

FAQs on Presenting an ALCTS Webinar

A free webinar on *How to Present a Webinar* can be found at http://alcts.ala.org/ce/howto_webinar_march232009.wmv.

Q: What kind of content is good for a webinar, and what are ALCTS's specifications?

Length

ALCTS generally allots 60 minutes for a webinar, and we recommend that you create your presentation to be about 40 minutes long, allowing 20 minutes for questions. If you feel that your content cannot be adequately presented in that timeframe, we can arrange to extend that time by 30 minutes, or it can be split into two webinars.

Topics

Choose a topic that is meaningful and timely to ALCTS members. It is often helpful to begin with a problem that your potential audience might be having, and then design your webinar around solutions to that problem. Make sure that your webinar has objectives that are action oriented, measurable, and learner focused.

Auditory Content

Make sure that your auditory content is strong and interesting. Although it is good practice not to read slides to your audience in any presentation, this is particularly true of webinars. Make sure that your voice is enthusiastic and natural; a smile can usually be heard even if it can't be seen. A prepared script, however, can be very useful for keeping yourself on track, particularly since there are no audience cues.

Visual Content

Create visually appealing slides, avoiding bullet points whenever possible. Suggested content includes multi-colored graphs, tables, and screen shots that demonstrate the points of your presentation. It is also possible to share your desktop, so live demonstrations are possible. Links with more best practices for creating slides are below:

<http://www.garreynolds.com/Presentation/slides.html>

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/powerpoint.htm>

Timing

It is recommended that you break your webinar into 15 minute segments with an interactive transition, such as a poll or a few audience questions, in between segments. Think about how much time you spend on each slide, since that is all that your audience can see; 2 to 3 minutes per slide usually gives the audience enough time to absorb the slide's content without becoming bored.

Location

It is best to find a comfortable and quiet location where you will not be interrupted during your presentation. Please remember to silence all phones (cell and desk phones) and any applications on

your computer that make noise. It is best to close all applications you will not be using during the webinar. When considering potential co-presenters, remember that it is not necessary that presenters and moderators be in the same location during the webinar.

Q: What kind of support does ALCTS provide?

Webinar Coach

A webinar coach will arrange a time with you to explain the software and help you get some hands on practice. After this initial session, there is usually a formal practice session with the webinar coach and webinar moderators where you can practice your webinar from start to finish. The webinar coach will also help to solve any technical issues that arise before or during the webinar.

Webinar Moderators

One or more members of the ALCTS Continuing Education Committee will be present during your webinar to introduce you before you begin and thank the audience afterwards. They can also help moderate questions for you during the webinar. Moderators usually attend the practice session with the webinar coach.

Q: How do I interact with an audience I can't see or hear?

Introduce Yourself

Early in your presentation it is a good idea for you to introduce yourself. We have also found that including a photograph of yourself helps give the audience a sense of who is speaking. Some presenters have also included pictures of their institutions or towns/cities as a way of adding a personal touch. Personal anecdotes and real world experience can add additional flavor.

Polls

The GoToWebinar software allows presenters to conduct up to 8 multiple choice polls at any point in the webinar. The results are instant and can be shared with attendees. Some presenters have used polls at the beginning of a webinar to gage the audience's experience. Polls also make a good transition between topics and can be used during the webinar for opinions and feedback, reminding attendees that they are part of a larger group of people watching the webinar. Polls must be set up ahead of time with a webinar coach.

Questions

You should decide ahead of time when you would like to ask for questions. We recommend that you ask audience members to type their questions rather than ask them since we cannot verify the microphone settings for the attendees (if they even have microphones). It is also helpful if one of the moderators keeps track of questions and reads them aloud. This allows the presenter to focus on answering and is an auditory cue to the audience that someone is asking a question. Questions that are not for the entire audience (technical difficulties during the presentation, for example) can be answered privately by any of the moderators typing a response.

Q: What kind of software does ALCTS use?

ALCTS uses GoToWebinar from Citrix. After your webinar has been approved, you can schedule a practice session with a webinar coach to learn more.

A user guide from GoToWebinar can be found at

https://www2.gotomeeting.com/default/help/g2w/pdf/GoToWebinar_User_Guide.pdf

Q: What kind of hardware will I need?

You will need a microphone and headphones to present a webinar. A headset with attached microphone allows you to free your hands. Headphones are a must in order to avoid delayed feedback.

A PC is recommended; there have been issues with presenters using Macs in the past. If there is no option other than a Mac, dual monitors will likely be necessary.

Q: I have a great idea for a webinar! What steps do I need to take next?

1. Submit your idea for webinar using online form at

<http://alctsprogram.wufoo.com/forms/alcts-webinar-proposal-form/>

The committee will review your proposal and contact you about its status.

2. If your webinar is approved, you will be contacted about setting dates for the webinar practice session and for learning the webinar software. You may also be asked to prepare more detailed information for the committee.

3. About a week before the webinar, there will be a run through with several committee members to make sure that everything is set to go for the actual webinar.

4. On the day of the webinar, the presenter(s) and moderator(s) will sign in to the webinar software about 30 minutes before the scheduled start time.

5. After the webinar attendees will be sent the link to an online survey, and the results of that survey will be shared with you.