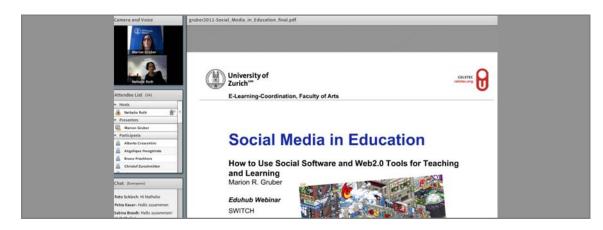# *Desktop conference*

Participating in meetings from the work station

What is a desktop conference?

Aside from professional video conference systems for large rooms, online discussions or seminars which also take place at sites which are remote from each other can take place directly from PC workstations.

Aside from audio and optional video transmission via webcam, the individual PC desktop can also be made accessible to all participants. It can be used to jointly view and work on images, programs (e.g. browser windows) or presentation foils. Many of the desktop conference tools also offer other functions to support the exchange.

Such meetings or webinars are carried out with suitable video and web conferencing software such as Adobe Connect or Skype.

Low technical requirements: a hyperlink to the meeting room, PC with modern browser and a headset are all that is required to participate.

Functionalities

— Applications sharing: jointly view/use documents and applications

— Whiteboard: jointly draw and enter text

— Implement tests and surveys

— Chat function

— Roles: organiser, moderator and participants (registered or guests)

— Recording and if applicable, processing and further utilisation of meetings which can be transmitted via streaming (see the specs on streaming) after the desktop conference

— Several variants are possible for some tools in the number of participating parties and direction of communications:
(A) point-to-point (1:1) or multiple (1:n or n:m)
(B) uni- or bidirectional

Benefits

– Low technical requirements

– Audiovisual communication enabled via distributed locations

– Communication partners can be heard and seen: additional information through facial expressions and gestures

– Desktop conference can be visited or carried out directly from the accustomed PC workstation

– Functions and tools of the conference system can enliven communication and support collaboration

Disadvantages

– The level of face to face situations is not reached

– Plan in familiarisation time for organisers and particularly for moderation

– Test before meeting start to prevent connection and quality problems in image and sound

When can I use a desktop conference?

Desktop conference tools can be used to hold interactive, multimedia online events in real time, such as trainings (webinars), meetings or demonstrations. Project or research groups whose members are scattered worldwide can meet online via desktop conferences, saving time and money.

How and who?

In case of questions, please contact SWITCH support via e-mail: interact-support@switch.ch