Choosing the right software to deliver sessions remotely

With so many webinar and video conferencing platforms to choose from, making the right choice for your organisation and community can be tricky. We have put together a list of things to think about when selecting a platform to deliver your sessions.

Price

Webinar software can range from free to very expensive, and your budget will be an important factor in narrowing down the list of affordable platforms. However, you must not base your choice solely on price, as many providers are competitive and offer products in a similar price bracket.

Top Tip: If you do not have the budget to purchase webinar software, you can apply for a [Be Connected grant](#) to help cover the cost.

Ease of use

Your learners may be completely new to attending sessions remotely, so trying to choose a platform that is easiest for them to use is essential. Some providers allow learners to join a session without registering and without having to download software to their devices. Keep the needs of your community in mind and consider how to make the experience easy and accessible for them.

Interactivity

Delivering sessions remotely brings with it various challenges. One of these is making sure participants are concentrating and having an opportunity to take an active part in the session. Most platforms allow for activities such as screen sharing,

while others can produce a whiteboard for everyone to write on, boxes for people to type in, polls for you to quiz your learners and popups that will take learners to a particular web page or document.

Ability to record

This may not be a factor for everyone, however, some Network Partners will want to record their sessions so learners can watch them at a later date. Most webinar platforms can record sessions but some charge extra for this feature. It is considered good etiquette in the virtual world to gain permission from the group prior to recording the session.

Accessibility

For Network Partners that support learners with physical or intellectual disabilities, delivering sessions remotely may require added accessibility features. Platforms vary from having no accessibility support at all, to being able to add closed captions and use keyboard shortcuts.

Support for other languages

Some platforms are only offered in English, while others have support for many other languages and might even allow participants to choose their own language for easier understanding. This will be a big factor if your organisation works with people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

Privacy and security

Before choosing any digital platform or program, it's important to check how secure it is before you download it. Most providers will have information on their websites about the security of their platforms, so do some research to make sure they are in line with your organisation's security policy. If the provider doesn't have any information about security or privacy, it might be worth finding an alternative.

Creating and setting up sessions

Most webinar platforms come with the standard ability to choose the time, length and description of your webinar. Other providers allow you to also customise the look and feel of the webinar and invitation. This can be more time consuming and might require more knowledge of how to use the platform, so make sure you not only consider what is best for your learners but also what is best for you.