Privacy Considerations when Using Video Conferencing Tools

There are numerous advantages to video conferencing, such as the ability to involve individuals from multiple locations in meetings or to alleviate the need to reserve spaces for large group meetings. Video conferencing applications not only stream content, but may also support recording functions. It is sometimes useful to ensure content be re-watched and shared, depending on the event, but there must be a business purpose to record content, and participants must be notified in advance. Regardless of the solution you choose, there are some privacy considerations to take into account.

Selecting an Application

- When selecting a streaming application, if users are required to establish their own profile, it must require only the minimum amount of information necessary. Name and contact information, such as an email address and phone number, should be all that is required by the application.
- Users should use their business contact details and accounts to set up a profile for the service if it is used for professional purposes (Work email, phone number, etc.).
- If you setup a UserID within the application, it is recommended you do not use your UM credentials to log it. (UMnetID and password should not be reused for external accounts).
- Where possible, the application selected should allow audio-only participation, and if possible, dial-in participation as well. These options support participants’ preferences and comfort levels for participation, and also ensures that users who do not have access to a webcam and/or microphone can still participate.

Recording an Event

- If there is a business need to record the event, you should notify participants in the meeting invitation that the event will be recorded.
- If you have any questions or concerns related to the Intellectual Property (IP) and ownership of a potential recording, you should connect with the Copyright Office prior to creating any recording. They can be reached at UM.Copyright@umanitoba.ca.
- If you chose to record an event, you need to ensure that the software allows you to manage how long you keep the recording. It should be retained and disposition managed in accordance with the appropriate Records Authority Schedule.
  - In order to manage a recording, best practice is to ensure a copy can be created and moved to a University managed hardware or service.
  - If a recording is retained in place, you must ensure that the service can support the timeframe required and that appropriate access to UM users is maintained for the duration of the retention.
- At the beginning of the meeting, verbally confirm the session will be recorded, and notify participants when recording begins and ends.
- Communicate the reason the recording is required to participants, i.e. to provide a recording for those unable to attend, or to use in the future for training.
Ensure that default settings for control and access to the video conferencing tool are always set by the moderator. Default settings should allow participants to control their own audio and video feeds directly wherever possible.

Other Tips

- Always make sure that training documents are available to staff who will have access and a need to use a service.
- Make sure the application you select enables participants to control their own participation. It should allow employees to mute their audio contributions.
- Try to ensure your solution allows for the submission of questions/comments in text. This function not only ensures employees can contribute in a medium they prefer, but also ensures staff can still watch the video of a session or event if they don’t have a computer station that allows them to participate in the audio or visual formats (such as with cameras and microphones.)

For Further Information

- Contact the Access and Privacy Office, 233 Elizabeth Dafoe Library, 204-474-7559, fippa@umanitoba.ca