

Best Practices for Video Conferencing in a Google+ Hangout

Equipment needed:

A computer with a connection to the internet. For group video connectivity, Google suggests bandwidth of 1mbps for upload and 2mbps for download for each user.

You can test your bandwidth at <http://www.speedtest.net>. Once the page loads, click the Begin Test button. After testing your download and upload speed will display above the speedometer.



A headset for your computer. I recommend a usb headset as many headphone/mic inputs are located on the back of computers. I recommend Logitech or Plantronics USB headsets. This will minimize the amount of feedback that everyone in the room hears.

A web camera. Personally, I use either whatever is built into the laptop, if you have one, or any HD webcam with USB. I'm partial to Logitech HD webcams and typically use a Logitech HD Pro Webcam C920. Prior to video conferencing, be sure that you verify that the camera works with your computer by installing the driver and testing that it does indeed work.

Steps to follow prior to the conference

1. Make sure you have the bandwidth needed for the conference by testing your bandwidth at <http://www.speedtest.net>. Once the page loads, click the Begin Test button. After testing your download and upload speed will display above the speedometer.




2. Make sure that your headset is plugged in and functioning properly. One way to test the headphones is to try listening to music on the computer or visiting youtube.com and watching a video that includes sound. You can test your microphone by visiting <http://www.onlinemictest.com/> and following the directions there.



3. Test your webcam by using whatever software that was installed with it or by visiting <http://mailvu.com/testCamera/TestYourWebCam.html>.



Best Practices for **hosting** a Florida Institute of Technology Google+ Hangout

1. Follow the instructions titled **Steps to follow prior to the conference**.
2. Sign into your Google Account by visiting <http://accounts.google.com>. Your account uses your TRACKS ID and should be entered in this format TRACKSID@go.fit.edu. From this page you will be directed to sign into TRACKS. If this is your first time using your account, you will be prompted to fill in your profile (Name, picture, etc).
3. After logging in, you will see your name and a + in the upper left corner of the browser screen. You may be asked if you wish to add people to your circles. In this case look for a link which says continue and click it. You will be taken to your main Google+ page.
4. When you enter your Google+ page, you will notice  Hangouts on the upper right, just under your profile picture. Click it. At the bottom of the page click Hangout Party. When you mouse over Hangout Party a button labeled "Start a Party" will be revealed. Click the "Start a Party" button.
5. When prompted to Invite people click Cancel. You should now see your video camera displaying in the lower section of the screen.
6. Speak into your microphone. You should see a green sound indicator on your video camera display. You can also see a sound indicator in the upper right section of the screen.



7. Copy the URL at the top of the Hangout.
8. From your email, send this link out to whomever you wish to join. They should be able to join from that link.
9. In the Hangout, click the Chat button on the left. This will open up the Group Chat on the right. Type a welcome message.
10. You can click on any attendees thumbnail icon to have it display in the main part of the screen.
11. Carry on with your meeting. When you are ready to quit, click the phone disconnect icon in the upper right.



Best Practices for **Joining** a Florida Institute of Technology Google+ Hangout

1. Follow the instructions titled **Steps to follow prior to the conference**.
2. Prior to the Hangout, sign into your Google Account by visiting <http://accounts.google.com>. Your account uses your TRACKS ID and should be entered in this format TRACKSID@go.fit.edu . From this page you will be directed to sign into TRACKS. If this is your first time using your account, you will be prompted to fill in your profile (Name, picture, etc).
3. Watch your Florida Institute of Technology email for the host's email which provides the URL for the Google+ Hangout. Click the link when it is made available.
4. Once inside the Hangout, mute your microphone by clicking the mute microphone icon in the upper right section of the screen. It will turn orange. This will help keep feedback from starting.



5. In the Hangout, click the Chat button on the left. This will open up the Group Chat on the right. Type a friendly "hello" in the chat box.
6. Unmute your microphone as needed (i.e. when you need to talk) by clicking the mute microphone icon again. While you are speaking, if you don't seem to cause any feedback, you may be able to leave the microphone unmuted. However, if you do hear feedback, click the mute microphone icon again. Chances are, as long as everyone is using a headset, you won't have any feedback and can continue with the microphone unmuted.
7. You can click on any attendees thumbnail icon to have it display in the main part of the screen.
8. Carry on with your meeting. When you are ready to quit, click the phone disconnect icon in the upper right.

