Hybrid Meetings

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Context

• The past years probably do not need an introduction (C-word)
• Clear need for a mixture of face-to-face meetings with virtual meetings
  • Sounds easier than it is to organise!
• Disclaimer:
  • I am not a specialist; just someone that ended up in a mix of hybrid meetings with a desire to get these to a higher level
  • This presentation is not a course on how to organize hybrid meetings, rather an invitation to exchange experiences and thoughts
  • Work in progress
Concrete cases identified

- Small-scale hybrid meetings (eg this one)
  - All participants around a table
  - Sometimes up to 40 participants
- Full conference (eg the upcoming CLARIN annual meeting)
  - Typical stage + audience setting
  - Up to some hundreds of participants
- First focus: small-scale meetings
Wishlist, in the ideal world

• A setup that is:
  • Intuitive to use
  • Portable
  • Inclusive for the remote participants
    • Easy to follow what is happening
    • Easy to interact with the on-site participants
  • Dependable
  • Extendable (eg for large rooms, or unusual room shapes)
  • Cheap
• Dream scenario: name tag with e-Ink and a wireless mic built in for each participant
  • For a start-up, someone?
What did *not* work

- Just bringing a laptop
  - Microphone does not capture all speakers
- Bringing two (or more) laptops
  - Multiple mics > echoes for the remote participants
- Basic speakerphones such as the Sennheiser SP20
  - Microphone not sensitive enough
- A webcam at a different location than the main presentation screen or presenter
  - Lack of “eye contact” towards the remote participants
What *did* work

- Using a single, dedicated laptop to mix all incoming microphone streams with a software mixer
- Using one or more **boundary microphones**, e.g.
  - Samson UB1 (omnidirectional = 360 degrees)
  - MXL AC-404 (directed for 180 degrees)
- Using a **lavalier mic** for individual speakers (e.g. meeting chair or presenter)
- A simple USB-based bus to connect all microphones and a USB speaker if needed
  - With extension cords
  - Works well for mics (not requiring too much power)
What *did* work
Further investigation

• Webcam setups
• Daisy chain microphones
• All-in-one devices, eg
  • Meeting Owl Pro (OEAW and HuC have one)
Thank you for your attention!

Do you have input or ideas? Want to access all links?

See the Hybrid meeting scratchpad