

Digital Tip in Action: Conducting Online Meetings

[00:00] When you need to conduct meetings with colleagues in various locations, online meetings and videoconferences can offer many of the benefits of a face-to-face meeting, minus the costs and complications of travel. Remote meeting applications vary widely in format and features, so carefully consider a few questions before you select an application. How many people will be involved in your meeting? Is the application designed for hundreds, thousands, or just a

[00:30] few participants? Do all participants have the required equipment? Will they need a microphone, Webcam, or special software? Let participants know what they'll need in advance, and encourage them to try it out before the meeting to prevent confusion or technical difficulties during the meeting. What type of meeting are you conducting? Is one person presenting to a large group, or will several people speak? Will each participant be at a separate location,

[01:00] or will some locations host groups of participants? Establish the role of each participant in advance so that the meeting runs smoothly. Do you plan to use other media? If you want to share a presentation, look for and practice with an application that allows you to switch between camera- and desktop-views. Test several applications, and select the program that best maintains the quality of your media. Will you be

[01:30] discussing sensitive or proprietary information? Most free videoconferencing applications do not offer secure connections. However, several commercial applications offer enhanced security features, such as password-protected meetings and encrypted data transmission. Evaluate whether the information you'll be transmitting is sensitive enough to require these advanced features. Do you need a record of your meeting? Some applications work well for quick, casual meetings, but do not record video or audio. Other

[02:00] applications archive all meetings automatically or allow you to record selected meetings. If you think it's likely you'll need to refer back to the meeting's content, opt for an application that will allow you to record. Search online to find the right videoconferencing solution for your needs. For commercial software, typical licensing

[02:30] models include cost-per-user-per-minute, a flat monthly fee, and a seat model. Some systems require hardware that you must purchase or lease. Popular commercial options include Adobe Connect, IBM Sametime, GoToMeeting, and Zoho Meeting. Alternatively, numerous free videoconferencing applications provide basic features that may be sufficient for small groups or a quick meeting. Some offer paid upgrades with additional features. Consider

[03:00] Skype, Google Hangouts, and other options you research online.