PUTTING YOUR BEST VIRTUAL FOOT FORWARD

Scott Hull
Goddard Photo Club
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Agenda

- Lighting
- Background
- Camera Angle
- Camera Settings
- Audio
- Teams Considerations

I won't name names, but I have seen all of these mistakes made within the last month.

Nobody expects perfection, but do your best

Lighting

- Think about where the light is coming from, relative to the camera lens; no backlighting!
  - Automatic gain control darkens the image
- Ideally, light your face, but not the background
- Things to avoid:
  - Ceiling lights behind you
  - A window behind you; in front of you works, though
  - Laptop screen; image brightness varies; turn it down
  - Reflections (glasses, for example)
  - Red face from warm white lamp bulb; replace with daylight
  - CHECK YOUR IMAGE BEFORE THE MEETING
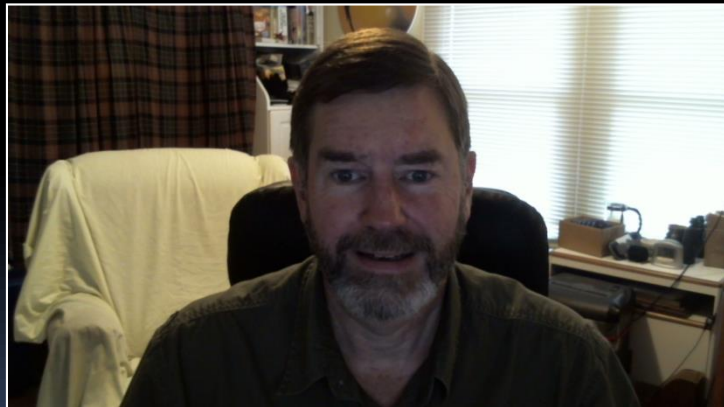
Lighting Examples

Best

Window behind me

Overhead Light

Warm White Bulb in the Lamp

Background

- <u>Natural</u> (the room you're in)
  - Minimize clutter and distractions
  - But beware the plain wall mug shot
  - Consider your clothing, hair, and skin colors
- <u>Artificial</u> (substituted or modified)
  - Teams has a nice blur effect built-in
  - Substitute backgrounds
    - Many available (offices, beaches, mountains, cartoons, etc.)
    - You need to be well-lit, and background needs to be dim
    - If contrast is poor, parts of you <u>will</u> become transparent
    - If you sit too far from the camera, you will disappear
  - <u>CHECK YOUR IMAGE BEFORE THE MEETING</u>

Background Examples

- Curtain stretched over the shelves reduces distractions
- Next step, clean off the shelf to the right…

Teams Background Effects

More Background Examples
(Different camera, different lighting,
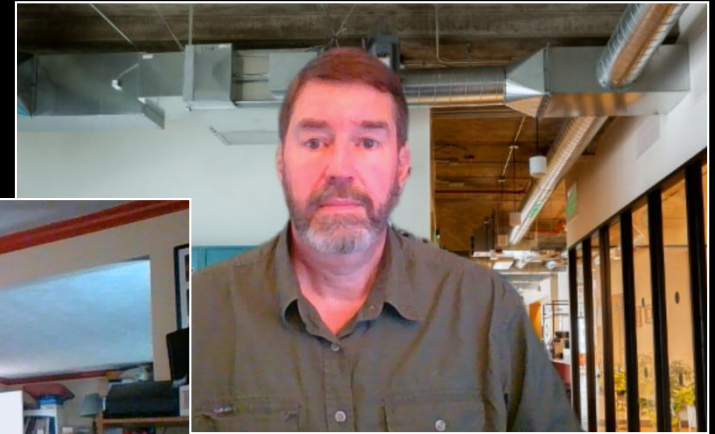
Camera Angle

- Avoid the dreaded up-nose shot
  - Elevate your camera/laptop to prevent this
- Try to fill most of the frame with your face and shoulders
  - Move back and forth to change size
  - Leave no more than about 20% above your head
  - But don't get <u>too</u> close, either
- Look at the camera
  - Move Teams window right under the camera

<u>CHECK YOUR IMAGE BEFORE THE MEETING</u>

Camera Angle Examples

Come closer   but not THAT close!

Camera Settings

- Most camera settings are controlled by the manufacturer's software
    - Not the same as Windows' Camera tool
    - Some built-in cameras have only a few options
- Can usually control the typical image settings: brightness, contrast, color temp, saturation
- May be able to select the resolution
    - Higher resolution looks better, but uses more bandwidth
- Look for a mirror control
    - Reverses the image, but mirrors your movements
    - Try it both ways, and see what works for you

CHECK YOUR IMAGE BEFORE THE MEETING

Mirrored Image Examples

"Normal" view

Text is correct, but my right hand is on the left side. Motions are reversed.

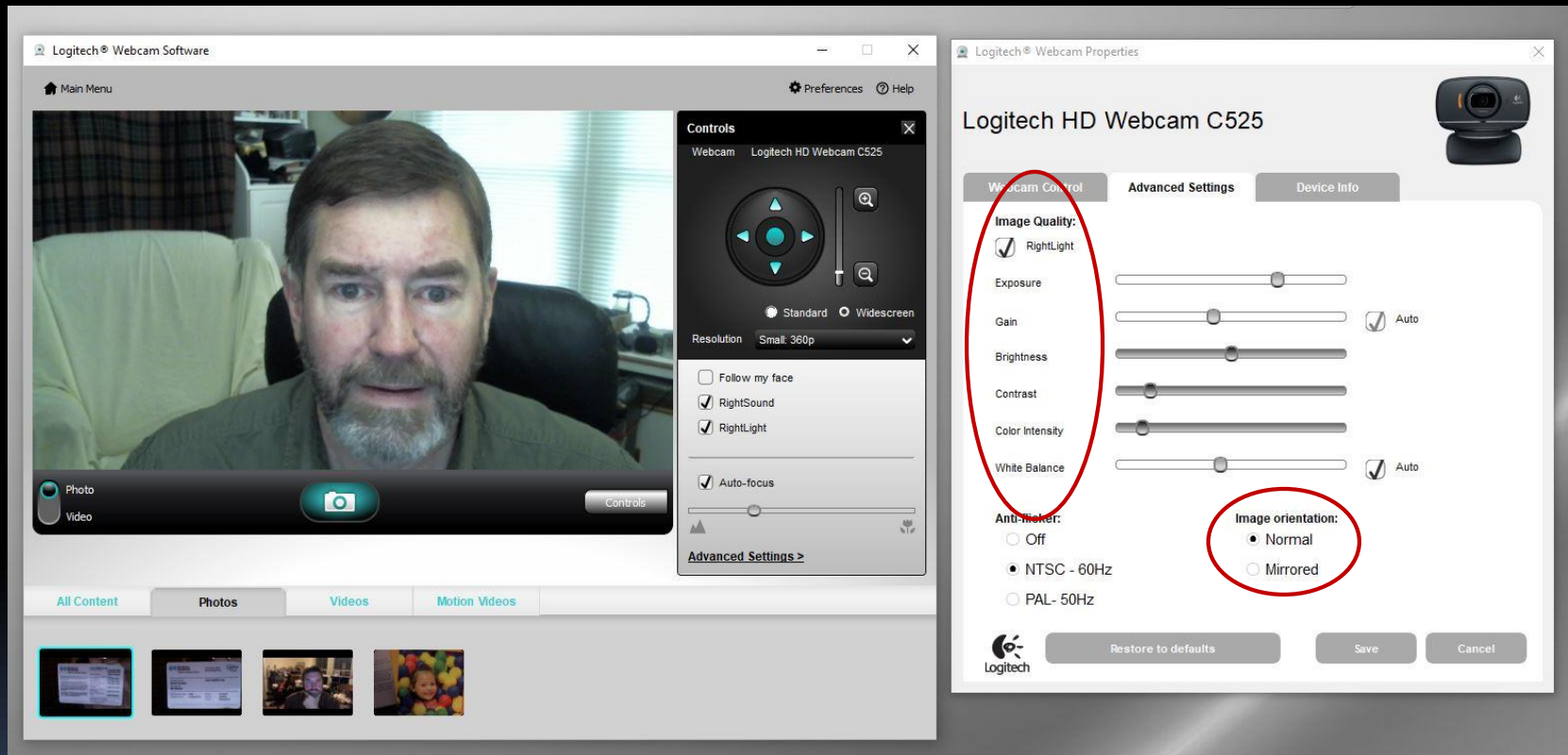How everybody else sees me

"Mirrored" view

Movements are on the correct side, but text is backward

How I see myself in the mirror

Camera Setting Example

Audio

- Laptop speakers and mic can cause an echo
- Room may cause an echo
- Keyboard clicks and ruffling papers are distracting
- Headphones with a mic are ugly but effective
  - Ear buds are less visible
- Volume for both speakers and mic are usually adjustable, and you can usually test them
  ## TEST THEM BEFORE THE MEETING

Teams Features
(may also apply to other online conference tools like Zoom)

- Select your camera, speakers, and microphone
    - Make sure the software hasn't forgotten
- Teams automatically adjusts the aspect ratio and placement as more people join the meeting by digitally zooming
    - There is a built-in 'feature' that automatically follows you, and centers the person in their window
      Is this creepy?
- You may need to exit the VPN for better connection

Online Meeting Etiquette

- Normal meeting etiquette still applies, even from home
- In general, mute your audio when you're not talking, to reduce distractions
- Consider stopping your video when you're not presenting
  - Not usually an issue for small meetings
  - Video helps with lip-reading if the audio is not great quality
- Let your family know you are in a meeting to prevent interruptions

24 Parting Examples
Some good, some wickedly bad