Personal Videoconferencing: Troubleshooting Audio Issues

This guide provides step by step instructions to overcome the most common audio problems that can occur during a videoconference. We’re here to help make sure your videoconferencing experience is a good one!

If you have a problem that does not match any of the conditions described below, or you have attempted the corrective action and the problem persists, please contact OTN Technical Support.

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For further assistance and technical support, contact OTN Technical Support:
Phone: 1-855-654-0888 (option 2)  Email: techsupport@otn.ca
Others Can’t Hear You

The Short Answer: There might be a problem with your microphone or the other caller’s speakers.

If there are multiple people on the call and none of them can hear you, then it is a problem with your microphone.

1. If you are using an external microphone, check that it is properly plugged into the correct socket on your computer.

2. Check that the Personal Videoconferencing software is using the correct microphone.
   i. Open your videoconferencing window’s Configuration panel ( ) and click the Devices tab (Figure 1).
   ii. If there is a microphone listed with ‘Recommended’ in parenthesis, select it.
   iii. To apply the changes and close the panel, click the Save button. Or to apply the changes and leave the panel open, click the Apply button.

3. In your videoconference window, use the Microphone control ( ) to:
   - Check that the microphone control is not muted ( ),
   - Increase the microphone volume (Figure 2).

If there is only one person that cannot hear you, then it could be a problem with their speakers.

Ask them to check their speakers by following the instructions in the next section, “You Can’t Hear Others” on page 3.
You Can’t Hear Others

The Short Answer: There might be a problem with your speakers or the other caller’s microphone.

If there are multiple people on the call and you are the only one who can’t hear, then it is a problem with your speakers.

1. If you are using external speakers, check that they are properly plugged into the correct socket on your computer.

2. Check that the Personal Videoconferencing software is using the correct speaker device.
   i. Open the videoconferencing window’s Configuration panel ( ) and click the Devices tab (Figure 3).
   ii. If there is a speaker listed with ‘Recommended’ in parenthesis, select this device.
   iii. To apply the changes and close the panel, click the Save button. Or to apply the changes and leave the panel open, click the Apply button.

3. In your videoconference window, use the Speaker control ( ) to:
   • Check that the speaker control is not muted ( ).
   • Increase the speaker volume (Figure 4).

4. Check that your computer’s main audio settings are not muted or turned to a low setting.

If there is only one person that you cannot hear, then it could be a problem with their microphone.

Ask them to check their microphone by following the instructions in the previous section of this guide, “Others Can’t Hear You” on page 2.
You Hear an Echo or Audio Feedback

The Short Answer: Echoing or audio feedback is usually caused when the sound from a caller’s speaker is ‘looping’ back into their microphone.

- If you hear your own voice echoing, the problem is on the other person’s side.
- If the other person hears their voice echoing, the problem is on your side.
- If an echo happens during a videoconference, stop and ask who hears it. The participant who does not hear the echo is the source.

1. Verify that everyone on the call is using a USB-based audio device which has either:
   - Built in echo-cancellation (e.g. Chat50 speaker phone); or
   - Physically separate microphone and speaker (e.g. USB Headset with microphone).

2. To test whether or not you are using a particular microphone:
   i. First activate the mute control on the device itself.
   ii. Then ask other participants if they can still hear you.
   iii. If they can still hear you, the software is using a different microphone.

3. Ensure everyone is using a ‘recommended’ speaker and microphone or has enabled the echo cancellation feature.
   i. To see the list of devices recognized by the videoconferencing application, open its Configuration panel ( ) and click the Devices tab.
   ii. If a device has built-in echo cancellation, ‘Recommended’ will appear beside the name. Select this device.
   iii. If there are no ‘Recommended’ devices listed, select the Echo Cancellation checkbox to enable the videoconferencing software feature.
   iv. To apply the changes and close the panel, click the Save button. Or to apply the changes and leave the panel open, click the Apply button.

4. To identify which participant is causing the echo:
   i. Ask all participants to mute their own microphone or as host, use the Global Meeting Controls toolbar to Mute All.
   ii. Have each user un-mute their microphone one at a time until you find who is causing the echo.

5. If the caller causing the echo does not have the recommended equipment, ask them to try:
   - Moving their microphone as far away as possible from their speakers.
   - Lowering their speaker volume.
## Poor Quality Sound

**The Short Answer:** There are a number of factors that can affect the sound quality in a videoconference. Review the symptoms below to find a matching solution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Suggested Solution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You hear background noise.</td>
<td>• Ask the person to move to a quieter location.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Ask the person to move closer to their microphone when they speak, and to mute when they are not speaking.</td>
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<td>• Use OTN recommended headsets, speakerphones, and webcams. Built-in equipment is more likely to pick up background noise.</td>
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<tr>
<td>You hear the sound at a very low volume.</td>
<td>• In your videoconference window, use the <strong>Speaker Volume</strong> control (סמיר) to increase the volume.</td>
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<td>• If it is a specific participant you can’t hear well, ask them to use the <strong>Microphone Volume</strong> control (מיקרופון) in their videoconference window to increase the volume.</td>
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<td>There are dropped or cut-off words.</td>
<td>• Your CPU may be intermittently working on other tasks.</td>
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<td>• To free-up your CPU, close all applications except those necessary for your videoconference. (For example, shut down Outlook which can use a lot of bandwidth and CPU if it is downloading large attachments.)</td>
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<td>• Your Internet connection may be poor or highly variable.</td>
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<td>• If you share a connection with others, another application or another computer streaming video or file downloading might be consuming bandwidth.</td>
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<td>• If you are connected via a wireless connection, you can improve the quality in most cases by moving to a wired connection.</td>
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<td>• To test the quality of your Internet connection, open a browser window and go to <a href="http://networktest.otn.ca">networktest.otn.ca</a>.</td>
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