

How to make your webcam video look good

We may be trapped in our houses but we still need to look professional to our students and colleagues when in video conference sessions or when recording video content with something like Kaltura Personal Capture. These tips will help you make your video and your audio presentable using the technology you already have.

START WITH LIGHTING

Light can be your best friend or greatest enemy when using a webcam. Oftentimes, you'll see someone with a big window behind them, making that person a dark silhouette against a glowing white rectangle. The ideal lighting setup is just the opposite of this, with a big, soft light -- like a window or lamp -- in front of you and a darker background for contrast.

Ring lights that plug into your USB port are great light sources that let you experiment with different angles and light intensities. Here are a couple of links to ring lights that are affordable and effective:

[6" Selfie Ring Light with Tripod Stand](#)

[Selfie Ring Light with Cell Phone Holder Stand](#)

PUT YOUR CAMERA IN ITS PLACE

No one wants to see up your nose. Put your computer on a stack of books or attach your external webcam to a small tripod. Having your camera level with your eyes is ideal. And don't forget about framing yourself. Try and fit your head and shoulders in the shot, at a comfortable distance from your device. Using an external webcam can make this easier.

DON'T FORGET AUDIO

It's easy to forget about audio when making a video. But in terms of comprehension, it is the most important part. Using an external microphone or even a pair of iPhone earbuds can greatly improve your audio. And, of course, choosing a quiet place is key. This can be hard to do but as of yet there are no microphones that can cancel out the sound of screaming children or neighborhood lawnmowers.

UAF eCampus has microphones, light rings and cameras available for short-term loan. [Browse our collection.](#) Inventory is limited so if you see an item you need, submit a request and someone will contact you about availability.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR BACKGROUND

Zoom virtual backgrounds are popular and can be great fun but sometimes we need to be honest about our actual environment. It helps with authenticity and will work no matter what recording or video conferencing tool you are using. Taking a few small steps to spruce up your environment, coupled with lighting choices above, can result in a more professional presentation. Professionals across the world are working through this same problem. The popular Twitter account [Rate My Skype Room](#) chronicles many of these setups.

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN EDITING

If you are recording webcam video for use later, spending some time in editing software can result in a neater result. UAF now provides all faculty and instructors Camtasia, which can be used to edit a more polished piece for publication. Screenflow is also a great option for Mac users, and UAF eCampus has a limited number of licenses available. Contact Eric Lonn at eglonn@alaska.edu for more information.

DIY VIDEO

WITH UAF ECAMPUS

- Sept 22 Best Practices for Media Recording
- Sept 24 Options for Media Editing and Publication
- Sept 29 Kaltura Media Tools
- Oct 1 Explain Everything (tool)
- Oct 6 PC Video Editing (Camtasia)
- Oct 8 Mac Video Editing (Screenflow)

All sessions are at 2-3pm on Zoom. Reserve your seat:
iteachu.uaf.edu/reserve-a-seat/

The UAF eCampus media team is hosting a DIY video series where faculty, instructors and TAs can learn about best practices, editing software, capture tools and more.

FURTHER READING

<https://wistia.com/learn/production/how-to-look-good-on-a-webcam>

<https://blog.frame.io/2020/04/14/workflow-from-home-episodes-5-and-6-conan-and-remote-interview-setups/>