Effective Communication in Virtual Spaces

Presented by Johnny Zhou
University of Hawaii at Mānoa
A little more about myself

- Raised in Hawaii
  - Very casual place
- Master's Student and Graduate Assistant at the College of Education, Learning Design and Technology Department
  - Master's project on online communication
- Instructional Design Assistant at the Online Innovation Center
Webinar Agenda

Objectives
01. What will the webinar cover?

Effective Communication in the workplace
02. Contemporary Workplaces
   ● Communication Considerations
   ● Tips for effective communication

Q&A
03. Opportunity to ask additional questions
Webinar Objectives

- Describe effective communication in virtual spaces.
- Explore effective communication strategies for communication in virtual spaces.
- Distinguish between proper and improper use of effective communication strategies
Intro to Communication in a Virtual Space/Online Communication
What is Communication in a Virtual Space/Online Communication?

Communication in a virtual space is how people communicate, connect, transact to send, retrieve, or receive information of any kind via the internet and through computer mediated tools.
How do people communicate in the virtual space?
Common Online Communication Mediums

Email

Chat Rooms

Voice Call

Video Call
Common Online Communication Mediums
The Contemporary Workplace
In a study of 5,858 U.S. adults conducted by the Pew Research Center (2020), a majority use some form of online communication for their work.

With 54% of these individuals opting to continue to work from home if they had a choice.

**The Contemporary Workplace**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Hardly ever</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video calling or online conferencing services like Zoom or Webex</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant messaging platforms such as Slack or Google Chat</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Share of respondents who didn’t offer an answer not shown. Figures may not add to subtotals due to rounding.


“How the Coronavirus Outbreak Has – and Hasn’t – Changed the Way Americans Work”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER
Workplace Communication Behaviors

- Information Sharing
- Organizing
- Relational Maintenance
Question from the Audience:
The struggle in virtual communication is to have the team understand their jobs and responsibility since we cannot track their job directly. Any suggestions to communicate job with the team.
In-person vs. Online Communication

Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014
Online Communication Considerations

**Sender Responsibilities**
Concisely conveying your message with consideration for your receiver.

**Understanding the technology**
Different technologies change how you communicate and the appropriate time frame for response.

**Lack of Non-verbal Cues**
Avoiding the misinterpretation of your messages.

**Netiquette**
Understanding the accepted norms/behaviors for communicating online.
Tips for effective communication in the virtual space
Video about Proper Email Etiquette from the Providence College Office of Academic Services (2:42)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TeHnzfO0glA
Understanding Sender Responsibilities

01. Clarity
   Properly conveying your message

02. Setting
   Understanding the context of the recipient

03. Collaboration
   Working with others before communicating with the whole

04. Mindfulness
   Can your message be misinterpreted?

05. Listening
   Giving your recipient the same respect of being a listener

Adu-Oppong & Agyin-Birikorang, 2014
Hey,
So waz UR job like???????? I’m kinda interested in mrktg but I’m not sure. How offen are U board at work? I’m was board ALL THE TIME at skool  !!! Since we both like baseball, we should go to a Twins game together next season, what do U think? Here’s my personal email since this one will shut off after this thing: imawesome@myemail.com or if you wanna call me, my cell number is (612)555-9876. U should totally drop me a line and we’ll hang out.

Oh yeah....I’m sposed to send U a question....how did u fix that issue on the projekt?
C ya
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Understanding Sender Responsibilities

Collaboration: Did the sender take the time to seek out others on how to ask this person or check whether this would be the best way to talk with this person?

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Mindfulness: How would the sender be viewed by the recipient with this type of tone?

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C ya
Understanding Sender Responsibilities

**Listening:** Do you take the time to understand the recipient's response?

Hello John,

I am glad to hear about your interest in marketing and baseball.

I am not quite sure what you are asking of me. I noticed that you asked about project however I am not sure what project you are referring to. If there is any other way that I could assist you, please let me know.

Thank you,
Bob
Hello Mr. Smith,

My name is John. I am a new hire and my supervisor, Helen, recommended that I reach out to you for project advice. I was interested in improving my skills in marketing and took on a marketing project whose foundation is built off of your previous work. Helen informed me that we have a shared interest in baseball. If you are available, I would definitely be interested in hearing about your experience in working on the project. Please let me know what would be the best way to stay in contact with you. My email contact is bob.marketing@myemail and my phone contact number is (612)555-9876.

Thank you,

John
Following Netiquette

framework of accepted behaviours when communicating online

Make Real People a Priority
Give your complete focus to your recipient

Use Respectful Language
Speak/write in a courteous manner

Prompt Responses
Respond in a timely manner
Make Real People a Priority

Give your undivided attention to your recipient

Avoid distractions or things that pull your attention away
Communication Style

- Clear and Concise Language
- Thorough Responses
- Proper Tone
Communication Style

Are you focused on the topic at hand?

Do you follow the norms for formal communication?

Do you cover all of the important points?

Are your responses orderly?
Hey Mr. James!

I am looking forward to seeing you today for our meeting. I’ve attached the materials needed for our discussion. Let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,
Terry Johnson
B.S. Engineering Student
To: James A.

From: Terry Johnson

Subject: Materials for Today’s (9/13) Advising Meeting

Hello Mr. Anderson,

I am looking forward to seeing you today (9/13) for our advising meeting. I’ve attached the materials needed for our discussion. Let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,
Terry Johnson
B.S. Engineering Student
To: John Doe  
From: Jane Smith  
Subject:  

Hey John, We talked a couple weeks back at the chamber of commerce event. (I was the one looking for a summer internship and had a zit on my lip that could have passed for a cold sore. Lol. Whew. It was not.

I’d really like to come work for you at your IT business. You seemed like a cool person to work for, I liked ur striped pants. I’m available to start working on Monday, but I am taking my driver’s test in June and have to study and go an hour and half away to take it at an easier place cause I’m not a great driver so I’ll miss a few days. I am also going to the beach with friends for a week in July. I’ve attached my resume, it’s the bomb dot com. Let me know if you have a job opening for me. I can’t wait to play on some computers. If I don’t respond to your email, I’m always on FB, snapchat or insta!

Peace out,  
Jane
To: John Doe  
From: Jane Smith  
Subject: Inquiry Concerning Summer Internship  

Hello Mr. Doe,  

I hope you are doing well. My name is Jane Smith and I am an IT student. We had met during the chamber of commerce events a few weeks ago and I enjoyed our discussion.  

You had mentioned during the conversation that your IT business may potentially have an internship this summer and I wanted to follow up with you on that point. I have also attached my resume for your reference.  

Thank you for your consideration,  
Jane
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video/Voice Call</td>
<td>Immediate response. It is the same as in-person communication where it is in real time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chatbox</td>
<td>Immediately or within about 15 minutes. There is some extra leeway for responses given the expectation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td>Immediately or within a day. There is an understanding that email is similar to a letter and responses are not immediate.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Q&A

Do you have any questions?
Thanks!

Johnny Zhou
johnnyy@hawaii.edu
University of Hawaii at Mānoa

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