

EAUC BOARD PAPER

Title: How We Meet – Virtual Communications

Paper No: 17.09.03



For Discussion

Purpose

To provide Board Members with a suggestion of systems to use for communicating in between face-to-face meetings.

Information

There are a variety of different ways to communicate. Here are the most simple to use for basic functions. A further paper will be developed by the Exchange Project which will include a more in-depth review of the options available.

- **Video Conferencing**

This is the 'traditional' method for video conferencing. The majority of institutions will have a video conference suite. This generally includes a TV screen, video camera and microphones. Generally the equipment is set up in a specific room and there will be a specialist who can assist with setting up. There is a video conferencing booking system called JANET which is operated with all educational institutions worldwide. Through this system you can book a session with any other institutions video conference system. This is very easy to use and once the session is booked you only require to turn the system on (as easy as a few switches) and the connection will be automatic. You are advised to contact your IT department who will direct you to the correct person within your institution who can set this up for you and advise on your own institutions systems. Video Conferencing is suitable for small to medium size meetings depending upon the technology available. The calls are through the internet so there sometimes can be delays.

- **Telephone Conferencing**

Many telephone systems have a 'conference call' option. Contact your IT department to ask them for training on your phone system as this varies. You can then phone several people and connect them into one call.

Alternatively we have an account with Pow Wow which is an external telephone conference system. You can contact us with a time and date and the Chair of the meeting and you will be provided with a telephone number to call and then a PIN. The various people in the meeting do the same and you are all connected to the same call.

- **Skype**

Skype is an instant messaging system with video options. You can have live chats (messaging) and share documents and screens with other users. You need to install the software (so you will need administrator rights or ask your IT department) and set up a user name and password. You can have live calls with other Skype users and is free of charge (it goes across the internet) – you can do this for up to 5 people in a conference call scenario. If you have a web cam you can also use the video option and this provides a shot of another person on your PC (as long as they also have a web cam). The video option can only be used with 2 different destinations (i.e. 2 computers). Skype is free to use and works best with a good Broadband connection. You need to have access to your microphone and speakers on your PC/Laptop, if you are in a shared office you will need a headset for this to work.