



The Meeting Place

Products- connecting tools

Hardware requirements for connecting Lighting



One of the easiest things you can do to improve the look of your video is to simply turn on any light you have handy and position it behind the camera shining on your face. That might mean moving a lamp, or moving your computer if all your available lights are in a fixed position, but it can make a dramatic difference.

Get multiple lights and position them effectively. Getting a couple of lights that you can move to where you need them most is a good, inexpensive way to get started.

Use 3-point lighting at this stage, it's really time to just go ahead and get serious about lighting. The best balance in terms of optimising specifically for streaming and video calling is to pick up at least two LED panel lights. Using three of these, you can set up a standard 3-point lighting setup which are ideal for interviews or people speaking directly into a camera—aka just about every virtual conference/meeting/event/webinar use you can think of.

Add accent lighting, you've got your 3-point lighting but accent lighting can really help push the professionalism of your video even further, and it's also pretty easy and to set up using readily available equipment.

External webcam



Choice Considerations

1. Recording Quality

Recording quality is hands down the most important thing to look for in a webcam. If you're rocking an old webcam with 480p, it's time to throw it in the trash and invest in HD. There's no guarantee your viewer's internet connections will be good enough to watch your streams in high-definition.

2. Recording vs. Streaming

There is a very fine line between recording a file to be uploaded later and streaming video chats in real time. Just because a camera can record in 1080p, that doesn't mean it can stream at that resolution. This is an important distinction to remember.

3. Microphone Quality

This is another important quality for any user. If you frequently have a lot of background noise, make sure your microphone has good noise reduction technology built in.

4. Zoom Quality

Whether intentionally or accidentally, zooming in can have a major effect on the quality of your video footage or conference call. If you do expect to zoom in a lot, it helps to have a camera with a good auto-focus to keep things from getting too blurry.

5. Field of View

A wide field of view is very important to capture all the people in connection. This isn't going to be a major concern for everyone, of course, but it's worth bearing in mind.

Microphone

Get a basic USB mic, dedicated external mics are another way to quickly give your setup a big boost for relatively low cost. A simple wired lavalier (lav) microphone is a great way to upgrade your audio, and it doesn't cost that much. The main limitation of this is that depending on cord length, you could be pretty limited in terms of your range of motion while using one. A lav mic is great, but a wireless lav mic is even better. It means you don't need to worry about hitting the end of your cable, or getting it tangled in other cables in your workspace, and it can provide more flexibility in terms of what audio interfaces you use to actually get your sound into the computer. For top level streaming quality, with minimal sacrifices required in terms of video, you can use a good broadcast-quality shotgun mic.

Headphones

Headphones of any kind will make your video calls better, since it minimises the chance of echo from your mic picking up the audio from your own speakers. Big over ears models are

good for sound quality, while earbuds make for less obvious headwear in your actual video image. You still want to be using headphones at this stage, but the best kind to use really are in-ear monitors that do their best to disappear out of sight. You can get some dedicated broadcast-style monitors, or you can get a really good pair of Bluetooth headphones with low latency and the latest version of Bluetooth

Communication and collaboration tools

1. Google Drive

Google drive offers docs, spreadsheet, presentation, and drawing capabilities. Files can be uploaded or downloaded and shared by permission or to anyone with a link, for free. While Google Drive provides easy to use, real-time collaboration, online editing is difficult.



2. Fast computer processing

If your computer lacks a sufficiently fast processor, your audio and video quality will be downgraded to make the best possible call for your system's specs. Your computer should have a minimum 2 GB of RAM and a quad-core processor.

3. Sufficient network band width

The effect of a slow network on video quality is similar to that of a slow computer processor. Your call will dynamically adjust to give you the best possible quality with the available network. The network bandwidth required will depend on the resolution and frame rate you want. The more participants there are in the video call, the more bandwidth is required.

Screens – Smart Displays
See product section for details.

