

Appendix B

Video Conferencing Minimal Manual

Weeks/Days before the videoconference

- Share information between local and remote sites.
- How many students/presenters at each site.
- How many sites.
- Mail accompanying literature for support of conference.
- Confirm who is dialling whom and when. Have alternative contact (voice) numbers available in case of technical problems.
- Test compatibility between different systems if this is the first videoconference between the sites.

Room set up

Screens

- Ideally, each site should have two screens, one showing outgoing video, and one showing incoming video.
- Aim to have no more than as many people per screen as inches across display (i.e. a 28" monitor can be viewed by no more than 28 people).

Microphones

- Lapel microphones are the preferred audio system for presenters.
- Add ambient microphones throughout room for added realism and accessibility.
- Try to avoid "push to talk" microphones: they interfere with natural dialogue.
- Voice-activated microphones tend to break up the audio signal.

Audience(s)

- Remote: Cameras should be placed so a remote site can see both the presenter and local audience (if present).
- Local: Audiences should be able to see both remote site and local presenter.

The Presenter

- Plan and rehearse presentations.
- Allow involvement of remote site and local site: do not forget to involve both audiences.

- Special considerations should be given to the timings of the presentation. A slick performance is especially needed when video conferencing. Think about:
 - Time speaking vs Time summarising.
 - Time explaining vs Time for audience to think it over.

Just Before The Videoconference

- Encourage informal interaction between sites. A warm up period will allow you to get the most out of your audience once the videoconference session starts.
 - Personal introductions of participants.
 - Games for breaking the ice.
 - Camera panning around room (if possible).

During the Videoconference Consider the Following Points

Oral

- Speak clearly and try to maintain a constant volume.
- Pause often for reflection.
- Allow for time delay when in a discussion.
- Clearly indicate when you have finished talking and are expecting a reply.

Visual

- Most subtle expressions will either be lost or exaggerated.
- Avoid excessive movement.
- Avoid pointing devices (will not be seen).
- When initiating conversation, use hand signals to highlight who is speaking.
- Keep pictures or images on screen for long periods of time.
- Do not move pictures once they have been positioned.
- Avoid poor quality (second generation or worse) video.
- Wear low contrast clothing (subtle colours).

Keeping the Remote Audience's Attention

Orally

- Give attention to talking through presentations.
- Explain clearly each new area of the presentation.
- Constantly summarise each section.
- Pause often for questions.
- Actively attempt to involve the remote audience by asking questions, etc.

Visually

- Use different media to keep attention (slides, images etc.).
- Allow for visual gags where possible (cartoons etc.).

Discussions

- Allow for breaking the ice between sites.
- Have one controller or chairperson who oversees interactions.
- Attempt to involve everybody from all sites.
- Attempt to use personal names where possible.
- Begin talking by visually and orally identifying your name and site.
- Allow long time for turn taking.

Just After the Videoconference

- A virtual Coffee bar.
- Allow for period of "warm down".
- This must be done with the videoconference link still active as there is no informal period after the session when any student can interact with lecturer in an informal "coffee bar" setting.

Day(s) After the Videoconference

- Send out (and get back!) questionnaires to participating students for feedback to incorporate into the next session.