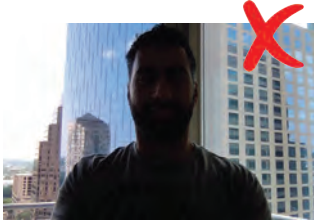


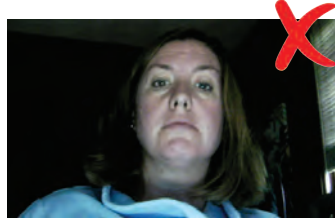
Cheatsheet for improved presence and presentation online.

A little attention to the finer points of things can bring great improvements to your meetings, webinars and lecture recordings. The below points apply to any of these activities, and are not difficult to apply to your office, lecture space, or home. The human brain is great at picking details from poor environments. Cameras and microphones lack this ability, and convey poor conditions with brutal honesty. Let's see what can be done to improve our recording environments...

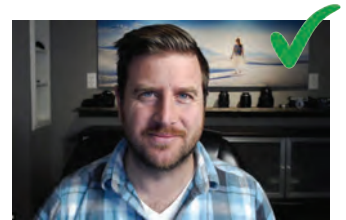
Lighting: placement and type <https://www.diyphotography.net/look-good-webcam-vlog/>



Bad backlighting



Monitor only lighting



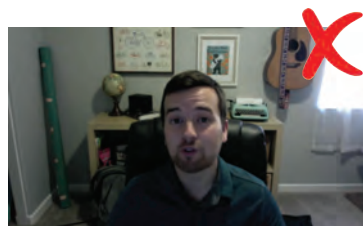
Good lighting

Ideal placement for a camera lighting: Front, slightly to one side, and slightly above your face. A diffuse light, such as a lamp (with lampshade), just past arm's reach, at the 2 o'clock position just above head height is good. Do not rely on light from your monitor. This can be inconsistent, as the material on screen changes regularly. Be mindful to avoid lights (or daylight from windows) behind you. This causes backlighting, which the camera compensates for, making your face dark.

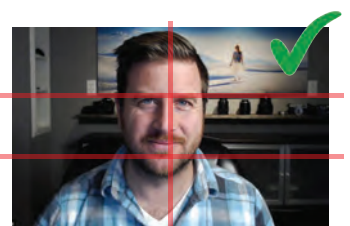
Framing: placement and type <https://www.diyphotography.net/look-good-webcam-vlog/>



Camera too low



Too distant



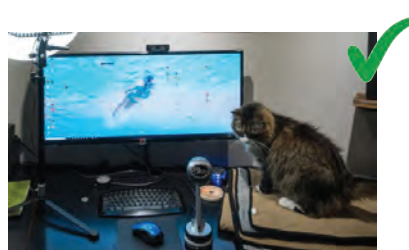
Good framing

Aim your camera so that your face is left/right central, and your eyes are near to the top third of the frame. This may involve adjusting distance from the camera (seating), and/or direction of camera. Note, some cameras may be built into your laptop or PC, and require tilting/rotation of said unit. Nearly all webcams are designed for such framing within arm's length distance. If you find yourself craning forward to read small text on screen, consider expanding text size, or investing in a larger monitor. Place camera at eye height, looking level. Laptops on a desk may need elevation. Place the camera close to the monitor you use for recording/meeting. This will ensure "eye contact" with your audience.

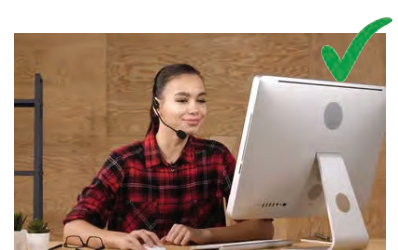
Microphone: placement and types



Laptop speakers "talk at" Microphone (echo)



Good Mic on desk, near mouth, out of camera view



Headset, with Mic placed well - good for meetings

Good capture of audio is a function of both microphone use, and the overall environment. Ambient noise must be kept under control, such as devices in your room, activity in nearby rooms, or outside. If using a headset, keep the microphone beside, or below your mouth - not directly in front. This will avoid "peaks" caused by sounds such as "P", "Ch", "T", etc. USB Microphones, separated from desk activity, such as paper shuffling, mouse clicks, etc are good. Avoid rooms with plain, hard walls, to avoid reverb and echo. Use for curtains, drapes, or large canvas prints can absorb sound and solve such issues. Where possible, reduce output volume on your device, so that echo cancellation is more effective. Using a laptop, with built in speakers and Microphone can cause troubles.

Connection: Speed (often dependent on type)

"Internet connection" in the current context, refers to two links: PC/Laptop to local network, and local network to Internet.

Internet:

Aim for a guaranteed 50Mbit down/20Mbit up link. Check your subscribed service from ISP, and upgrade if needed. Ensure internet is not being overused by other occupants of house (video, downloads etc).

Local Network:

Where possible, use a wired network cable from your modem/router to your PC/laptop. Such cables are immune to the many factors that affect a Wifi link. Wifi problems include: too many devices, competing airspace from neighbouring Wifi, distance, microwave ovens and even plants and fishtanks!



Wired connection to router = Good
Wifi connection = Potential for trouble