

Tech Snacks - WebEx

WebEx is an online video conferencing service that Northern faculty and staff can use to host meetings. Along with live, two-way video and audio between multiple participants, WebEx also includes some useful classroom tools.

Features

- **Screen sharing** allows others to see the content you display on your computer. Use screen sharing to share PowerPoint slides, websites, and other content with students. In the screenshare function, you also have the option to “optimize for sharing video and audio” and “share computer sound” if you are sharing a video. (These options are at the top when you are choosing what screen to share.)
- **Live polling** lets you ask multiple-choice or open-ended questions and could be used to get feedback about where your students are with comprehension.
- The **whiteboard** tool lets you draw on your computer using a mouse or a stylus, and everyone else in your WebEx meeting can watch live. You could use the whiteboard feature to draw diagrams and work through problems, and you can even give students whiteboard access so that they can take a turn drawing.
- WebEx also allows you to **record meetings**, to be saved to the local computer or saved to the cloud (accessible on your WebEx portal at msun.webex.com).
- **Video breakout rooms** allow you to let students interact in groups. The meeting host can pop in and check on the groups.
- If participants have limited internet bandwidth, or if they don't have access to a camera and/or microphone, they can still connect with **audio only**, or in the chat.
- WebEx works best with a desktop or laptop computer with a webcam, but there are also **WebEx apps** for Android, Blackberry, and iOS smartphones and tablets.
- There are no charges for attendees.

Equipment

- To get started with WebEx, you really only need a webcam and a microphone. Most laptops have a camera and mic built-in, and USB cameras are very affordable.
- If ambient noise is a problem, or if you're a soft speaker, a USB headset microphone might be a good option to consider.
- For mobile devices, the built-in camera and microphone should be sufficient.

Tutorials

There are several video tutorials available on the msun.edu/otle webpage under the “Faculty Resources” > “Instructional Technology”. These help explain how to use the various features. These are continually being updated as Webex changes, so feel free to let us know if you notice any tutorials that are no longer accurate.

How to get started with WebEx

1. Email helpdesk@msun.edu and ask ITS to activate your WebEx account if you have not already. It can take a day or two to hear back from ITS, so do this well in advance of

when you want to use WebEx. The first time you host a WebEx meeting on a computer, you'll be prompted to download and install the WebEx software.

2. Once your WebEx account has been activated, go to msun.webex.com.
3. Click "Log in" in the top-right corner of the window, and log in using your NetID and password, just like you log into Brightspace.
4. There are three options for setting up a meeting.
 - If you just want to use your "general" meeting room link, you can simply share your meeting link listed under your name on the main screen and then hit "Start Meeting." Be sure to indicate to the attendee what time you are meeting.
 - If you want to schedule a meeting with a unique link for a specific time or recurring time, click the gray "Schedule" button and follow those instructions.
 - Faculty can also set up meetings directly in Brightspace. If you want the meeting to be more seamlessly embedded in Brightspace, just leave this WebEx portal and schedule recurring meetings through Brightspace directly, from the Content area. See the directions below.

Using the Webex integration feature in Brightspace

1. Go into your Brightspace course and enter the Content area.
2. Create a module called "WebEx." In the module, go to the gray "Add Existing Activities" button and select "External Learning Tools." Click on "WebEx" at the bottom of the list. This will place a WebEx link in that module.
3. Click on the WebEx link. Under the Setup tab, make sure you have the "Mountain-Denver" time zone selected. "Activate" if you are prompted to.
4. Click on the Virtual Meetings tab and select "New Meeting." Name the meeting the name of your course! Select the meeting date, duration and recurrence for your class meeting times.

Now students can go click on your WebEx link to see every upcoming WebEx class meeting, and they can access past meeting recordings if you recorded them.

Additional tips for a successful WebEx meeting

Log into the meeting early to make sure your audio and video are up and running before students arrive.

If you plan on using the "Share Screen" option, you may want to turn off email alerts and other notifications so that your students don't accidentally see sensitive or private information.

If you plan on sharing any documents or slideshows during the meeting, put them all in one folder on your desktop ahead of time so that you don't have to waste time searching for files.

Contact [OTLE](#) to try out your WebEx meeting ahead of time!