

Virtual Collaboration

By Ben Ziegler
(Collaborative Journeys)



Collaborative
Journeys



Goals for the session

1. How to interact virtually in ways that enhance interpersonal communications and relationships
2. Essential tools for your virtual collaboration toolbox
3. Choosing the appropriate virtual conferencing platform
4. Strategies and tips for facilitating virtual boards, teams, and difficult conversations
5. Guidelines for distance partnering
6. Building your virtual collaboration capacity



About Ben

Ben is a conflict management and collaboration specialist, based in Victoria, BC. He works as a mediator, workplace fairness consultant, facilitator, and trainer. His blog is collaborativeJourneys.com.

His online experience includes:

- Virtual facilitator of global teams (IdeaConnection)
- Online mediator (eBay, BC Government)
- IT business analyst & project manager (Accenture, Sierra Systems)

He currently volunteers with Inter-cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Family Caregivers of BC, and Canadian Executive Service Organization (NGO).

@benziegler

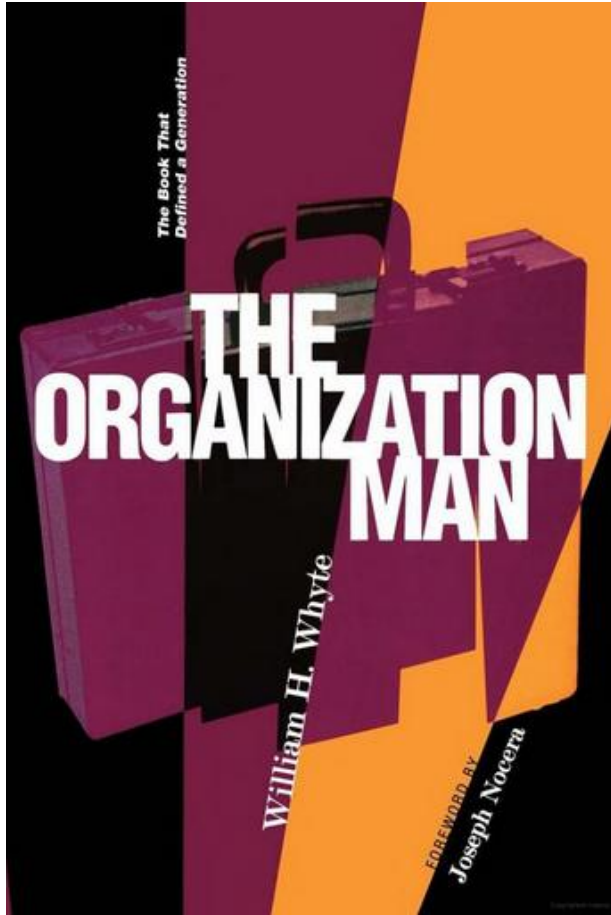
ben@collaborativejourneys.com

1-250-516-3936



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Promise



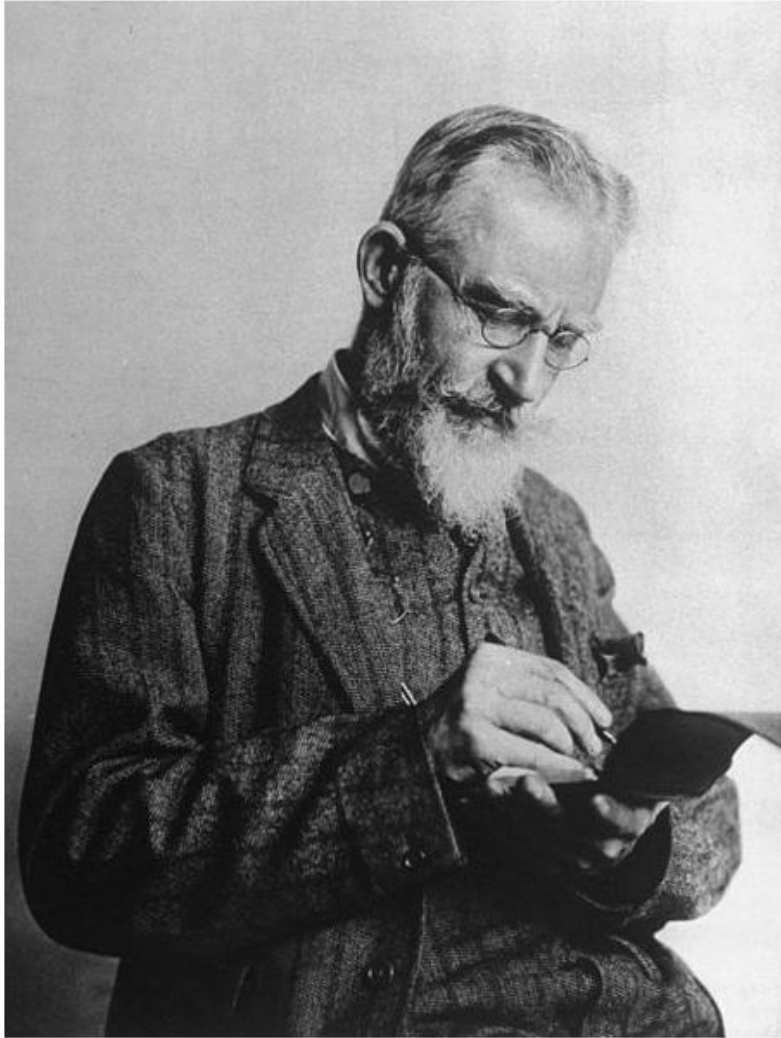
Reality?





**The word
'Communication'
is derived from
the Latin word
'Communis'
which means to
make 'Common'**

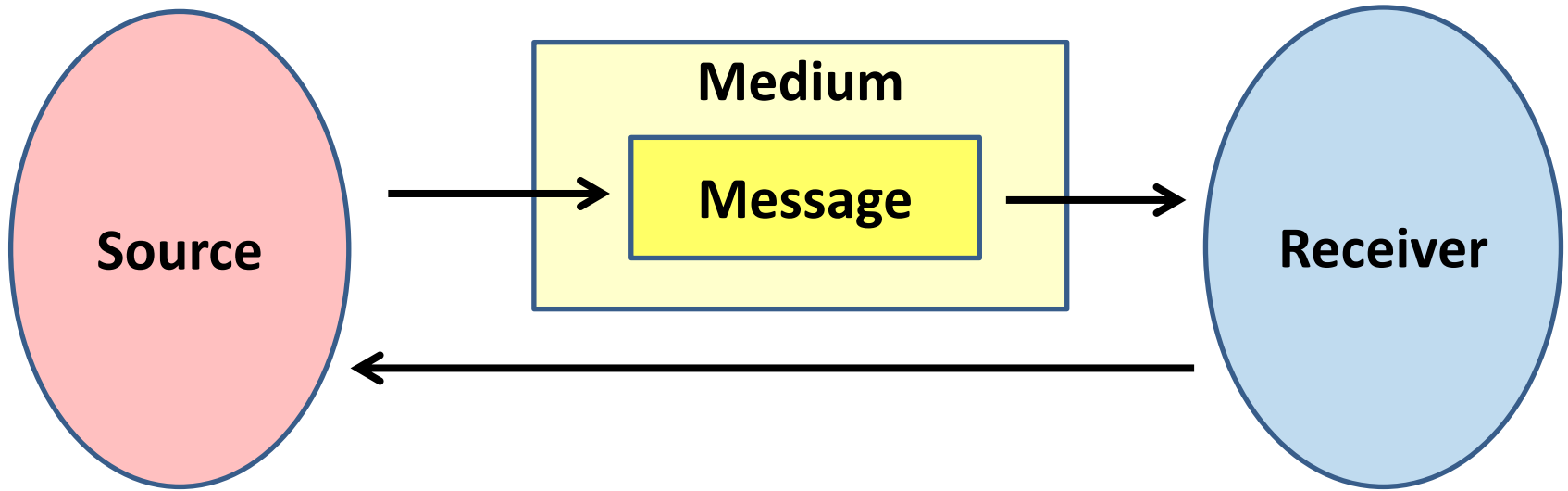




“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”
(George Bernard Shaw)



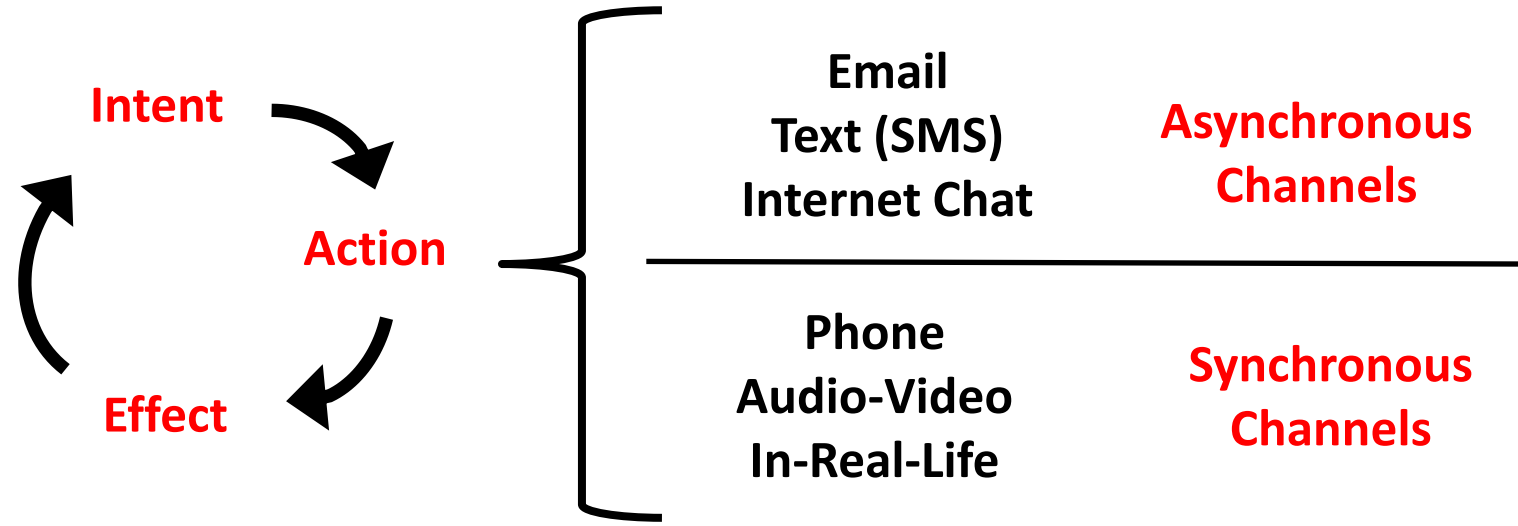
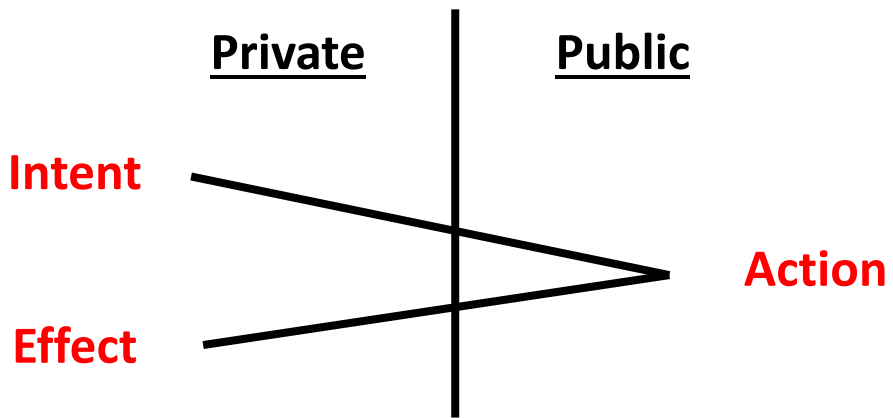
Making common – In Real Life and Virtual



Intent **→** **Action** **→** **Effect**

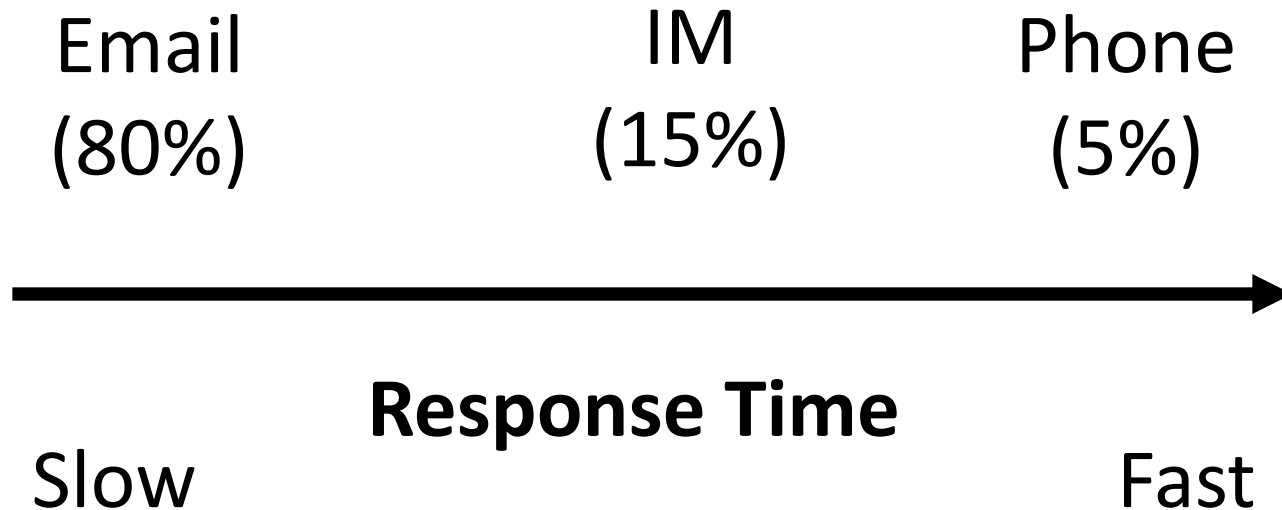
Did we make common?





Progression of communication

(Virtual Teamwork example)



Poll #1

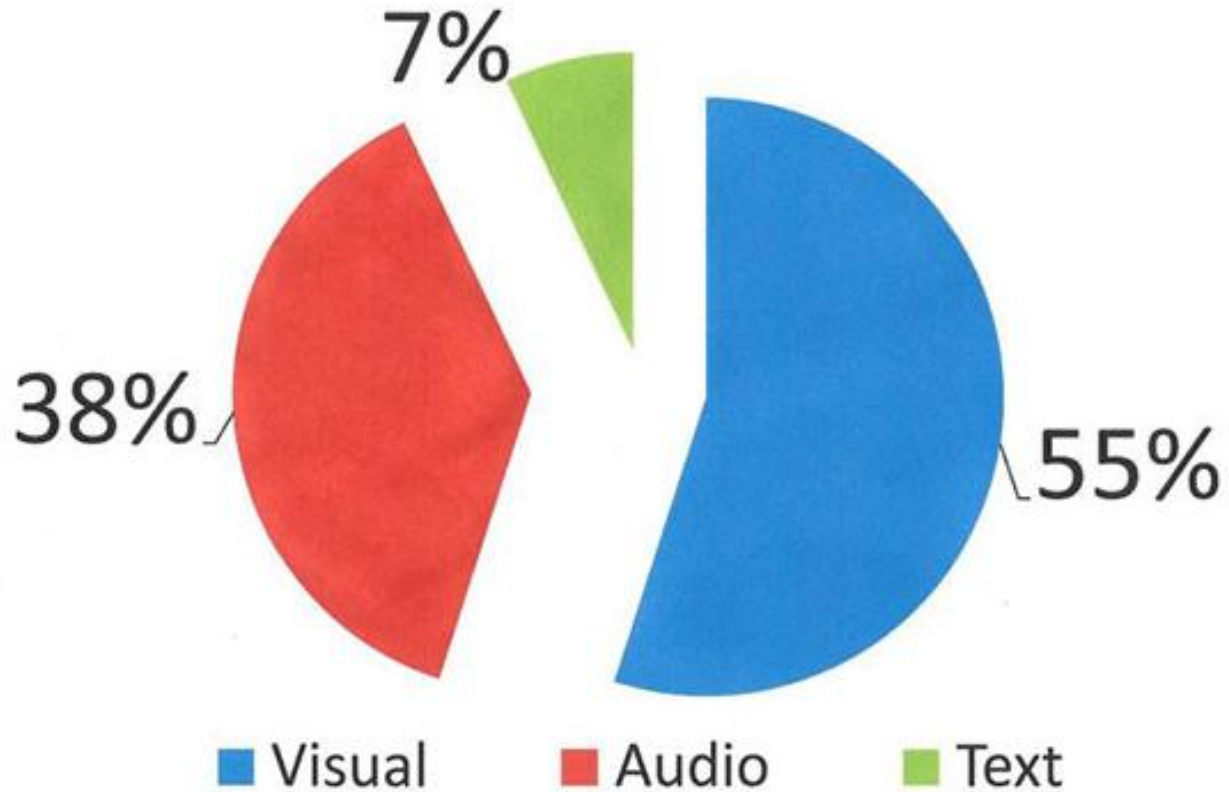


Virtual dilemma

High-context communications
in a low-context virtual world



Impact of Communication



Source: UCLA study on how audience learns during a presentation



In Real Life

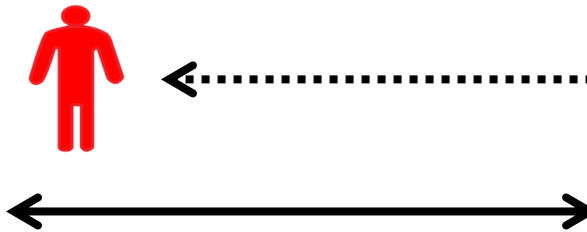
Low-context



High-context

Virtual pull

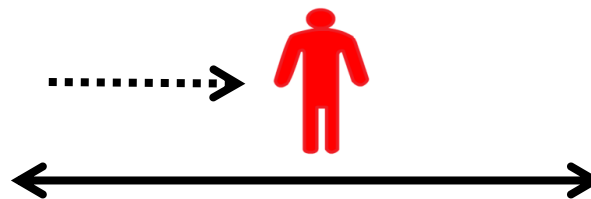
Low-context



High-context

Add context?

Low-context

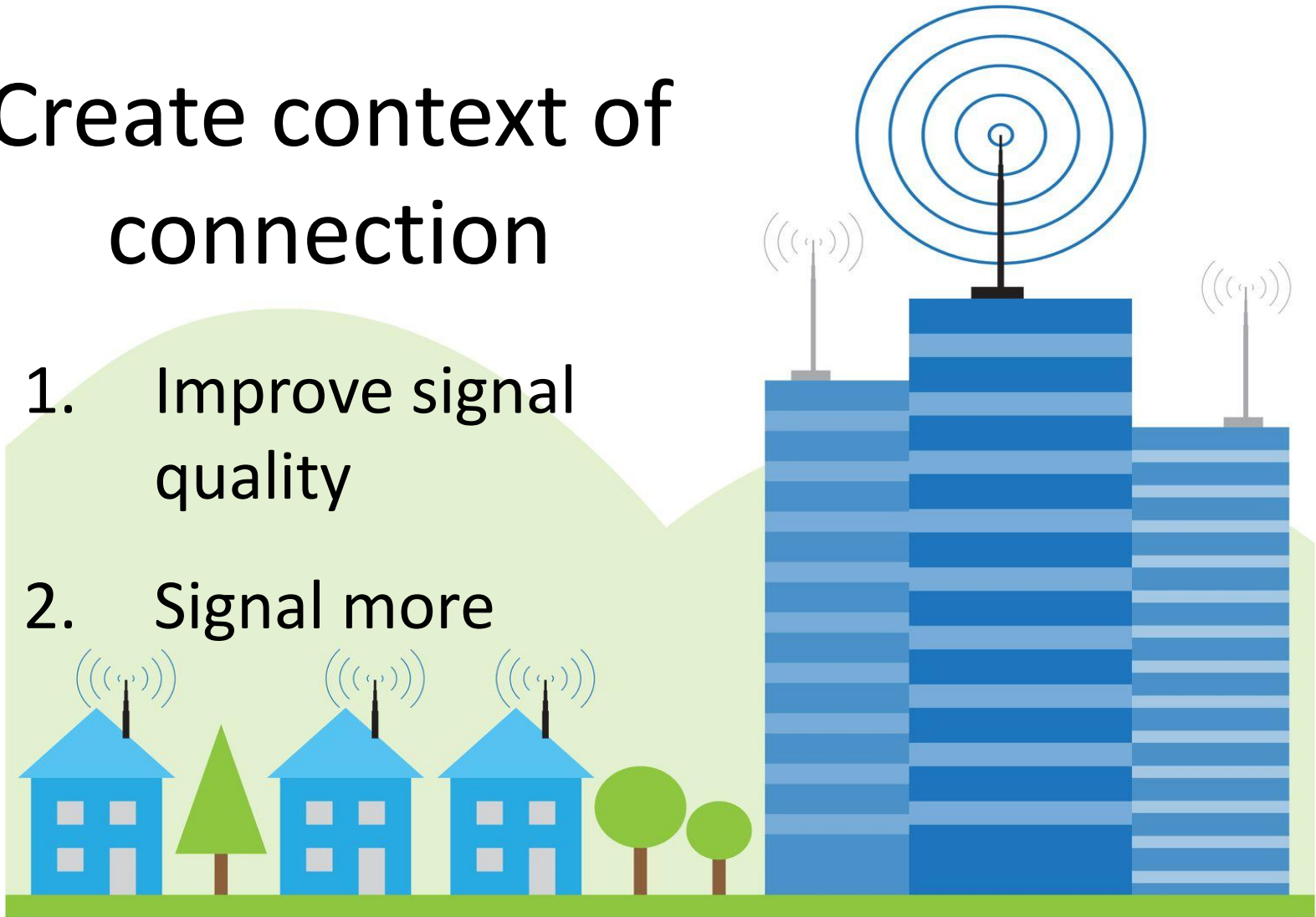


High-context



Create context of connection

1. Improve signal quality
2. Signal more



Add:


Emotive language

Visuals



Signals and Relationships

YouTube CA the magic relationship ratio



John Gottman: The Magic Relationship Ratio

The image shows a YouTube video player interface. At the top, the YouTube logo is on the left, and a search bar contains the text "the magic relationship ratio" with a magnifying glass icon on the right. Below the search bar is a video player. The video frame shows a man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a dark shirt, speaking against a purple background. The video player controls at the bottom show a play button, a volume icon, a progress bar at 0:01 / 1:20, and icons for closed captions, settings, and full screen.



The Magic Relationship Ratio

(applies to virtual interactions, too)



Many : 1



Table 4.2

<i>Relationship</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>Negative</i>
Parents to their children	3	to	1
Bosses to employees	4	to	1
Partners to each other	5	to	1
Friends to each other	8	to	1
Little League coaches to kids	10	to	1
Personnel to customers	20	to	1
Parents to their grown children	100	to	1
Remarks to one's mother-in-law	1,000	to	1

Table source: Ed Diener

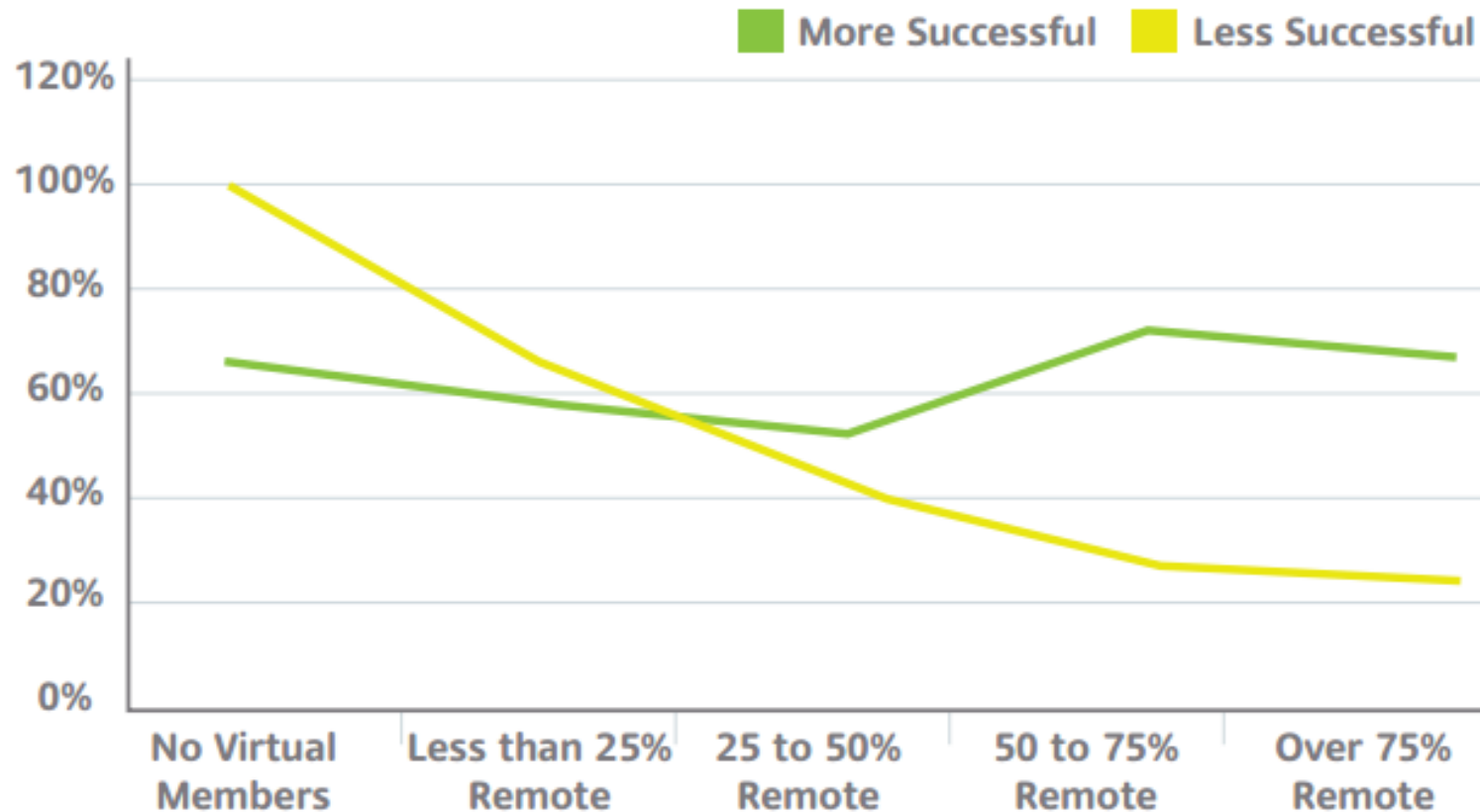


Poll #2



Personal (non-business) conversation

Engages in personal (non-business) conversation daily or weekly



Source: Unify.com



“The more virtual we get, the more ritual we need”

@ChipConley



How will you apply?

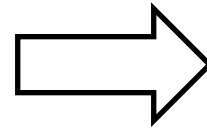
Emotion

Visualization

Message amplification

Message frequency

Positive : Negative ratio



Website

Emails

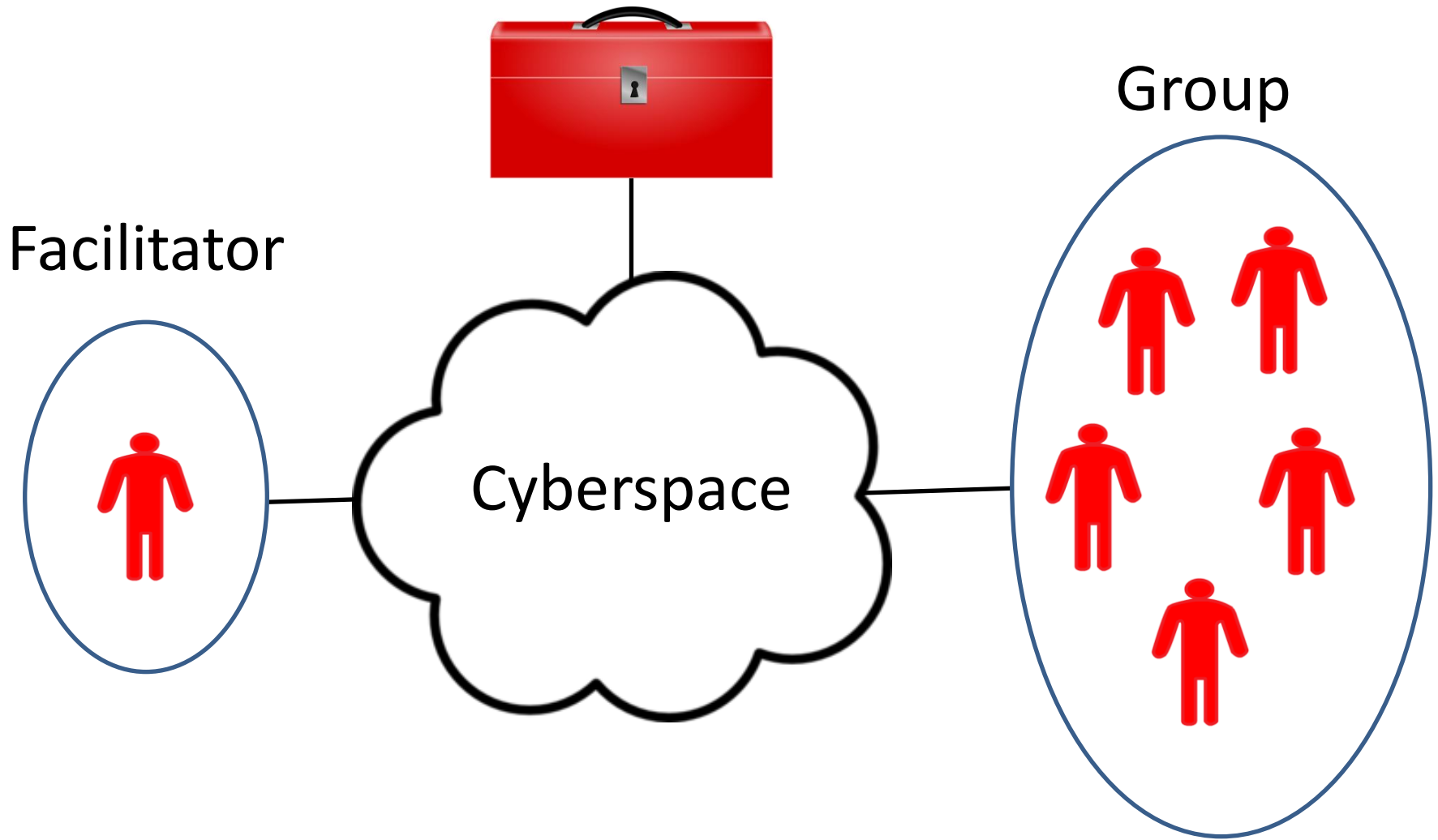
Social media
channels



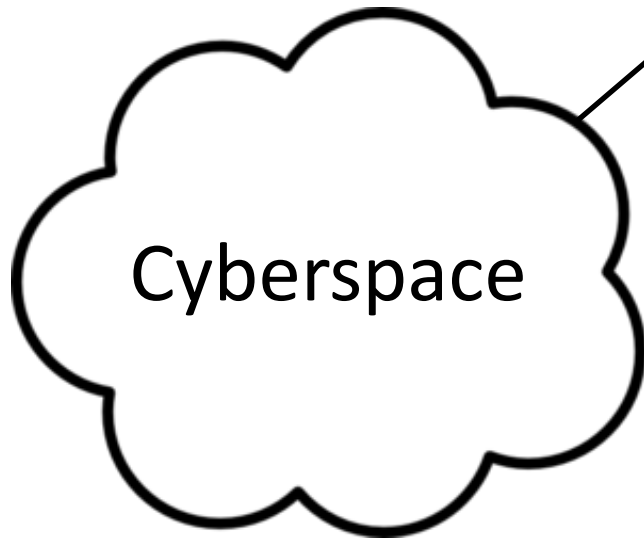
12 Scenarios in which a virtual meeting may be preferable over meeting in-person

1. Add a (remote) voice to the conversation and/or interview a remote candidate
2. Power imbalance; need to level the playing field
3. Time boxed
4. Generational preference
5. Prepare for in-person conversation
6. Follow up on in-person conversation
7. Safety
8. Cost
9. Convenience
10. Appropriate progress of communication
11. Eco-friendly
12. Relationship





Essential types of tools for group work



Shared calendar



Seeing is believing



All out in the open



In the loop



Water cooler





Virtual Toolbox (Lightweight)

Requirement		Common Tool(s) *
Shared Calendar	Schedule	Google, Doodle (poll)...
Seeing is believing	Shared screen	Skype, JoinMe, Webex, GoToMeeting, Zoom...
All out in the open	File management	Dropbox, Google Drive...
In the loop	Communications	Email, Teleconference, Project Management (e.g., Basecamp)...
Water cooler	Social (persistent)	Facebook, WhatsApp, Yammer...

* Free or low-cost, monthly fee



Audio Equipment



Video Equipment



Smart phone



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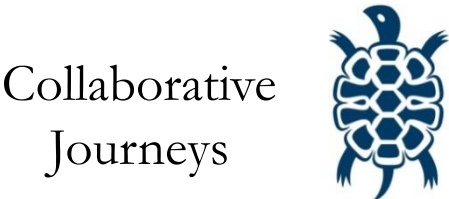
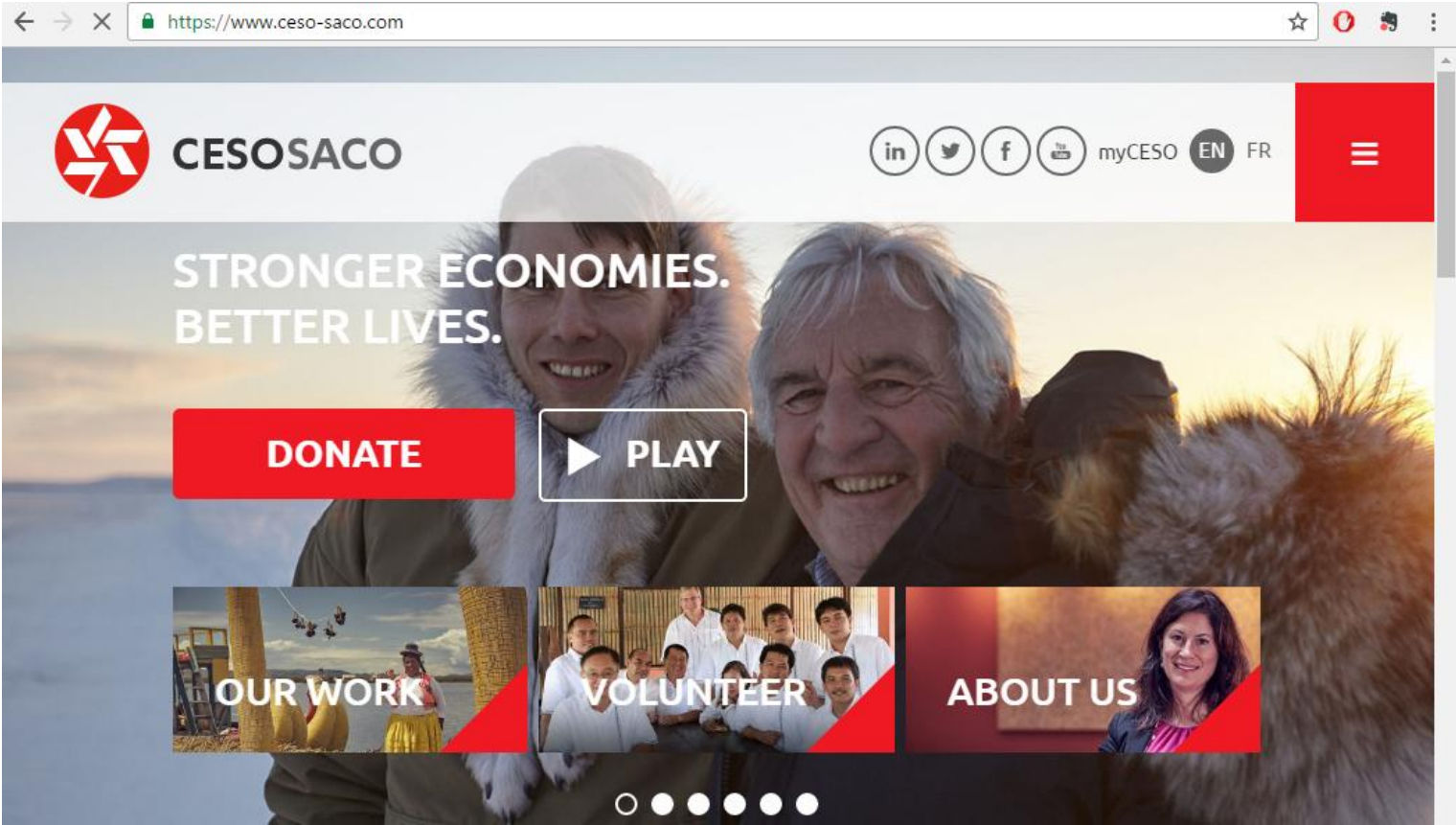
The Mustard Seed Street Church has been essential in fighting hunger and restoring faith to a large portion of people living in poverty, as well as the working poor, in greater Victoria since 1975. The Church ministries are nearly 100 percent community funded and include Vancouver Island's largest Food Bank, a Family Center, Hospitality programs, and addiction recovery at



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CESO (Canadian Executive Service Organization)



WhatsApp and a large Tanzanian Nonprofit Association



Whatsapp is a free to download messenger application that runs on your smart phone

The app allows users to send messages via Internet (vs. phone/text) = less cost



Tanzanian Association set up separate WhatsApp group chats; to connect 1) regional leaders (25 in total) and 2) board of directors

Bonus: WhatsApp lets you to keep in touch with family and colleagues living abroad, without incurring international distance charges!



Virtual collaboration on a budget

- Look to those who already leverage low-cost virtual collaboration solutions
- Smart phone can be a communications hub, especially for remote participants with limited local technology infrastructure
- Collaborate on support; e.g., a Secretariat can deliver virtual services (e.g., advisory, communications, training, facilitation support...) to a number of organizations



Virtual Volunteers

Managing Virtual Volunteers:

- Recruiting/screening volunteers
- Provide an online orientation to volunteers with internet access
- Schedule volunteer work, track volunteer hours
- Survey volunteers via e-mail about their experiences with agency or program
- Recognize/appreciate volunteers
- Enter volunteer opportunities into online databanks
- etc.

Technical Assistance Volunteers can:

- Conduct online research
- Provide professional consulting, multi-media, and/or technical expertise
- Help with advocacy
- Translate a document into another language
- Design a newsletter or brochure
- etc.

Direct Contact Volunteers can:

- Electronically visit with someone who is homebound
- Provide online mentoring and instruction
- Staff an e-mail or chat room or phone answer/support line
- Work with other volunteers and/or clients to create a project
- Train volunteers in a subject via the Internet
- etc.



As a manager of virtual volunteers,
see it from **their side**



Getting things done?



Tools for setting virtual collaboration expectations

- Meeting agenda
- Project terms of reference (e.g., BOSCARD)
- Collaboration (partnership) agreement or MOU
- Code of conduct
- Contract
- Etc.



Poll #3



Audio, video, screen share,
chat, whiteboard, breakout

File Repository

Co-working documents
(real-time)

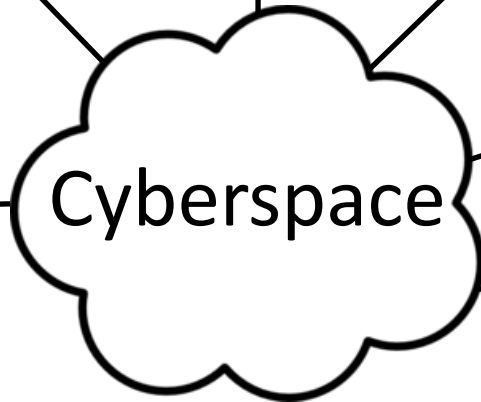
Engagement features
↓



Dropbox



Google Drive



Facilitator



Participants



Video Conferencing or Audio-Only Conferencing?

Video-Conferencing	Audio-Only Conferencing
Is more engaging and makes for better conversations.	Is more reliable and easier for most people to use.
Works best with 5 or fewer.	Can handle hundreds of callers.
Requires excellent bandwidth.	Works in more places.



80/20



Audio
Share screen
Chat

Audio
Share screen
Chat

Video

Video
Whiteboard
Breakout groups



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Use collaboration tools that support diversity and inclusion

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Virtual dilemma – facilitating virtual meetings



Image: pagedooley on flickr



Less is more

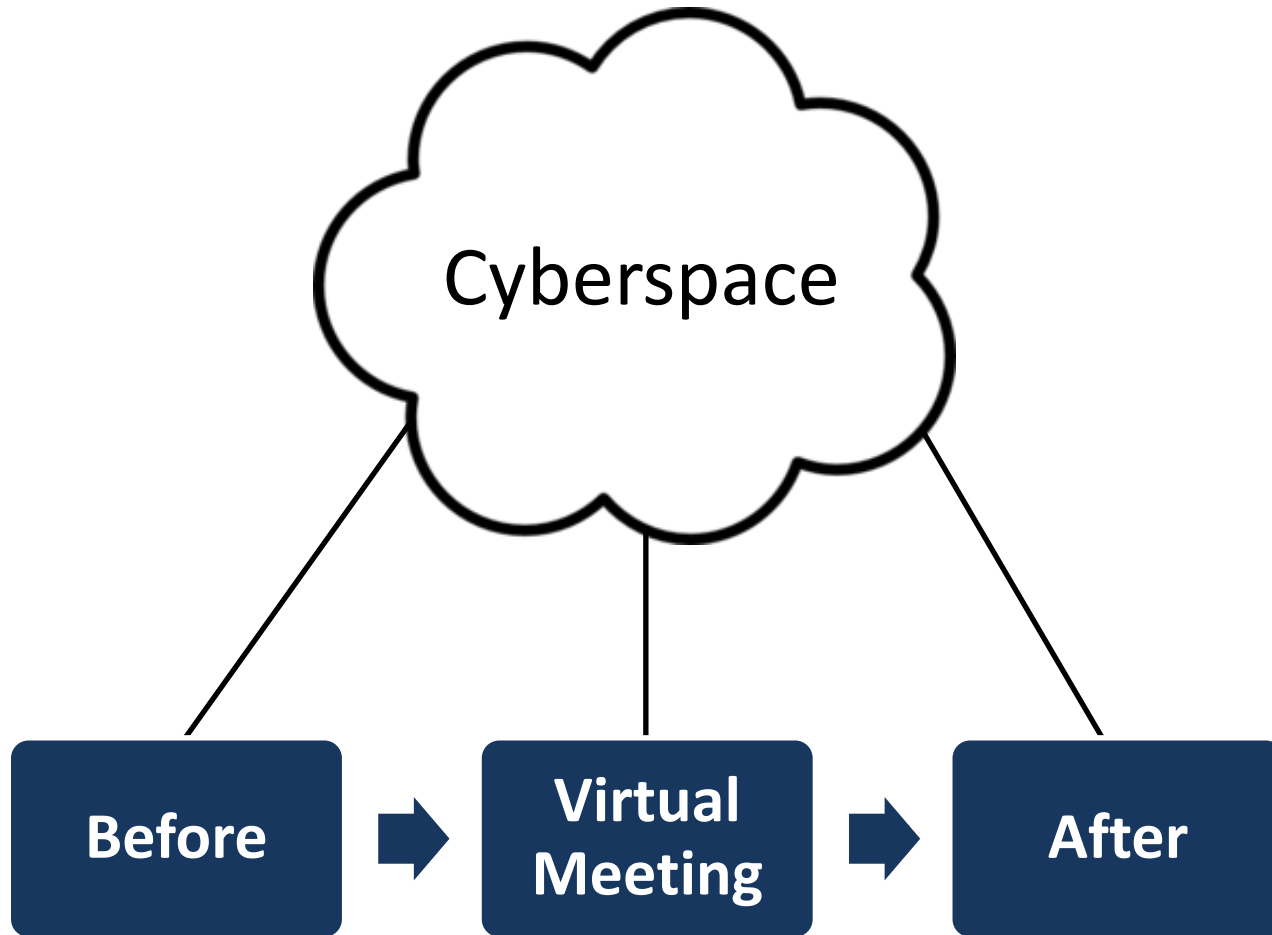
< people

< agenda

< clutter



Asynchronous or Synchronous?



Virtual Process

	Actions	Enabling Tools
Before the meeting		
The (virtual) meeting		
After the meeting		



Orchestrating virtual meetings



Image: TimesColonist.com



**People
(& Relationships)**



Process



Content



**Channel
(& Tool)**



Time



More or less control?

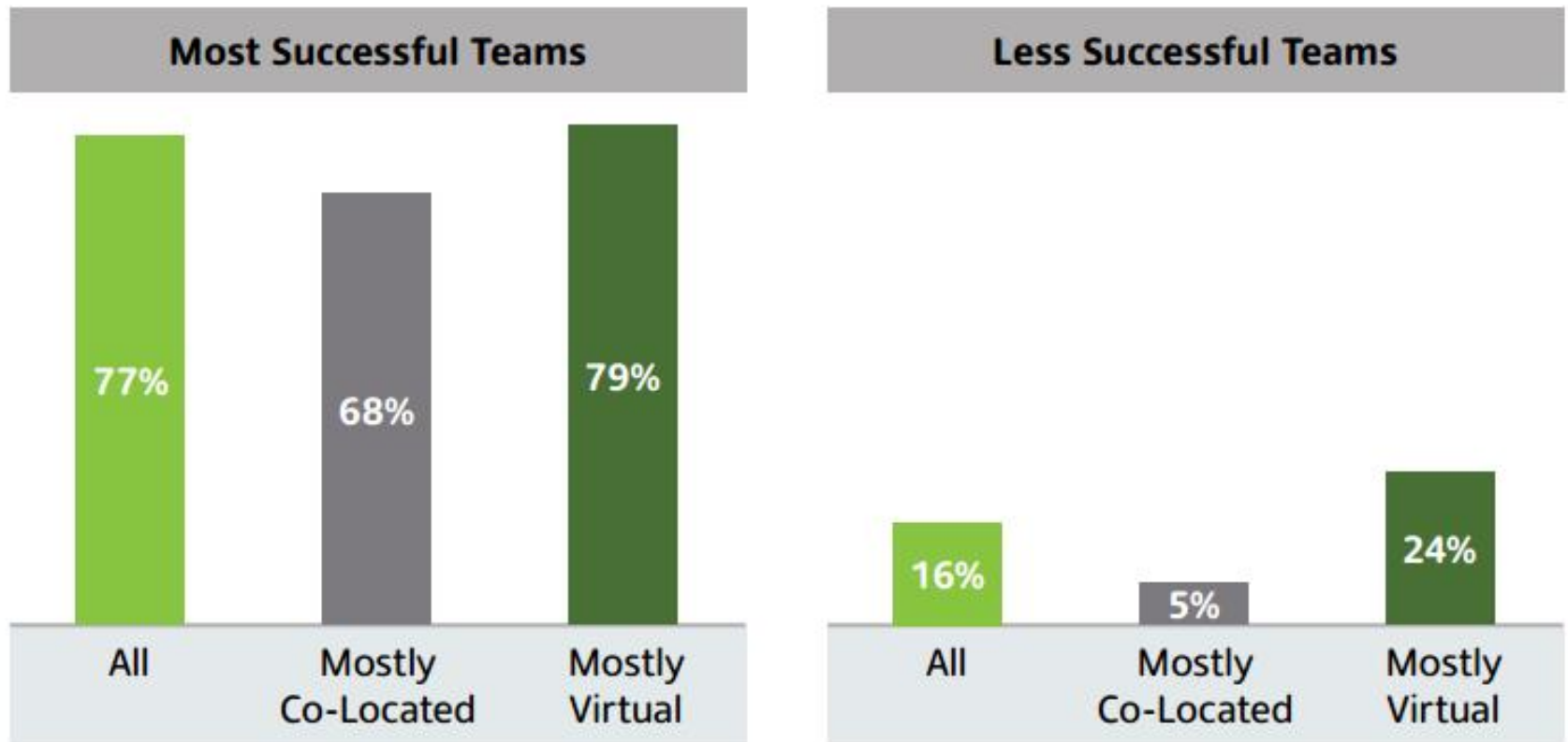


Image: mrhayata on flickr



Monolog vs. Dialogue

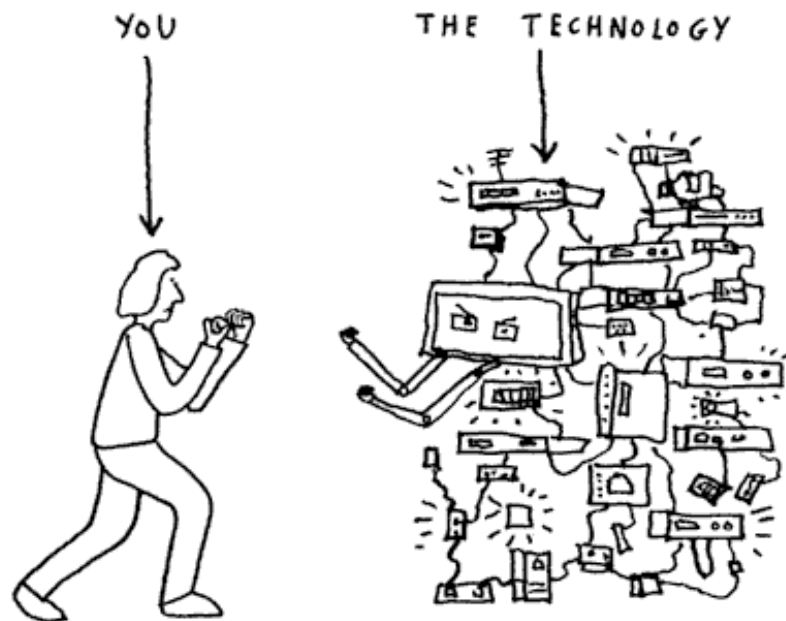
Collaboration Benchmark: Less than one-fourth of team meetings are mostly monolog



Source: Unify.com



Virtual dilemma – technology is always a barrier

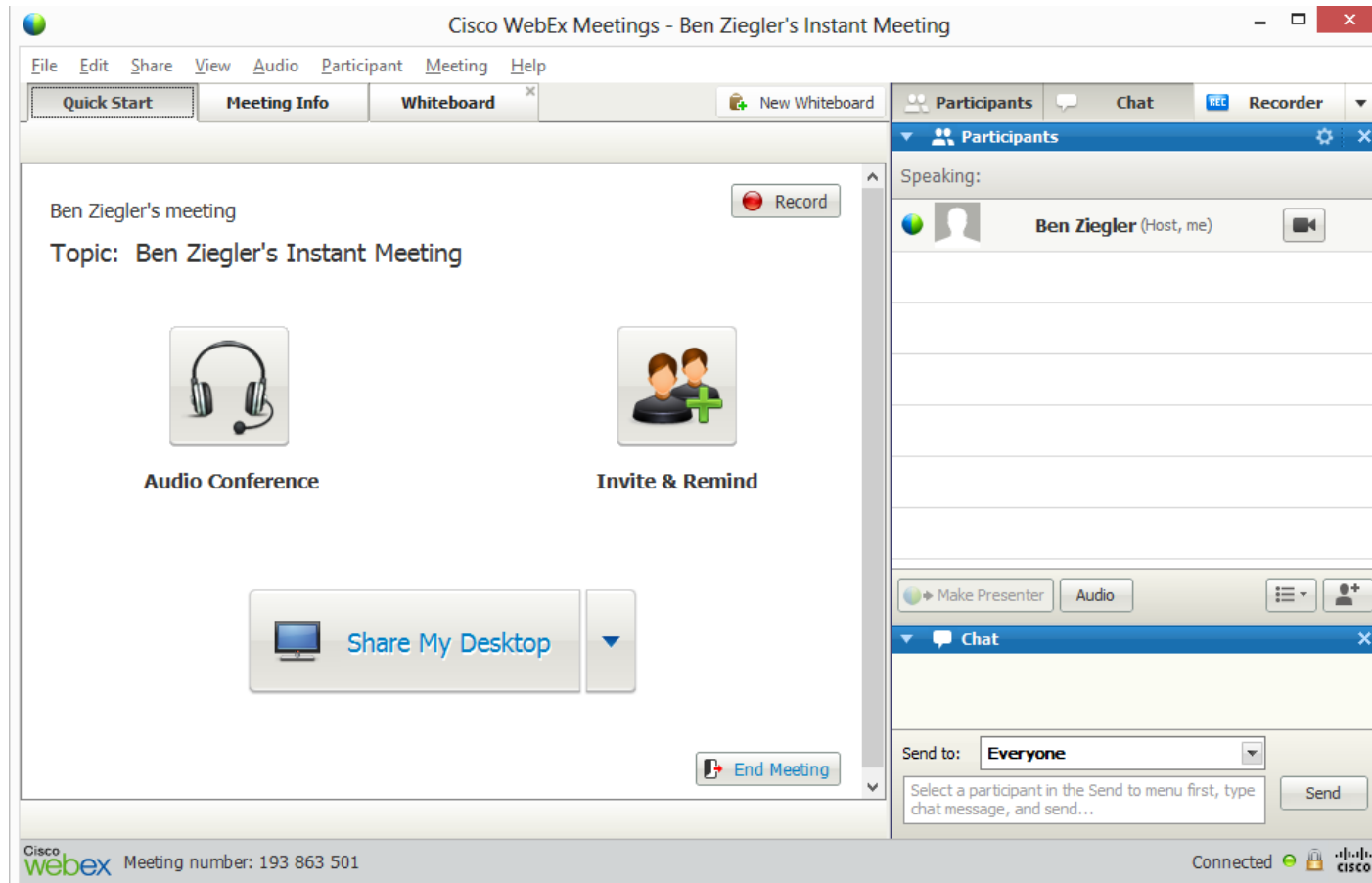


THE BATTLE WE ALL FACE

weblogcartoons.com



Over-familiarize yourself with the technology



Work with a co-facilitator

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting titled "THE ECONOMIES OF CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION OPTIONS IN THE FOREST SECTOR". The meeting is in progress, with two participants visible in the top video grid. The main screen displays a poll titled "Where in the world are you located?".

Region	Percentage	Count
Europe	75%	117
North East, North Africa	8.8%	13
Africa	4.2%	6
Asia Pacific	3%	4
Latin America, Caribbean	3%	4
South America	2.2%	3

Another poll titled "How experienced are you in (co)facilitation?" is also visible:

Experience Level	Percentage	Count
Not at all experienced	22.7%	33
Somewhat experienced	33%	48
Very experienced	27.2%	39

The interface also includes a sidebar with a list of participants, a chat window with messages, and a world map showing the global distribution of participants.

Image: martingilbraith.com



Have a backup plan

“Astronauts are taught the best way to reduce stress is to sweat the small stuff.”
(Cmdr. Chris Hadfield)



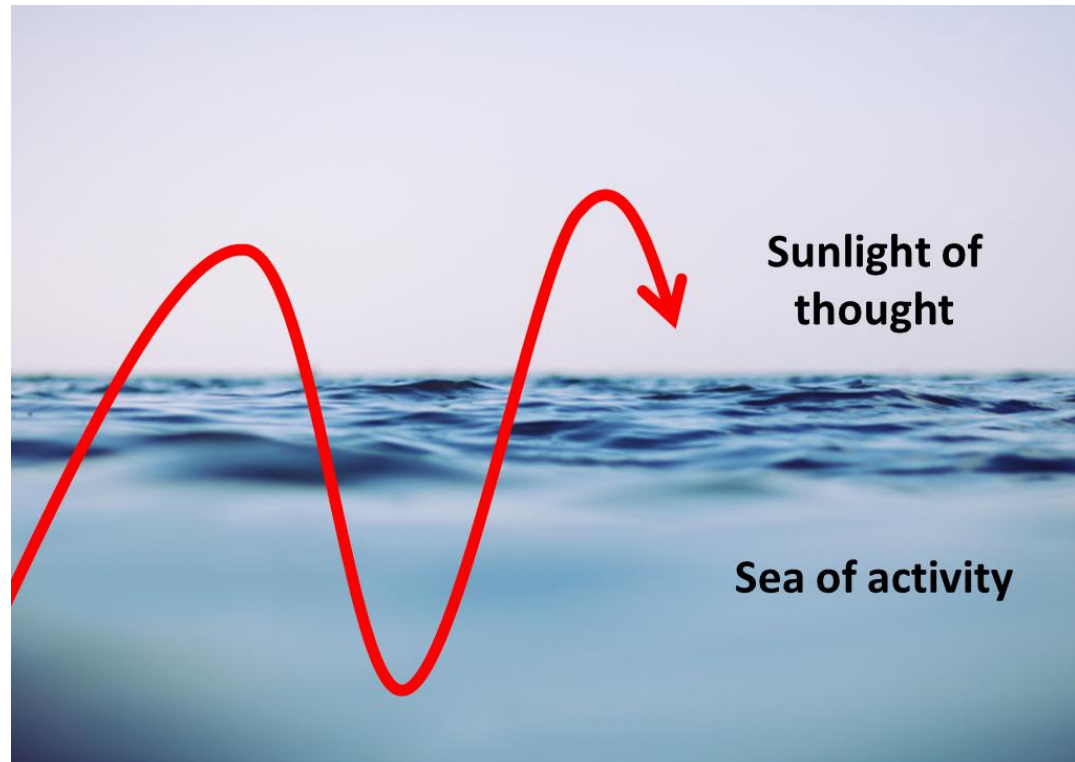
What if...?



On virtual collaboration learning & capacity-building

“The objective of learning is to integrate thinking and doing.”

~ Dr. Roger Fisher,
author of Getting to
Yes



Community-of-practice(s)



NetSquared.org gathers together nonprofits and activists, tech leaders and funders, and everyone who's interested in using technology for social change.

About
TechSoup Canada



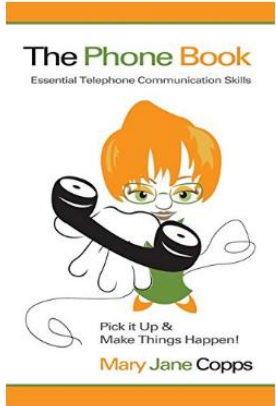
TechSoup Canada is a team of 9 people dedicated to empowering charities, nonprofits and libraries with the effective use of technology.



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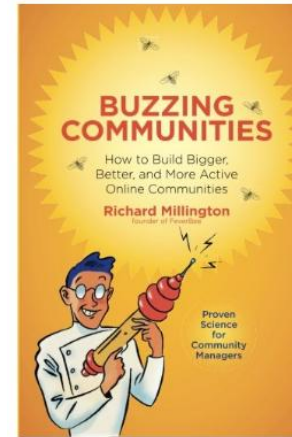
6 Books



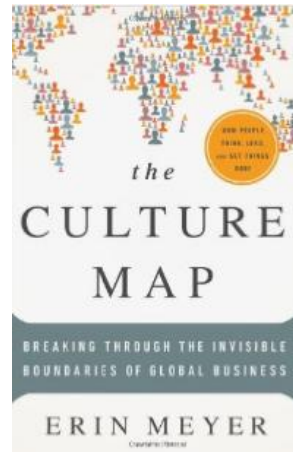
Good for fundraisers!



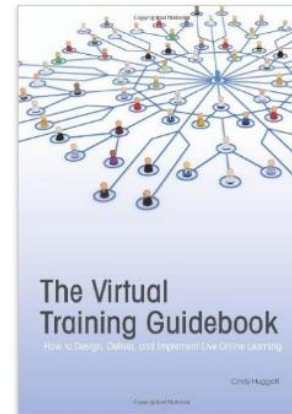
From the founder of Basecamp



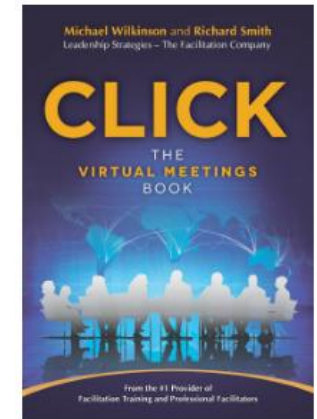
All about making online communities work



Visualize cultural differences – its Canada, after all!



Cindy Huggett consults to GoToMeeting



An A-Z on virtual meetings, by a leading in-person facilitator!



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Have fun learning



http://youtube/z_tiqIBFjbk



In closing, keys for effective virtual collaboration

- Agree on the work. Operate from a shared terms of reference.
- Follow best practices for virtual communications and relationships.
- Choose appropriate tools.
- Run virtual meetings with intention.
- Learn as you go. Ready. Fire. Aim.



Over to you...

As “daily life is foreplay for relationships”, what actions will you focus on to be more effective through virtual collaboration?



Questions?

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