Blackboard

How to Troubleshoot Audio Video Issues in a Collaborate with the Ultra experience Session

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Document Summary:

Summary

This article provides instructions on how to troubleshoot audio issues in a Collaborate with the Ultra experience session. Issues may range from no audio and/or video to garbled or poor audio.

Issues can be caused by using an older browser or having other applications open at the same time when trying to use a Collaborate Ultra session.

The following are some easy steps to have users try:

1. Try using a headset whenever possible (instead of using a built in laptop microphone for example). This helps prevent environmental noises from being picked up by the microphone.
2. At this time when using Chrome, Chrome uses the computer's default speakers. Check that the correct speakers are selected for your OS. Mac go to Apple > System Preferences > Sound. Windows go to Control Panel > Hardware and Sound > Sound or search for Sound and select Sound from the Control Panel in the search menu.
3. Make sure the proper audio device is being used by Ultra. Click on My Settings (your avatar) > Audio and Video Settings > Setup Your Camera and Microphone.
4. Make sure the microphone is located appropriately (for example under the nose will result in breathing being heard and too far away from the mouth will result in low audio and a possibility of environmental noise being included).
5. Make sure browsers are up to date. Current browsers have been tested against Ultra and can include fixes to known issues.
6. Try a different browser, for example if using Chrome, try Firefox.
7. Try clearing browser cache and restarting a session. Click here for instructions to clear browser cache
8. High CPU usage (aka your computer is working hard) can cause audio issues as well. Be sure only necessary programs are running on the computer before starting the session. If you don't need email, YouTube, Word, etc… open for the session, then close it!
9. Sometimes a good old fashion computer restart can solve an issue.

If these steps have been taken and there are still issues, it might be time to evaluate your network. The following steps are for home users. Users connecting from a school or work network should contact their IT department and refer them to the Ultra Networking and Firewall article: Click here to go to the Ultra Networking and Firewall article

A poor network connection can be more than just a slow download speed. Sometimes a really fast connection can still suffer from latency, out of order packets, and packet loss. Meaning that data being received and transmitted on a computer can suffer from a temporary time delay (latency), data that is out of order and therefore not in the order expected by Web Conferencing/Ultra which results in a garbled sounding speech, and data that is completely lost just won't be heard!

Web Conferencing and Ultra as applications are unique in that they are constantly sending and receiving data while a session is taking place and because they are constantly sending and receiving data they are more sensitive to general network conditions than a generic webpage download.

While there are cases where a user might need to contact their ISP for assistance, there are several tips that can be tried at home first to see if the experience improves.

1. If at all possible try using a hardwired ethernet connection to the router.
2. If you must use wifi, be sure you are as close to the router as possible.
3. If using wifi, is the router appropriately placed? For example, in the center of the room, away from other electronics, windows, microwaves, is it high enough? [Click here for more tips on how to place a router to be effective.](#)
4. Try restarting the modem/router.

Tips to conserve existing bandwidth:

1. Shut down all unnecessary programs, especially those that use the internet: email, IM clients, video feeds (Youtube), other conferencing options (Skype), etc…
2. Be sure no one else in the house is using the internet if at all possible. For example, be sure nobody is watching Netflix while you are trying to take your online course!
3. If you are having some issues hearing and don't need to share your web camera feed, turn it off.