



WebEx Meeting Center



Product: WebEx Meeting Center

Editor Rating: ●●●●● Editor's Choice

Owning over 60 percent of the market, WebEx is the Web conferencing service to beat. The new version of WebEx Meeting Center is fully loaded and earns our Editors' Choice hands down.

Of all the services we evaluated, it offers the best integration with Microsoft Office. A special download adds a drop-down menu to all your Office applications, so you can crank up an instant conference that shares whatever document and application you're working in. You can also start a conference to share any file in any application by right-clicking on the filename and choosing Share in WebEx Meeting, or start a One Click Meeting using a desktop icon.

WebEx had the best Outlook integration of any service we tested, allowing us to add a short registration from within Outlook and to distribute a full meeting transcript—including the agenda, a participant list, meeting notes, the presentation, and all chatting and polling information—after the meeting. You can also record meetings and download the recordings, though it's not easy to post recordings to a Web site. The company's Training Center and Event Center services let you do this more readily. We had quick success at creating recordings in WebEx that included everything from presentations to chat, application sharing, and Web tours.

The WebEx interface isn't as effortless as Live Meeting's, but it's more powerful. Assigning rights to participants and making them presenters or hosts is a simple matter of right-clicking on their names in the Participant window and selecting the desired attributes. During a meeting, you can easily open and run presentations, conduct polls and Web tours, and share applications, though there's little capability for premeeting preparation. WebEx has two options for sharing Web content. One lets you share a single Web page, and another lets you take participants on a tour.

The service makes great use of its advanced switched network, but the quality of streaming video was erratic at best. Sometimes it worked exceptionally well; other times it took a long time to load and then froze. But we had the identical experience with the other services offering video. This performance kink could be ironed out in the final release.

We did miss a formal Web-based Q&A capability and an easy way to post recordings to our WebEx Web site. Despite these quibbles, WebEx Meeting Center offers the best combination of features and ease of use among all the four services we tested.