Recording with *Screencast-O-Matic* (SOM) – the vConferenceOnline tool

> **Note: For instructions for using Zoom or PowerPoint, see the links in the email you received with this document.**

Screen Capture Video Deliverables Requirements and Best Practices

First and foremost: if you have any questions, ask us. Call or email Caitlin McCord and she'll help you out in any way she can. Email kat@vconferenceonline.com or call 661-241-0807.

Thank you for being a part of an online event hosted vConferenceOnline. The following information should serve as a guide in assisting you when recording your own presentation. If you follow these basic rules outlined below, you should end up with a quality screen capture video file.

General Settings

The most important thing to remember when setting up your screen recorder is that you want the end result to be **1280x720 in size (for 16:9 widescreen ratio) at 15 frames a second**.

Because you are recording for 1280x720, you should capture at that same size. This will provide the most clarity possible in the end result. **Set your desktop resolution to 1280x720** (or as close to that as possible, some may need to do 1280x768 or 1280x800).

Recording with SOM

You should have already **set your desktop resolution to 1280x720**. Right now you're probably thinking "Whoa, where's all my screen real estate?" Due to some very technical details that we won't bore you with, **this is the size you MUST record at** to ensure the clearest possible picture for the viewer.

Let's look at setting up Screencast-O-Matic (SOM) to start recording:

Go to the SOM website...

http://screencast-o-matic.com/vconferenceonline

There's a login link up in the right corner - **you don't need it.** Just click "Start Recorder." It will request to download the recorder onto your machine ("Install Recorder App!") - allow it to do that.

Don't worry, it won't start recording until you tell it to.

Watch for permission requests and enable them. If you notice the loading icon for SOM is just spinning and not actually loading anything, it's because your browser is not allowing Java for that session. Different browsers handle this Java notification differently. Usually it is a small pop-up or tab window asking if Java can run.

Best browser **usually**? Chrome. If any other is having issues, try that before giving us a call. We recommend using the latest FireFox browser on Macs though. *If you are having issues, it's probably Java. Sometimes a manual update is necessary depending on your browser settings.*

Next you'll see the actual recording interface open up on your screen. Because your resolution is already set to 1280x720, you just need to click the screen button to tell the app to record full screen.

If it asks for a password to move on, the password is **SOM5684.**
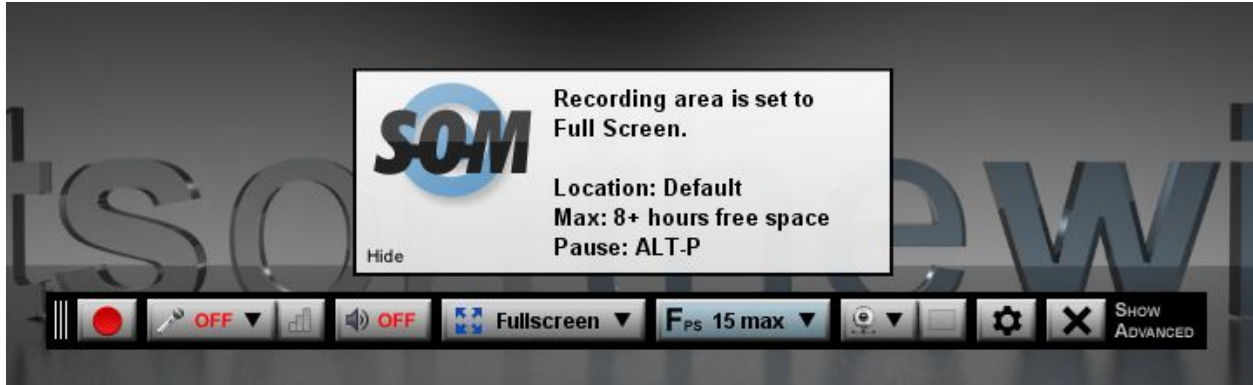
 When you record in Full Screen mode, the menu bar for the recording interface disappears. To get it back, you will need to pause your recording to see the menu bar. This is done by clicking *Alt-P* (on a PC) or *Option-P* (on a Mac).

Webcam Video

If using webcam video (not required), please record your webcam as an overlay to the screen capture to put a face to your voice for the viewer. SOM allows you to edit the webcam size and placement after you have finished recording before you export to final video file. You will send us the SOM project file which will allow us to edit your webcam's placement. **Be sure to leave space for the webcam overlay on your slides.** Usually we put them in the top or bottom right hand corner.

Here is a **basic** primer for setting up your webcam, lighting and backdrop. *If ANYTHING seems confusing, give us a call. We want to make this as easy as possible for you.*
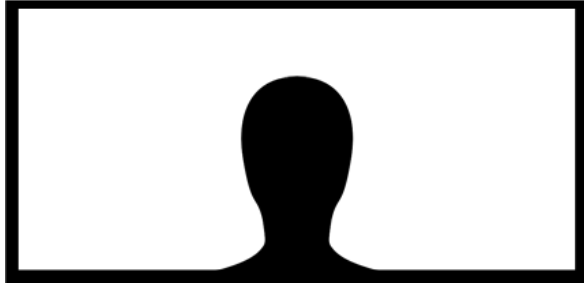
Camera

Camera should be at eye level height and should be "level" itself.

Please do not set the camera pointing up at your chin. Those of you who use devices with built in webcams should place something under the device to get the camera up at eye level. Also, it can be equally strange for a viewer to see someone's camera pointing down at them. Please be sure your camera is steady. No "machine in the lap" shots or shaky desks. Test it if you're not sure.

So what should it look like? You are going for what's called a bust shot. We should see some of your shoulders up to the top of your head. Don't place your face in the center of the frame with too much headroom above you in the shot. The top of your head should be right at the top edge of the frame with your shoulders showing at the bottom.

bad   good
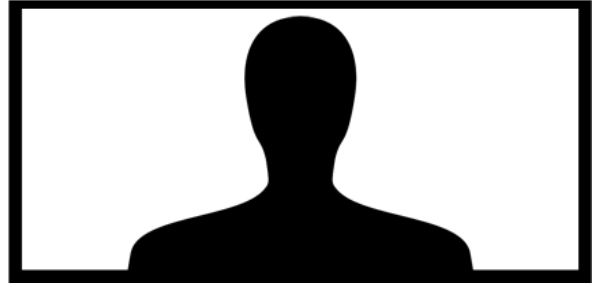
Lighting/Exposure

Please check to be sure there are no bright lights BEHIND you. This is known as "backlight" and most cameras cannot produce decent images if this happens. The more light you can get IN FRONT of you, the better your camera will look (until it can't take anymore light, then you just turn white). A window or open bulb desk lamp can really help here. Try to avoid up-lighting or light that comes from under your face (kinda creepy).

Most webcams are set on auto. This is good to start, but it would be better to take off the auto and make manual adjustments to brightness and such. This will keep the camera's image constant to avoid automatic dimming/brightening while you are recording.

Simple terms? Take a quick video of yourself testing it out. If you can see yourself well, you're good to go! Want to send us the video just to double check? That's completely fine.

Background

The plainer the better. A white wall, a sheet - whatever you have easy access to. Again, if you aren't sure, we can help out! Send us a picture and we'll give you the green light.

Audio Setup and Configuration

Please make sure your microphone is plugged in. You don't want to use your computer's built in microphone as the quality is not what we are after. Some external webcams have pretty decent mics built into them, so test yours to see if the results are good. Basically you want a direct sound. If you sound like you're sitting 10 feet away in a huge room… that is bad.

If you don't have a mic yet, we'd like to recommend this one:

http://www.amazon.com/GE-98950-Detachable-Desktop-Microphone/dp/B000BYCNKU/ref=sr_1_16?ie=UTF8&qid=1297201473&sr=8-16

This mic is available online and also at many dept. stores including Target and Wal-Mart for around $10. We have many and they work just fine.

If you do have your own microphone and have used it to good results in the past, by all means use it. *NOTE: If you are not sure if the quality is on par with our requirements, please email us a short sample recording.*

You'll need to select the microphone line in option on SOM. If there are multiple options and you aren't sure which is which, just tap the microphone with your finger, and change the input selection while doing so, until you see the tapping on the meter. Then you'll know you have selected the right input.
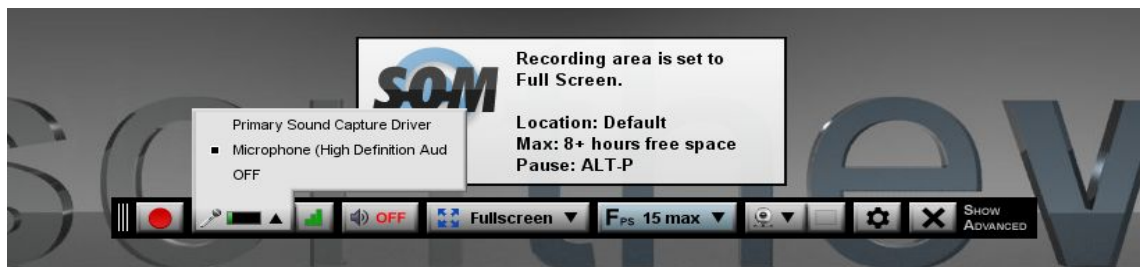
A note about mic placement. The closer you can get the mic to your mouth and away from other surfaces, the better it will sound. If the mic is more than 12 to 16 inches away from you, it starts to get more "roomy" and less "direct".

You'll want to adjust the input settings on your capture utility so that the audio meter is bouncing around the "half-way" mark when you are talking into it at a normal volume just as you would when presenting.
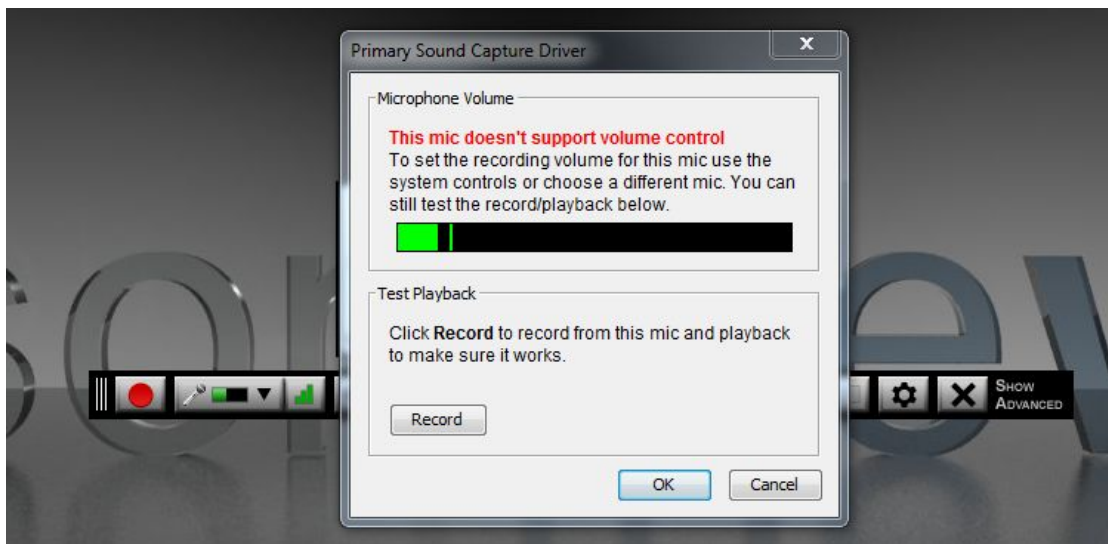
If you're not sure about the meter, try a quick test recording and play it back. If it's distorted turn the mic volume down, if it's too quiet, turn it up. Again, you're safe bet is in the 50% area. You want a good strong signal but not so much that it distorts at the loud parts.

Your surroundings should be quiet and free of interruptions. Make sure there are no noise making devices running (fans, mobile devices, pets, etc.).

Congratulations! You're set up. Now the fun part... testing.

Confirming Your Settings

This is a very important point. It is crucial that you test your settings to ensure you are getting quality results before you start the actual presentation capture. The last thing you want to do is to have to re-record the whole thing because of one small setting you forgot to change. **If you have any concerns about your setup or just aren't sure if you've got it right, please do contact us and we will be happy to help.**

Try recording (hit the big red button) for a minute or so and then watch the playback. If it looks and sounds good, you are ready to begin capturing. If it looks bad, you may want to go back and confirm your settings. Screencast-O-Matic takes care of most of the technical settings under the hood so as long as you are set for 1280x720 screen size, 15 frames per second (or higher), and Microphone audio input...you're good to go!

After Recording, What's Next? Export!

Once you hit done on the utility interface (to stop recording) it will open an export window. This is where you save your capture, do any edits, and export to a video file. Be sure to save every capture with a name you will recognize in a directory that you can find easily. This SOM file will act as your "project file" and let you pull up captures into SOM for editing or splicing later. The SOM file contains the screen capture, webcam capture and audio that you recorded. Most presentations will at least need the beginning and end cleaned up. We call this trimming.

SOM can do basic trimming very easily. Just drag the markers on the preview timeline (noted with red arrows) to the desired in and out points of your video. You can push play to see the results. Once you are satisfied, click the "R" button (noted with green arrow) to set your changes. If you're not able to do your presentation in one segment, that's ok. SOM can also add other videos and captures you've done. So if you need to do things in short segments you can build those segments into one full video afterwards. Be sure to save each separate segment for recall later when you are editing them together. If you need to do more in-depth editing, we recommend that you watch the help videos on SOM website for instructions on using the edit functions.

To be clear, we are not editing your content on our end. You are the only one that can do that. We are simply adding your webcam and cleaning up the beginning and end. We will not be scrubbing through your entire presentation to check for issues. You must do that prior to saving and sending. Please be sure that you have fixed any issues you may have within your presentation.

Once you have completed any trimming and editing, you're going to save the SOM project file and send it to us. We recommend free file transfer service 'WeTransfer.com', but any file transfer service will do. Send the transfer notification to production@bitsonthewire.com. We will download it and go through the SOM file to edit webcam placement.

It's important to name your output file something that resembles who you are and what your presentation's title is. We recommend something abbreviated along the lines of "`YourName-SessionName.MP4`".

For example: " JSmith-DBARulesProc.MP4 "

Happy Recording!

We realize that this information might not answer every question, so please feel free to contact a BOTW production staff member with any additional questions or issues. Thank you for working with us and happy capturing!

Email caitlin@bitsonthewire.com or call 661-241-0807 if you have *any* questions.