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Video Conference Etiquette
Converting to Online Teaching
by John H. Cable

Converting to Online Teaching [1]
A series of short guidance articles for educators and institutions

Video Conference Etiquette [2]

By John Cable, Director

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Using Zoom video conferencing is pretty simple and a great tool for meetings and discussion. Here are a few tips for a productive session:

TECHNOLOGY

Be sure that your computer / smart phone / tablet has a good high-speed connection to the internet. We find that the vast amount of the difficulty you may experience with a stable connection is on the user end and not the system. Test your setup before the scheduled start time of the video conference in case you need assistance. If doing this for the long haul, it is worth the investment to get good equipment.

MANNERS

Be on time.
Mute yourself when not speaking.
Turn your camera on – it is rude not to be seen with the others on the conference.
Adjust the camera so that your headshot is in the middle of the screen.
Adjust the lighting so that you are clearly visible. A bright background puts your face in silhouette and others can't see you.
Maintain eye contact with the camera.
Be courteous to all participants.
No side conversations but do use the chat box to provide information or ask a public or private question.
Speak clearly in a firm voice so that others can hear you.
Don't interrupt others.
Dress appropriately.

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[1] This series of articles by the Director of the University of Maryland's Project Management Center for Excellence provides information and advice for converting from traditional in-person classes to online teaching, based on their experience before and during the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020. See Professor Cable's background at the end of this article.

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Video conferences can be a very effective communications tool but it takes learning how to manage the event and all participants using proper etiquette for participation. Current platforms such as Zoom have polling and breakout room features which simulate actual classroom activities. Our upcoming article on Video Production Guidance may be of interest if you are planning to create videos to use in lieu of campus lectures.

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About the Author

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John Cable is Director of the Project Management Center for Excellence in the A.James Clark School of Engineering at the University of Maryland, where he is also a professor and teacher of several graduate courses in project management. His program at the University of Maryland offers masters and PhD level programs focused on project management. With more than 1,300 seats filled annually with students from many countries, including more than 40 PhD students, the program is the largest graduate program in project management at a major university in the United States.

John Cable served in the newly formed U.S. Department of Energy in 1980, where he was involved with developing energy standards for buildings, methods for measuring energy consumption, and managing primary research in energy conservation. As an architect and builder, Mr. Cable founded and led John Cable Associates in 1984, a design build firm. In 1999 he was recruited by the University of Maryland's Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering to create and manage a graduate program in

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project management. In his role as founder and director of the Project Management Center for Excellence at Maryland, the program has grown to offer an undergraduate minor, master's degrees, and a doctoral program. Information about the Project Management Center for Project Management at the University of Maryland can be found at www.pm.umd.edu.

In 2002, PMI formed the Global Accreditation Center for Project Management Educational Programs (GAC). Mr. Cable was appointed to that inaugural board where he served as vice chair. In 2006, he was elected as chairman, a role he held through 2012. As Chair of the PMI GAC, John led the accreditation of 86 project management educational programs at 40 institutions in 15 countries in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and the Asia Pacific Region. John was awarded PMI's 2012 Distinguished Contribution Award for his leadership at the GAC. He can be contacted at jcable@umd.edu.