LEANWI

Remote Work Support and Recommendations
For LEAN WI Partners and Member Libraries

March 21, 2020

Remote Work Services

System-Managed Remote Desktop Access

Remote desktop access is the easiest and most secure mechanism we can deploy and support at scale for member libraries. LEAN WI is deploying the Splashtop Remote Desktop tool for member libraries. This enables us to support connectivity to a library-owned staff computer from most remote computers including those personally owned by library employees.

Contact your Library System's helpdesk to schedule implementation.

Dial-in Capable Web Conferencing

While the LEAN WI partners work explore several centrally manageable platforms, we recognize that many libraries need to start utilizing web meeting services ASAP. There are several great web conferencing services available and several have expanded their free tiers of service which make them more meaningful and useful to public libraries. While we may not be able to provide direct, long-term support for these products, the following are some of the more prominent services LEAN WI partners have had the opportunity to test and we'll help as we can with support for the 1st option:

- **Free Conference Call (recommended , positive limited testing)**
  https://www.freeconferencecall.com/features

  Free Conference Call (FCC) sounded too good to be true, and we almost passed it by. However, the business model does make sense, and once you sign up you'll find a slate of value-added options including a static call-in phone number for $4.00/mo. Tests so far have proven very positive.

- **UberConference** (**positive moderate testing**)
  https://www.uberconference.com/pricing

  We have direct experience with UberConference, using it for inter-system meetings with other collaborators. Its video conferencing aspect is new, but thus far tests seem reasonable. Its temporarily expanded free version is meaningful for use and it's one of the tools we're researching as a potential system-managed service.

- **Cisco WebEx**
  https://www.webex.com/pricing/index.html

  WebEx is a very popular and powerful web meeting platform used by small businesses and large enterprises alike. We haven't had the chance to test this one yet, but its general popularity and its updated free tier removes the 40 minute limit.

- **Skype** (**Mixed limited testing**)
  https://www.skype.com/en/

  Skype is tried and true. Now owned by Microsoft, Skype was the first real service to bring voice and video calling to the general public and has a mature feature set. Its rich features make it powerful, but it may be a bit overwhelming to figure out group/meeting connections and hosting from scratch, especially "guest accounts."

- **Zoom**
  https://zoom.us/pricing

  Zoom is another very popular platform and is the one most mentioned in general conversation over the past week. It's last on this list only because its free version seems to remain limited to 40-minute sessions for public libraries. They do have that restriction lifted for K12s but we have not had time to research deeper.

Real-time Communications Tools

LEAN WI partners use Slack Teams for real-time and as-available instant messaging, quick web content and file sharing, impromptu voice calls, and other aspects of communications:

- **Slack (recommended , positive significant testing)**
  https://slack.com/pricing

  Slack is a powerful real-time communications tool LEAN WI partners have significant experience with. While its business model makes a centrally managed solution infeasible, we can help with setup and usage support upon request.

Services in Development for Remote Work

Capital Procurement for Remote-relevant Equipment

The impetus for our current need seems like it came with the flip of a light-switch. However, many of the service needs and demands - suddenly very relevant - have been part of the forecast for LEAN WI service and budget planning for several years. Mobility of key parts of a workforce is not new territory, but a mass migration from in-office to remote-only or mostly remote almost overnight, is. As each member library director or admin team discovers their key remote-enabling capital challenges, LEAN WI partners will work with you to ensure the best possible chance of overcoming those challenges. Here is an outline of some of the things we can help with immediately:

- Laptop procurement assistance via delayed or distributed invoicing.
- Chromebook procurement for the majority of web-app based work, communications, and web/video conferencing.
- Virtual meeting enhancement peripherals like large screen displays, cameras, headsets, room audio equipment, etc.
- Mobile Hotspot device and services procurement.
- Other remote work enabling capital based on needs/demands feedback from the diversity of LEAN WI partner member libraries.

System-Managed Virtual Conferencing and Large-scale Webinars

LEAN WI has requested an expanded pool of BlueJeans Enterprise licensing available to BadgerNet customers as a benefit through TEACH. This centrally manageable licensing pool should enable us to quickly provision out and help directly support meeting host capabilities to member libraries.

While we await those licenses, we are experimenting more with UberConference Business. As it recently added in long-awaited video options, it is now a potentially viable centrally manageable low-cost option. UberConference is the service we have the most direct experience with as users, has the least complex host and guest meeting experience, and enables dialing out to guests who might otherwise incur long-distance charges.

We are also testing default and "add-on" expanded capabilities of [Microsoft Teams](#) (formerly Skype for Business plus a few other things). Teams is the most complex for backend support and standard user operations, but it represents a different business strategy than just web conferencing. Teams supports "Live Events" functionality allowing up to 10,000 participants and supports enterprise level integration with SIP trunk services which could make it a potential telephone service replacement solution that also has web conferencing capabilities. While Teams may not be the most meaningful web conferencing tool for immediate needs, it may prove viable for large-audience webinar-style presentation programming. Considering the potential for high-attendee count library virtual programming and looking at the long game, this product warrants additional research and testing.

Services Being Researched

Virtual Reference / Virtual Librarian Applications

To get in front of the possibility of a longer than hoped for period of remote work and service provisioning, we are looking into services like [Mosio](#) for Libraries which are designed to make a reference or service team accessible via multiple common channels: web chat, SMS, email, and sometimes phone.

Others as Needed

Each library and its personnel are experiencing this unprecedented time with us. Some challenges and respective solutions will be common and ubiquitous. Some will be unique, or at least experienced by some before others and we will rely on everyone's feedback to help shape our immediate and long-term futures. Please reach out to your library system consultants and representatives per usual, and as we hear of new use cases and issues, we'll work with you to study and resolve everything within our capabilities.