

Defense Connect Online Facilitation Guide



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A Guide to Conducting Meetings and Training Events on Defense Connect Online

This is a guide for facilitating an on-line meeting or training event using DCO. It is not intended as a step-by-step guide on how to use DCO. If you need instruction on how to use DCO attend the on-line training provided by DCO at www.dco.dod.mil.

Tasks to Accomplish Before the Meeting/Training Event:

Task	Responsible Party	Description/Details
Register on DCO	Host & Presenter	<p>Go to www.dco.dod.mil.</p> <p>Register on the web site by clicking on the green “register” button on the page.</p> <p>Follow the instructions to register.</p>
Take the Online DCO User Training	Host & Presenter	<p>It is highly recommended that all hosts and presenters take the beginner and intermediate training provided by DCO. Information about the training is located on the DCO home page under the section titled “Getting Started.”</p>
Create a Meeting	Host	<p>Prior to the training event the host must create a meeting on DCO.</p>
Set Up the Meeting/Training Space	Host & Presenter	<p>The host and presenter must coordinate how the meeting/training will be conducted prior to the beginning of the event.</p> <p>Once the meeting is created the host and presenter must decide on the appropriate layouts that they will need to use in order to conduct the meeting. (A layout is a pre-determined arrangement of the different pods and tools that can be created in DCO.)</p> <p>Treat the virtual environment the same as you would treat a conference room. If you have professional packets and handouts at a meeting you will need to create the same environment in the virtual meeting space. This is done through creating professional slides, visuals and layouts.</p>
Set Up Audio	Host	<p>Decide prior to the meeting how you will deliver the audio for the meeting. Conducting a meeting with voice over internet protocol (VOIP) and a separate dial-up telephone line is complicated and takes additional coordination. To avoid confusion decide on only one of these methods for delivering your audio.</p>

		<p>VOIP Audio Instructions: If you plan to use the VOIP, you must set up your microphone and speakers on your computer PRIOR to the meeting. If you do not know how to set up your microphone and speakers for use on DCO obtain assistance from a knowledgeable individual or you local help desk.</p> <p>With the new version of DCO you have the ability to give participants the permission to speak. If you plan to use this capability, make sure your participants have their microphones and speakers set up prior to the event.</p> <p>To avoid feedback and background noise, use a headset for the microphone. If there are multiple presenters in a room sharing one computer you will need to use a desktop microphone. If you choose to use a desktop microphone plan your space and sound quality before the meeting.</p> <p>Separate Dial-Up Line Instructions: If you plan to use a phone line for the audio, you will not need to set up your computer microphone and speakers. You will also need to arrange for a conference call to be set up. Remember to have all participants have their phones on mute when they are not speaking to reduce the background noise and distractions.</p>
<p>Set Up Your Video Presentation Space</p>	<p>Host & Presenter</p>	<p>If you plan to use the video as part of the meeting/training event, plan the visual presentation prior to the event.</p> <p>Here are guidelines for professional video presentation using a web-camera:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All protocol and other courtesy items are maintained in a virtual environment. For example, if the speaker would have flags or other protocol items present in an auditorium or conference room then those same items should be visible in the web camera view. A virtual environment does not mean a relaxation of proper military customs and courtesies. • Set the camera above the presenter so the presenter is looking slightly up into the camera. • Prepare the background for the presenter so that the background is neat, orderly and presents a professional image. A blank wall or wall with a professional image as the background is best. • Prepare the area that is visible by the web camera

		<p>for OPSEC. Remove maps, classified materials or sensitive items. The area visible by the camera should be at the FOUO level of security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only the presenter should be visible on the camera. (The host is the technical person and the participants do not need to see the technician running the behind the scenes aspect of the meeting/training) • Avoid a background that has distractions such as people walking in and out of the camera view. • Treat the video set-up and presentation of the presenter in the same way you would set up an auditorium or conference room. If you would place flags and emblems behind the speaker in an auditorium do the same for the background for the video presentation. The only change in the meeting is a shift from a physical space to a virtual space.
<p>Decide How to Accept Participants Into the Meeting/Training Environment</p>	<p>Host & Presenter</p>	<p>Decide before the meeting how and who you will accept into the meeting/training environment.</p> <p>If participants are going to be using DCO on a regular basis they should be a registered DCO user and sign into meetings using their user name and password.</p> <p>An additional option is to invite registered DCO users to the meeting on the DCO website when setting up the meeting.</p> <p>If the participant is not a registered on DCO they can sign into the meeting as a “guest” and type in their first and last name. It is suggested that you do not accept guests into a meeting unless they provide you their complete name. If you would not accept anonymous people into your auditorium you should not accept anonymous people into your virtual environment.</p> <p>Decide who will physically accept the people into the virtual training environment. A good rule of thumb is to have only ONE person accepting people into the environment and to establish a rule for those signing in as guests.</p>

<p>Send Out Meeting Information to Participants</p>	<p>Host or Presenter</p>	<p>Send out the URL, meeting time and date and call in number (if you are not using VOIP) to the participants at least one week prior to the meeting through e-mail or method of your choice. If the meeting or training is open to the public you will need to publish the information for the meeting in the same location the meeting or training is advertised.</p> <p>If you choose to have all users sign in through the DCO web site as registered users you will need to invite them to your meeting through DCO web site.</p> <p>When sending out the meeting details make sure to tell participants when the meeting space will be available for them to log in. It is recommended that you start accepting participants at least 5 minutes prior to the start of the meeting so you can assist them with the log-in procedures if they are having difficulty.</p>
<p>Publish Meeting Agenda</p>	<p>Presenter</p>	<p>Send out the agenda for the meeting or training event to the participants prior to the meeting.</p> <p>If the meeting or training is private, publish the agenda through e-mail or a calendar invite through outlook. (Private meetings are not searchable on the DCO web site and participants can only connect to them if they are sent the specific URL for the meeting. Public meetings are searchable on DCO and participants can find the meeting and request entry through the DCO web site even if they were not sent the specific URL by the meeting coordinator.)</p> <p>If the meeting or training is public, publish the agenda in the "Summary Description" section of the meeting information on the DCO web site so participants can review the agenda prior to attending the meeting. If the meeting or training is advertised through a separate web site, publish the agenda at that location in addition to the DCO web site.</p>

Tasks to Conduct During the Meeting/Training Event:

Task	Responsible Party	Description/Details
Open the Meeting Space	Host	<p>The Host should log into DCO at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the meeting. At this time the host should double check all of the layouts for the meeting, do a final review of the visuals for the meeting and prepare to accept participants into the meeting.</p> <p>Do not start accepting participants until you have checked all of the layouts and visuals.</p>
Accept Participants into the Meeting	Host or Presenter	<p>Start accepting participants into the meeting space at the designated time as indicated in the e-mail inviting participants to the meeting.</p>
Provide an Overview of the Virtual Environment	Host	<p>If the majority of the participants in the meeting or training event are new to the DCO environment you will need to provide them instruction on how to participate in the virtual environment.</p> <p>At the beginning of our presentation provide a 3-5 minute presentation on the capabilities of the virtual training environment. This should include how participants can virtually participate in the meeting or training.</p>
Record the Meeting or Training Event	Host	<p>DCO has the capability to record the meeting or training and to make the recording available for view. The recording can be made either public or private allowing the host and presenter the ability to decide who can view the recording.</p> <p>If you plan to record the meeting or training event you need to announce to all participants that you are recording the meeting. It is also recommended that a note is visible in the meeting space telling participants that the meeting is being recorded.</p> <p>Start the recording and announce when you begin recording. You will need to end the recording at the end of the meeting.</p>

		<p>Recording the meeting or training is valuable for multiple reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You can review the meeting later to improve your performance. 2. You can make the recording available for participants who were unable to attend the meeting. 3. You have a record of the event for continuity.
<p>Conduct the Meeting/Training Event</p>	<p>Presenter</p>	<p>When the presenter starts conducting the meeting or training the host should turn off his/her camera. The participants only need to see the presenter at this point in the event. Think about who is on “stage” at the moment. Only the person who has an active role in the presentation should have his/her camera on.</p> <p>Conduct the meeting with the same level of professionalism and organization you would in person. Include the standard items such as an agenda, taking attendance, establishing ground rules and providing a training evaluation. All protocols and courtesies that would be adhered to in a live meeting should be maintained in a virtual environment.</p>
<p>Conclude the Meeting/Training Event</p>	<p>Host & Presenter</p>	<p>At the end of the meeting or training event establish how long you will leave the meeting space open for the participants.</p> <p>This is a good time to have a layout designed to capture feedback and questions from the meeting or training event. Feedback can be collected through DCO through the use of poll pods and chat pods.</p> <p>If you have a training evaluation or feedback form create a layout for your evaluation and convert the questions to polls and chats. The multiple choice questions become poll pods and the open ended questions become chat pods. The participants can respond to your evaluation prior to exiting the virtual environment, eliminating the need for you to send them a form through e-mail. At the end of the meeting make sure and close the meeting by selecting “end meeting” in the DCO menu to make sure your participants do not have access to your meeting space after the meeting is over. Ending the meeting removes all users from the virtual environment in DCO.</p>

Tasks to Conduct After the Meeting/Training Event:

Task	Responsible Party	Description/Details
Review the Attendance Roster and Polls	Host & Presenter	<p>After the meeting or training event review your attendance roster and the results of your poll questions. If this is a training event, you may want to verify that a participant was present for the entire training event. DCO provides a roster of attendees with the time they logged into the meeting space and the time they left the meeting space.</p> <p>The poll questions are automatically tabulated when the poll is closed in the training environment. The results of the polls are presented in the reports section associated with each meeting.</p>
Conduct Post Meeting/Training Maintenance in the Virtual Environment	Host & Presenter	<p>After the meeting review each layout. If you want to capture the comments made in the chat pods, you can e-mail the chat pod contents to yourself or copy and paste the contents of the chat pod to a word document.</p> <p>After you have reviewed the contents of the chat pods, clear the chat pod so it is ready for the next meeting or training event.</p>
Conduct an AAR	Host & Presenter	<p>After the meeting or training event conduct an informal or formal AAR and make recommended changes for the next meeting or training event.</p> <p>If you recorded the meeting, review the meeting to determine what improvements can be made for the next event.</p>
Publish Meeting Minutes	Presenter	<p>Publish the meeting minutes to the participants in the meeting through e-mail or through another method of your choice.</p> <p>If the participants are all registered users you can send obtain their contact information through DCO. If they are not a registered DCO user you will need to obtain their contact information prior to them leaving the virtual environment in order to send them the meeting minutes.</p>

Suggestions and Best Practices

This section is a list of suggestions and best practices for making your virtual meeting or training event interactive, effective and professional.

Use Interactivity Tools:

The host and presenter should practice and master the interactivity tools built into DCO. Each tool helps to make the virtual environment interactive and effective. Use of these tools will make the meeting or training event more interesting to the participant, engage them in the event and provide a means for gaining feedback. (The table below was adapted from the Virtual Facilitator Training provided by NetSpeed learning solutions. *2009 CLAY & ASSOCIATES INC./NETSPEED LEARNING SOLUTIONS™*)

Tool	Uses	Benefits
Chat	Solicit participant input Encourage collaboration	Actively engages participants in discussion Creates peer exchanges
Polling	Check knowledge or experience Stimulate interest Set up lecture or discussion	Provides instant feedback (and satisfaction) Participants can compare their responses Helps facilitator lead discussion and tailor lecture
Status Icons	Quickly get input Identify volunteers for exercises See agreement or disagreement	Participants can “vote” or respond Opens the door for facilitator to call on learners to give examples
Streaming Video	Stream video of Facilitator Add animation and interest	Helps to establish rapport Creates a sense of connection
VOIP	Stream audio over the Internet	Provides a cost-effective audio solution Supports use of web interactivity tools
Teleconferencing	Encourage voice-to-voice communication	Adds the dimension of peer-to-peer dialogue Useful when users do not have sound cards or speakers

Tool	Uses	Benefits
Whiteboarding	Brainstorm and capture ideas Encourage collaboration	Allows facilitator to guide and record discussion visually Encourages peers to share ideas
Application Sharing	Share websites, your desktop, or documents Can turn over control to specific participants	Allows you to demonstrate steps or actions online Gives a participant the opportunity to practice steps or actions while others observe

A Guide to Visuals

1. Avoid using the built in clip art in Power Point. A large number of web sites are available that provide high quality stock photos for **free**. A photograph has a greater visual and emotional impact than the clip-art. In addition, the photographs provide a more professional image whereas the clip-art dates your presentation. (www.mwrbrandcentral.com; www.flickr.com/familymwr; www.digitalimagemagazine.com/blog/featured/25-free-stock-photo-sites/)
2. Pay attention to color choice. When choosing colors; use a color wheel, cultural knowledge about the significance of colors and knowledge about the emotional impact of color. For example: blue and green tones are calming colors, red and orange colors impart negative or stressful emotions, and brown and black are neutral colors. Keep in mind that some of your users may be color blind and to avoid red/green combinations. (The following link is to an article that explains the use of color in presentations. www.indezine.com/ideas/prescolors.html)
3. Keep the slides clean and simple. Keep the text on a slide to a minimum. Too much text makes the slide difficult to read and understand. A rule of thumb on text size is to print your slide, place it on the floor and try to read the slide while standing. If you have difficulty reading the slide from a standing position then the font is too small. Slides are free, it is better to have more slides with less text than one slide with too much text.
4. Only use a visual if it adds to the presentation. Photos should emphasize a point, be a lead into a discussion, or impart a desired emotional response. Graphics such as charts and graphs should be chosen to present information quickly. Choose the correct chart or graph to deliver the data. For example; pie charts show portions of a whole, bar graphs are good for comparing data and line graphs are good for showing a trend over time.

5. Use the Master Slide in Power Point to set up your slides before you start putting information on your slides. The use of the Master Slide keeps all of the slides formatted the same, makes sure all bullets line up properly from one slide to the next and reduces the file size of the presentation.

Virtual Training Best Practices:

1. Use pre-training assignments. Send out the assignments prior to the start of training and refer to the assignments during the virtual training.
2. Include more slides instead of less to guide the discussion and training. Build the slide deck to organize the flow of the virtual training. The use of the slides to organize the training instead of different layouts will keep a consistent look to the training.
3. Keep the presentation interactive with an activity every three to five minutes of presentation. Use chats and polls to keep the participants engaged in the training. Discourage the practice of multi-tasking during the training.
4. Use follow-up e-mails and evaluations one week after the training event. After the event, conduct a follow-up survey or check back with the participants to make sure they have the information they needed from the training.
5. Look into the camera when responding to questions. Looking into the camera will help the participants connect with you during the training.
6. Have the chat pods, poll pods, note pods and other pods created before the training event. Pre-set the training environment so you have all of your visuals and tools available during the training.
7. Organize the additional pods that will be used in the training in the “off stage” area of the training platform. Stack the pods in an organized manner so they can be easily found and used during the training.
8. Create different layouts prior to the training for different purposes. (Discussion, presentation, introduction, evaluation etc.) If a large portion of the training involved discussion or another activity, create a separate layout for that activity prior to the training. You can easily load the prepared space to move through the training events quickly and efficiently.
9. Respond to the chat responses by name to make the training more personal. Responding by name helps the participants feel like they are part of the training and not just watching the training.
10. Use the status icons throughout the training to encourage interaction.