

Tips for Hosting an Off-Camera Watch Party for a Global Webchat

Why host a viewing group or watch party for a webchat?

It's a great way to bring people together to network and foster dialogue on a topic. We always encourage posts to **hold a side-event** — a planned discussion before/after the virtual program, maybe with a local speaker on the ground or some other activity. This not only provides you with a "Plan B" in case the internet or electricity is disrupted, but also reinforces discussion of the topic and networking.

Before the Webchat — Tech Requirements

- > **Test your connection and set-up early** - well before the day of the program. Simulate everything exactly as it will be for the day of the livestream — use the same room, internet port (always use a wired Ethernet connection if possible) and equipment.
 - > Test your internet connection by going to a video on Youtube or Ustream.com (for example <http://www.ustream.tv/nasahdtv>). If you can hear and see the livestream there OK, you should not have a problem participating in the webchat. You should have at least **1.5 Mbps** of upload/download speed, but for a smoother video feed we recommend **5 Mbps** upload/download. Go to speedtest.net to test your speed.
 - > Make sure your browser and Adobe Flash are up to date before the day of the program. **Do not use Internet Explorer or an OpenNet connection.**
 - > Try to test the **same day of the week and time of day** as the program will take place on, as well. If there are other people who will be using the same internet network during the livestream, outside of your viewing group, try to restrict their internet usage if you notice their usage negatively affects your connection.
 - > You don't need special equipment: A **computer, large monitor or projector, and speakers** are the basic equipment required.

Before the Webchat — Marketing: interactive.america.gov

- Most large-scale webchats have a **social media toolkit**. Go to interactive.america.gov to download or email iipinteractive@state.gov to ask for one.

The image shows a screenshot of a Twitter thread. The top tweet is from GIST Network (@GISTNetwork) dated Oct 17. The text of the tweet says: "Trying to learn more about your customers? The best thing to do is conduct customer interviews. #GISTTechConnect bit.ly/2oEAfNC". Below the text is a promotional banner for a GIST TechConnect event. The banner features the GIST logo and the title "GETTING YOUR NAME OUT THERE: BRANDING AND MARKETING FOR STARTUPS". It lists three experts: Ray Sanchez (Managing Partner and Co-Founder, Ghazlight Creative), Jane Sugiyama (Marketing Specialist, University of Michigan), and Steven Rodriguez (Startup Communities Manager, Global Entrepreneurship Network). The event is moderated by Steven Rodriguez and is scheduled for Tuesday, Oct 17, 2017, at 11:00 A.M. EDT (15:00 UTC). The bottom tweet is from U.S. Embassy Haiti (@USEmbassyHaiti) dated Oct 17, with the text: "Encouragez les commentaires, ils sont nécessaires pour les MobileApps & les investisseurs providentiels aident aussi #GISTTechConnect #Haiti".

The Day of the Webchat

- Start setting up early and make sure your watch party invitees are in place well before the webchat starts.
- If you are having tech issues the day of the program, please let IIP know in the chat space and someone from the IIP interactive team will message you with help.
- The video will have **captions**
- **Send a pic of your watch party**, before the program starts/during the first part of the program. We will try our best to show it during the livestream. You can use it to post on your social media accounts later, as well. *The marketing materials will tell you how to send your viewing group picture if this is an option.* If you do not know, write a message in the chat space and we will private message you the email address.

For webchats on Share America/other webpages:

- **The chat space and the video player will only appear the day before the webchat.**
- Log into the chat space on the program page as a watch party: Sign in as a “guest” — erase the generic “Guest1234” that appears when you click “guest” and name yourself something that identifies your location (like “IRCKampala” or “ASKarachi”).
 - You can **pop out the chat space** and make it bigger on the page, as well. Click on an icon on the lower right of the chat box that looks like a box with an arrow.
 - Introduce yourself in the chat space and let us know how many people are in your watch party.
 - You can designate a separate computer for the chat space, so individuals can come up and type in a question on behalf of the group, while the livestream is playing from a separate computer.
 - Alternatively, people in the watch party can use their mobile devices to ask questions (via the chat space on the program page or via the program Twitter hashtag).
- Use the **audio-only player** on the page below the video player if there is a major problem with your connection on the day of the program that cannot be resolved.

For webchats on Facebook pages:

- Ask questions via the program’s Facebook post’s comments section. Let us know what Facebook account your group will be asking questions from. If people in your group will ask questions using their own accounts on their mobile devices, have them write, “From American Center Karachi” (for example) before they ask a question.

After the Webchat

- Recordings will appear on the webchat page within a few days of the live

program. You can also email IIPInteractive@state.gov for a link to the recording.

- For Facebook Lives, the recording will appear almost immediately on the Facebook page.

Find Out About Upcoming Webchats

- Check out interactive.america.gov to see what programs are scheduled. Promotional materials are available for download.
- Look for announcements in your IIP regional office newsletter.
- All REPs will be notified of upcoming virtual programs.

Examples of viewing groups





