

Presenting & Recording Speeches from Home

Creating a professional recording of a speech or presentation can be challenging. The following information will help you make decisions about how and where to best present virtually or record a presentation from home.

Setting up

When choosing a location to present virtually or to record, select a space where you can control the lighting and background and minimize sound reverberation and distracting noises (car horns, ductwork fans, pets, roommates/family members, etc.). Consider how the following factors will affect your recording:

- ***Size of the space:*** The space must be big enough to accommodate you, your visual aids, and any audience members you may have.
- ***Lighting:*** Avoid a space with a window or bright light behind the presenter. Light sources should come from behind the camera, or in front of, above, or to the side of the presenter. The light should help spotlight the presenter, but check to make sure the lighting isn't too dark or too bright to show up well on your camera.
- ***Background:*** Choose a quiet indoor space with a neutral, light colored background, such as a blank or minimally decorated wall, to minimize distracting visual cues. The area behind the presenter should be plain, and a color different from the clothing of the presenter to provide visual contrast. Any objects visible in the background should be appropriate for a professional audience. If you lack an appropriate neutral background, you may be able to create one by taping or pinning a solid colored flat sheet across a doorway or closet. Do not record outdoors.
- ***Sound:*** Make sure that the sound quality allows a viewer to hear you clearly with no need to strain to make out what's being said. To be sure your particular recording device is adequate, first create a test video and ask someone unfamiliar with your presentation to repeat back words from the recorded presentation. Be aware of and when possible, eliminate distracting sounds that distort the sound captured by the camera.
- ***Audience members:*** If you will have an audience watching your presentation, seat them at least 8 feet away from you. The camera needs to have a clear view of you, leaving some space above you in the frame, and so you might want to create an "aisle" for the camera in the middle of the audience. Generally, the camera will need to be about 10 to

12 feet away from the speaker to clearly capture your face and body (from the mid-thigh up). The camera lens should be positioned at, or just above eye level.

Recording

Ideally, recordings will be made using an actual video camera such as a digital video recorder (DVR) or personal video recorder (PVR). If you don't have access to either, your cell phone or webcam are fine, but these devices are often limited in terms of their sound quality, as their microphones are designed to pick up sound only in close proximity. Make sure that the camera produces a video showing you in clear focus.

Finally, use a tripod or steadying device to keep the camera steady. Some other things to consider when recording:

- If you are using your cell phone to record, film with the phone turned horizontally, not vertically.
- Look directly into the camera. This gives the illusion to your virtual audience that you are making eye-contact with them.
- Place your camera on a stable surface (ideally with a tripod). Remember that the camera must be at eye level or slightly above.

Visual Aids

Which visual aids to use and when depends on topic, audience, and occasion, but logistics (where recording, access to materials and resources, etc.) should also be considered. Online course visual aids require careful and strategic planning because they are not really enhancing the presentation if the virtual audience can't see or hear them.

You may have to revamp your visual aid plan to adapt to presenting on camera rather than to a live audience. You must incorporate the aid into the presentation so that it feels intentional and integrated. You must acknowledge your aid. Ex: introduce and/or debrief a video clip, tell us about the image, explain what is in the graph or chart, etc.

If you want to present with a slideshow, images, videos, etc., a good way to ensure that they are clear and visible to the virtual audience is to use a TV screen or a large computer monitor.

- [How to Play a PowerPoint Slideshow on TV](#)
- [4 Ways a Smart TV Can Take Your Presentation to The Next Level](#)
- [How To Mirror Smartphone Or Tablet To Wirelessly Present A Presentation](#)

Note that images on TV screens can be hard to see on camera if the color scheme is too bright. It can also be affected by where light sources are located and how the camera is placed. You should take a test video using the TV screen to make needed adjustments.

Delivery

There are a few things to consider for delivery.

- Look directly into the camera lens. That is your audience's eyes and looking there will make your virtual viewers feel like you are looking at them and connecting with them. (If you have audience members at the recording, vary your gaze between the audience members and the camera.)
- Avoid reading word-for-word from a script, teleprompter, or cue cards, as this limits your ability to make eye contact and present naturally and conversationally (instead, use a keyword outline or notecards to jog your memory).
- Stand up straight and face the camera. You can still use purposeful movement, just keep it to a smaller space so you don't go off camera. Move slightly left or right with your transitions. Use natural gestures.
- Be mindful of the color and pattern of the clothing you are wearing as it may be distracting on video.
- Avoid clothing and accessories that will cause you to fidget; take off hats and pull hair back if needed. Don't wear things that make noise or that will pull the audience's attention away from you and your message.
- Wear clothes that are comfortable and that make you feel confident, so you don't feel the need to adjust them.
- Monitor your speech rate, your pitch, volume, verbal fillers, etc. Include pauses and vary your inflection. Take breathes and slow down so you don't sound "breathy." That is when it sounds like you have just run up a flight of stairs before speaking. Make sure you are articulating and enunciating and that you are pronouncing words correctly.
- If submitting a recording of a presentation, watch your video at least one time before you turn it in. You may catch major mistakes that would affect your grade. Consider watching the video while following the scoring rubric in order to maximize your success.

*This resource was adapted from the documents "Recording Speeches and Presentations" from Central Michigan University Presentation Skills Center, and "Presenting and Recording Speeches at Home" by Jenny Southard of University of North Carolina Greensboro.