



Webcasting vs. Web Conferencing

Vendors and end users alike have trouble differentiating between webcasting and web conferencing. Like webcasting, web conferencing is also often used to facilitate communication among groups. While there are some key similarities between these two technologies, they are quite different.

A **Webcast** is equivalent to a TV broadcast, in which a live or prerecorded program is sent from a central location out to an unlimited number of viewers – in this case, streamed over the Internet as audio only or audio and video. The Webcast is typically viewed using Microsoft© Windows Media Player or RealPlayer. The presenter shares his presentation slides with the end users in real time.

Web conferencing, in contrast, is similar to a face-face meeting or seminar, with multiple degrees of presentation, interaction, and collaboration among a smaller amount of computer users. Web conferences are more interactive, with the ability to share presentation rights and control of applications among all group members. Attendees generally dial into a conference bridge to receive the audio and access the internet to view the presentation.

Comparison Point	Webcasting	Web Conferencing
Uses	Broadcasts, Presentations, Training	Data sharing during meetings
Audience Size	Medium to massive	Small to medium
Level of Interaction	Basic (polling, quizzes, question submittal)	High (voice, annotations, application sharing)
Audio	Yes (streaming internet)	Yes (audio bridge)
Video	Yes	No
Delivery Method	Internet	Conference call and internet

Key Differences

- Webcasting enables primarily one-to-many broadcasts, while web-conferencing focuses on interactive meetings.
- Webcasts are ideal, both in terms of functionality and cost, for large audiences, while web conferences are better suited for small groups.
- Webcasts frequently involve live or pre-recorded video, while web conferences do not include video and instead focus on PC content.
- Webcasts include integrated audio while web conferencing requires the use of an audio conferencing bridge.