


What Is a Webinar?

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Here's How Webinars Are Changing the Way we Connect and Learn

Watching a Webinar

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Software & Apps

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With internet technology, we have the possibility to connect in real-time with people from all over the world, whenever we want.

Video chatting platforms like Skype or [Google Plus](#) are fine for casual individual and group-based chats, but for professional events meant to deliver presentations to larger audiences, webinars tend to be the medium of choice. Anyone can host a webinar or tune in to attend and watch one.

Let's explore what a webinar actually is and how people are using them today.

What Exactly Is a Webinar, Anyway?

A webinar is a live web-based video conference that uses the internet to connect the individual hosting the webinar to an audience—the viewers and listeners of the webinar from all over the world. Hosts can show themselves speaking, switch to their computer screens for slideshows or demonstrations, and even invite guests from other locations to co-host the webinar with them.

There are also interactive features that the audience can use to ask questions and chat with host. Many people who host webinars include Q&A sessions at the end to answer viewers' questions.

Recommended: [10 Popular Tools for Broadcasting Live Video to an Online Audience](#)

Why Host or Tune in to a Webinar?

Professionals use webinars to give educational presentations related to their businesses and connect with their audiences in a much closer way. It could be a webinar where one person simply hosts a lecture or seminar to teach something, it could be a promotional presentation to sell a product, or it could be both.

Webinars are also helpful tools for conducting live interviews with other professionals, which are often compelling aspects that draw more people in to attend webinars. If you want to learn something about a particular topic of interest, webinars are one of the best ways to expand your knowledge by learning directly from the experts.

Tuning in to a Webinar

Depending on which service the host uses, you may need to download an application first in order to access the webinar. Some hosts also require you to reserve your spot by clicking on a link in an invitation email—especially if the webinar allows a limited number of audience spots.

Many hosts will send out at least one reminder email an hour or a few minutes before the webinar is about to go live. Some hosts will even go as far as to host two webinars of the same presentation to cater to large audiences—especially if they're from all around the world in different timezones.

When it's time to tune in, audience members have to “call in” sort of like making a phone call to access the webinar. Audience members are often provided with a custom link or even a password by webinar host in order to get in. For some webinars, there's even an option to call in by phone to listen.

Some hosts will also give their audiences access to a replay of their webinar if they weren't able to attend the live session.

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Webinar Features

Here are just some of the things you can do with a webinar:

Display slides: You can display a slideshow presentation using MS PowerPoint or Apple's Keynote, just like you would in a regular classroom, meeting room or lecture hall.

Stream video: Show a video either stored on your computer or found online, such as on [YouTube](#).

Talk to your audience: Webinars use [VoIP](#) to make real-time audio communication possible.

Record everything: Webinars often provide an option for the host to [record their entire presentation](#)—including all visuals and audio.

Edit: The host can often use their mouse to create annotations, highlight things or create markings on the screen.

Chat: The host can open up a chat box to text chat with the audience, which is especially helpful for audience members wanting to ask questions.

Conduct surveys and polls: Some webinar providers offer the ability to create polls given to audience members for quizzes or survey purposes.

Hosting Your Own Webinar

If you'd like to host your own webinar, you need to choose a webinar service provider. They're usually not free to use over the long run, but most of them offer some kind of free trial period for 30 days or so.

Webinar Service Providers

Here are three popular webinar service providers that people use, among many others:

GoToWebinar: A lot of professionals use this one. As one of the most popular webinar platforms today, you can get started with GoToWebinar with its 30-day free trial or for \$89 per month with up to 100 attendees.

AnyMeeting: AnyMeeting is another popular webinar platform choice and is a bit cheaper than GoToWebinar at just \$78 a month for up to 100 attendees after your free trial is up. It's got great screen sharing options, social media integration and a variety of management tools as well.

Zoom: Zoom is totally free for up to 50 attendees and a 40-minute cap on meetings. This service is scalable in price depending on how many attendee spots you want, and starts as low as \$55 a month.