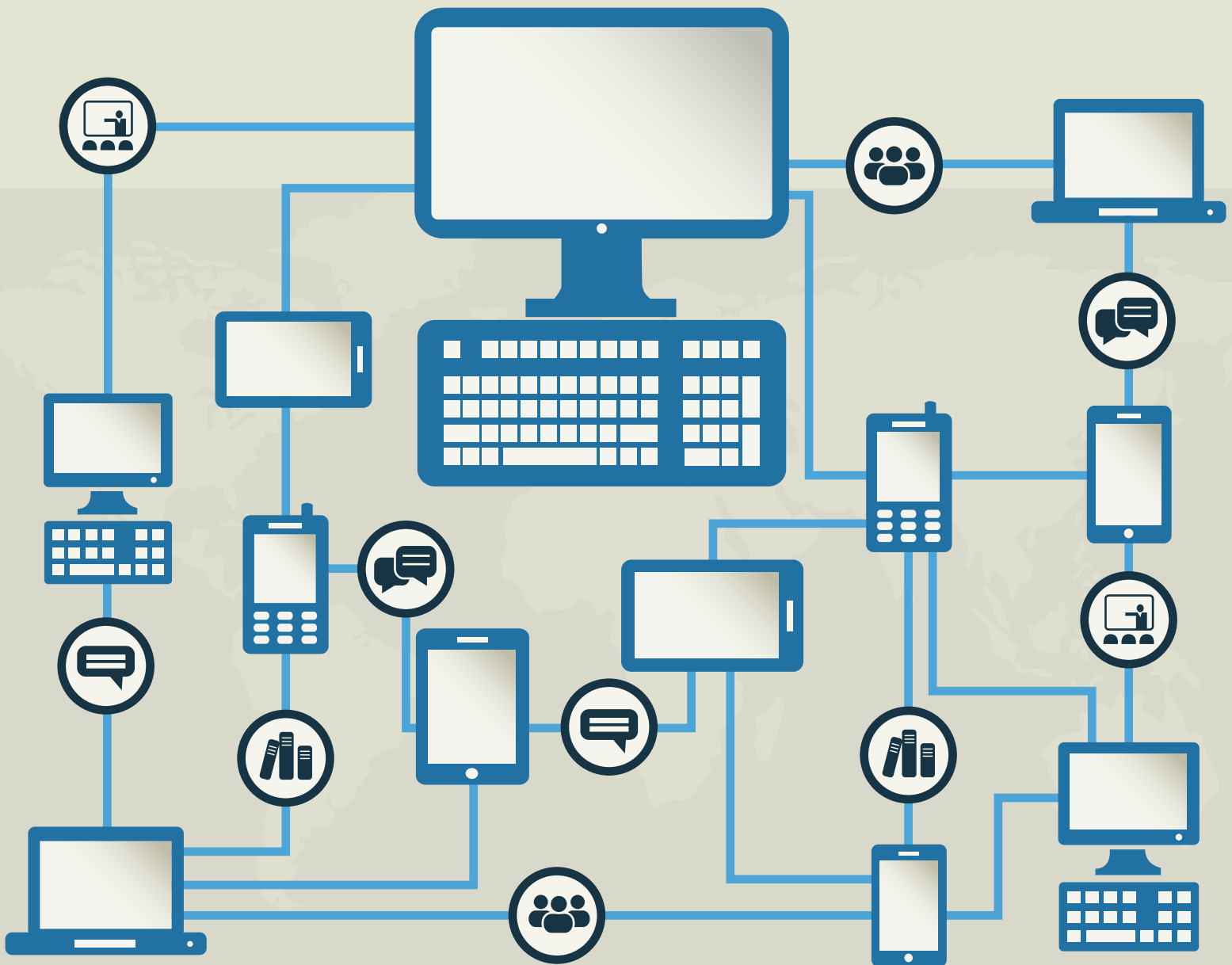


BUILDING BETTER CONFERENCES AND TRAINING:

The Value of Virtual Events in Government



CONTENTS

FOREWORD - - - - - 3

INVITATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - - - - - 5

IMPORTANCE:

HOW DO PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS PERCEIVE VIRTUAL EVENTS? - - - - - 8

They're Familiar	8
Figure 1. "I've Participated in the Following Types of Events"	9
They're Valuable	9
Figure 2. "Virtual Events and Training Present the Following Benefits"	9
They're Flexible	10
Figure 3. "What Elements of Virtual Events and Training Do You Find Most Effective?"	10
They're Inevitable	11
Figure 4. "True or False: I Am More Likely to Attend a Webinar Instead of an In-Person Event"	11
Is Virtual Learning Effective? (Hint: Yes, It Is.)	12

IMPACT:

WHICH AGENCIES ARE ACHIEVING EARLY SUCCESS? - - - - - 14

"Public Health Informatics Conference" - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	14
"Defense Connect Online" - Department of Defense	16
"Every Day Counts Spring Summit" - Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Institute	18
"Social Learning Pilot" - Office of Personnel Management	20

INDUSTRY:

WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FROM A VENDOR PERSPECTIVE? - - - - - 24

"Leading Learners to New Levels of Engagement" - 6Connex	24
"Enabling Access Everywhere" - Adobe	26
"Can Virtual Become 'Better Than Being There?'" - Cisco	28
"Improving the Human Condition Via Video-Based Connections" - FuzeBox	30
"Achieving Optimal Outcomes With Virtual Events" - Vidyo	32

IMPLEMENTATION:

WHAT ARE THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION? - - - - - 34

Get a Champion and Charter	34
Define Outcomes and Objectives	34
Put Together an Audience Profile	34
Take an Honest Assessment of Readiness	35
Determine the Need for Assistance	35
Conduct an Asset Audit	36
Build Engaging Elements	36
Make Marketing a Priority	36
Test, Test and Test Again	36
Consider Continuous Content	36

INNOVATION:

HOW CAN PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS MOVE FORWARD TOGETHER? - - - - - 38

Government Virtual Engagements Community of Practice

SUMMARY - - - - - 40

ABOUT GOVLOOP - - - - - 42

FOREWORD

Few topics of difficulty currently occupy the thoughts of senior government leadership more than conferences, or the lack thereof. Offices are struggling to bridge the gap between the moratorium on in-person government conferences and the need to meet mission critical objectives.

If you look at the mission statements of government departments, you quickly comprehend that these offices cannot meet their stated purpose without the collaborations previously achieved through conferences – not just among staff, but with public and private partners as well.

The ultimate goal of government-funded conferences is the exchange of information and ideas, learning opportunities and the transfer of knowledge, that is necessary for serving the public's needs and protecting the welfare of our citizens.

Fortunately, there are technology-based solutions that offer the ability to overcome the barriers associated with in-person conferences and potentially save taxpayers hundreds of millions at the same time. Virtual and hybrid (having both an in-person and virtual component to reach a wider audience) conferences not only reduce or eliminate the need for hospitalities such as food and lodging, they also save dollars that would be spent on airfare and other travel-related expenses.

As with all innovation, necessity propels these technologies into prominence. Economically-challenged governments in European countries have had these systems in play for several years now as a means of meeting budget constraints, while ensuring continuity of government programs and services.

The new challenge then is to promote awareness of these solutions and to provide education on their uses, functionality, implementation requirements and production processes – to essentially take the scary guesswork out of it.

That's the intent of this guide, which we hope is just the first of many resources that will be created to assist government training and events planning professionals as they seek to create virtual and hybrid events.

That's also the intent behind the [Government Virtual Engagements Community of Practice \(GVE CoP\)](#) that is receiving enthusiastic support from government agencies as well as public-private interests such as associations and organizations that partner with and support government.

We're fortunate to have captured the interest and support of some of the most widely known and respected game-changers and innovators of our time, from both government and the private sector. In fact, the community's Board of Advisors reads like a who's-who of influential thought leaders in the fields of government and technology.

There's more information about the GVE CoP at the end of this guide and we hope you'll decide to get involved. Moreover, planning for a virtual event to launch the community is underway. Stay tuned on GovLoop for that announcement coming soon.

Sincerely,



Adam B. Arthur, David Ely and Mary Elizabeth Arthur
Founders, Government Virtual Engagements Community of Practice (GVE CoP)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“As part of the effort to safeguard Federal funds, agencies should focus on expenses related to conference sponsorship, conference hosting, or attendance of Federal employees at conferences sponsored or hosted by non-Federal entities. Federal agencies and employees must exercise discretion and judgment in ensuring that conference expenses are appropriate, necessary, and managed in a manner that minimizes expense to taxpayers.”

– Jeffrey Zientz, Office of Management and Budget
Memorandum on “Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations”

In-person training and events dollars are getting harder to come by in government. The two primary factors for recent cutbacks are sequestration and increased scrutiny on travel and conference spending. However, the move away from in-person learning was already underway long before the present circumstances pushed teetering training budgets over the edge.

Sending staff to off-site conferences and training has always been an expensive investment. The costs quickly add up when accounting for registration fees, travel and lodging for classroom-based training. Venue rental, food, beverage and other amenities further increase an agency's costs for face-to-face conferences. With the current state of training budgets, in-person events can spiral into an amount perceived as exorbitant in the court of public opinion - even

when an agency strives to keep costs in check. Of course, there is also the opportunity cost of time out of office, away from the pressing challenges of accomplishing an agency's mission.

At the same time, employees do not grow professionally through experience alone. Policies and operating environments are not stagnant. They shift with evolving circumstances, and public sector personnel need to remain up to speed on the changing laws, regulations, products and systems that undergird their work. Sometimes employees just need to break away from the day-to-day in order to focus on specific knowledge acquisition.

In other words, the training delivered via conferences and classroom-based training might be a bit too much for the current fiscal mood,

but that does not mean training is not essential. Responsible supervisors cannot say “no” to training indefinitely. As a result, the question should not be, “How do we cut training and conferences?” Rather, a better question is:

“How do we deliver mission-achieving knowledge to public sector employees with-in modest budget constraints?”

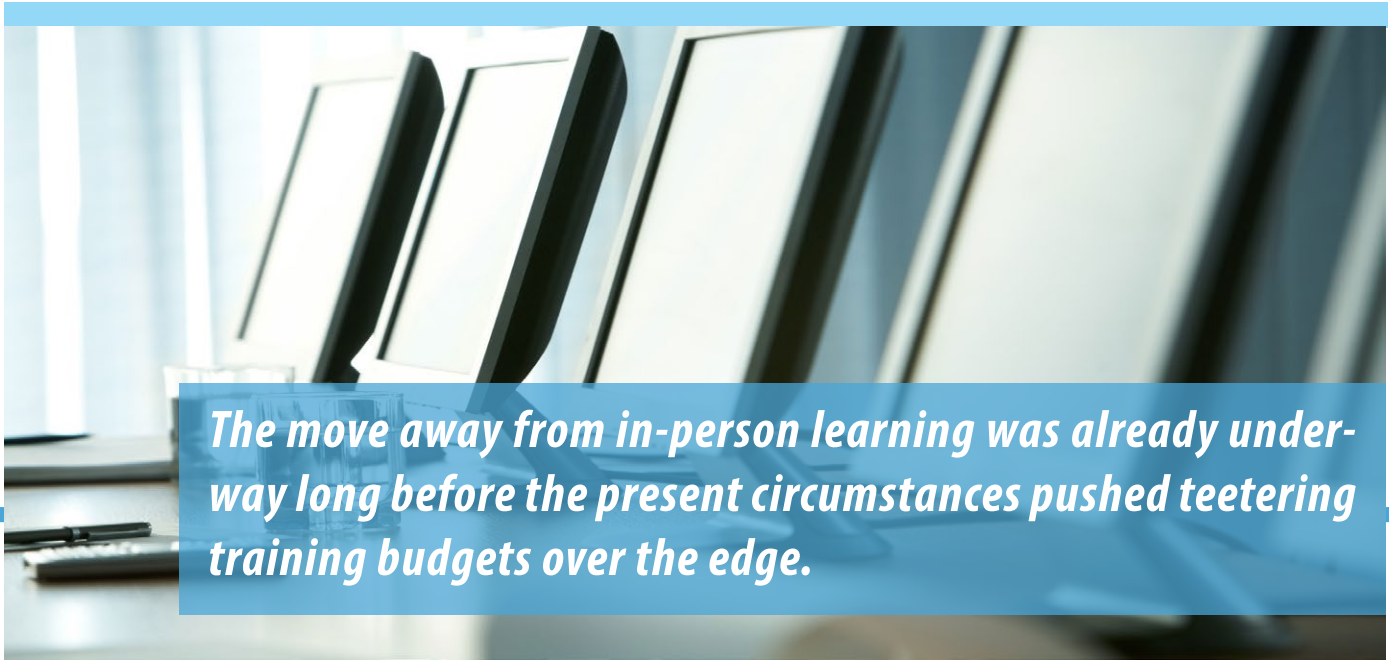
That is the core question we seek to answer in this guide. This guide also explores:

- 1 **How do public sector professionals perceive virtual events and training?**
- 2 **Which agencies are achieving early impact?**
- 3 **What are the best practices from a vendor perspective?**
- 4 **What are the key considerations for implementation?**
- 5 **How can agencies move forward together?**

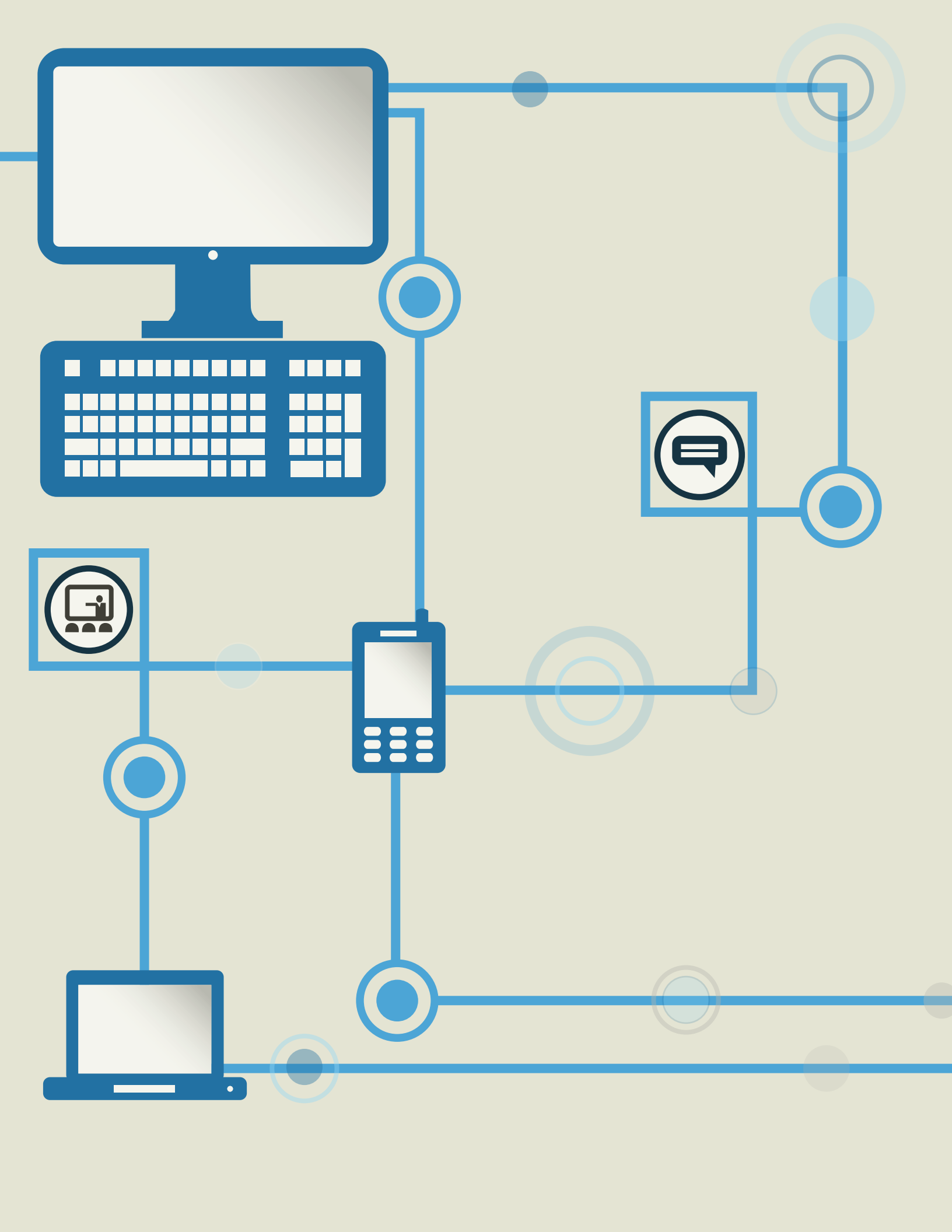
SPECIFICALLY, THIS GUIDE WILL:

- Reveal the results of a recent GovLoop survey of 335 respondents.
- Highlight specific case studies from CDC, DoD, DOT and OPM, as leading government examples that are achieving early success with virtual training and events.
- Share insights from industry thought leaders whose companies are offering valuable virtual event, and training solutions.
- Discuss the key issues surrounding the development and delivery of virtual events.

Lastly, this guide invites readers to join a virtual Community of Practice on GovLoop where interested professionals may share insights and resources aimed at building better online and hybrid events.



The move away from in-person learning was already underway long before the present circumstances pushed teetering training budgets over the edge.



IMPORTANCE

How Do Public Sector Professionals Perceive Virtual Events and Training?

In May 2013, GovLoop conducted a survey exploring how professionals in the GovLoop community participate, view and derive value from virtual events. Of the 335 total respondents, the majority (79%) represented a government agency working at federal (54%), state (14%) and local (11%) levels. The other 21 percent of respondents represented contractors, academia and non-governmental organizations. The survey shed valuable insight on the trends, benefits, challenges and engagement opportunities for utilizing virtual gatherings.

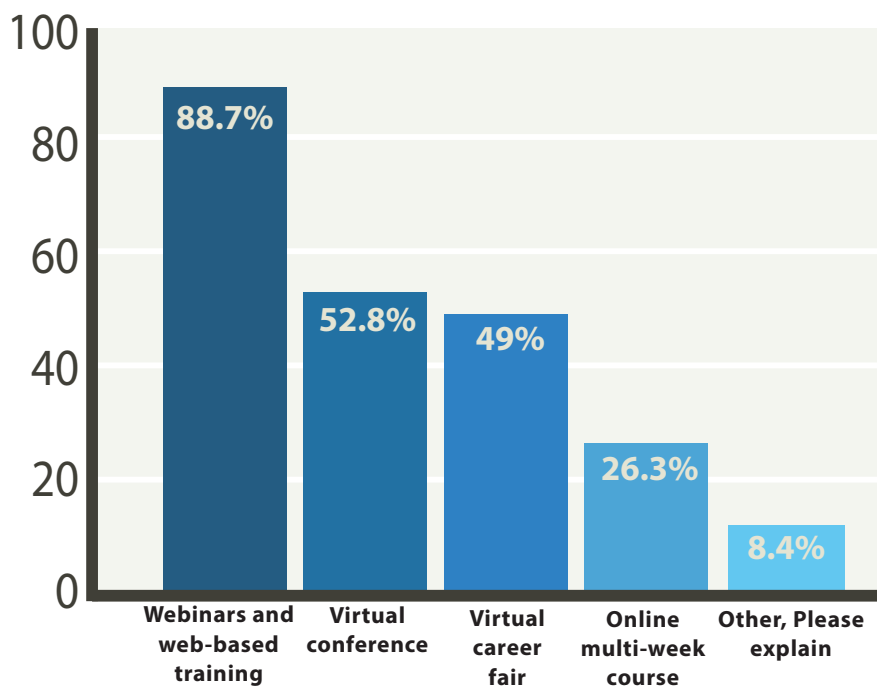
PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS ARE FAMILIAR WITH VIRTUAL EVENTS

Recent years have seen noteworthy growth in the utilization of virtual events. The results of the GovLoop survey indicate the extent to

which virtual gatherings have grown in importance for the public sector. Ninety-two percent of survey respondents reported that they have either attended or participated in virtual events or trainings of some kind. Eighty-nine percent named webinars and web-based trainings as their most-attended type of online training while 50 percent had attended virtual conferences and virtual career fairs. Just 26 percent of participants had engaged in a multi-week online course.

In addition, survey respondents indicated their agencies are getting creative with virtual options. For instance, one respondent said, "We have virtual jams on various topics during which we identify problems and solutions." Others cited experimentation with free platforms like Skype, Google+, virtual worlds, and Twitter Town Halls. **Please see Figure 1 for the breakdown of responses.**

“I’VE PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF VIRTUAL EVENTS” (Figure 1)



PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS SEE THE VALUE OF VIRTUAL EVENTS

Survey respondents saw multiple benefits to virtual events and trainings. The results indicated that professionals value the fact that web-based events reduce travel costs and lost time out of office (91%), save time and money (87%), enables greater participation to geographically dispersed staff (79%) and delivers training more conveniently (70%).

Moreover, one respondent said he found it “easier to make networking connections as people are more willing to connect via social networking.” Another respondent indicated that an underappreciated value in virtual events is the ability to maintain relationships with both the participants and the subject matter experts. “I feel freer to network into the future with trainers/presenters after an online event, than I do after a live event,” stated one survey respondent. Lastly, respondents believed that a virtual event “augments and diversifies participants” and “allows ‘time-shifted’ workers (those who don’t work 9-5) to participate.” One respondent even said that virtual events “provide an opportunity to get training on topics I might otherwise never get an opportunity to attend.”

“VIRTUAL EVENTS AND TRAINING PRESENT THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS”

(Figure 2)

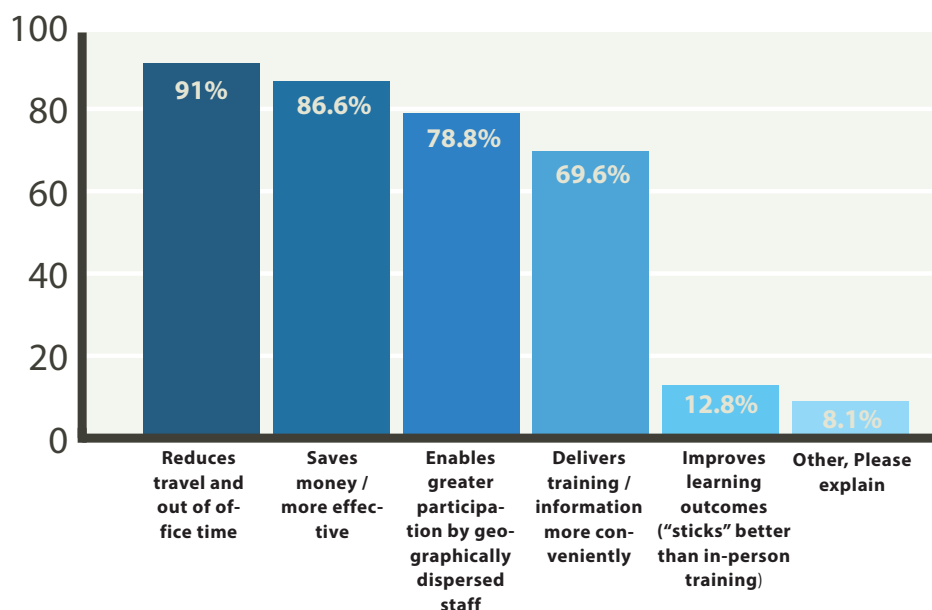


Figure 2 shows the top benefits noted by survey recipients.

PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS APPRECIATE THE FLEXIBILITY OF VIRTUAL EVENTS

Respondents also highlighted the aspects that they found most valuable about virtual events. When asked, “What elements of virtual events and training do you find most effective and engaging?,” the top responses were downloadable PDFs (81%), live presenters via webinars (77%) and links to additional resources (73%). Other valuable elements to virtual events included the pre-recorded webinar format,

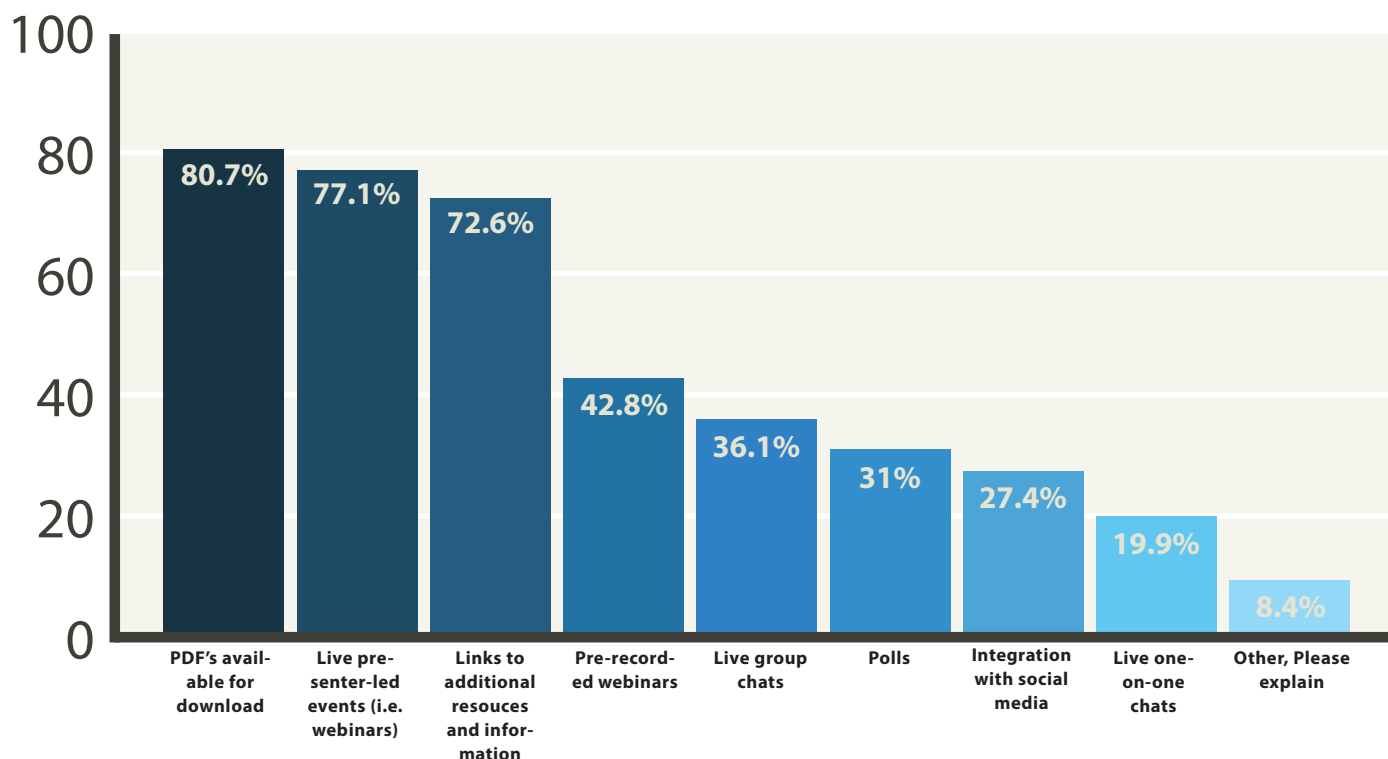
live chats, polls and integration with social media.

In fact, time and again, respondents stated that they liked that participants “can refer back to materials if they are archived” and that “recordings and decks are usually made available, which are convenient.” They also cited as positive that virtual events and training “allow people to complete their training on their own schedule and at their own pace.” Moreover, “staff could learn about a training or event less than 10 minutes before it begins and if their schedule allows, decide to participate with little or no advance no-

tice or they could wait until just before the event to decide whether they have available time and energy to make the most of a virtual event on a given day.”

In a word, it’s ‘flexibility’ that seems to be the greatest value of going virtual, which also leads to greater levels of participation overall. According to one agency training professional: “We recently hosted four virtual roundtables, and many more staff and partners were able to participate since the event was virtual, as opposed to when they could only afford to travel one to three people. [It] brought a lot more

“WHAT ELEMENTS OF VIRTUAL EVENTS AND TRAINING DO YOU FIND MOST EFFECTIVE AND ENGAGING?” (Figure 3)



6 SECRETS TO VIRTUAL TRAINING SUCCESS

In addition to the results found in this survey, GovLoop also completed a research analysis of the state of government training in 2012, conducting interviews with numerous subject matter experts from government, non-profits, and industry. In that research, GovLoop discovered that today's workforce wants learning to:

- ➔ Include practical/real applications.
- ➔ Provide tips/actions/concrete advice that are immediately applicable.
- ➔ Curate and share resources people can access easily (websites, templates, guides, etc.).
- ➔ Incorporate interaction, direction, and feedback.
- ➔ Engage with instructors that offer feedback through multiple modalities: email, direct message, forums/discussion boards, live chat/video, etc..
- ➔ Learn with other students via discussions, forums, group projects.

The best virtual events and training will incorporate some combination of these elements.

breadth of experience and insight into the issues to the table.”

PUBLIC SECTOR PROFESSIONALS SEE AN INEVITABLE TRANSITION TO VIRTUAL EVENTS

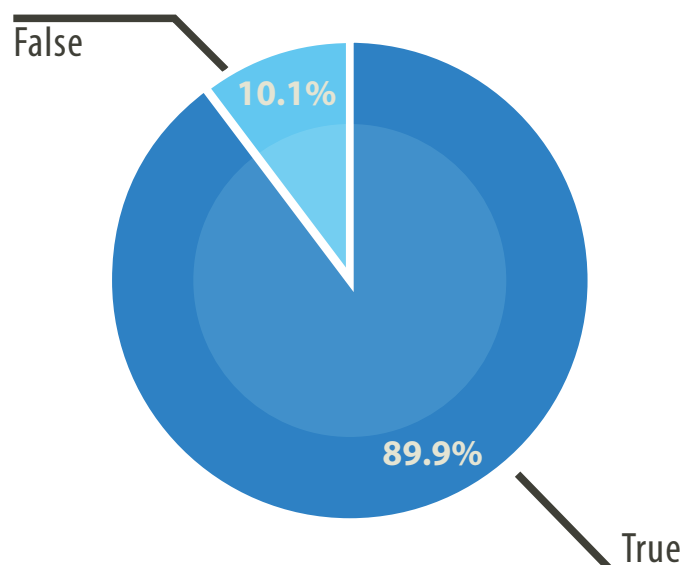
Two out of three respondents indicated that they prefer in-person events, but fully **90 percent believe that they are more likely to attend a virtual event or webinar due to budget cuts and other factors.** One respondent underscored the overarching move toward virtual: “Many of our clients have travel bans or very restrictive travel guidelines. Webinars are often the only

way we can provide legislative staff the continuing training they need.”

Another respondent summed up their mixed feelings about the transition from physical to virtual events: “I prefer to be face to face because there is a better connection established when everyone is physically present creating a better learning atmosphere. However, if people are not local in today's budgets, virtual is better than people not being able to attend. I have also experienced and given classes that have both aspects and that works great. Trainers just need to be aware of how to work with a virtual audience.”

A number of respondents noted that the preference of virtu-

“TRUE OR FALSE: I AM MORE LIKELY TO ATTEND A VIRTUAL EVENT OR WEBINAR INSTEAD OF AN IN-PERSON EVENT” (Figure 4)



al versus in-person is based on the event's content and aim. One professional wrote that her assessment of an event's value, "really depends on the content of the event. Sometimes it's better over webinar when there's a need for a skill-building type learning or when information needs to be conveyed. Sometimes it's better in person, such as career fairs or procurement conferences, where the opportunity to network in person is better." Other feedback from the survey showed that virtual events may be preferred when the goal is content-rich, while in-person events are preferred for programs in project man-

agement, where interpersonal skills are central.

As agencies continue to face budget constraints, especially in training and conferences, they are increasingly looking to virtual events as a cost-reducing means of carrying out mission tasks. However, as indicated virtual events are not a catchall solution. Agencies need to examine how they can most appropriately utilize virtual platforms and how to creatively promote engagement. The remainder of the guide details some best practices in planning, delivering, and evaluating virtual events.

🔗 **Interactive:** The nature of the learning content is emergent as learners interact with one another, a teacher, or other knowledge sources.

These learning experiences may not only be replicated in online instruction, but the research indicates there are "no significant differences in effectiveness between distance education and face-to-face education." One of the studies in the meta-analysis even found, "online learning to be superior to classroom-based instruction in terms of declarative knowledge outcomes." In other words, the data suggests that web-based education is a viable replacement for in-person instruction.

IS VIRTUAL LEARNING EFFECTIVE? (HINT: YES, IT IS.)

In the GovLoop survey, when asked about the benefits of virtual events and online learning, just 13 percent indicated that it improves learning outcomes. However, those respondents may be surprised to learn that a September 2010 report by the Department of Education titled, *Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning: A Meta-Analysis and Review of Online Learning Studies*, found that "on average, students in online learning conditions performed modestly better than those receiving face-to-face instruction." This research was based

on dozens of studies and revealed that web-based learning activities were on par with in-person, classroom-based education.

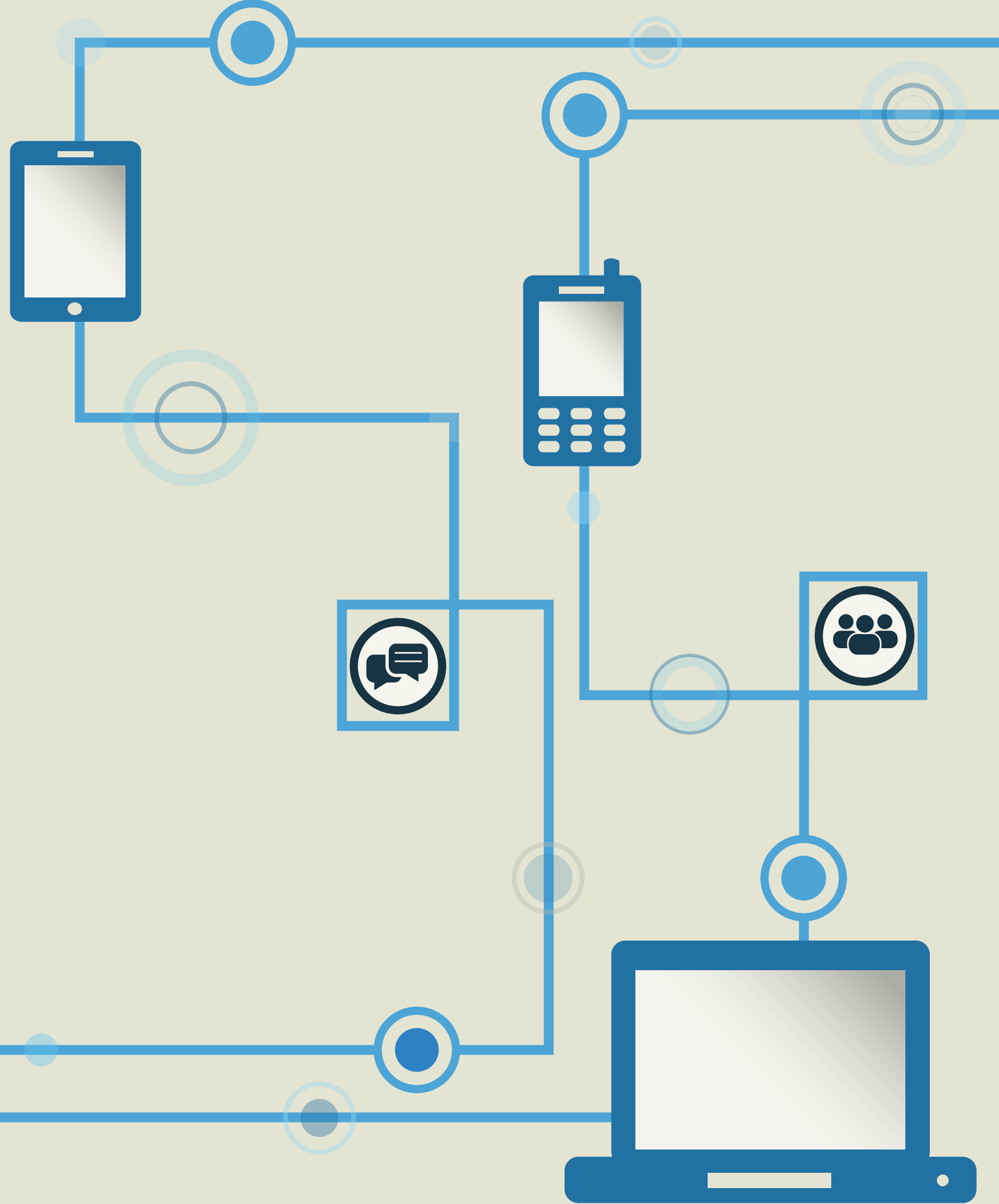
The study notes that there are three types of common, in-person learning experiences that may be facilitated through virtual platforms:

🔗 **Expository:** Content is transmitted to the student by a lecture, written material, or other mechanisms.

🔗 **Active:** The student has control of what and how he or she learns.

Virtual events and online learning activities are more than a cost-saving alternative to in-person events. If your organization is seeking to achieve real learning outcomes while allowing employees to remain up-to-speed, productive and engaged, then there should be no hesitation or second thoughts in moving to the virtual realm.

For more information, see <http://www2.ed.gov/rsch-stat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>



IMPACT

Which Agencies Are Achieving Early Success?



U.S. CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION “2011 PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATICS CONFERENCE”

In August 2011, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched the Public Health Informatics Conference (PHI), which was the first virtual/hybrid event produced by government agency staff. The virtual/hybrid event goals were to cut expenses on employee travel, while continuing to expand the CDC's educational outreach. The event was extremely successful with 1,875 virtual registrants (911 attendees on-site at the Atlanta conference accessing the virtual environment and 964 attendees located virtually across the world). Through online participation, the event saved an estimated \$780,000 in travel costs, including gas, airfare, lodging, and meals, and eliminated over 1 million pounds of carbon dioxide.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE VIRTUAL PLATFORM INITIATIVE

Of course, the extraordinary results of the Public Health Informatics Conference did not happen overnight. Planning for the event began in 2009, when the agency hired a former communications specialist from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services named Adam Arthur. Arthur originally led the development and management of PHConnect.org, the government's first registered social media network. Soon after his arrival, Arthur was also assigned to increase conference attendance for one of CDC's largest annual gatherings. In

response, Arthur suggested a virtual/hybrid event that consists of an immersive virtual environment “that imitates and runs alongside the in-person events.”

In order to gain approval for the event, Arthur created a 43-page project charter that outlined the potential impact of adding a virtual meeting component. He had to ensure that the component would uphold CDC’s operational goals, as well as support alternative objectives, including sustainability, accessibility, and security. Arthur had to show that the virtual component would not only save the CDC money, but also increase their efficiency overall.

Arthur also had to outline all potential issues to win support for the virtual event initiative, including security risks and administrative demands. Arthur explained, “We showed that our vision had been well thought out. We effectively won over the individuals that would usually be naysayers, because we had covered all our bases.” Through a detailed project charter and stakeholder engagement, including security officials and managers, the project received the green light for the Virtual Platform Initiative (VPI) and began development of the CDC’s new platform.

In the development process, the CDC wanted to construct



a lasting virtual platform that could both be utilized for the conference and be adapted for different events and other business cases. Ultimately, this would save the CDC time and money on contracts for individual events and remote business. To accomplish this goal, the agency partnered with two vendors to construct code for a customizable programming platform, now known as CDC’s Virtual Engagement Platform, and provide virtual business services. This technology became the cornerstone of CDC’s VPI.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM AT THE PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATICS CONFERENCE

The VPI was originally designed as an immersive virtual environment to make off-site

conference attendees feel like they are actually at the event. For online attendees, every session during the three-day event was available virtually. The morning meeting sessions and the closing general sessions were live-streamed. The virtual conference website offered 101 live concurrent webinar sessions, with PowerPoint and audio of the on-site speakers. The conference included 17 virtual hosts, who welcomed attendees to sessions and served as online moderators. Finally, the platform enabled vendors to set up virtual booths and interact with online attendees. The event even allowed vendors to measure engagement with online attendees through analytics software.

While providing all of these functional features, the platform also needed to be aesthetically pleasing and inter-

active. Arthur explained, “I tried to make the environment replicate the in-person environment as much as possible. It was photorealistic, showing the lobby, meeting rooms and exhibit halls from the actual hotel where we were broadcasting. If you wanted to go downstairs, you clicked the escalator. If you wanted to enter the exhibit hall, you clicked on the door. We even went so far as to green-screen real people to insert into our environment for realism purposes. There were people literally walking around in the virtual rooms, checking their BlackBerrys and laptops.”

Those who registered for the in-person event also received virtual access, enabling them to check out event resources or sessions they missed during the conference. Before the archived site was debuted, the platform received 4,201 total visits with participants averaging roughly 2 hours and 20 minutes on the site over the course of two months. Finan-

cially, Arthur conservatively estimates that taxpayers saved roughly \$780,000 on traveling expenses associated with gas, airfare, lodging, and meals for virtual attendees.

FUTURE OF THE VIRTUAL PLATFORM INITIATIVE

After the success of the first Public Health Informatics Conference virtual/hybrid event, the CDC granted the authority to produce the virtual conference component until 2014. In 2012, the CDC held six more virtual / hybrid events utilizing the platform. The CDC Centers of Excellence in Public Health Informatics Virtual Conference was one successful example, held exclusively online and featured speakers from around the world. About 700 attendees participated globally. The National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media Virtual Event was another virtual/hybrid successful implementation, which allowed 1,100 health com-

municators from around the world to participate in cross-disciplinary dialogue in a collaborative, virtual environment.

One of the lessons from the event is that virtual programs work well when blended with in-person activities. As Arthur explained, “Shaking someone’s hand and looking them in their eyes, and having collaboration on that level cannot be completely duplicated—there are many studies that show face-to-face contact is essential. If you go virtual-only, you are going to lose some of the collaborative juice.” Agencies should assess the relative value of in-person and online elements, then take the best of both mediums to deliver a hybrid model that most effectively accomplishes their goals for an event.

For more information, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/virtual>

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE “DEFENSE CONNECT ONLINE”

How does a massive organization like the Department of Defense (DoD) connect its 5 million personnel and external, non-DoD folks like first responders, NGOs, foreign partners/militaries, spouses/

loved-ones, etc. for events and online information sharing? An increasingly important answer to that question is Defense Connect Online (DCO), a web-based service that enables web conferencing as well as

live-chats on unclassified and classified networks.

According to Michael Murtha, a Program Manager for Defense Connect Online, “Prior to DCO being available, there

were lots of organizations that went out to get their own solutions or conducted their missions without a solution to do simple things, like conduct meetings remotely or chat with someone if they were available.” Some of these organizations found funding and implemented solutions that met their requirements, but they could not communicate to external organizations. “It was very disjointed and duplicative,” explained Murtha.

While Army its brigades and divisions were using the technology solution that eventually became offered as DCO Connect, it wasn’t until DoD decided to bring this solution enterprise-wide that the outcomes became particularly impactful. Murtha said that those outcomes include, “tremendous usage and growth, cost avoidance and cost savings ranging from simple remote training to disaster relief

efforts to missions planning to command and control.” In 2012 alone, over half a billion minutes of web conferencing were consumed and over 350,000 chat messages were shared per week. Moreover, some conservative models show that DCO saved the DoD between \$500 to \$700 million last year alone.

Of course, those hard numbers don’t account for the benefit of not traveling across dangerous terrain to attend a meeting. Being able to able to attend meetings and planning sessions virtually quite literally saves lives for personnel in places like Iraq and Afghanistan.

DCO has also helped streamline disaster response efforts. Murtha said that during Hurricane Sandy and many other national events, DCO “allows first responders to be in the same virtual room with the

National Guard, other national military stakeholders, and the US Northern Command. In the past, they could not communicate as well. They may have been able to do email and limited asynchronous data sharing, but could not get complete and very timely situational awareness about what was going on.”

Disaster response teams could “get on a conference call, but not see mapping, video, briefing slides, or download pertinent files,” said Murtha. This reality hindered mission achievement. One recent example of leveraging DCO for enhanced results was the Haiti relief effort. The Air National Guard coordinated medevac flights in and out of the country, using DCO to communicate with organizations like Doctors Without Borders and other non-governmental organizations.



One of the core benefits of DCO is that anyone can access a collaborative session. A guest does not need to have a military ID - "only the person that creates the session needs to have a military ID or be a sponsored user," said Murtha. "Among DCO's 900,000 registered users are industry partners, system integrators and many other groups that DoD personnel need to collaborate with around the world."

Even with broad availability and ready access for non-DoD users, the services remains secure. The classified DCO service is available for users that

operate at that level of classification and have access to the SIPR network. Even unclassified access requires a Common Access Card (CAC) certificate to validate a person's credentials.

DCO is being used to host a variety of virtual events for the DoD. One example is the 21st Annual Safety Conference, which they converted from in-person to online. The online iteration of the conference was a multi-day event that featured keynotes and track sessions that followed a community of interest format.

With 5 million personnel in the DoD, the DCO platform serves as an example for adoption. As DCO adds even more capabilities, it will become an increasingly important facet of DoD's responsiveness to mission-related needs that hinge on improved connectedness and real-time communication channels.

For more information, visit: <http://www.disa.mil/Services/Enterprise-Services/Applications/Defense-Connect-Online>

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S "VIRTUAL SPRING SUMMIT"

In 2012, the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) hosted a series of in-person Every Day Counts Fall Summits. Over the past previous years, in-person events had become quite costly. "The cost concerns were not just the expenses associated with the conference itself, but the loss of time for participating employees as they found it harder and harder to be away from the office," explained Debbie Gwaltney, the FHWA's Information Services Team Lead. The highest levels of leadership knew that the event was unsustainable in a face-to-face

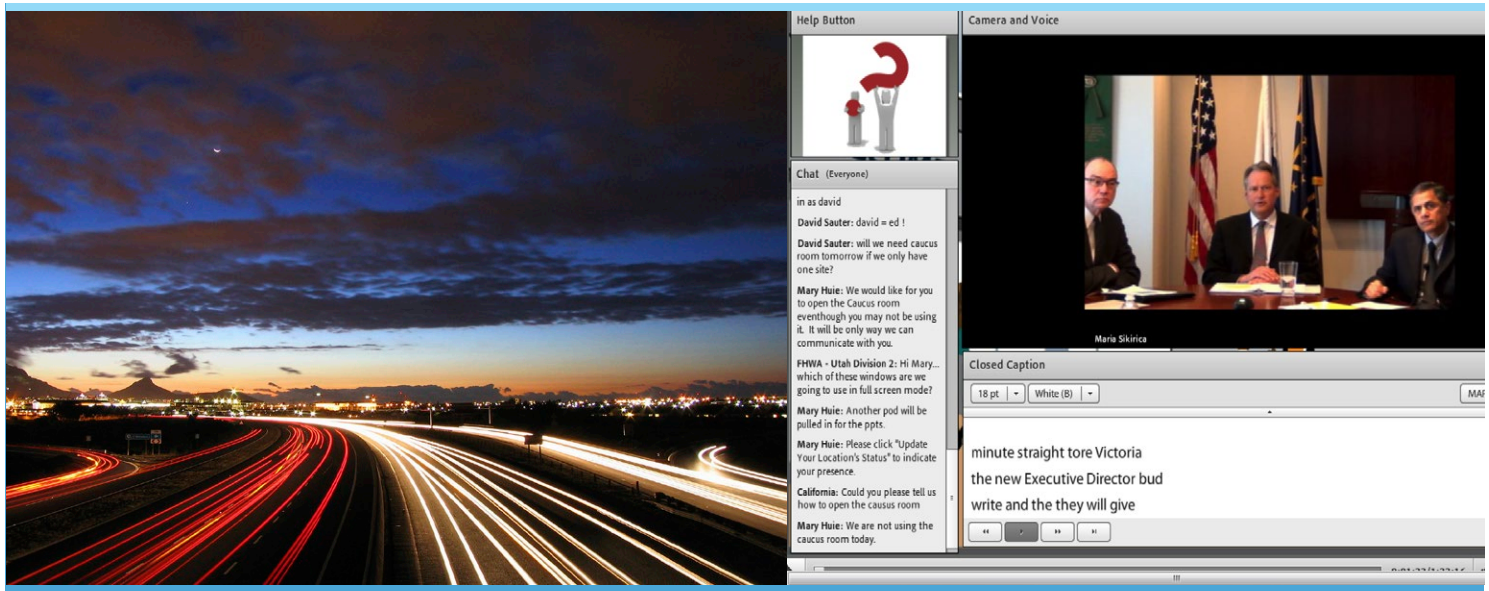
format and directed staff to discover alternative options.

At first, FHWA considered hosting the event in a virtual world where participants would interact in a two-dimensional space via avatars. This type of engagement felt like the next step in the organization's technological evolution as it had already been using web conferencing for almost a decade. Ultimately, the key stakeholders concluded that their decision "should not hinge on a type of technology, but on meeting their business needs and educational require-

ments," said Gwaltney. Those requirements were to:

- ➊ Reach anyone, anywhere at anytime.
- ➋ Enable web-based access.
- ➌ Avoid the use of a download or plug-in for the end user.
- ➍ Ensure that the event was highly interactive.

With these core requirements in mind, Gwaltney indicated that the group made a unanimous final selection of the



right platform, and it has proven to be the perfect choice.

With the delivery platform decision made, Gwaltney and the conference planners began shaping the format and schedule for the virtual event. They settled on a format that enabled the 2,500 attendees to log into a 'virtual lobby' where they could navigate to their relevant sessions. Attendees primarily joined the plenary presentations in a central room, but they also had the opportunity to break out into dedicated rooms for each of the 50 states where they could network with colleagues and discuss issues specific to their geographic location. There was also a "map pod" that enabled direct access and communication to a particular state.

The event's impact is an increasingly common story for

agencies that move from in-person to virtual events. Gwaltney reported that the virtual event has enabled FHWA to:

- ➊ Cut the cost of the event by 90% from the in-person version.
- ➋ Increase attendance from 1,200 in-person to 2,500 virtual participants.
- ➌ Facilitate better decision-making by states that are evaluating new technology at the summit.
- ➍ Gain "extremely positive" participant feedback, especially with the state rooms and "the ability to have so many more people able to participate."
- ➎ Expand this delivery method and platform to achieve agency-wide impact.

The virtual platform has the power to bring in employees working in various geographic locations. Gwaltney pointed out that the FHWA has division offices in every state and in other remote locations. "In the past, logistics limited participation from these offices. However, virtual delivery has increased field participation" and enabled leadership to more effectively gather state input not only at an event like the Spring Summit, but as a new way of doing business in the agency.

For more information, about the Spring Summit, please visit: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/everydaycounts/springsummit/>



OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT AND GOVLOOP SOCIAL LEARNING PILOT : “PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FOR HR PRACTITIONERS”

In August 2012, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) approached GovLoop to lead the development and delivery of a pilot project that would incorporate social learning (i.e. the use of web-based tools, such as social networks, blogs and online discussion forums) into a federal human resources course. OPM wanted to test a new method of training delivery and assess its ability to transfer learning back to the job.

“We hoped that by incorporating social learning techniques into human resources training, it would make a greater impact on the transfer of learning back to the job,” said Karen Simpson, Training Policy and Outreach Program Manager at OPM.

The original goal was to host 30 participants in the pilot course. OPM reached out directly to approximately 20-25 potential participants who were preselected to ensure a diverse range of titles and levels in government. As the agency opened enrollment beyond this smaller group, it quickly became apparent that there was strong interest for the course as 97 participants

signed up from more than 25 agencies.

“The need for HR training is increasing in demand,” explained Simpson. “Many HR professionals are looking for training opportunities to grow in this profession, but the present budget climate is making it more difficult. The social learning pilot gave HR professionals an opportunity to participate in an innovative training experience and gain knowledge and skills that they could apply to their jobs.”

PLANNING, DESIGN AND EXECUTION

For the pilot course material, OPM selected a Department of Defense (DoD) course titled, “Performance Management for HR Practitioners.” The course had been used by DoD, vetted by OPM policy experts and was already posted on HR University. Based on an analysis of the Instructor and Participant Guides provided by the DoD, GovLoop converted the classroom-based training into six discrete modules. These modules were presented over a period of six weeks by five differ-

ent instructors and followed the same pattern of delivery:

- ➡ **Webinar:** Live and recorded, instructor-led, every Tuesday for one hour.
- ➡ **Readings:** Self-paced, completed by Thursday of each week; 2-3 blog posts from GovLoop and other sources that featured knowledge from both experts and colleagues.
- ➡ **Group Discussion:** Live, every Thursday for forty-five minutes (and available afterwards); incorporated videos, scenarios and questions from the DoD materials.
- ➡ **Peer Reflection:** Self-paced, completed by Friday; each participant was paired with one person from a different agency and asked to share lessons learned in the previous week.

The course was staged in a virtual classroom, using an invite-only, online group in the GovLoop community. The virtual classroom included all course content, a course syllabus and workbook, course instructions

and discussions as well as instructor biographical sketches.

GovLoop also administered a pre-course survey to determine the learning expectations of participants and their supervisors; facilitated web-based orientations for instructors and participants; developed and delivered weekly emails; moderated weekly webinars and discussion forums; and provided overall technical assistance. OPM provided general support and monitored each of these administrative components.

EVALUATION AND PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

GovLoop and OPM gathered feedback through individual course participation tracking, webinar evaluations, weekly peer reflections, pre- and post-course surveys (immediate and 60-day) as well as focus groups with both participants and instructors within one week of course completion. Post-course survey results revealed that:

- 86%** indicated that the “course learning objectives were met”
- 79%** said that the “level of interaction in course met or exceeded my expectations”
- 75%** reported that the “information presented in the course was useful for my job”

Across twelve learning elements, an average of 96% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they had improved their knowledge or skills. Overall, course participants, instructors, and administrators found the course to be an effective pilot that achieved its desired objectives. Additional feedback summarized the overall impact of the course:

- “I have been a classroom instructor for 20 years, which is better for soft skills and practice. This system is much easier to get supervisors to do than to get them to join a class for 2-3 days.”

- “With telework and remotely located workers, this type of class is better than the alternatives.”
- “I wanted to participate in this type of blended learning. While this isn’t immediate job performance for me, it is an approach to training that I am interested in for my agency and to that end, it was very successful.”
- “Reflecting on the course’s six weeks, it has been greatly instructional...not to mention learning from experience and discussing the issues with the experts and practitioners in the field. I’ve had a good experience from this six weeks and hope to see other courses available that I can take part.”
- “These past weeks have made me see in a broader sense how the HR specialist can make a difference in an organization.”

As a result of the success of this pilot, OPM and GovLoop are looking for future opportunities to convert traditional, classroom-based training into online, social learning modules or to create new courses based on emerging government requirements.

For more information, visit: <http://www.govloop.com/govloop-opm-partner-to-produce-successful-social-learning-pilot>



Get your free copy of Virtual Learning for Dummies

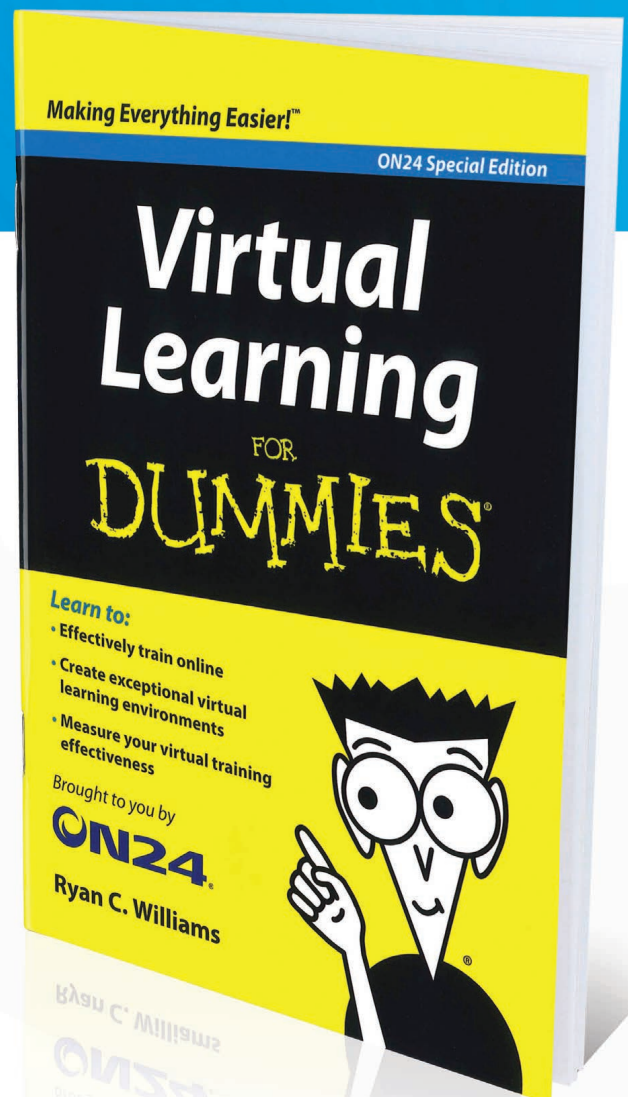
Download Your Free eBook at
ON24.com/govloop

This book will help you quickly learn the WHY and HOW of virtual learning. Discover the power of virtual learning, and read about the many applications for virtual training and the benefits for your employees, customers, and partners.

If you are considering virtual learning for your company or want to improve your current efforts, this book gives you the tools to make virtual learning work for you.

LEARN TO

- Effectively train online
- Create exceptional virtual learning environments
- Measure your virtual training effectiveness





Virtual Event Platform

As the pioneer of virtual business solutions that increase productivity and maximize business ROI, 6Connex provides user-intuitive, immersive, turnkey virtual solutions. To ensure our customers get the highest value and return from the secure and scalable Virtual Experience Platform

Key Benefits:

- » Only approved platform used by the U.S. and UK Governments
- » Enterprise Level Security
- » Comprehensive Content Management System
- » Self-service and Full-service offering
- » Real-time Metrics and Analytics
- » Live and OnDemand Videos
- » Integrated Webinar Platform
- » Support for mobile device



LEADING LEARNERS TO NEW LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

An Interview with Leon Papkoff, Chief Technology Officer for 6Connex



When it comes to virtual events and training, there are many benefits: lower costs, reduced travel, positive environmental impact, unparalleled convenience and substantial time

savings. According to Leon Papkoff, the Chief Technology Officer of 6Connex, none of those factors are the most important.

"The most important element is that it's scalable for larger numbers," said Papkoff. "Beyond any physical gathering, you can create a curriculum and scale it, which becomes a multiplier effect for all those other benefits."

Papkoff noted that he's been in the industry for a while and has watched the pendulum swing back and forth as organizations figure out the right balance between physical and virtual.

"When I look over the years, a lot of customers jumped in right away and just said, 'okay, we're going to stop all our physical events or meetings' and went completely virtual. Then they realized that didn't work out too great, so now we're going to swing back over," Papkoff said. "Now people are realizing that it's really a balanced approach." What used to be a physical event of 15,000 people now might have only 5,000-6,000 people in person and the other 10,000 join virtually. "That's the concept of the hybrid event that's becoming more and more popular," said Papkoff.

So how does an organization achieve that balance? Papkoff suggested asking several questions around the event's core objectives:

- ❶ Is the event or training for internal staff or will it be a public event?

- ❷ What type of content does the organization have in mind?
- ❸ How much of the content do they want to be available before, during and after the event?

In addition, Papkoff said that 6Connex breaks up an event into five distinct stages of engagement as another way of achieving a successful balance:

- ❹ **Awareness:** How do we make people feel comfortable in a new environment?
- ❺ **Interaction:** How do we assist participants to get involved in deeper levels of engagement?
- ❻ **Learning:** What facets of the experience are they accessing to gain knowledge (i.e. webcasts, videos, PDFs, etc.)?
- ❼ **Collaboration:** Are the participants building on the foundation of interaction and learning to share with other attendees?
- ❽ **Teaching:** Are participants reaching back to help others in earlier stages of engagement?

Papkoff urges organizations to use these questions in the planning phase to establish key performance indicators, then circle back around to map the results.

"These are methodologies that have been around for decades," admitted Papkoff. "The key for virtual events and training is to be flexible and agile."

For more information, please visit <http://www.6connex.com/>

Meetings & Training on the Move

Host, present and drive collaboration and training from your device and desktop



Learn more >>



www.adobe.com/government



[/AdobeGov](https://www.facebook.com/AdobeGov)



[@AdobeGov](https://twitter.com/AdobeGov)

ENABLING ACCESS EVERYWHERE

An Interview with Emily Timmerman, Adobe Connect Solutions Consultant, Adobe Public Sector



If you're a training or event organizer, what happens at an in-person conference when you find out onsite that your subject matter expert (SME) or keynote speaker can't make it? You likely

have a few options: (a) engage in a last-minute scramble to shuffle the schedule, (b) find someone from among the current attendees who can present in a pinch, or (c) cancel the session and give participants an extended break.

While this scenario would still create a challenge for a virtual event manager, one of the benefits of being online is that "an SME is available and able to participate in a session at almost a moment's notice – having the potential to deliver whether they're on the road, in the office or teleworking," said Emily Timmerman, an Adobe Connect Solutions Consultant with Adobe's Public Sector team.

With the technology available today, "an SME doesn't need to know much about the platform itself. They can come online, get a quick 5-minute tutorial and be up and running."

Virtual platforms mitigate other unforeseen circumstances as well. For instance, Timmerman recounted a recent virtual event where "the presenter was stuck in traffic and not able to make it back to the office in time for the presentation. Instead of having to reschedule the session, the speaker was able to pull over and present via an

Adobe Connect Mobile app on his tablet." The participants never knew the difference.

Timmerman is also seeing a significant increase in online learning via virtual conferences and summits due to their ability to draw a crowd. "Every agency that has embraced virtual training is surprised by the size of audience they are able to reach and how thirsty some of their remote employees have been for this type of training," said Timmerman.

Timmerman recommends that agencies give considerable thought to how they will engage virtual learners. "There are many ways to engage the learner online," Timmerman said. "You can use polls, ask for responses to questions via chat as well as encourage the use of status icons like raising a virtual hand to agree or disagree with comments. The key is to regularly check in with participants throughout the presentation."

In order to help organizations measure learner participation levels, Adobe's virtual classrooms have an engagement dashboard, which allows presenters to see participant activity in real time. "If the engagement dashboard ticks down, the presenter can spur fresh energy by asking another thought-provoking question to re-connect attendees with the content," said Timmerman.

For more information, please see: <http://www.adobe.com/products/adobeconnect.html>

Cisco Event Collaboration Services



Faster deployment, lower cost and better results.



Webcasting

Broadcast and archive high quality video

- Expert technical integration and end-to-end project support
- HD video inside or outside your firewall
- Live events, announcements and presentations
- Integrates with existing infrastructure

Welcome to the Virtual Conference

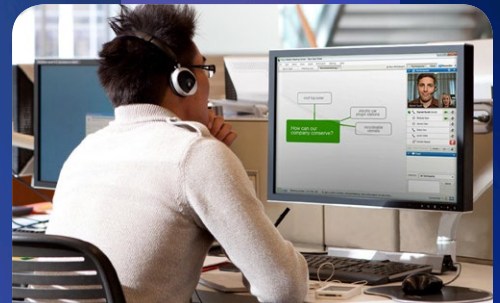
Learn. Share. Collaborate.

- Sessions >
- Resources >
- Sponsors >
- Games & Badges >

Online Events

Reusable virtual room or conference center

- Replicates real-life event experiences
- Real-time metrics and statistics
- Integrates with WebEx, Show and Share, TelePresence and more
- Developed and supported by the leaders in virtual events
- Cost of ownership lessens with re-use



WebEx Events

Plan and conduct collaborative online meetings

- Experienced production team
- Integrated, easy-to-use
- End-to-end project management and support
- Standalone, or part of a larger solution

For more information, call 1-877-509-3239 today, or see a [live demo](#).

CAN VIRTUAL BECOME “BETTER THAN BEING THERE?”

An Interview with Cisco's Hans Hwang, Vice President of Cisco Advanced Services



What if virtual events and training participants could create an online experience that was better than being in-person? That might sound like an unattainable goal, but Hans Hwang, Vice President of Cisco Advanced Services, says Cisco has made it a top priority.

“We want virtual experiences to be better than being there,” said Hwang. “We watch high-definition sporting events and sometimes that experience is better than in-person when you consider visibility to action, ease of conversing with friends and other factors. Why can’t that be true of online training or virtual events?”

Of course, Hwang noted that it will require multiple factors to make virtual training preferable to face-to-face experiences. “It’s not just technology, not just the content, not just the facilitation, not just the experience - it’s all of these things being considered as part of planning for an optimum attendee experience before, during, and after an event.”

Effective virtual event planning requires that key stakeholders understand their outcomes and objectives, and that these outcomes and objectives are spelled out in concrete requirements. For instance, “if an organization will require employees to be able to participate from their smartphones in addition to their desks, it will need to make sure that employee devices can access the content and that infrastructure

can support the users logging on from multiple devices,” noted Hwang.

When designing a virtual event or training experience, one temptation is to simply convert traditional curriculum to an online medium. Hwang cautioned against this practice. He suggests that organizations “start with a blank sheet of paper. Don’t do a one-to-one mapping from the old way of getting information out. You’ve got to think about how you get information in. How can you enable participants to more readily share knowledge with each other?”

For instance, Cisco has worked closely with several universities to rethink how they deliver education. Instead of using precious in-person time to have a professor drone on from the front of a large lecture hall, some schools are having professors record a webcast version of their lectures in advance. Students then view the on-demand videos before arriving at lecture and come to class ready to debate each other on the content.

The move to virtual is also revolutionizing organizations with geographically dispersed staff. “Lots of knowledge wasn’t getting shared in the past. People wouldn’t run into each other unless they attended an in-person conference,” said Hwang. With virtual learning, “we’re speeding up breakthroughs,” said Hwang.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.cisco.com/en/US/products/ps10352/services.html>

THE FREEDOM TO MEET & SHARE FROM ANYWHERE



Across the country or around the world, FuzeBox allows you to meet, train and collaborate with anyone over safe, reliable, HD video and audio conferencing. Our cloud-based content sharing assures a high quality performance every single event.

Save valuable time and resources.
Any Device. Anywhere.

LEARN MORE

FUZEBOX®
WWW.FUZEBOX.COM

IMPROVING THE HUMAN CONDITION VIA VIDEO-BASED CONNECTIONS

An Interview with Jeff Cavins, CEO, FuzeBox



The way we conduct business has changed dramatically. "It used to be that the three most important tools were telephone, email, and airplane," explained Jeff Cavins, CEO of FuzeBox.

"Video-based connections are quickly becoming the fourth tool as they bridge the former three practices, allowing for real time, visual meetings anytime and anywhere."

Until recently, there were many challenges associated with the use of video-based connections for virtual meetings and trainings. "Software used to be extremely expensive. However, due to the introduction of cloud technology, daily costs have significantly decreased to about what you would spend on lunch," said Cavins. Lack of bandwidth and complicated software used to make video-based connections more difficult. These problems have mostly been mitigated as companies implement cloud technology, which limits dropped connections and improves the user experience across multiple devices.

All of these fixes have made video-based connections easier and more cost-effective, which makes it an attractive option for the public sector. "In 3-5 years, video-based connections will be on every device in the government, helping to enhance productivity and efficiency," predicted Cavins. "The U.S. government is one of the largest organizations in the world and it would benefit to communicate visually in real time, anytime and anywhere."

Several government agencies are already benefiting from video-based connections. For exam-

ple, the Department of Veterans Affairs is using FuzeBox to deliver personalized medical attention to veterans. Doctors and patients communicate over video without the patient traveling to the hospital. Moreover, video-based connection is valuable for the Department of Defense's mobile soldier initiative as well as other government conferences and yearly training.

"Now that OMB has placed limits on gatherings and conferences and anything over a certain dollar amount has to be approved, video-based connections are a good substitute," noted Cavins.

"The key to making virtual events more prominent is to ensure that users have a good experience," explained Cavins. "This occurs by making a product that is intuitive to use, consistent across all devices, and enables collaboration in multiple mediums, such as video, chat, and screen share. Once you achieve this goal, individuals begin to understand the value of the virtual experience and shift to this medium over in-person."

Based on his experience, Cavins sees "individuals using Fuzebox in large nations, such as India, Britain, and the US, and remote or small countries, such as Madagascar, Papua New Guinea, and Guyana. Since the technology requires Internet, instead of phone service, a lot more people are able to connect and collaborate, which ultimately drives economic activity and improves the human condition."

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fuzebox.com/go/home>



Juggling IT Priorities? We Can Help.

"In a marketplace defined by fast technology developments, Vidyo has been at the forefront of innovation."

Frost & Sullivan



In today's always-on and BYOD world, extending your video conferencing capabilities while avoiding pitfalls — like cost, interoperability and unreliable quality — can be a little tricky.

The 2013 winner of the Frost & Sullivan Global Video Conferencing Technology Leadership Award, Vidyo delivers telepresence-quality multiparty video collaboration at audio conferencing price points. We support a diverse set of devices used by enterprises and government agencies every day on networks they already have in place.

Increase workforce productivity without compromises — no matter how many balls you have in the air.

To learn more, visit www.vidyo.com/govloop

Let's toss some fresh ideas around.



ACHIEVING OPTIMAL OUTCOMES WITH VIRTUAL EVENTS

An Interview with Joan Vandermate, Vice President, Product Marketing, Vidyo



How do you design a virtual event or training that achieves optimal outcomes? According to Joan Vandermate, Vice President of Product Marketing for Vidyo, there are several steps an organization can take to ensure success:

First, Vandermate suggested that organizations begin with a blended approach. She explained how one organization set up a training program that launched with a hands-on, in-person event. Once the participants went back to their offices, their training continued through a combination of self-paced modules and live, instructor-led videos. "What they found is that in-person built camaraderie," explained Vandermate, "and that subsequent virtual sessions became more interactive because they knew each other."

Second, Vandermate encouraged agencies to test systems in advance. If an agency is planning to host a live, video-based training, it's important that participants engage in a test prior to the event. "For instance, CERN (the European Organization for Nuclear Research), has set up a video desktop and a camera so that scientists can test the technology and initiate a connection before key meetings," said Vandermate. Testing systems in advance avoids situations where participants might miss valuable information as they spend the first five to ten minutes of a session troubleshooting technical issues.

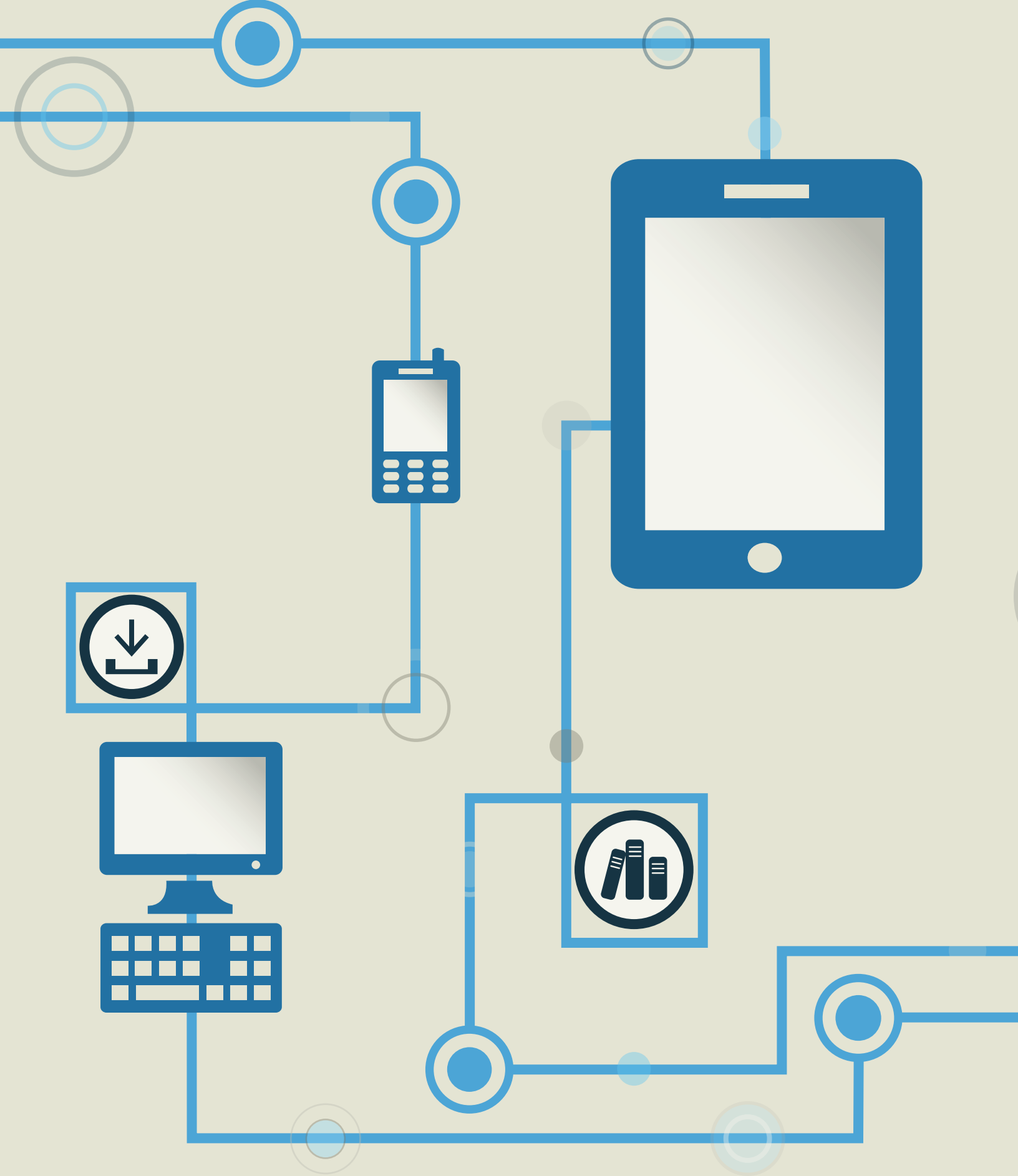
Third, Vandermate suggests assigning a moderator. While it's possible that the speaker or instructor could play dual roles of trouble-

shooting and presenting, the best practice in virtual events is assigning a single moderator. "That person can assist with activities like muting everyone, responding to technical issues and attending to participant needs while the speaker can be full on running the session," recommended Vandermate.

A fourth suggestion from Vandermate was the use of surveys and Q&A to assess and sustain engagement during the event. "Every 10 minutes, we do a poll question so that participants have to push something back," said Vandermate. "We also end webinars with a Q&A session" that allows the organization to assess not only the quantity of questions from participants, but the quality of questions as well. If attendees are asking drill-down questions on the content, they've likely found it to be valuable and relevant.

Finally, Vandermate recommended that agencies extend participant engagement beyond a single event. "Use creative approaches to keep participants engaged over time," suggested Vandermate. "It's important to connect with participants multiple times through multiple modes of communication before and after the event." That touch point could include an email or a series of links on an agency intranet site or even a quick knowledge test at regular intervals after the event.

For more information, please visit [http:// info.vidyo.com/Live_Demo.html?ls=GovLoop](http://info.vidyo.com/Live_Demo.html?ls=GovLoop)



IMPLEMENTATION

What Are the Key Considerations for Implementation?



10 TIPS FOR PRODUCING VALUABLE VIRTUAL EVENTS

Based on the case studies and industry perspectives above, there seem to be several common considerations when it comes to implementing virtual events and training. To maximize the benefits and combat the challenges, agencies should take into account the following ten elements:

① Get a champion and a charter. DOT had a senior executive that pushed their project forward as its champion. CDC established a bulletproof charter that was honest about potential issues and offered responses to mitigate the concerns of detractors. These two elements always seem to accompany an inno-

vation effort and that's true for an agency's first steps into virtual events and training.

② Define outcomes and objectives at the outset. CDC, DoD, DOT, and OPM all began with their missions in mind. They built their forays into virtual venues upon clear business objectives and concrete training requirements. Each of the industry experts confirmed this approach and encouraged their customers to establish key performance indicators (KPIs) that can be tracked and reported to ensure that the event/training achieves its desired goals.

③ Put together an audience profile. DoD knew it needed to implement a solution that accounted for personnel in remote and risky locations. They also had challenges



around varying levels of classified and unclassified access both within and outside the organization. Not every agency has this kind of complicated operating environment, but it's still worth asking audience-related questions like: Where are participants located geographically? Is there a need for many employees to augment soft skills in a particular topic area? How broad or specific does it need to be? Are their groups of employees in a functional area that need training? How many participants would benefit from a particular type of training (will the scalability of virtual meet high volume needs)? How many people would likely attend in-person and how many would take advantage of an opportunity for virtual participation?

4 Take an honest assessment of your organizational readiness. DOT's organizational readiness for a virtual event was eight years in the making. They had nearly a decade of conducting web-based conferencing to prepare both the organization and potential external participants for a fully virtual event. If an agency is initiating virtual events or training for the first time, it might require a couple more cycles to educate and gain buy-in. Be sure to remain clear-eyed in assessing: What is the organizational / workplace culture? Are employees familiar with virtual events and training? Is the organization's technological infrastructure ready for a move to virtual?

5 Determine the need for outside support and assistance. OPM, CDC, DOT and DoD all recognized that they would benefit from having a vendor working alongside them to achieve their project goals. For each of them, it was not just about technology, but also about methodology. Some vendors' value is as simple as providing a platform. Others bring experience and expertise to the table that could increase the likelihood of a project's success. If agency employees are familiar with virtual platforms and programs, by all means they should take the lead from design through evaluation. If virtual is something new to an organization, an agency might consider working with a trusted partner on a project to leverage the vendor's hard-won

lessons and proven approach.

6 Identify both current and fresh content assets. It's likely that an organization has been conducting events or training in-person for many years and has historical content that can be grafted into a virtual approach. As mentioned by at least one of the interviewees above, the temptation might be to simply convert that content directly into an online forum. Moving to a virtual modality provides an opportunity to take a fresh look at traditional content. By thinking outside-the-box, OPM was able to blend previously used DoD course content (including videos and classroom-based exercises) with online discussions and blog-based content that enhanced and applied a new spin on the traditional material.

7 Build interactive and engaging components. Virtual events and training provide a great opportunity to incorporate interactive components to training, whether it's real-time polling, live chat, social media integration, breakout rooms, or multi-video participation. Even ample time for Q&A in an hour-long session can transform a "push" mode of information sharing to a highly relevant, just-in-time knowledge exchange. When designing virtual events and training, take into consideration the following questions: What methods

could be used to facilitate interaction between presenters and attendees and among attendees? How will you make the content "stick" with the audience and how will it triumph over distractions in the office?

8 Market a virtual engagement like you would an in-person engagement. Most organizations spend a lot of time and energy to encourage participation in face-to-face events. The same level of marketing is required to encourage virtual attendance. As has been shown throughout this guide, the difference is that the yield for virtual events ends up being much higher. Best practices include a marketing approach that leverages all the traditional tactics (fliers, word-of-mouth, email, etc.) coupled with well-timed emails just before and during the event.

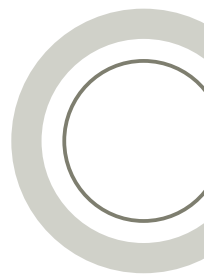
9 Test, test and test again. An obvious, but often overlooked, component of delivering successful virtual training and events is checking to make sure that internet, hardware and software work effectively. It's always a good idea to run a test with the specific laptops in the specific office(s) or meeting room(s) where the moderators and presenters will be participating in the event or training. Schedule a test call in order to square away everything from log-in access to audio, video, site navigation, polling

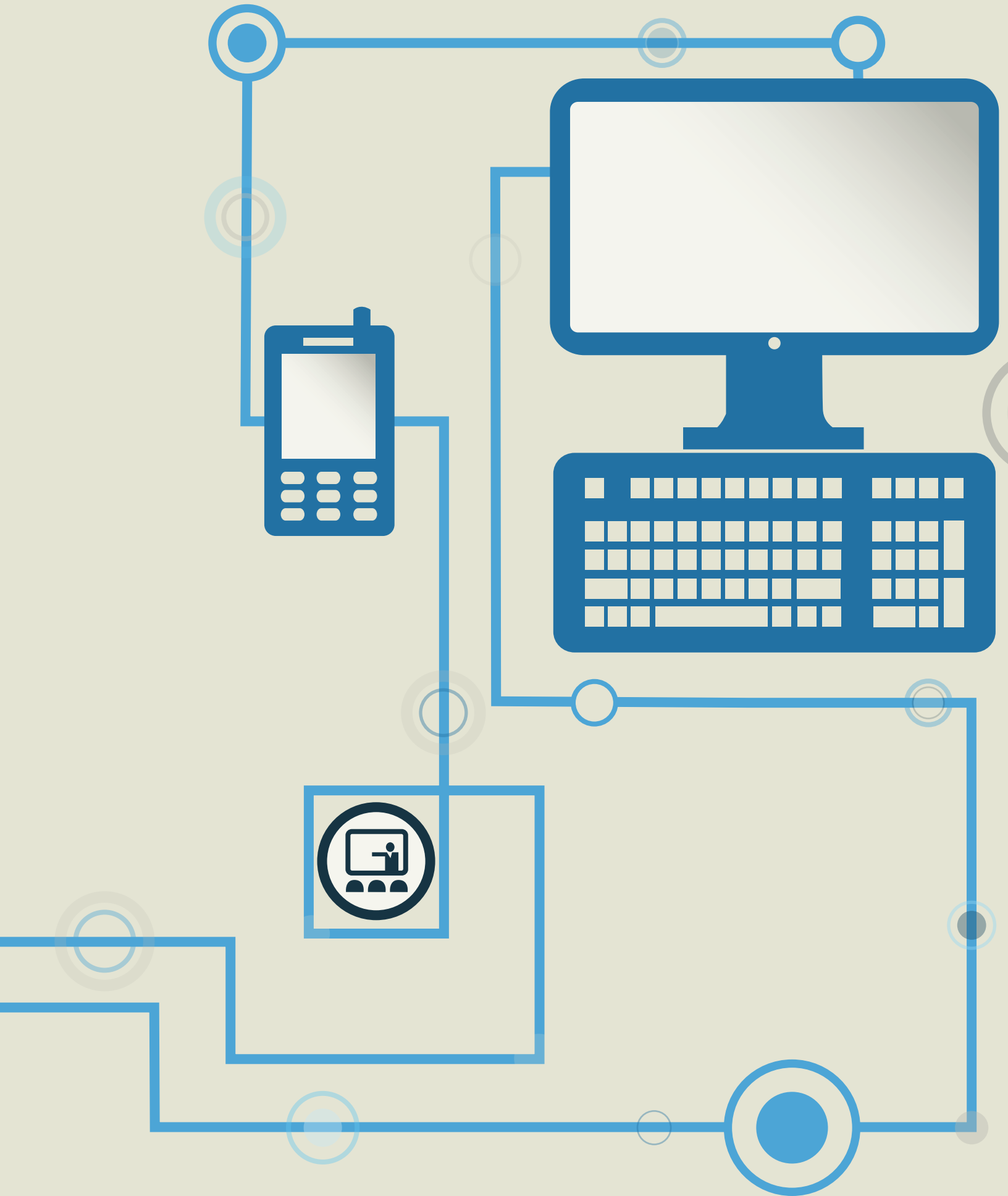
and other facets of the virtual platform are both familiar and functional for everyone involved in the event.

10 Consider what content should be available after the event/training.

In many ways, virtual events and training create a long-tail impact for organizations. Both attendees that join in real-time and personnel that need to participate on an alternative schedule can take advantage of the flexibility offered by virtual. Live video and discussions may be recorded for access post-event. Content can be posted for download or online viewing long after the training is over. This reality extends the value of virtual events and training. Over time, the growing amount of content becomes a readily accessible repository of peer- and expert-based knowledge.


If you follow these ten tips, you'll be well on your way to planning and running a successful virtual event or training.





INNOVATION:

How Can Agencies Move Forward Together?



The hard reality right now is that external pressures are causing agencies to rethink the way they host events and deliver training. The shift from physical to virtual will likely have a permanent impact on government, leading agencies to become even more creative and innovative in how they equip and educate their employees.

One response to this shift on the federal level is the Government Virtual Engagements Community of Practice (CoP). The GVE CoP is an online social collaboration effort to source the most relevant, peer reviewed information on all topics around the use of virtual engagements to meet the needs of government and government partners.

This sourced and refined information will be worked into a variety of products that will serve to educate and inform those within government, and entities that support government,

who will need to develop the skills and abilities necessary to support the use and implementation of technology-based engagements.

The three primary goals of the GVE CoP are to:

- 1 Assist in the development of government-friendly interoperability standards around virtual engagement technologies;
- 2 Source and refine professional development learning materials; and
- 3 Support the development of tools that simplify solutions strategies for the planning and execution of virtual engagements.

Another – and maybe the most important – focus of the community's founders is to familiarize people with these innovative tools and

dispel the myths that always burden the adoption of newer technologies.

By designing resources specifically to meet the needs of government, and developing – and broadening – a support system around government virtual engagements, even the least informed critic and those averse to change will soon be as comfortable with these technologies as they are with the telephone or personal computer.

For some, progress takes a little getting used to. But there's also a very strong current of technologically savvy individuals within our governments, and government partners, who are more than ready for this shift to 21st Century technologies that supplement in-person engagements.

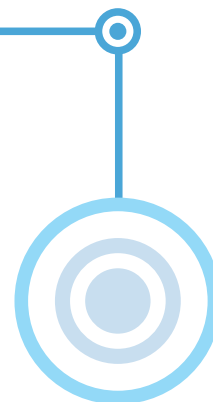
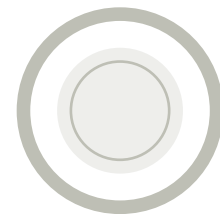
The GVE CoP will be made up of three representative factions, coming together to develop standards, share knowledge, and find the best solutions for implementing virtual business technologies and practices at all levels of government:

- Communicators and collaborators - both FTEs and contractors - within federal, state, territorial and local governments, who are practitioners of virtual engagement use cases and technology solutions.
- Partners of these government entities - such as non-profit and for-profit associations.
- Virtual technology service providers and consulting firms that service government

For more information about the GVE CoP, or to find out how to join, check out the community's preliminary discussion group that has been set up on GovLoop:

http://www.govloop.com/groups/gve_group

The GovLoop Group will be used to identify individuals who are interested in participating in the GVE CoP, and to better understand the needs of individuals who work within the scope of this community's purpose.



SUMMARY

There's no doubt that government agencies will be hosting an increasing number of events online. The opportunities for scale and cost effectiveness are immense and the risks are relatively low. We hope this guide has been a useful resource to understand the perceptions of public sector professionals when it comes to virtual events and training. We also hope that the examples and insights from government and industry are informational and inspirational, and that the concrete action steps and open invitation to join a community of interest around this topic give you a solid foundation to move forward. Please do not hesitate to let us know how we can continue to provide additional support and resources as you seek to build valuable, virtual conferences and training.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

GovLoop would like to thank the following individuals who were interviewed for this guide:

Adam Arthur, Virtual Platform Initiative Lead, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and GVE CoP Co-Founder

Mary E. Arthur, GVE CoP Co-Founder

David Ely, GVE CoP Co-Founder

Debbie Gwaltney, Information Services Team Lead, Federal Highway Administration

Hans Hwang, Vice President, Cisco Advanced Services

Michael Murtha, Program Manager, Defense Connect Online

Leon Papkoff, Chief Technology Officer, 6Connex

Emily Timmerman, Adobe Connect Solutions Consultant, Adobe Public Sector

Joan Vandermate, Vice President for Product Marketing, Vidyo

We would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the following members of the GovLoop team who contributed to the guide's development:

Lead Writer: Andrew Krzmarzick, GovLoop Director of Community Engagement

Writer: Samantha Holquist, GovLoop Graduate Fellow

Writer: Kim Truong, GovLoop Graduate Fellow

Lead Designer: Jeff Ribeira, GovLoop Senior Interactive Designer

Designer: Russell Yerkes, GovLoop Design Fellow

Editor: Steve Ressler, GovLoop Founder and President

Editor: Pat Fiorenza, GovLoop Senior Research Analyst

RESOURCES

On GovLoop...

16 Tips to Get the Best Value Out of Virtual Career Fairs

<http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/top-tips-to-get-the-best-value-out-of-virtual-career-fairs-expert>

Does Anyone Have Experience Hosting Virtual Conferences?

<http://www.govloop.com/forum/topics/virtual-conferences>

Government Conferences Attacked: Is the Solution Virtual?

<http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/government-conferences-attacked-is-the-solution-virtual>

Intelligence Community Virtual Career Fair

<http://www.icvirtualfair.com/>

Memorandum on Promoting Efficient Spending to Support Agency Operations

http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/memoranda/2012/m-12-12_0.pdf

MuniGovCon '09 – A Virtual Conference for Government

<https://sites.google.com/site/munigov20/Home/mungovcon09---a-virtual-conference-for-government>

Six-State Virtual Government Information Conference

<http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/conference/6state/schedule.html>

State and Local Government Virtual Summit

<http://www.govloop.com/group/productivity/forum/topics/state-and-local-government-leaders-virtual-conference>

Tips from the Perfect Online Conference (U.S. Forest Service Sustainability Conference)

<http://www.govloop.com/profiles/blogs/tips-from-the-perfect-online-conference-just-because-it-wasn-t>

..and Beyond

Best Practices In Virtual Events

<http://www.factpoint.com/Best-Practices-for-Virtual-Events-FactPoint.pdf>

Virtual Events for Dummies

<http://www.slideshare.net/AlexGrinyayev/virtual-events-for-dummies>

Virtual Events: 7 Reasons to Use Them

<http://www.aliciacowan.com/fascinating-stories/news/virtual-events-7-reasons-to-use-them>

Virtual Events 101: Common Use Cases for Them

<http://allvirtual.me/2010/04/28/virtual-events-101-common-use-cases-for-virtual-events/>

Virtual Training: Catching on Fast

<http://www.2elearning.com/solutions/collaboration-web-20-tools/lead-news-item/article/virtual-training-catching-on-fast.html>

ABOUT GOVLOOP

LOCATION

GovLoop is headquartered in Washington D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

734 15th St NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 407-7421
Fax: (202) 407-7501



GovLoop's mission is to connect government to improve government. We aim to inspire public sector professionals by acting as the knowledge network for government. The GovLoop community has over 65,000 members working to foster collaboration, solve problems and share resources across government.

The GovLoop community has been widely recognized across multiple sectors. GovLoop members come from across the public sector. Our membership includes federal, state, and local public servants, industry experts and professionals grounded in academic research. To-

day, GovLoop is the leading site for addressing public sector issues.

GovLoop works with top industry partners to provide resources and tools to the government community. GovLoop has developed a variety of guides, infographics, online training and educational events, all to help public sector professionals become more efficient Civil Servants.

If you have questions on this report, please feel free to reach out to Andrew Krzmarzick, Director of Community Engagement, at andrew@govloop.com



734 15th St NW, Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 407-7421
Fax: (202) 407-7501