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

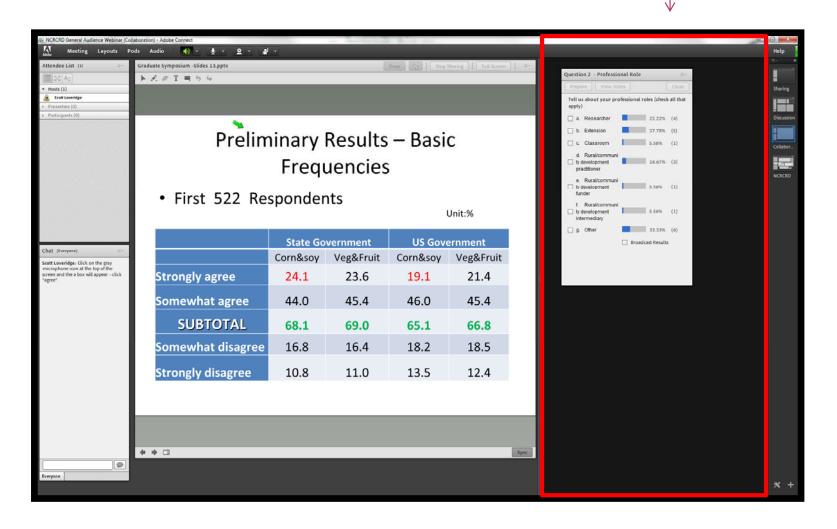
STANDARD NCRCRD WEBINAR PROTOCOL

- 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.

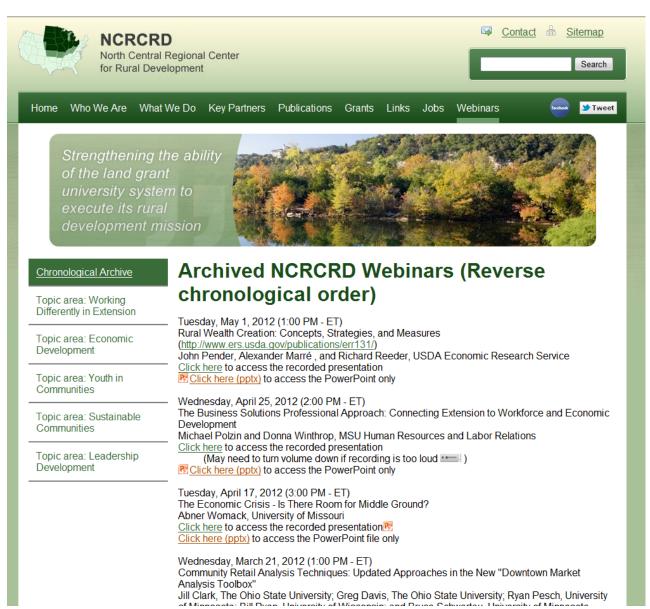
PARTICIPANT VS. This area not seen by participants HOST/PRESENTER VIEWS



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 EXPERIENCE

- 38 Webinars since October 2010
- Two webinars experienced internet service interruption:
 - One continued without MSU; one was rescheduled and redone

Audience

- Extension educators, 12-state region
- Other land grant professionals nationally
- 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?