

The conference environment

School rooms that are effective for conventional teaching and face-to-face meetings may not be suitable for videoconferencing, but music rooms may provide a good starting point for a conferencing room as they could already possess some of the desirable characteristics.

The provision of an effective environment for videoconferencing requires particular attention to the room's characteristics; this is true both for sophisticated teaching sessions and simple desktop conferencing from a PC with plug in cards.

The room needs to be quiet, as microphones can accentuate unwanted sounds. The human ear may be quite tolerant of ambient noise such as traffic, air-conditioners, students in corridors etc. but a microphone is not so discriminatory and the intrusive noise can effectively render a conference unworkable.

Echoes within a room (or reverberation) must be controlled otherwise the conference sound will be degraded. This is particularly relevant in schools where some classrooms can suffer severely from echoes.

Television cameras are sensitive to changes in light levels so windows pose a special problem, as light levels can fluctuate wildly. The overall lighting level also needs to be high to produce the best possible images from the camera.

Decorations within the room need to be chosen carefully. Busy patterned backgrounds are not ideal; plain matt surfaces are to be preferred.

All of these factors and several more are covered in greater detail in the document <https://community.ja.net/library/videoconferencing-booking-service/video...> [1].

An acceptable environment is the starting point; without this, sound and vision quality will be impaired. Unfortunately many potential users of the medium have been put off by a bad experience in an unsuitable room. If the characteristics of the room are unsuitable, no amount of expensive equipment will correct the resulting poor quality of the pictures and sound.

Source URL: <https://community-stg.jisc.ac.uk/library/janet-services-documentation/conference-environment>

Links

[1] <https://community.ja.net/library/videoconferencing-booking-service/videoconference-rooms-and-venues>