



THE MISSING GUIDE TO

TROUBLESHOOTING AUDIO & VIDEO CONFERENCING



This guide includes excerpts from the blog post by the same name. To read the full post, which includes more details and links to additional resources, visit:

<http://blog.lucidmeetings.com/blog/missing-guide-troubleshooting-audio-video-conferencing>

PREPARE FOR SUCCESS



Get at least 3 services

Make sure you have and know how to use:

- A video conferencing service
- An audio-conferencing service
- A direct-dial phone number



Select the preferred service when scheduling your meeting, and have a backup ready just in case.

For internal meetings, try video first. For client meetings, use audio-only until you know they can use video. For one-on-one calls, consider just calling people directly.



Know how to fix small problems

Learn how to troubleshoot the most common problems.

Video Conferencing or Audio-Only Conferencing

When can you use video conferencing (the best choice for creating an engaging meeting) and when should you stick with audio-only conferencing?



Video is **more engaging** & makes for **better conversations**.



Audio-only is **more reliable** & easier for most people to use.



max 8 to 10 people best with 5 or fewer



can handle hundreds of callers



Appropriate during working hours only



Acceptable after hours - barely.



Requires excellent bandwidth



Works in more places

MOST COMMON PROBLEMS

1

You can't trust the Internet.

Video conferencing, web audio, and VoIP services all require a stable, high bandwidth internet connection to work well. Video freezing, screen lag, choppy audio, and sudden disconnects are all symptoms of an unreliable internet connection.



2

Inappropriate hardware or software.

All conferencing systems have minimum system requirements. All computer-based audio and video works best with a wired headset and microphone. Echo, sounding like you're in a tin can, and a participant's inability to connect are all symptoms of using inadequate hardware or software.



3

Oh dear. User error.

Incorrectly entered conference IDs. Thinking the microphone is plugged in when it's not. Falling asleep and snoring through a meeting without first hitting the mute key. Making a big speech without unmuting first. This guide can help you troubleshoot other issues; here you're on your own!



COMMON PROBLEMS & HOW TO SOLVE THEM

Problem

Try

Hard to hear; People sound like they're far away

The speaker is not using a headset and microphone. Instead, talking into a speaker phone or directly into their computer's built in microphone. From a computer-audio perspective, this is like shouting to people outside from within a cave.

FIXES TO TRY

- Ask the person to use a headset and microphone.
- If that's not possible, ask them to get closer to the microphone and speak more slowly.

Echo...echo, echo, echo

No headset: Audio is coming out someone's speakers then picked up by their microphone and rebroadcast.

FIXES TO TRY

- Mute the person causing the echo. If you're not sure who this is, mute everyone except the person speaking.
- Make sure everyone on the call knows how to mute and unmute their own line, so they can speak up when they want to.
- Ask people to use a headset if possible.

No sound; you can't hear anyone on the call

Volume or speaker settings.

FIXES TO TRY

Most of these applications have a sound check feature.

- Make sure your speakers are set up correctly. If you are wearing a headset, make sure your system audio is configured to use them.
- Turn up the volume on your computer.
- Turn up the volume in the application (most have a volume slider).
- Try plugging your headset into a different USB port.
- You may need to reboot your computer to get it to recognize your headset speakers correctly.

Problem

Try

You can hear others, but they can't hear you

Microphone settings

FIXES TO TRY

Either your microphone isn't turned on correctly, or the software can't access it because something else on your computer is interfering.

- Check the sound settings (see above) to make sure the software is using your microphone.
- You may need to reboot your computer to get it to recognize your headset speakers correctly.

You sound choppy; you're breaking up! We're losing you!

Connection and bandwidth problems, tunnels

FIXES TO TRY

If you sound choppy to others, that's usually a problem with your upstream internet bandwidth or cell phone signal. Computer audio, video and screen sharing need good upstream bandwidth (1Mb/s or more) to work well, which can vary wildly throughout the day on some networks.

- Stop any big uploads in progress.
- Switch to a telephone that doesn't use the internet for dialing.

The screen freezing or lagging behind when others speak

Connection and bandwidth problems

FIXES TO TRY

This could be a downstream bandwidth problem. In that case, you can:

- Stop streaming videos, updating software, and anything else competing with your internet connection.
- Step away from the microwave (sadly, this helps with our WiFi).
- Get a wired connection if possible.

PROBLEMS WITH AUDIO & VIDEO CONFERENCING SOFTWARE

Examples: Zoom.us, Cisco WebEx, GoTo Meeting, Fuze.com, Skype

Problem

Try

Download Problems

Slow internet

FIXES TO TRY

Join the meeting at least 10 minutes early start the download.

Can't install or run the software

These applications don't work on every computer or device. Causes include:

- Use of Linux or another unsupported operating system
- Conflicts with assistive technology (e.g., the meeting crashes JAWS)
- Downloads blocked by the corporate firewall
- Device limitations: no camera available, unsupported mobile device, etc.

FIXES TO TRY

Switch to a browser-based technology (see WebRTC) or dial-in for better universal support

BROWSER-BASED AUDIO & VIDEO (WEBRTC) PROBLEMS

Examples: appear.in, Hangouts, UberConference, Lucid Integrated Audio

Problem

Try

You don't see buttons to join the audio or video

Unsupported browser: Safari, Internet Explorer, others

FIXES TO TRY

Web audio and video only works reliably using Chrome or Firefox. Some services will attempt to substitute a Flash-based audio connection for Internet Explorer users and others who join using an unsupported browser. The quality of these alternatives is lower.

- Re-join the meeting using Google Chrome or Firefox

Your audio or video doesn't start

Browser Permissions

FIXES TO TRY

The browser needs permission to use your microphone and camera, and you may have missed the pop-up. You'll find these settings in the URL bar of your browser.

You click the button to join the call and nothing happens

Browser or Javascript Errors

FIXES TO TRY

The software didn't load correctly or encountered an error.

- Hold down the shift key and refresh the page to reload the software from scratch.
- Try joining the meeting with a different browser.

Your call freezes or drops unexpectedly

Accidental page reload or Internet connection problem

FIXES TO TRY

- Refresh the meeting page and rejoin the call.
- Switch to a phone and dial-in that won't be impacted by Internet bandwidth problems.



PROBLEMS WITH SIP OR VOIP PHONES

Examples: PhonerLite, Blink, many corporate phone systems

Problem

Try

Clicking to join using SIP doesn't do anything

No SIP software installed

FIXES TO TRY

People can get confused by SIP and try to use it, even though they have no SIP software installed. To use SIP, you need an application or phone designed for that.

The conference doesn't recognize your conference ID

The SIP client isn't sending clear tones to the conference.

FIXES TO TRY

Configure your SIP client to make sure the "Send Inband DTMF" setting is turned off. This ensures that the numbers you enter for your conference ID sound correct to the conference line.

PROBLEMS WITH DIAL-IN NUMBERS

Examples: Toll, Toll-Free and International dial-in numbers

Problem

Try

Poor quality using a wired phone

Signal routing issue

FIXES TO TRY

The phone system works a lot like the public internet. It's actually a whole lot of interconnected systems passing your voice around. Some routes work better than others.

- Hang up and dial back in.
- Try an alternate dial-in number.

Poor quality using a cell phone

You're using a cell phone. For a conference call.

FIXES TO TRY

- Join the call with a wired phone or your computer instead.
- If you have no other choice, plug earbuds with a microphone into your cell phone to better concentrate the audio.

Poor quality using Skype dial-out

Skype dial-out signal loss, interference, and weirdness

FIXES TO TRY

Skype-to-Skype calls tend to work fine with 2 or 3 callers, making Skype a great choice for ad-hoc calls, quick one-on-ones, or talking with your mom. The dial-out works ok for one-on-one calls, but fails regularly on conference calls. We've encountered undecipherable call quality and one time, high-pitched squealing that bombarded everyone except the Skype user.

Please just don't. Using the Skype phone to dial-in to a conference call line is the least consistent and worst quality option at this time. We know the folks at Microsoft are working on this, so that may change, but for now please try web audio using Chrome instead, or get a SIP client.



ALL-IN-ONE MEETING PLATFORM

Meetings are the engine that moves work forward. With Lucid Meetings, your whole organization can consistently run organized, engaging, successful meetings.

We make great meetings easy.

Learn more about running great meetings on our blog at: www.lucidmeetings.com/blog

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