

CHOOSING A VIRTUAL MEETING TOOL: ISSUES TO CONSIDER

A RESOLVE Collaborative Technology Guide

FOCUS ON THE PURPOSE

Tools like **Adobe Connect**, **GoToMeeting**, **Microsoft Teams**, **WebEx**, and **Zoom** all have powerful features to support engagement.



Is your goal to **seek input** from a group? Look for features like polling, "reactions," or Q&A tools that make it easy for groups to give feedback.



Do you want a group to **collaborate in real time**? Consider tools with features like breakout rooms, screen sharing, or chat features, as well as additional tools that allow for jointly editing documents.

Is your goal to **share information**? You can turn off some of the collaboration features to minimize distractions. Some technologies also have a dedicated webinar service to make this easier.



Taking extra steps like **muting all participants** can help groups focus on information sharing and reduce distractions.



Record the event to share with people not able to attend the live version (but always make sure participants know recording is happening).

Some tools work well for larger groups (and can be used with small groups too). **Adobe Connect**, **GoToMeeting**, **WebEx**, and **Zoom** all work well with groups as large as 100.



HOW BIG IS YOUR GROUP?



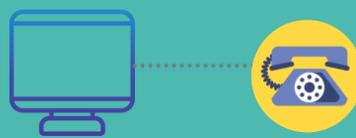
Tools like **Google Hangouts**, **Microsoft Teams**, or **Skype** work best with groups smaller than 10.

CONSIDER CONNECTIVITY & ACCESSIBILITY

Do all of your participants have **reliable internet or phone connections**? Consider the bandwidth requirements of a technology. Set up both phone and VOIP audio and check whether needed **international phone numbers** are available.

Ask whether any participants (often **government agencies**) have rules about the technology they can use.

How **tech savvy** are participants? It may be easiest to stick to the technology a group has experience using. **Zoom** also tends to be easier for new users.



Some tools like **Google Hangouts**, **GoToMeeting**, **Skype**, **WhatsApp**, and **Zoom** may be more accessible for people with limited connectivity.

IS SECURITY A CONCERN?

Security for many virtual meeting tools can be enhanced by adjusting settings to **control who enters meetings** or **requiring passwords** to enter meetings.

If your meeting needs to be encrypted or use robust security protocols, consider tools like **GoToMeeting** or **WebEx** for larger groups or **Microsoft Teams** or **WhatsApp** for smaller groups.

WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

Services like **Google Hangouts**, **Skype**, or **WhatsApp** are available for free. **Zoom** also has a free version with limited capabilities available.

Some companies or third party vendors may offer **discounted rates**.



Audio options can impact the overall cost. VOIP is usually integrated and free, but may be affected by internet speeds. Some services also offer local dial-in numbers which often cost less than toll-free options.

DON'T STOP WITH THE TOOL

Once you've decided on a technology, take the time to **prepare for your event**.



Consider **facilitation and technology support** for larger, complex events.

Practice with a colleague, invite presenters to test their slides, and organize your materials in advance. **Share instructions** with participants about how to join the meeting, ways to engage, and how features (like mute) work in the platform you've selected.

RESOLVE has a decade of experience using technology to support virtual collaboration. **We know what works well, the challenges to expect, and how to solve them.** Contact Maya Breitburg-Smith or Paul De Morgan to learn about our collaborative technology and facilitation services.

