

# USING WEBINARS TO ENGAGE AUDIENCES AND TAP LATENT EXPERTISE

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# WEBINARS

- ◉ Internet-based
  - Less technology-intensive than video conference
  - Anyone with computer and broad band can participate
- ◉ Common feature: PowerPoint slides

# WEBINARS: WITHIN SOFTWARE INTERACTION OPTIONS

- ◉ VOIP
  - Presenter(s) & host only
  - All participants
- ◉ Chat
  - Everyone
  - Presenters only
  - One-on-one
- ◉ Polls
  - Multiple choice
  - Multiple answer
- ◉ Webcam



# STANDARD NCRCRD WEBINAR PROTOCOL

- ◉ Presenter(s) & host VOIP; Participant no VOIP
- ◉ One or two polls
- ◉ Participant questions via chat
- ◉ NO Webcam
- ◉ “Sound Check”
- ◉ Rationale:
  - VOIP reduces costs and allows instant, high-quality archiving
  - VOIP high potential for “technical difficulties” so limit number of people and thoroughly test system for those who will be on.
  - Polls help presenters get a sense of audience
  - Webcams eat up bandwidth and make me look uglier than usual

# PRESENTER VS. HOST STATUS

- ◉ Host
  - Full control; can move modules around
- ◉ Presenter
  - More limited options. Can advance slides and operate pointer, but cannot move modules.
- ◉ NCRCRD: Do not give resource people host status.
  - Presenters usually not familiar with software and can inadvertently alter settings if they have host status.

# PARTICIPANT VS. HOST/PRESENTER VIEWS

This area not seen by participants

**Preliminary Results – Basic Frequencies**

- First 522 Respondents

Unit: %

	State Government		US Government	
	Corn&soy	Veg&Fruit	Corn&soy	Veg&Fruit
Strongly agree	24.1	23.6	19.1	21.4
Somewhat agree	44.0	45.4	46.0	45.4
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>68.1</b>	<b>69.0</b>	<b>65.1</b>	<b>66.8</b>
Somewhat disagree	16.8	16.4	18.2	18.5
Strongly disagree	10.8	11.0	13.5	12.4

**Question 2 - Professional Role**

Tell us about your professional roles (check all that apply)

- ☐ a. Researcher 22.22% (4)
- ☐ b. Extension 27.78% (5)
- ☐ c. Classroom 5.56% (1)
- ☐ d. Ruralcommunity development practitioner 16.67% (3)
- ☐ e. Ruralcommunity development funder 5.56% (1)
- ☐ f. Ruralcommunity development intermediary 5.56% (1)
- ☐ g. Other 33.33% (6)

☐ Broadcast Results


# PARTICIPANT/HOST VIEWS

- ◉ Different screen views → different aspect ratios
  - Have to be careful; sometimes presenter/host can see bottom of screen but participants cannot
  - Can use “voting” or chat to make sure everything is visible, or just make sure bottom of the screen is blank/non-essential.








# NCRCRD EXPERIENCE

**NCRCRD**  
North Central Regional Center  
for Rural Development

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*Strengthening the ability  
of the land grant  
university system to  
execute its rural  
development mission*



[Chronological Archive](#)

Topic area: Working  
Differently in Extension

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Topic area: Economic  
Development

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Topic area: Youth in  
Communities

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Topic area: Sustainable  
Communities

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Topic area: Leadership  
Development

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## Archived NCRCRD Webinars (Reverse chronological order)

Tuesday, May 1, 2012 (1:00 PM - ET)  
Rural Wealth Creation: Concepts, Strategies, and Measures  
(<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err131/>)  
John Pender, Alexander Marré, and Richard Reeder, USDA Economic Research Service  
[Click here](#) to access the recorded presentation  
[Click here \(pptx\)](#) to access the PowerPoint only

Wednesday, April 25, 2012 (2:00 PM - ET)  
The Business Solutions Professional Approach: Connecting Extension to Workforce and Economic Development  
Michael Polzin and Donna Winthrop, MSU Human Resources and Labor Relations  
[Click here](#) to access the recorded presentation  
(May need to turn volume down if recording is too loud 🔊 )  
[Click here \(pptx\)](#) to access the PowerPoint only

Tuesday, April 17, 2012 (3:00 PM - ET)  
The Economic Crisis - Is There Room for Middle Ground?  
Abner Womack, University of Missouri  
[Click here](#) to access the recorded presentation  
[Click here \(pptx\)](#) to access the PowerPoint file only

Wednesday, March 21, 2012 (1:00 PM - ET)  
Community Retail Analysis Techniques: Updated Approaches in the New "Downtown Market Analysis Toolbox"  
Jill Clark, The Ohio State University; Greg Davis, The Ohio State University; Ryan Pesch, University of Minnesota; Bill Ryan, University of Minnesota; and Bruce Schwartz, University of Minnesota



# NCRCRD EXPERIENCE

- ◉ 38 Webinars since October 2010
- ◉ Two webinars experienced internet service interruption:
  - One continued without MSU; one was rescheduled and redone
- ◉ Audience
  1. Extension educators, 12-state region
  2. Other land grant professionals nationally
  3. Administrators
  4. Anyone else

# NCRCRD EXPERIENCE

- ◉ Other uses of the webinar technology
  - Team meetings
    - State Extension Program leaders
      - Minutes/presentations
    - Multi-state research group meetings
      - Budget adjustments
      - Progress reporting
  - Virtual focus groups
    - More on this later!

# NCRCRD EXPERIENCE: WHAT HAS NOT WORKED?

- ◉ Developing/emerging economy participants – lack sufficient bandwidth for VOIP
- ◉ Colleagues “on the road” joining conference calls by cell phone.
- ◉ Colleagues with outdated operating systems (importance of pre-test)

# BATTLING THE COMPUTER GREMLINS: FLEXIBILITY HELPS!

- ◉ Deller advance slides
- ◉ Cantrell voice muffled



## RECOMMENDATION:

- ◉ If the event requires audio from many participants, drop VOIP and use webinar + conference call.
- ◉ Reasons:
  - Familiar technology
  - Less chance of poor quality connection

# VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUP

- ◉ Recommended when:

- Exploring a topic
- Can tap individuals with experience/expertise
- Individuals are difficult to bring together



# VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUPS: TWO CASE STUDIES

- ◉ Extension professionals talking about power structures in local community and economic development groups
- ◉ Bankers talking about reaching Hispanics for loans and other banking services (in partnership with Minneapolis Federal Reserve)



# PHASE 1: PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT

## ◉ Extension Professionals:

- Snowball technique via emails to colleague (forwarding & nominations)
- List of six possible dates with return email
- Picked TWO dates with most people available
- Recruits welcome to switch dates w/o RSVP

## ◉ Bankers:

- Emails from Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank to rural banks
- One date, announced by Fed

# VIRTUAL FOCUS GROUP TECHNICAL SET UP

- ◉ Webinar for:
  - Slides
  - Polls
- ◉ Conference call for:
  - Audio
- ◉ Why not VOIP?

# SOFTWARE

- ◉ CED Extension Professionals
  - Adobe Connect (formerly Breeze)
- ◉ Bankers
  - Citrix Gotowebinar



# BASIC APPROACH

- ◉ Webinar slides to introduce topic, basic questions (reason for virtual focus group) hopefully and get everyone on the same page
- ◉ Polls to “warm up” people—get them thinking about the topic, narrow down focus of discussion
- ◉ Open-ended questions via telephone - open mic for participants to respond

# RESULTS

- ◉ Extension professionals virtual focus group went extremely well. Lots of discussion with active participation from almost everyone who was on the line.
- ◉ Banker virtual focus group was mixed.
  - Some participants seemed less experienced reaching Hispanic audiences and probably joined to learn rather than share.
  - One participant was outstanding, and provided many excellent strategies for reaching Hispanic customers and overcoming credit challenges.
  - Possibly some reluctance to share due to competition and regulators on the line.

# RESULTS: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT - 27 PARTICIPANTS

- ◉ Local development groups exhibit different leadership “personalities”
- ◉ Consensus builder group
  - Most commonly observed
  - Seen as most effective
- ◉ “Kingmaker” or “Two Person” groups next most common personalities
- ◉ Extension “best practices” to move to consensus builder:
  - Talk to people before meetings/create mental map of group power structures
  - Point out advantages of “making the group think it was their idea.”

# RESULTS: HISPANIC BANKING

- ◉ Issue for Fed: high cost of credit/lack of credit for Hispanics (equity issue).
- ◉ Two types of Banker concern:
  - Lack of applications
  - Lack of creditworthiness
    - Poor credit record
    - No credit record
- ◉ Best practices:
  - Spanish language employees/materials necessary but not sufficient
  - Key contacts/leaders in target community, esp. religious
  - Presentations to groups
  - Not one-size-fits all (different sub-populations)
  - Christmas club type products to establish relationships



# SOFTWARE DIFFERENCES

## ◉ Gotowebinar

- Automatic reminders to participants
- Preset “status” (host, presenter, participant) so that one doesn’t need to do this the day of the event.
- No “resizing” problem (host screen share)

## ◉ Abobe Connect **Winner!**

- Any presenter may advance slides (in normal mode)
  - Host screen share available but not default
- Polls and slides may be overlaid
- “One click” poll result broadcasting
- Road map of slides (optional)
- More interaction options
- Poll results exportable to excel for further analysis

# IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION PROFESSIONALS

- ◉ Nationally, Extension is restructuring to a more regional staffing model→
  - Narrower set of topics
  - Larger territory
- ◉ Virtual focus group may be excellent way to set program priorities for Extension Professionals covering a multi-county region or state.
- ◉ Virtual focus groups may also be a great way to get feedback from trusted stakeholders about a new curriculum (pre-pilot testing)
- ◉ For those with research responsibilities, a Virtual Focus group can be a way of efficiently collecting both qualitative and quantitative data from the same subjects for mixed methods studies.

# IMPLICATIONS FOR NACDEP MEMBERS

- ◉ How would you see yourself using this method?
- ◉ Could you benefit if the NCRCRD offers to provide the platform as a service?

