

Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional Best Practices

Technology alone does not guarantee successful collaboration among faculty and students. However, when you leverage it properly, technology can offer huge possibilities for improving communication and learning.

This document identifies a collection of best practices for using Acrobat Connect Professional. You'll see some innovative ways to use Acrobat Connect Professional in higher education and explore a process for successful collaborative teaching.

Plan for Success

Create a master learning plan before developing content, creating courses, or scheduling meetings.

- Start with a simple but flexible learning plan you can modify as you become more familiar with Acrobat Connect Professional. You will undoubtedly find ways to incorporate this program's capabilities into your learning plan.
- Include a list of presentations and courses you plan to develop (for the semester, quarter, or class).
- Plan a directory structure on your computer for storing presentations and courses in Acrobat Connect Professional so you can easily find which files pertain to each class.
- Identify your target audiences, and develop goals and learning objectives accordingly.
- Create a development calendar showing presentations, courses, live meeting sessions, and meeting content that you will develop.
- Help faculty and administrators work together to define roles and create a network of content producers, meeting leaders, and learning coordinators. Faculty usually don't want to be burdened with setting up and managing user accounts, online content, courses, curriculums, events, meetings, and seminars in Adobe Connect Enterprise Manager.
- Assign these tasks to a qualified learning coordinator who has Administrator permissions in Adobe Connect Enterprise Manager.

Make Lectures Available to a Wider Audience by Using Adobe Presenter

Using Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Presenter, you can publish media-rich presentations your audience can view by using any standard web browser.

- Make sure each slide stands on its own. You will not be present to answer questions when students view your Adobe Presentations.
- Narrate your presentations whenever possible.
- Use Flash to create conceptual animation designed to aid communication.
- Include PowerPoint speaker notes that contain the text of the narration. Because these notes are visible in Acrobat Connect Professional, your presentation will be more accessible to hearing-impaired users or to users without sound on their computers.

Create Online Courses and Curriculums by Using Adobe Connect Training

Using Connect Training, you can mix and match Adobe Presentations to produce complete online courses and curriculums.

- Include presentation quizzes. Quizzes offer learners a chance to check their comprehension, and they give faculty a chance to measure the success of courses.
- Avoid changing a quiz after you make your presentation available. Doing so could give some learners an unfair advantage over others.

Lead Synchronous Education by Using Acrobat Connect Professional Meetings

Using Acrobat Connect Professional meetings, you can communicate in real time over the Internet with other faculty and students. Educators are expanding the reach of their lectures to reach a globally dispersed audience. You can use features such as text chat, application sharing, and polling to maintain interactivity and student participation.

- Suggest reading or background materials prior to the meeting so students can add understanding, discussion, or collaboration during the meeting.
- Send participants a list of ground rules for participating in the meeting.
- Create an attendance sheet of enrolled participants to determine when all or most of your registered students have arrived.
- Preload materials (content) into the meeting room before class.
- Encourage student participation by using chat and polling features.
- Assign students *presenter* status, allowing them to take on more active roles in the session.

Collaborate with Other Faculty by Using Acrobat Connect Professional Meetings

Acrobat Connect Professional meetings aren't just for leading classes. Faculty from around the world can meet online to share ideas and research. You can hold faculty meetings, peer reviews, online conferences, and more.

- Although you can assign each participant Presenter status beforehand, a good idea is to designate only one meeting leader.
- Have other faculty enter the meeting as participants, and then grant Presenter status as needed from within the meeting room window.

Promote Student Workgroups by Using Acrobat Connect Professional Meetings

Using document sharing in an Acrobat Connect Professional meeting, students can present and share their work with other meeting participants.

- Create a unique meeting room for each student workgroup.
- Assign one student to the Meeting Hosts group and grant that student Manage permissions and Host status for the workgroup meeting room. This student will serve as the meeting leader.
- All other members of the student workgroup should enter the meeting as participants. The meeting leader can then grant Presenter status as needed, allowing other students to share their work and ideas.

Support Students Online by Using Acrobat Connect Professional Meetings

You can also use Acrobat Connect Professional to conduct one-on-one meetings or group meetings.

- Schedule group sessions or private office hours by creating your office in Acrobat Connect Professional and then wait for students to join the meeting.
- Conduct tutoring sessions between professors and teaching assistants inside an Acrobat Connect Professional meeting room.
- Schedule online portfolio reviews so students can share their work online and receive feedback from a larger audience.

Manage Large and Small Collaborative Learning Events by using Adobe Connect Events

In Acrobat Connect Professional, the Adobe Connect Events application enables users to manage the full life cycle of large or small events, including registration, invitations, reminders, and reporting. Connect Events can be used with meetings, seminars, presentations, or training.

An event generally involves many participants, so it requires careful pre-event planning and post-event management. For example, event hosts may want to accept or reject participants after they register. Because the appearance of the event may be critical, special university or college branding may need to be applied.

Use Seminars to Conduct a One-time Meeting with a Noncollaborative Large Group

With Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional Seminars, users can conduct a special kind of meeting in Acrobat Connect Professional. Like a meeting, a seminar is conducted online in real time and provides a virtual room in which a presenter can show slides or multimedia presentations, share screens, chat, and broadcast live audio and video.

A seminar takes place in a meeting room. As with meetings, you create a seminar in Adobe Connect Enterprise Manager.

Seminars differ from meetings in key ways. A meeting normally has 10 people or fewer and can be recurring. A seminar might have different limits for the number of users or the number of meetings that happen at the same time. (Users can click the information link to see what those limits are.) The default seminar room looks different from the default meeting room. Also, seminars can be created only in a shared area, while meetings can be created either in a shared area or in a user folder.

You could consider holding a seminar in the following situations:

- You are hosting at least 50 participants.
- The meeting is a one-time or infrequent event.
- The meeting is noncollaborative, with little audience participation or interaction.

Assess Knowledge and Learning Performance by Using Reports

Acrobat Connect Professional offers a wide range of reports for evaluating users, courses, and meetings. These reports offer you the most value if you have sufficient data to evaluate.

- If you plan to use a presentation as learning content in an Acrobat Connect Professional course, be sure to create a comprehensive quiz that maps directly to the learning objectives of your course. This will allow you to measure student performance accurately by running detailed user and course reports after class.
- During meetings, be sure to include several carefully written polls.
- Design polls as pop quizzes or course exams to administer in a meeting. Use the results to measure meeting and participant success by running detailed meeting reports.

Gather Research Data with Polls and Surveys

You can design polls for gathering information at various times during a meeting session. Polls offer an excellent way to gather information about enrolled learners and meeting participants. You can also use Adobe Presenter to add survey questions to a presentation. Surveys prompt students for feedback at key points in the presentation.

- Use reports to view detailed information on course and meeting survey and polling results.
- Use a combination of surveys and quizzes to create pre- and post-training assessments during Connect Training courses.
- Use a combination of surveys and polls to create pre- and post-meeting assessments during Acrobat Connect Professional meetings.

By following these simple guidelines and suggestions, you can maximize your investment in Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, avoid common mistakes, and be quickly on your way to successful collaborative teaching.