

Naval Safety & Environmental Training Center (NAVSAFENVTRACEN)

## Doing more with less

Foremost authority on U.S. naval safety training uses Adobe Connect for its global, joint service safety conference and as its de facto synchronous eLearning platform

For military personnel, not all risks exist on the battlefield. The Naval Safety & Environmental Training Center (NAVSAFENVTRACEN) and its corresponding offices across service branches are tasked with eliminating unnecessary mishaps outside combat through policies, services, and risk management data, and training to foster a safety-centered culture to ensure combat readiness.

For 20 years, military safety leaders, civilian experts, trainers, and critical safety staff met onsite at an annual safety conference to share safety data, discuss best practices, and learn about ways to employ innovative ideas in their field. However, recent budget pressures jeopardized the Department of Defense's (DoD) ability to carry on with the critical safety training.

Historically, safety conference coordinators would complete detailed requests for conference space, presentation equipment—including computers, projectors, whiteboards, tables, and printed materials—for each session. Onsite assets and personnel were also required to ensure presenters and participants were where they needed for each session and coordinate travel and accommodations for speakers.

Six weeks prior to its 21<sup>st</sup> annual conference start, organizers realized that many people would be unable to participate in San Diego, California because of budget—the travel costs were just too high for a globally-based force. Doing nothing wasn't an option and completely reorganizing another live event wasn't feasible. NAVSAFENVTRACEN had to examine alternatives.

A new idea—executing the conference virtually—emerged among the leadership team. Given NAVSAFENVTRACEN's desire to innovate, the consensus was quick and event organizers pushed forward with the new plan.

### Only weeks to launch

With help from EnvolveMEDIA, Adobe's collaboration services partner, NAVSAFENVTRACEN chose to deliver all 52 of its 2013 conference seminars virtually—from keynote speeches and classroom learning to breakout sessions and service meetings. Taking cues from past success experienced within its eLearning environment, NAVSAFENVTRACEN chose to use Adobe Connect.

"The Training Center needed added flexibility within learning sessions so that virtual training sessions could mirror on-site experiences," says Dean Pianta, Chief Learning Technologist at EnvolveMEDIA. "Adobe Connect offers that as well as a straightforward environment to set up meetings quickly, helping to address the aggressive deadline for the conference."

Using virtual conference templates in Adobe Connect, coordinators put together event pages, html-based email invites, online registration forms, and an analytics engine. Within two weeks, coordinators set up the complete infrastructure necessary for event registration, organization, and delivery—as well as a repository for post-event access to recording and learning materials.

The Adobe Connect web conferencing platform was also chosen because many speakers and trainers didn't have firsthand experience delivering content virtually. "With Adobe Connect, we held very brief orientation sessions with the speakers who were presenting virtually and that was all they needed to get started," says Pianta.



### Naval Safety & Environmental Training Center

Norfolk, Virginia

[www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/navsafenvtracen/](http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/navsafenvtracen/)

[www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/navsafenvtracen/Documents/Fy13CourseSchedule.aspx](http://www.public.navy.mil/navsafecen/navsafenvtracen/Documents/Fy13CourseSchedule.aspx)

### Results

- Successfully coordinated and executed a week-long virtual conference, with over 1,500 attendees, 80 speakers, and 52 topics
- Increased participation in annual conference by more than 50%
- Measured event participation and engagement to quantify success
- Reduced event costs by one-half and eliminated over \$1 million in travel costs
- Offered straightforward workflows for presenters with persistent rooms, layouts, and content

Using engagement tools available in Adobe Connect—including polls, chat capabilities, and video—presenters can engage participants as if they were sitting right in front of them.



### Challenge

- Coordinate and execute a multi-day virtual conference and eLearning sessions for 1,500+ attendees, including 80 geographically dispersed speakers
- Effectively engage global audiences with valuable web conference tools
- Reduce conference costs without sacrificing learning opportunities

### Solution

Using Adobe Connect, NAVSAFENVTRACEN successfully engaged 1,500+ event attendees and supported post-event engagement by enabling access to electronic event materials and conference recordings from virtually any device.

### Systems at a glance

Adobe Connect

Overcoming security challenges was also a top concern for NAVSAFENVTRACEN as most users would be accessing conference materials from behind secure firewalls. Training materials needed to be readily available and easy to access, while still complying with security protocols. The Adobe solution's ability to integrate with multiple teleconferencing providers further enabled access to sessions for participants and presenters worldwide.

### Engaging a global audience

Though it was the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Joint Services Safety Conference, it was the first year that the week-long event was delivered exclusively virtual, and consisted of 80 geographically dispersed speakers discussing 52 topics. Seminars ranged from two-hour sessions to tracks running multiple days. Some events had a single speaker while others had panels of six or more.

Speakers' equipment and location ranged from personal computers at home, to office environments to small command public affairs related studios. The total number of registered participants reached more than 1,500—at least 500 more than if the event was limited to in-person attendees.

With a virtual conference, NAVSAFENVTRACEN could engage its regular list of attendees as well as a much broader audience, including personnel deployed globally who, historically, wouldn't be able to attend. As sessions kicked-off, organizers could see attendees in all areas of the world—including Europe, Asia, and the South Pacific—logging into the virtual seminar rooms at all hours and actively participating. Holding the event virtually also eliminated \$1.5 million in planned travel expenses and cut operating expenses in half.

Equally as important, presenters who were previously planning to attend the event in person—including the event's keynote speakers—were able to deliver presentations from home offices. The persistent, modular meeting rooms enabled these presenters to log into the session, upload already developed materials, then present at a moment's notice.

NAVSAFENVTRACEN made use of Adobe Connect engagement tools, including polls, files shares, and chat capabilities. Presenters could engage participants throughout sessions, a technique unavailable at past brick and mortar conferences. Presenters could also solicit opinions on a topic or ask about past experiences as if the attendees were physically sitting in front of them.

Additionally, Adobe Connect allowed presenters and participants to use webcams for face-to-face interactions, nonverbal gestures, and visual mannerisms to increase engagement. When bandwidth was limited for either presenters or participants, NAVSAFENVTRACEN limited the use of video to optimize experiences. Adobe Connect helped speakers to go beyond just broadcasting information—it helped conference attendees achieve a two-way conversation that encouraged learning and participation.

Using Adobe Connect, conference attendees have access to important event materials after the event from virtually any device, helping to extend the learning experience.



*“Using analytics capabilities in Adobe Connect, we can measure and evaluate the success of the event clearly and from multiple perspectives.”*

Dean Pianta, Chief Learning Technologist, EnvolveMEDIA

### Measuring engagement

Using analytics tools in Adobe Connect, NAVSAFENVTRACEN took a more granular look at participant engagement. For each event, coordinators and stakeholders viewed how many attendees in each session participated in polls and asked questions.

Coordinators used feedback gathered through post-session surveys to learn what worked and what didn't work. All metrics were collected from each session and compiled into a single repository, then exported into a spreadsheet for further analysis. After evaluating the data, event organizers found that more than 92% of all participants said they had positive attitudes towards the virtual conference.

“Using analytics capabilities in Adobe Connect, we can measure and evaluate the success of the event clearly and from multiple perspectives,” says Pianta. “We can support our projected return on investment and cost-benefit ratio figures, as well as track user experiences and engagement—proving that this is an effective solution to situations where travel simply isn't an option.”

NAVSAFENVTRACEN is measuring how participants and members of their staff are accessing recorded conference sessions. With every download of the recorded sessions, the agency is gaining even more value from its investment in Adobe Connect. Rather than spending resources on printed materials or making CD-ROM disks for attendees, NAVSAFENVTRACEN could offer materials as downloadable files accessible from virtually any device.

### From web conferencing to eLearning

Success using Adobe Connect at its annual conference helped to reaffirm the Naval Safety & Environmental Training Center's choice to employ eLearning as a critical platform. Demand for eLearning and web conferencing has grown from 60 students regularly attending courses in 2011 to more than 800 in 2013 and expectations of more than 2,000 students next year.

NAVSAFENVTRACEN believes more DoD personnel will want to participate in virtual courses to better accommodate their already busy schedules. Live and recorded courses with Adobe Connect makes learning more convenient without sacrificing the learning experiences. At the same time, trainers can measure participation, and engage learners directly, helping to increase accountability for students learning the material.

The agency's ability to measure success with Adobe Connect for online learning has helped drive the decision to expand eLearning training programs and expand opportunities for more DoD personnel to attend training and the annual safety conference virtually.

For more information  
[www.adobe.com/products/connect](http://www.adobe.com/products/connect)



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