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## **A Review of a Web-Conferencing Technology: GoTo Meeting**

Brian E. Perron

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Chapter 12 continues the discussion on the emotional toll violence takes on professionals due to the stressful nature of the work. Hoff acknowledges that many of those in helping professions have personal histories of violence and that the ramifications of the lived experiences may not be fully resolved. Hoff compares the secondary trauma experienced by professionals to that felt by police officers who witness horrific acts of violence. Examples of vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue are provided through the varied lenses of a family therapist, a professor of nursing, a humanitarian aid worker, and an immigrant student from a poor country. Hoff advocates for professional self-care and offers strategies for busy providers who might not have the time to engage in self-care activities.

As a bonus, the book provides a companion Web site in which readers interested in providing programs of study on violence can find specific directions on curriculum development as well as other resources such as course syllabus samples and

additional references. In various places throughout the book, the reader will find symbols indicating where the hard copy of the book is enhanced by the companion Web site. For example, the book provides a terse description of the authors that is greatly enhanced on the companion Web site, which provides readers with information on Hoff's research expertise and some of her selected publications.

The book gives an ample and all-inclusive description of violence throughout cultures giving students and beginning practitioners an overview of why violence education and prevention are vital to changing the tide of hostility and aggression in society. The author intended the text as a way to "assist a total curriculum and health system response to the issue." As such, social workers who might come into contact with either the victims of or perpetrators of violence will find this book educational as it covers the issue from a national to an international perspective.

A Review of a Web-Conferencing  
Technology: GoTo Meeting

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Many social work researchers are engaged in projects where their collaborators are at other universities and, many times, in other countries. The Internet has been an important tool for reducing geographic barriers in collaborations, with e-mail being one of the most heavily used information and communication technologies (ICTs). Social work researchers can benefit by remaining current with the rapid and continual growth of ICTs, as they can be important tools for facilitating collaborations. This review focuses on a Webconferencing system called GoToMeeting ([www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com)).

### What Is it?

Webconferencing is a system that allows people to meet and collaborate online. GoToMeeting is a Webconferencing service provider that offers different types of subscriptions and support for Webconferencing.

### How Does It Work?

An individual or organization purchases a Webconferencing subscription. The holder of the subscription is the Webconferencing organizer and can invite other people to join a scheduled conference, up to a specified number depending on the subscription. The organizer schedules the conference online, and GoToMeeting automatically creates a meeting invitation that

can be e-mailed to other participants. At the time of the meeting, participants click the provided link and enter the log in information contained in the invitation. Participants can participate the meeting using a computer microphone and headphones or by telephone.

In addition to working like a conference call, GoToMeeting allows *desktop sharing*. That is, the Webconferencing system allows the meeting organizer to show her or his computer screen to all other conference participants in real time. This allows the opportunity to display and discuss almost any type of information that is shared in a face-to-face meeting, such as slides for a presentation, text documents, software demonstrations, and statistical output. The organizer can give permission for other conference participants to share their desktop as well. A suite of other tools are also provided to enhance the conferencing process, such as chat boxes, tools for marking up document, and recording options.

### Who Is Using it?

This system shows potential utility for anybody involved in meetings that involves travel by any number of participants. At the University of Michigan (UM) School of Social Work, it is a standard tool for many research projects that include local, national, and international research collaborations. In some research project, key informant interviews may be conducted effectively using this technology instead of using only a telephone interview format. It has served as a teaching tool to engage students in small group projects, as well as providing opportunities to hold workshops online, particularly those that involve software demonstrations. The Office of Student Services also uses it as a cost-effective and efficient way of reaching out and orienting students to the School of Social Work.

## What Skills and Knowledge are Needed to Use This Technology?

No special skills or knowledge are required for this use of technology. Persons using it should know how to use e-mail, manage their windows on their desktop, and be able to make basic adjustments to hardware, such as microphone volume. Meeting participants and organizers will learn that communicating in a Webconference is different than a face-to-face meeting, given the absence of non-verbal language. This is not necessarily a challenge with GoToMeeting but the use of this type of technology in general. We have had excellent technical support from GoToMeeting representatives when we have encountered challenges with the software.

## What are the Technology Requirements?

GoToMeeting can be used with either a PC or Macintosh computer. Participants need high-speed Internet, an update to date Web browser and operating system, and Java. Specifics on computer requirements are provided on the GoToMeeting Web site.

## Why Is It Significant?

GoToMeeting can be a tool for increasing efficiency of various research processes. In fact, it has the potential to replace any meeting that does not require participants to be in the same room for discussion. For example, a statistical software demonstration can be easily done using this computer system.

## What are the Downsides?

In our experience, the GoToMeeting system has been stable, but some participants are temporarily dropped from the conference because of a poor Internet connection or a problem with their own computer system. Participants who are less familiar with managing their own computer settings (e.g., adjusting

volume or navigating their own computer desktop) have encountered problems with this system, although proficiency rapidly improved with additional instruction. When holding large conferences with multiple people presenting, it has been necessary to hold practice sessions to ensure everybody is familiar and comfortable with the technology. Additionally, there can be problems with people violating social norms of meetings because their behaviors are not observable—that is, participants can be actively engaged in other activities and not focusing on the meeting tasks.

GoToMeeting is a subscription-based service that may not be affordable to all persons or organizations. Thus, it is important to consider all the potential costs and savings before purchasing a subscription. Finally, as experienced with the adoption of most technologies, some people may not feel comfortable have exhibited resistance with change in processes. However, in our experience, when this technology is appropriately matched to a given project or initiative, the response to its use has been excellent.

## What are the Implications for Social Work Research?

Using the application effectively and matching it to needs of a project, GoToMeeting, and other Webconferencing tools, can be an important tool for improving research collaborations, reducing costs (e.g., travel), and saving time. It has the potential for supporting current research initiatives as well as enhancing a research infrastructure to support new initiatives that have been challenged by geographic barriers.

## Pricing Information

Pricing plan varies on subscription payment plan (i.e., monthly vs. annual) and number of attendees supported. Refer to [www.gotomeeting.com](http://www.gotomeeting.com) for current details.

K. van Wormer

*Working With Female Offenders: A Gender-Sensitive Approach*  
Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 2010. 298 pp. \$50.00 (paperback).  
ISBN 978-0-470-58153-7

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DOI: 10.1177/1049731510384273

In her book, *Working with female offenders: A gender-sensitive approach*, Katherine van Wormer has compiled relevant information for clinicians and staff working with this population that is long overdue. For a field in which there has been little high-quality research on interventions, this book provides a lens through which to view this population, a framework for

approaching social work practice, and direction for researchers interested in developing evidence-based practice.

Divided into four sections and seven chapters, this book addresses the victimization, criminalization, and institutionalization of women. The author introduces us to the distinctive needs of incarcerated females living within a system designed for men. She defines the concept of a gender-sensitive approach, describes typical female crime trajectories, discusses challenges of working within the male-oriented institution of corrections, and finally addresses specific skills on which to focus and approaches to working with this population.

The book begins with a preface that provides an accurate description of the book's organization and a clearly articulated rationale for its purpose. This section is designed to provide the reader with a road map of what to expect in flow and content