"CAN YOU HEAR ME NOW?": INTERNET COLLABORATION TOOLS USING VIDEO, AUDIO AND CHAT

Sharon E. Dennis and Susan K. Roberts
Eccles Health Sciences Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah

Abstract:
Is it possible to conduct meetings and classes, collaborate with colleagues at a remote location, or offer distance education programs using low-cost hardware and software over an Internet connection? The answer is a resounding "Yes, but…” This course will survey hardware and software videoconferencing options for use in a variety of settings, including distance learning.

Objectives:
Topics to be covered include:
• Discussion of videoconferencing standards and basic terminology
• Range of collaboration options, from one-on-one to multiple site
• Bandwidth and network infrastructure requirements; firewall and security issues
• Camera options, including how to choose a camera appropriate for your budget
• Software options for video, audio and application sharing including chat tools, NetMeeting, Skype, VRVS, Macromedia Breeze, and Polycom software,
• Facility requirements (room setup, lighting, placement of microphones)
• Limitations and realistic expectations for the technology
• Future technology such as the Access Grid and Internet 2

The workshop will include a videoconferencing demonstration with a remote site. Participants will also be given the chance to “test drive” some of these videoconferencing technologies in hands-on exercises.

Benefit to participants attending session:
Participants will learn how they can set up their personal computer systems to teach classes and hold collaborative meetings with colleagues located remotely. They will learn how to choose hardware and software to meet their specific needs and budgets. In addition, they will be able to view a demonstration of the technology.

Intended Audience: This workshop is for anyone in any discipline who uses or wants to use Internet collaboration tools for their work or teaching.

Prerequisites: None. This class assumes no prior experience with videoconferencing. Participants should be familiar with the Web and be able to use a Web browser.

Format: Full-day lecture/demonstration with hands-on training

Limit: 20
Instructor Qualifications:
Sharon Dennis is Technology Coordinator for the Midcontinental Region of the National Library of Networks of Medicine (NN/LM). As Technology Coordinator she has been experimenting with "mix and match" audio and videoconferencing technologies to support distance education. She also trains NN/LM resources libraries on the use of video broadcasting (streaming media) hardware and software. She is also co-director of the Health Education Assets Library (HEAL) project; HEAL is a national multimedia database of publicly accessible materials for health sciences education.

Susan Roberts has worked with Eccles Health Sciences Library at the University of Utah developing electronic teaching materials as part of the Knowledge Weavers and other projects since 1995. Susan has taught classes for staff and faculty in Dreamweaver, PowerPoint animation, Photoshop and Web design. She is currently part of the library’s education team which is involved in designing sessions for teaching faculty how to use the tabletPC. She has also taught workshops at past Slice of Life conferences.