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DIVETOUR

Training Kit of the cMOOC of DIVETOUR project

Guide

for the delivery of the cMOOC
Webinars

Edited by the DIVETOUR project team

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Foreword

After having an incredible boost during the COVID-19 pandemic, webinars have established themselves as a very effective way to share knowledge, ideas, and information. This practical guide is meant to point out some key characteristics of webinars to make them not only an efficient way to share, enhance and develop new competences, but also an effective and engaging one. Webinars are frequently used in MOOC to create synchronous moments of exchange among all interred stakeholders (host, participants, students, teachers), that is the case of our DIVETOIR project.

Working on this document, the **DIVETOIR partnership** decided to stick to some key concepts, without trying to “reinvent the wheel”, but underlying at the same time all necessary and useful reflections that schools, and educational or training institutions should consider when organising webinars in the post-pandemic digital space.

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What is a Webinar?

The word 'webinar' is a neologism born from the union of two English words: 'web' and 'seminar'.

A webinar is therefore a seminar held online.

Already from the etymology of the word, its training vocation is therefore clear. Indeed, webinars are training courses that allow content and presentations to be shared in a virtual space and thus potentially with anyone in the world. It is precisely this virtual and therefore potentially barrier-free dimension that has made it a key tool in the management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although they originated in education, webinars are now established tools in various professional and personal fields: marketing, education, human resources, business management to name a few.

Why organise a Webinar?

Organising a webinar is much easier than organising a physical conference or lecture since:

- No physical location is required.
- The number of participants can potentially be unlimited.
- The cost of any dropouts (i.e., registered users who do not turn up for the event) is low.
- The webinar can be easily recorded and later shared with other users, further expanding the overall audience of the event.
- The webinar is highly interactive, allowing participants to easily communicate, access content and presentations, and share questions and concerns.

Let's see the major opportunities connected to the **organisation of a webinar**.

- In an age when content is key, a webinar is a great tool for building your storytelling. Holding webinars, just like giving face-to-face lectures, helps you define your positioning and establish yourself as a subject matter expert.
- Content, being digital, could be shared on other online channels and go viral. Sharing content 'verbally' rather than in writing can increase the engagement of your audience (whoever they are: new employees, students, colleagues, possible customers).
- As mentioned above, webinars can be recorded. This allows you not only to share the content immediately,

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but also to create valuable content to share later with other contacts or to broadcast on demand.

Furthermore, from a marketing point of view, webinars offer two further great opportunities:

- to access a webinar, people must register themselves: they must share their data with you, becoming part of your database (we remind you on this point to always check legal regulations in force regarding respect for privacy and the use of personal data).
- Users, in most cases, voluntarily participate in your webinar. This means that they are interested in your content and therefore can be users that marketing defines as 'qualified leads' strongly interested in your services.

What Objectives?

There are different types of webinars to meet different types of goals. To be able to organise an effective webinar, it is therefore essential to first define what objectives you want to achieve. Below are some examples:

Training

If you need to deliver training on a topic you know well, a webinar is a perfect tool. It makes it easy to share content, to answer questions immediately, and to divide participants into subgroups to work or compare notes on specific topics.

Furthermore, by cutting the costs of any physical travel, it easily allows you to invite any national and international speakers.

Presenting a Service

If you have a new service, a course, or any other resource to launch on the market, a webinar may be the perfect solution for you. A webinar will enable you to provide detailed information and interactively answer questions coming from your audience. You will also have a database of potential customers to work with.

Welcoming New Students or Colleagues

Welcoming newcomers to a school or company

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environment is never easy. Especially when it is not possible to share spaces or moments of reflection daily. A webinar is a great tool that, by reducing time and costs, can be set up on a regular basis to ensure that the induction is successful.

Upskilling or Reskilling Colleagues or Employees

If webinars originated in the educational sphere, they are certainly now also widely used in the corporate sector. Constant training is indeed essential in every field and webinars provide a cost-effective, continuous, and consistent solution.

Maintaining Relations

Maintaining contact with colleagues, customers, stakeholders in general is necessary to get long-term stability. Webinars are an excellent tool for keeping stable and regular contact.

Generating New Contacts

Access to a webinar requires registration by the user. Registration is a key opportunity to collect contacts and create a useful database.

What Types of Webinars?

Depending on the objectives, the type of content to be conveyed and the target audience, there might be different types of webinars. A first macro division is as follows:

- **Live webinar**

A live webinar is the perfect solution to exploit the interactivity of online tools. Therefore, if it is your objective to have an exchange with participants, to collect questions, feedback, or opinions, you should choose this option. Moreover, the possibility of having an immediate and real exchange with the speaker will increase the involvement of participants and their empathy towards you and your content. Although the webinar will be held live, we suggest recording the session to be able to share it with those who were unable to attend the event or to replay it in the future to other users as on-demand content.

- **Pre-recorded webinar**

It is not always easy to organise an event by changing the agenda of all speakers and participants. Should this problem become difficult to manage, you can consider pre-recording the webinar. On the one hand, this makes it easier to involve speakers, and on the other hand, it allows you to broadcast several replays of the same content, thus also expanding the number of viewers. In this case, once the content has been

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recorded, it will be sufficient to broadcast it online on the appointed day and time. A very important feature offered by webinars is that of maintaining a live chat. This will allow participants following the pre-recorded webinar to still ask questions, which will be answered live from the chat of the people to whom you have assigned this task. This option allows the interactive function of the webinar to be maintained, albeit smaller than the live one.

In our DIVETOURL project we chose some sort of mix of these two approaches having 2 synchronical webinars to enhance exchanges among participants and we recorded both webinars to make them available afterwards.

How do you record a webinar?

When the webinar starts, remember to start recording. This is a feature offered by all technical solutions presently on the market. The platform will pulse "rec", click play and ensure that the recording is started and then saved in mp4 format. If the audience is visible in any way, remember to warn them that you are recording the event.

How to Help Participants Stay connected?

Let us now look at some of the most popular tools integrated in webinar platforms that can help you in sharing content and help participants stay connected.

Presentation

When sharing information, it is important to use visual aids to make sure the audience follows along with what you are presenting. The most popular and easy to implement option is the use of slides. Remember that to make it easier for participants to read the material, it is important that the slides are lightly written and easy to understand. Furthermore, it is a good idea to open the presentation with an introductory slide summarising the main information on the event (duration, times, agenda of topics covered) and to close it with a slide thanking participants and sharing references for follow-up events.

Chat

As already said, the use of the chat is crucial in building a relationship with participants. Chat can be used to collect questions (you can choose whether to enable audio and video of participants or not), to share technical information. You can choose whether to share messages with all participants or only with certain participants.

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Interactive Whiteboard

You can use an interactive whiteboard to enable the audience to better visualise complex processes.

Facilitating the session graphically, using charts, pictures or mapping some concepts from scratch, will help the audience in building knowledge and understanding the content.

When using an interactive whiteboard during the webinar, it can be stimulating to ask for participants' collaboration.

Screen Sharing

In some circumstances it can be useful to activate screen sharing to have participants see on the screen exactly what the presenter sees. This can be useful, for example, when making a demo of any software or digital tools.

Screen sharing can also be useful when the presenter must show not only one presentation, but several files he or she has on the PC. In this case, instead of always interrupting the presentation to upload and share different content, it can be much faster and more intuitive to share the screen directly.

Remember to deactivate all personal notifications and clean up your desktop so as not to risk showing unintended personal or professional content.

Surveys

The use of surveys is a very important tool for both you and your audience. For you because it allows you to

collect a range of information and data that you can then process as small market research and for your audience to feel an active part of the session and thus remain attentive and involved in the process. Surveys can also be conducted anonymously.

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How to Organise a Webinar?

Once the objectives and the type of webinar have been defined, it is time to proceed with the actual organisation of the event.

Content, Title and Format

Based on the objective you have defined, you must carefully choose the content to be conveyed. What specifically will your webinar be about?

It is important at this stage to be as precise and detailed as possible. To optimise online promotion, it is also important to meet SEO search criteria. Identify one or more keywords and make them present and clear in all the material you are going to create.

When creating the title, try to include the keyword you have identified and try to attract users' attention, e.g., by placing it within a question. Add key information such as whether the webinar is free or paid and who it is aimed at. For example, “Seminar: how to choose the right title? A free webinar for those taking their first steps in the industry”.

Involved People

* Presenter

The presenter of a webinar on a specific topic must be not only an expert on the subject, but also a qualified speaker. We know when the ability to speak in an audience is a skill to be trained. If this is true for in-person events, perhaps it is even more true for virtual ones where keeping the audience engaged and preventing them from being disconnected or distracted is even more difficult. Moreover, if in in-person events, it is somewhat easy to get feedback from participants (verbal or non-verbal), it is much less so in webinars, during which the speaker may sometimes run the risk of feeling alone in front of the screen. Webinars also allow the involvement of multiple speakers on a tight budget. Hypothetically all speakers are just a click away, so it may be a good idea to try to engage other national or international speakers.

* Extended Team

In addition to the presenter, it is important to identify an assistant to take care of the chat, to handle any questions or reports of technical malfunctions. In this sense, it is also important to have a technical reference figure who monitors the quality of the transmission.

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The Storytelling of the Session

It is essential to work on the storytelling of the session. Planning is a key element in the success of a webinar. It is therefore necessary to organise the content clearly and sensibly, and to have a moderator to guide the participants from one topic to the next and, in case several interventions are planned, from one speaker to the next.

For storytelling to be successfully followed, it is essential to draw up an outline of the session and share it with all the speakers, making it clear how much time each of them will have and aligning them on the topics that will be covered before and after their speech.

The average duration of webinars is between 30 and 60 minutes. We suggest not exceeding this limit to avoid losing the attention or participation of the users themselves.

Regarding the structure of the topics covered, it is important to remember that if people spend time on you and share their data with you, it is because they expect to receive **valuable content** from you. Therefore, whatever the purpose of the webinar, it is crucial that the commercial and narrow product promotion topics are limited to a very narrow time frame (indicatively never more than 20 per cent of the total time). The substantial part of the session must be aimed at conveying content of interest to the participating audience.

Interactivity

One can decide whether to give participants the floor or limit their interaction to chat only. This depends substantially on the objectives, the number of expected participants and the speakers involved. In general, offering the virtual 'stage' significantly increases the involvement of the participants, making them an active part of the content transmitted; at the same time, it considerably reduces the possibility of moderating the conveyed content.

Whichever way you choose, it is a good rule to try to involve participants even simply with surveys or quick questions to be answered via chat.

Accessibility

Like any event, it is essential that webinars are accessible and ensure that the widest possible audience can participate.

Here are some tips for making your webinar accessible:

1. Include **live transcription and captioning of presentations**.

It is recommended that you use live transcription and subtitling to make your webinar accessible to a wider audience, including people with hearing impairments, people who do not speak the language well, or people who cannot activate the audio.

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2. Limit the amount of text in the slides.

Do not create displays that are too full of text or with text written too small.

3. Use high-contrast colours in your slides.

This ensures that the slides are readable for everyone, including participants with low resolution screens, those with visual impairments such as low vision or colour blindness, or those watching via a mobile device.

4. Describe in Words everything you show on the screen.

In this way you can be sure that everyone is following everything you are sharing.

5. Record the Session.

If the context allows, recording the session and sharing the recording with participants allows those who were unable to follow or did not fully understand some of the content to review it and listen again one or more times.

6. Send Slides in Advance.

If the webinar involves the presentation of slides and if the context allows, it might be a good idea to share the slides in advance. Visually impaired people would therefore have the opportunity to read the text of the slides with their favourite device. It could also be a

good way for participants to familiarise themselves with the content you are presenting and allow non-native speakers to translate key terms into their own language.

Involvement

As with in-person presentations, there are tricks and strategies for increasing audience engagement in digital presentations.

The advantage of online seminars is that they offer inexpensive and user-friendly tools to increase interactivity with the audience and compensate somewhat for the lack of immediate response.

We summarise below some suggestions, already partly presented in the previous chapters.

- **Introduce yourself**

Participants may already know something about you, but introduce yourself in an affable manner anyway. Tell a personal anecdote, be confident but at the same time approachable.

- **Show passion**

If you are not passionate about what you are saying, why should the public be? Show yourselves to be passionate!

- **Don't be didactic**

Don't just read the slides, tailor the presentation to

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you and your audience. Add small personal or topical digressions. Make a few jokes if the context allows it.

- **Study public reactions**

Ask for feedback from the audience. Let them talk and introduce themselves. If it is not possible to do this visually because the participants' webcams are not active, or because the number of participants is very high, use polls and chats. Ask for feedback. Ask simple questions to be answered via chat. Use quizzes and surveys to increase interaction.

- **Create a working team**

Sometimes it is difficult to keep the thread of the discussion going if there is an overload of questions from the audience, so it is important to have the support of a moderator who will manage the chat and check professionally that everything goes as it should. Provide for the participation of one or more external guests. Changing voices often breaks the monotony and helps to maintain attention.

- **Ask for feedback**

This has two main advantages: it will make participants active in the comments and it will provide you with information on what you can improve for the future or what was of particular value.

When to Organise a Webinar?

When choosing the day and time of the webinar broadcast, it is important to keep a few points in mind. First, it is essential to think about the audience we want to engage. What kind of work do they do? Where do they live? When are they on holiday?

If, for example, the audience is very heterogeneous or lives in different parts of the world, a pre-recorded webinar with the possibility of subscribing to several replays can be a good solution.

In general, here are some good rules to follow:

- Place the webinar on a convenient day of the week for your audience.
- Avoid bridges, or days close to national holidays.
- Check for any other events already scheduled that might be of interest to the same audience.

As for the time, it depends a lot on the type of audience we are addressing. Will they follow the event at work or from home?

In general, it seems that the most appropriate time is in the morning, between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m. Remember to avoid lunch times and if you have an international audience, like in the case for our DIVETOURL project, always remember to check time zones to enable the

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highest possible participation. This is a useful [link](#) to check upon organising your webinar.

As we have already emphasised, webinar registration is a great opportunity. It is essential to point this out already at the registration stage, to encourage people to register and share their data with you even if they are not available on the scheduled date

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How to Promote a Webinar?

Once the target audience has been identified, the content defined and the date and time of the webinar set, it becomes essential to make people aware of it. Promotion is obviously crucial for a successful webinar, which otherwise risks being a great piece of content that nobody knows about. In a nutshell: we must collect registrations.

Creating the Landing Page

First you must create a landing page, i.e., a page on which you enter all the details of the event. The potential participant should find all the relevant information: date, time, title, agenda, speakers. The description of the event should be simple and clear but comprehensive.

Remember to make the time and date of the event clearly visible and to specify the time zone of reference.

In addition to the main information, the landing page must also contain the registration form, in which the user must enter personal data to finalise registration.

Choose the data you request from users during registration well: it must be data that is relevant to you.

Ask yourself what you need to know from your audience and what information you want to include in your database.

It is important, however, at the same time not to

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discourage the user with too long forms or requests for too personal data. These are fields to be defined very carefully; they will determine the quality of your leads. Here again, we remind you to always keep in mind the current data management regulations.

Always set up a confirmation page following successful registration. Do not leave users in doubt as to whether the registration was successful or not. Also set up the sending of an immediate summary email.

Once the landing page has been created, it is time to sponsor it.

Sponsorship

Here are some channels to promote your landing page and thus your webinar:

- Your **website**: insert the link on your website, in the news or events section or in a pop-up.
- **Social channels**: evaluate the social channels to be involved according to the target audience. Plan organic posts and if possible well-targeted sponsored posts.
- **Dem and newsletter**: send a communication via email to your database. Use clear messages explaining well what the purpose of the webinar is and to whom it is addressed.
- **Go viral**: try to create hashtags and push word-of-mouth online.

Also use your speakers' social channels to reach their audience as well.

Once you have collected a database of participants send some reminders.

Keep in mind that if the drop-out rate for physical events is high, the drop-out rate for digital events is even higher. It is therefore crucial to keep in touch with the participants.

We suggest you send at least two reminders: the first one two to three days before the event and the second one about 15 minutes before it starts, to convey a sense of urgency

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Some final Tips

Technical Tests

Before organising your own webinar, we suggest that you attend other webinars: it is essential to understand the structure and essence and to identify audience expectations and participants' needs. Seeing some examples of formats will help you identify the best format for you.

Once you have organised your webinar, before broadcasting the official session, we recommend that you organise one or more test sessions with all speakers involved. This is essential to verify that everyone's connection is sufficient and that no PCs have settings that conflict with the webinar platform.

Here are some aspects to check before transmission:

- Working video camera.
- Microphone working and suitable for the environment.
- Stable connection (cable is best).
- PC connected in charge.

As far as room set-up for recording is concerned, here are a few tips:

- Take a good look at what will fit in the camera's background.
- Consider the light well. A bright room is definitely favoured, the important thing is that the light does not

interfere with the camera.

- Position the PC at a height equal to your head and at the right distance to avoid shots from below or being cut off by the camera.
- Assess the noise level of the room from which you are transmitting.
- Point out that the room will be used for live filming, to avoid other people breaking into the room.
- Wear clothes that stand out against the background behind you (e.g. better to avoid a white shirt if the background is a white wall).

It is advisable to do these tests a few days before the transmission, so as to have time to fix any technical problems that have arisen.

On the day of the broadcast, we suggest connecting at least 20 minutes before the start for a final rehearsal.

Speaker Evidence

We recommend that you prepare your webinar thoroughly. Of course, it is important to be flexible, but preparation is the basis of any successful presentation. Rehearse your presentation, make it your own, feel confident in moving from one topic to another or answering any questions.

When you go live, try to integrate what you have prepared with what emerged during the event, to echo what was said by another speaker or some participant. It will make

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your speech more 'unique' and seem fresher and more improvised.

Avoid schedule revisions and last-minute changes, which risk making the situation chaotic and causing unnecessary stress. At airtime, keep a glass of water nearby, and stay focused!

Follow-up

Once the webinar has been broadcast, it is necessary not to close the conversation with your audience and to pursue a strategy that marketing calls follow-up. Send differentiated communication:

- For those who attended the event: say thank you, ask for feedback on the event and suggest next steps.
- For those who could not attend: share the recording of the session or the content presented, to maintain a link anyway.

Conclusion

Webinars are a powerful and useful tool, but their preparation, design, organisation, and delivery are a complex process.

We hope this agile guide might help you increase the success of your initiatives.

We would like to close with a famous quote by Wayne Burgraff: “It takes one hour of preparation for each minute of presentation time.”

Never forget it when preparing your webinars!

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Annex - Resources

The webinar software options have exponentially grown in the last few years also due to the remotization of many activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this guide we present to use **Zoom**, which we chose for our webinars since it's the software used by ESHOB lead partner for the delivery of the MOOC webinars.

For a more comprehensive analysis of available softwares you might check on the Capterra website at this link: [Best Webinar Software 2022 | Reviews of the Most Popular Tools & Systems](#)

Zoom

DIVETOIR Webinars have been broadcasted using the Zoom webinar platform. Upon registration participants received an event link for joining the webinar. An e-mail response support was made available to participants.

Zoom is a proprietary video telephony software developed by Zoom Video Communications.

Zoom provides a free plan that allows meetings of up to 100 simultaneous participants with a time limit of 40 minutes. Users have the option of unlocking the limits of the free version by upgrading and subscribing to a paid plan. Zoom offers the possibility of organising meetings and webinars. But, what is the difference between the two tools?

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	Meeting	Webinar
Introduction	Zoom Meetings is ideal for hosting more interactive sessions where you want to have high audience participation or divide the session into smaller groups.	Zoom Webinars is ideal for large audiences or events open to the public.
Ideal for	Groups for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with the customer • Meetings with colleagues • Training Sessions 	Major events and public broadcasts such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary Assemblies • Quarterly updates • Didactic lessons
Cost	Paid and free subscription options are available.	Paid add-on available for Pro subscriptions or higher.

Zoom provides a series of free training resources on how to create and technically manage a webinar with their platform.

Please **visit the following link for access** to comprehensive and up-to-dated Zoom training resources:
<https://explore.zoom.us/en/campus-events-guide/>.

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