Transcript: Videoconferencing Unveiled, December 3, 2008

Mary: Hello, and welcome to the latest NUIT to Go podcast. My name is Mary Zahn, and I am a member of the NUIT Communications team. Today I am here with Mike Curtis, the project manager of Video and Collaboration Services within NUIT. He is a part of the Academic and Research Technologies group. So Mike, can you quickly walk me through how to schedule a videoconference?

Mike: Sure. Well, we're going to start off going to the IT page at Northwestern, so it's it.northwestern.edu. And from there, under the Services link, we're going to scroll down and select Videoconferencing Services. That will bring you to the main videoconferencing page. Where we'll get started to actually make a reservation is in the lower-right hand section, there's an icon there called “My Conferences”, and that's where you're going to get started. This is going to show you conferences that you've scheduled and allow you to actually schedule a conference for the future. So once we go through there and you log in with your NetID, you're going to click “Add a Conference”, and once you get to the reservation form, there's five key areas that need to be populated with details for your conference. The first two are going to be date and time and frequency of your conference, as well as conference details, the type of videoconference you're wanting to schedule, which is basic information so we know what type of conference is being scheduled. The next section is going to be where you're going to have your videoconference, so your videoconference location, and this is the most important part of the videoconference, because without a videoconference room, you really can't have a videoconference. The room does have to have the technology equipped in it so that it can function in a videoconference. We do provide a list of rooms so that you can contact the coordinator or the owner of that space, request a room, and once you have the reservation, you can finish the reservation form that you're currently in and actually submit and let us know that “Yes, I have a room, this is the videoconferencing I want to do”, and we can follow up and provide some assistance based on your request. The last two pieces of the form are based on who you're conferencing with. So if it's not a NU location, if it's somewhere outside of Northwestern, it's really important for us to know who they are, what technology they have, and also who their contact is for technical support so that we can arrange and set up for some testing to make sure that we're compatible. Now, in order to do all this, we need time, time to contact them, for them to contact us, so that we can make sure your conference is successful. A week is very close to being the minimum amount of time that we need. Really, we'd like to have more, especially if there's going to be additional support needed, we need to arrange staffing and resources, so less than a week is really not recommended. In fact, if you have any idea of a videoconference that's being scheduled in the future, please use the form, put it in the system. It'll be on our schedule, we'll know about it, we can follow up, and if you need to cancel it at the last minute, that's fine, but it's much better for you to cancel at the last minute than it is to schedule it at the last minute, especially if you want your conference to be successful. The
last piece is the need for our videoconferencing bridge, in what should be listed on the form as a multi-site reservation. What that allows you to do is set up infrastructure that we have to allow multiple sites to connect at once. So if you wanted a conference with four or five different sites, be it on the Northwestern campus or off the campus, we have the services and the technology needed to support that. And there’s also the ability to do live videoconferencing streaming, which is also required by the video bridge as well. So those are the five key components. There are some other pieces of information there that you may have questions about. Feel free to contact us; we have a lot of information on our webpage where you can look up and find out more about streaming, more about videoconferencing locations and such.

**Mary:** Right, and also, on the Videoconference page, is there a page to find out more about room size, room capacity?

**Mike:** There is, under the Services section, there is a link to look at public videoconference rooms. We also have a lot of information on the form itself so that you’ll know where the rooms are, how to contact the owner, but it does indicate the size of the spaces, so you can get an idea of whether or not a 100-seat auditorium is the right size conference for your group of 20. It may not fit, or it may, but it really depends on what’s available. Quite often we have conferences that have small groups in large rooms because there are no other facilities.

**Mary:** OK, great Mike! I think that’s about it. What I’ve learned today is contact you early.

**Make:** Contact us early, that’s very important.

**Mary:** Get on the books. Alright, well thank you for coming. I also want to encourage our audience out there to visit the Tech Talk archive page, which you can go to from the IT home page, About NUIT, and scroll down to “Events, Presentations, and Training”. Under “Watch a Past Presentation” click the Archived NUIT Tech Talks link, and you will see a NUIT Tech Talk Videoconferencing Unveiled where you can watch an extended version of how to schedule a videoconference. I really encourage you to do that. Thank you for listening today.

This has been a presentation from the Northwestern University Information Technology Support Center. Please e-mail future topic suggestions to NUIT Communications at it-communications@northwestern.edu.

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