

TO: Audio and Web Conferencing Stakeholders  
FROM:Debbie Fery, DAS Technology Support Center Manager  
DATE: Thursday, July 23, 2009  
RE: Terminology and Stakeholder Survey

### **Greetings Audio and Web Conferencing Stakeholders!**

You have been requested to be part of this group because:

- you are already using a service provided by DAS, or
- have a contract with another company who provides these services, or
- have shown an interest, or
- have a pending solicitation for a product or service that uses audio or web based conferencing.

DAS is attempting to find a solution that we can standardize on; that provides the functions needed and or wanted. Our goal is to meet the vast majority of customers' needs, but recognizing that we may not meet them all. The state of Oregon has no single vendor that provides these services and it has been found when we consolidate our needs the cost goes down for all.

The TSC has been tasked with providing a recommendation to DAS EXEC staff on which direction the state of Oregon should go to provide these services. In essence, should the State outsource its volume or should we invest in a single solution and do it ourselves—insource.

To help answer the insource versus outsource question for Audio and Web Conferencing, DAS needs information from our stakeholders. For example:

- What is the volume?
- What are our customers using?
- How are we using these technologies?
- What is future usage?
- What are your business requirements?

Below is some terminology that DAS would like suggest we standardize on as we work through the options and requirements. In these definitions you will note the content of the meeting can be anything, it is the technology used and the interactive nature that defines which used.

**Audio Conferencing:** The use of traditional telephones or telephone equipment where parties call into a bridge or conduct a 3-way call from their phone. The technology uses telephone technologies and not the internet as the carrier of the communications. With Audio conferencing there is only interactive voice, not documents or video. The technology host of an audio conference is a telephone company or audio bridges and application in a data center scenario. Customer uses a phone and its keypad to access the conference.

**Web Conferencing** is used to conduct live meetings or presentations via the Internet. In a web conference, each participant sits at his or her own computer (or a computer in a shared conference room) and is connected to other participants via the internet. This can be either a downloaded application on each of the attendees' computers or a web-based application where the attendees may enter a URL (website address) to enter the conference.

The main or base features of web conferencing:

- Participants use a computer and its connection to the network and internet to communicate with each other. They use the network card, sound card with a desktop video camera to communicate, and usually a headset with a microphone. At a minimum participant have a computer with internet access.
- A desktop application is installed that allows all the parties to come together any time any place as long as all parties can get to the internet.

The technology host is generally a company that provides the hardware and software in a data center scenario to allow parties to come together. Web conferencing is often sold as a service, hosted on a web server controlled by the vendor. Offerings vary per vendor but most hosted services provide a cost per user per minute model, a monthly flat fee model and a seat model (current state-wide ATT Contract) Some vendors also provide a server side solution which allows the customer to host their own web conferencing service on their own servers (SDC and iLinc)

Typical features of a web conference include:

- Slide show presentations - where PowerPoint or Keynote slides are presented to the audience and markup tools and a remote mouse pointer are used to engage the audience while the presenter discusses slide content.
- Live or Streaming video - where full motion webcam, digital video camera or multi-media files are pushed to the audience.
- Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) Real time audio communication through the computer via use of headphones and speakers
- Web tours - where URLs, data from forms, cookies, scripts and session data can be pushed to other participants enabling them to be pushed through web based logons, clicks, etc. This type of feature works well when demonstrating websites where users themselves can also participate.
- Meeting Recording - where presentation activity is recorded on the client side or server side for later viewing and/or distribution.
- Whiteboard with annotation (allowing the presenter and/or attendees to highlight or mark items on the slide presentation. Or, simply make notes on a blank whiteboard.)
- Text chat - For live question and answer sessions, limited to the people connected to the meeting. Text chat may be public (echo'd to all participants) or private (between 2 participants).
- Polls and surveys (allows the presenter to conduct questions with multiple choice answers directed to the audience)
- Screen sharing/desktop sharing/application sharing (where participants can view anything the presenter currently has shown on their screen. Some screen sharing applications allow for remote desktop control, allowing participants to manipulate the presenters screen, although this is not widely used.)

**Webinar:** A **webinar** is a specific type of web conference. It is typically one-way from the speaker to the audience with limited audience interaction, such as in a webcast. A webinar can be collaborative and include polling and question & answer sessions to allow full participation between the audience and the presenter. In some cases, the presenter may speak over a standard telephone line, while pointing out information being presented onscreen, and the audience can respond over their own telephones, speaker phones allowing the greatest comfort and convenience. There are web conferencing technologies on the market that have incorporated the use of VoIP audio technology, to allow for a completely web-based communication. Depending upon the provider, webinars may provide hidden or anonymous participant functionality, making participants unaware of other participants in the same meeting.

**WebCast:** A **webcast** is a media file distributed over the Internet using streaming media technology. A webcast may either be distributed live or on demand. Essentially, webcasting is "broadcasting" over the Internet. The generally accepted use of the term webcast is the "transmission of linear audio or video content over the Internet". A webcast uses streaming media technology to take a single content source and distribute it to many simultaneous listeners/viewers.

The largest "webcasters" include existing radio and TV stations who "simulcast" their output, as well as a multitude of Internet only "stations". The term webcasting is usually reserved for referring to non-interactive linear streams or events.

Webcasting is also used extensively in the commercial sector for investor relations presentations (such as Annual General Meetings), in E-learning (to transmit seminars), and for related communications activities. However, webcasting does not bear much, if any, relationship to the idea of web conferencing which is designed for many-to-many interaction.

The ability to webcast using cheap/accessible technology has allowed independent media to flourish. There are many notable independent shows that broadcast regularly online. Often produced by average citizens in their homes they cover many interests and topics. Webcasts relating to computers, technology, and news are particularly popular and many new shows are added regularly

**Webisode:** A **webisode** is a short episode which airs initially as an Internet download or stream as opposed to first airing on broadcast or cable television. The term has been largely deprecated in favor of the simpler 'episode'. The format can be used as a preview, a promotion, as part of a collection of shorts, or a commercial. A webisode can be part of an already established drama or series or it may consist of entirely original material.

Depending on its purpose, the webisode may or may not be considered a part of an established program's continuity.

A webisode is simply a web episode – collectively it is part of a web series, a form of new medium called [web television](#) that characteristically features a dramatic, serial storyline, where the primary method of viewership is streaming online over the Internet.[3] While there is no set standard for length, most webisodes are relatively short, ranging from 4–15 minutes in length.

**Recorded:** Sound recording and reproduction is an electrical or mechanical inscription and re-creation of sound waves, such as spoken voice, singing, instrumental music, or sound effects. The two main classes of sound recording technology are analog recording and digital recording.

**Streamed Audio:** is constantly received by, and normally presented to, an end-user while being delivered by a streaming provider (the term "presented" is used in a general sense that includes audio playback). The name refers to the delivery method of the medium rather than to the medium itself.

**Virtual Classroom:** refers to instruction in a learning environment where teacher and student are separated by time or space, or both, and the teacher provides course content through course management applications, multimedia resources, the Internet, videoconferencing, etc. Students receive the content and communicate with the teacher via the same technologies.

**On-Demand Playback:** present past audio recordings (or web or video) that have been stored. A customer can listen or play back the audio or web conference when it is convenient to their schedule.