Introduction
Before beginning to use WebEx, take a few moments and read through this document of best practices (tips). This compiled list was put together by faculty members and staff who have used WebEx during the pilot program. These tips may save you time and energy.

Best Practices (Tips)

Before You Begin

- Refer to the WebEx self-help page on our website towson.edu/OTStraining for instructions and a library of self-help documents on using this product.
- Attend training sessions offered by OTS Training or WebEx University.
- Plan your training session first. Use a storyboard, instructor’s notes, etc. so you have a plan of how the session should go.
- Use a hard wired internet connection if possible. Try to avoid Wi-Fi.
- Keep the password for the session short, easy to remember, and easy to spell out over the phone.
- Practice using WebEx prior to your meeting or training session. Make sure your presentation loads as expected and you become familiar with the flow of your meeting within the console. Practice using the tools you will utilize within the meeting, i.e. annotation tools.
- Plug in your webcam and headset before you start your WebEx training session/meeting.
- Plan for technical snags (which occur occasionally in online collaboration tools) by sending the presentation and supporting material to the audience ahead of the meeting.
- Allow students to join 15 minutes prior so there is time to verify microphones and speakers are working correctly before beginning a session.
- Forward a welcome message to your students informing them how to prepare for upcoming meetings. (Use the Using WebEx: First Steps document as a template)
- Schedule at least one test session with your students to ensure they can access, hear and participate in your meetings.
  - Refer students to the WebEx website and link entitled WebEx for Attendees for complete instructions on Joining a Session and Icons in the Participants Panel before the training session.
  - Instruct your students to use the WebEx test meeting (http://www.webex.com/1p/jointest) to ensure that they can install the driver needed to access and participate in your meeting.
  - Tell participants that they must acquire a headset with a microphone in order to participate in a Webex meeting using VOIP.
• Remind participants to keep background noise and paper shuffling to a minimum and to mute their mic when they do not need to speak.

• Remember to send the URL and login steps to participants prior to the meeting. You may wish to send the invitation to yourself and then copy and paste the invitation into Blackboard.

• Enter the WebEx session at least 15 minutes early (if you are the host) to prepare your meeting space. Make sure to follow any prompts to install necessary drivers.

• Remember to close unnecessary windows especially if you plan to share your desktop.

• Open the documents you want to share before the session begins.

**During the Session**

• Once in your WebEx session, enable your own microphone and audio preferences via the Audio Setup Wizard.

• If you cannot hear your participants or they cannot hear you, instruct them to leave the audio conference and run the Audio Setup Wizard. If problems persist instruct them to contact a WebEx support specialist.

• When using a Desktop Microphone, hold down the CONTROL key on your keyboard when talking.

• Be sure to explain what the different microphone icons mean in WebEx. (outline = no mic, red = muted, green = have mic, flashing green = person speaking)

• Change initial “assign privileges” so that students can chat with all attendees and use all tools.

• Use the “yes/no” buttons periodically to keep people on-task and to be sure they still hear you.

• Student-to-student and teacher-to-student interaction is key. Keep pure lecture to no more than 15 minutes (Amirian, 2002, as cited in http://sigivc.wikispaces.com/file/view/9_IVC_research_we-navseadistedu.pdf)

• Keep e-mail running in the background and have your phone handy in case students try and contact you when having technical difficulties.

• Always check that students can hear you (and others) well and ask them to alert you if they are having trouble hearing.

• Tap into your audience by asking questions through chat. It's an informal way to get participants feedback.

• Interact with your attendees, and keep them involved and focused on your presentation. Advise participants to use the “raise hand” feature when they run into trouble.

• Share a website, application, or your desktop. Sharing a website, application or your desktop is more interactive than using screenshots in your presentation, and you can turn over control of the application to other participants. Allows you to demonstrate dynamic content and break up the monotony of slide pushing.

• Record your presentation - Capture your presentation, in its entirety, for later viewing by participants or colleagues who may have missed the live version or wish to review a historical meeting. This should be done in any session when a student is absent or has audio issues so that they can go back later and listen.
• Use all annotation tools. Add energy to your presentation by using a variety of annotation tools. Highlight key points and information as you talk about them. You can give your students the ability to respond to questions by using the whiteboard.

• Poll your audience. This provides your audience with a chance to share ideas and allows you to collect valuable information from them. Create your poll questions in advance and insert them into the presentation before your participants join the meeting. Use the circle if you only want participants to check one answer. Use the square if you want to allow for multiple selections or answers.

• Move slowly. Move slowly between applications to allow for a smooth transition for your users. Application sharing uses more bandwidth; smooth movement within the meeting improves the user experience.

• If you experience problems during your meeting call the WebEx 24/7 helpdesk at 1-866-229-3239 (U.S. and Canada Toll-Free) or +1-408-435-7088 (International Toll). Add this number to every invitation to a meeting or training session.

• Monitor your monthly VOIP minutes by reading our document titled: WebEx: Usage Report

**Instructional Uses**

• The learning goals should be the catalyst for instruction and not the technology.

• Use breakout sessions to foster more collaboration and communication. Employ the “Think-Pair-Share” cooperative learning technique.

• Use WebEx to host student presentations. The rest of the class can use the chat window to comment on the presentation as it happens so more class time doesn’t need to be taken for peer feedback after each presentation.