



Guidance on Technology

When businesses were forced to close their doors in March 2020 to stop the spread of COVID-19, there came a dawning reality that this might go on longer than anyone had anticipated. A year later and businesses have quickly moved their services online and remote working has become the norm. This forced experiment of a new way of working has brought positives as well as negatives on the way we work, but there is no escaping the fundamental role of technology.

The pandemic has created a need for employers and schools/colleges to be able to deliver experiences of the workplace in a virtual or blended environment. While this need is especially acute when the pandemic is restricting face to face interactions, we also believe that virtual and blended formats will likely become a core part of future delivery. Prior to the pandemic some organisations were already exploring a blended delivery model.

Learning to use new technologies might seem intimidating and time consuming, but given the right tools, it can make all the difference to creating truly captivating sessions. Delivering online work experience has never been easier and you're guaranteed to have the technology in your pocket or on your desk to do so: a mobile phone, tablet,

laptop or computer really is all you need to get started (and WiFi, of course).

Using easily accessible tools can mean you can effortlessly create films to share insights into your workplace and profile your employees doing their job. What's more, you can record your events to save and reuse in the future. This will give you the opportunity to build a library of resources to use again and again, and share with schools across the country. Get in touch with us to share on our Resource Directory:

General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR, has significantly changed the rules on how businesses capture and store personal data, a particular worry when working with young people. Thankfully, schools and independent organisations who specialise in the delivery of virtual work experience use systems which allow them to help you circumvent many of these challenges. Of course, it's important to take into consideration how you plan on processing data. Accenture and Movement to Work advise in their [Virtual Work Experience Toolkit](#), "records of consent are required to be maintained to demonstrate the data subject has granted permission for data processing."

Live interaction: commonly used platforms

From never having heard of Zoom, to becoming synonymous with video calling, the whole world has moved online as a result of the pandemic. As digital natives, young people have adapted quickly and easily, sometimes educating their elders on the finer points of the technology being used.

There is a wide range of video communication software available, however, the most commonly used are:



EngineeringUK outlines a number of benefits to using Google Classroom in their Virtual Work Experience - Key Learnings Report, these include:

- Everything is hosted in one place so all work can be assigned and uploaded, emails sent, meetings held and organisers can use Google Forms to collect data easily
- Students don't need a Microsoft Suite to access Google Classrooms
- Employers can set up multiple classrooms to allow smaller meetings and more engagement and collaboration on projects
- Google Classroom is commonly used in schools during lockdown so pupils will better understand the platform
- Has a 'hand in' feature so you can quickly and easily see who has and hasn't handed in the work assigned to them
- Can also increase engagement with live polls which create a two-way conversation

Despite a number of benefits, there are a few disadvantages to using Google Classrooms:

- The inability to see both students and teachers during the presentation can make engagement at times a little challenging. However, an easy work around is to flick between the presentation mode and meeting screen during questions
- To be able to access all the benefits of Google Classroom, you will need to purchase a G Suite for Education package which can be costly, unless you are a charitable organisation



Microsoft Teams is used widely in schools and colleges as a virtual classroom/office. Some of the benefits include:

- Ability to divide the cohort up into groups through breakout sessions
- Can encourage individuals to interact through the use of the whiteboard tool in Teams
- See the students put their digital hand up like they would be able to do in the classroom
- Blur out the background or upload an image such as your logo or office space. This is particularly useful if you're currently working from home
- Access student engagement data from the Team's dashboard for insights

Speakers for Schools explain why they use Google Classroom over Teams, and talk about why they feel Google is more interactive than Teams and gives more direct engagement.

"It's cheaper than Teams because you can create guest accounts for students and employers to ensure no personal contact data is shared and sessions are safeguarded. On Teams, this is much more expensive and based on each account being created.

Classroom allows for better collaborative working on docs in group work and sharing more collateral."



The newest video conferencing tool, Zoom, quickly became well-known and popular because it is easy to use and free.

The best features include:

- You can control if students are able to chat publicly or privately during the meeting
- Student can give nonverbal feedback through the use of icons such as raising their hands and putting thumbs up and down, which is good for engagement
- Cheaper in comparison to other video conferencing tools

The most concerning issues with Zoom are:

- **Privacy and security issues.** Users may unknowingly be giving away their personal data as the video calls are not end-to-end encrypted. This may not matter to you, but it creates a minefield for safeguarding and data protection.
- **The default setting within Zoom allows any meeting participant to share their screen without permission from an event's host.** This has previously led to something known as 'Zoombombing', which is why it's best to add a Meeting password for protection if using Zoom



YouTube is extremely beneficial for pre-recording your virtual work experience. All you need to do is upload your recording and send attendees a link so they can easily access it. This means students are able to watch at a time that suits them. You can also run live events through YouTube and other social media platforms.

Filming Guidelines

Landscape or Portrait?

When recording a video on your phone, you should always use landscape with the exception being if you're recording for something with portrait specifications such as an Instagram Story.

Recording in landscape mode allows your video to be viewed on a wider screen and it also avoids the two black vertical bars along the sides of a portrait video. Another bonus is that you'll be able to capture more using your phone in landscape mode so students won't miss a thing!

Think About the Lighting

Lighting is crucial when filming. If you're going to be filming indoors, it's best to ensure that you are facing a window as this will balance the lighting. Try to avoid filming with a window to the side of you or behind as this can create dark shadows on your face making it difficult for the viewer to see you. Bright sunlight can also make you squint, so diffused lighting is best. That's why professional photographers prefer overcast days.

If you're using a webcam on your laptop, it will most likely have a tool called auto exposure so try to avoid too much backlight as your face will end up being unclear and shadowed.

Going to be filming outdoors? If this is the case, it's best to avoid direct sunlight. If possible, seek out the shade or film on a cloud day as this gives the best lighting to work with.

Weather Conditions

If you're going to be filming outdoors, you need to take into consideration the weather conditions. If it's windy, students may not be able to hear you above the noise. Likewise, if it's rainy, they might not be able to see as clearly. It's best to aim for a still, dry day where possible.

Avoid Distractions

During the session, make sure that your phone is on silent or away. You should give the session your full attention and avoid doing other tasks during the filming. If that email really can't wait or another colleague is speaking, switch your camera off rather than looking distracted.

Remember, if you're sharing your screen it's a good idea to switch notifications off and ensure nothing private is visible, for example, data records or your inbox.

Tips on Successful Online Delivery

To make sure you deliver your virtual work experience without a glitch, we've pulled together a checklist for a day of filming or going live. These include:

- **Have a quiet space planned out before you join the call, so background noise is reduced (unless you're filming a workplace tour)**
- **Check your laptop power and make sure it is plugged in so you don't run out during the session**
- **Check your internet connection is strong enough [where possible if you can access a LAN cable this would be beneficial for a stronger connection]**
- **Speak clearly and not too far from the microphone.**
- **Mute yourself and/or turn off your camera when you are not speaking and don't forget to unmute when you want to say something!**
- **Introduce yourself before speaking/presenting: your name plus job title/organisation (if appropriate)**
- **Be mindful of your allocated time for speaking if a group of colleagues are speaking, remember students will have questions too!**
- **If you are working from home, ensure you have dressed appropriately for your workplace**
- **Don't eat or drink during the session unless your camera and microphone are both off**
- **Last but certainly not least, don't forget to SMILE!**

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