

As you may know, Adobe will be upgrading their Connect servers to use version 8 of their software on 14 January, 2011. This is supposed to be a seamless upgrade, adding ease of use and functionality. This will not be a service-impacting event. Any meeting in session during the upgrade will not be upgraded until after the meeting ends. No settings will be changed, and all content will remain intact. The only thing you will need to do is install the new plugin from your internet browser when prompted to do so by the meeting room you are entering. You only need to do this once.

Adobe is boasting some new features, notably the pods being more user friendly and advanced. The meeting will have a new look and feel, yet still be familiar. They also claim full compatibility with Ubuntu Linux, which we know a lot of our community members currently use.

Here are some brief overview videos which will introduce you to the new software from the point-of-view of a

Host: <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-adobe-connect-8/adobe-connect-8-jumpstart-for-hosts/>

Presenter: <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-adobe-connect-8/adobe-connect-8-jumpstart-for-presenters/>

Participant: <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-adobe-connect-8/adobe-connect-8-jumpstart-for-participants/>

There are also brief overviews of new features like the:

Attendees Pod: <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-adobe-connect-8/using-the-attendees-pod-in-adobe-connect-8/>

Q&A Chat Pods: <http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-adobe-connect-8/using-the-qa-and-chat-pods-in-adobe-connect-8/>

This explains more details about the new features being introduced:

<http://goo.gl/PFsZP>

### **What's new in Adobe Connect 8?**

Adobe Connect 8 offers powerful new capabilities including a simpler and more intuitive user interface for improved usability, enhanced audio/video integration for richer participant experiences, a new optional desktop client for improved access, and a software development kit (SDK) for even greater solution extensibility. With these new features, Adobe Connect 8 makes your web meetings, online training, and webinars more efficient, more effective, and more engaging than ever.

### **Easier to use**

A primary focus of Adobe Connect 8 is usability. With a new simplified interface featuring enhanced layouts and better organized controls, accessibility functions, and one-click sharing, Adobe Connect is now more powerful and easier to use. New usability features include:

- **Simplified user experience.** Use Adobe Connect more intuitively. With the new user interface, you can easily discover all available functions and features through better organization and prominent display of the most important and frequently used controls and capabilities.
- **Enhanced audio and video controls.** Access audio and video controls centrally. Audio and video controls are prominently displayed and logically organized at the top of the meeting bar. All related capabilities are now centralized and easily accessible directly from each control.
- **Unified attendee management.** Access all participant management functions from the Attendee pod. Hosts can change participant roles using simple drag and drop and assign video, audio, or screen-sharing rights using mouse-over controls. Presenters can quickly get the vote count using the new status view and easily control breakout sessions using the new breakout view.
- **Optimized screen use.** Size your screen area for your optimum viewing. The meeting interface rescales intelligently to provide optimum viewing experiences for any screen size or resolution. Presenters can now size their own version of the presenter-only area individually without impacting the view of other presenters.
- **Improved accessibility.** Navigate the Connect 8 interface by completely via keyboard. Several hot keys are also supported for direct access to important functions and capabilities. Significant improvements in screen reader compatibility include JAWS and Win-Eyes support and accurate focus-location tracking by screen magnification software.

### **Better collaboration**

To collaborate effectively, dispersed teams need to be able to share ideas and communicate freely, as well as capture decisions and results. With Adobe Connect 8, collaboration capabilities are now more flexible and robust, enabling teams to drive better results. New collaboration features include:

- **Advanced chat.** Organize chat into separate tabs for public and private conversations and reduce errant chat messages. Participants can choose the color and text size of their chat messages. Hosts can control whether private chats are allowed in a meeting room.
- **Rich Notes pod.** Use rich formatting capabilities in the Notes pod, such as bold, italics, multiple colors, and bullets. The Notes pod also includes productivity and accessibility improvements like support for keyboard shortcuts. Hosts can save notes as an RTF file on their local drive and then e-mail them to multiple participants directly from the Notes pod interface.
- **Simplified Q&A pod.** Easily manage questions between multiple Presenters during meetings. Presenters now have their own view for managing and answering questions and can assign/reassign questions, see who is answering, or answer the question privately or publicly. Participants have a separate view to ask questions and see answers.

- **Enhanced Whiteboard.** Collaborate more effectively with enhanced Whiteboard tools. In addition to the standard shapes available, you can create custom shapes and add text to shapes with just a simple double click. The whiteboard can also be used in the overlay mode on top of a shared document to zoom and pan along with the document.

### Richer audio and video experiences

Adobe Connect 8 allows you to provide rich multimedia experiences to your participants with integrated audio and video conferencing. New features include:

- **Two-way Universal Voice.** Bridge the audio from any audio conferencing provider into an Adobe Connect room and provide two-way communication between VoIP and telephone audio to deliver richer experiences for all participants.
- **Video conferencing integration.** Leverage existing investments in video conferencing solutions by integrating your video telephony devices supporting SIP/H.264 with the Adobe Connect platform (for on-premise deployments only). With this new feature, meeting hosts now have the option of bringing a live audio/video broadcast stream directly into an Adobe Connect meeting room.

### Improved access and extensibility

Busy professionals working on multiple projects with global teams need the ability to track down key people, instantly collaborate, and come up with responses quickly to meet project milestones. The optional Adobe Connect Desktop client allows workers to do just that. Plus, new and enhanced plug-ins for Microsoft Outlook, Adobe CS5 and Microsoft Communication Server clients improve productivity, as does an enhanced collaboration SDK. Access and extensibility features include:

- **New optional desktop client.** Set up and manage meetings more easily with the new optional Adobe Connect Desktop AIR client. Invite participants to meetings right from their desktop. You can also instantly search for archived Adobe Connect sessions, and download and playback recordings offline.
- **New and enhanced plug-ins.** Use the Microsoft Outlook add-in to schedule meetings from your Microsoft Outlook Contacts based on their Exchange Free/Busy time. Using Microsoft Office Communicator, you can see when contacts are online and available, then invite them to meet using their existing IM client, or via the Adobe Connect Desktop Air client.
- **Enhanced collaboration SDK.** Write to more than 100 Adobe Connect APIs to customize the user interface, extend security features, or add virtually any functionality to Adobe Connect you desire. The new SDK also supports Adobe Flex, Adobe Flash, and Adobe ActionScript 3 for richer, more dynamic interactions and even more engaging online collaboration.

### Increased security and enterprise support

Adobe Connect 8 is web conferencing for the enterprise. With strengthened security capabilities and improved support for virtualization and meeting resiliency, Adobe Connect is even more suited for enterprise deployments. New features include:

- **Passcode-protected meeting rooms.** Set and manage passcodes over some or all meeting rooms to better manage participants and control meeting access. Hosts can set and reset passcodes, which participants are required to enter upon login, protecting sensitive information.
- **Session management.** Manage meeting session length for strengthened security and finer-grained control of user sessions. Allow users to hold sessions for as long as necessary, while ensuring that idle sessions time out, reducing the risk of unwanted meeting access.
- **Thin-client support.** Provide rich-media collaboration in virtualized environments with support for Citrix XenApp 6. Improved delivery and performance of Adobe Connect 8 on Citrix XenApp 6 enables organizations to deploy rich, engaging web conferencing software throughout the enterprise while enjoying the lower TCO and increased agility of thin-client virtualization.
- **Ubuntu 10 Add-in.** Experience full-featured meeting host capabilities with a new add-in for Linux Ubuntu users. Now Linux users have the same capabilities Windows and Mac users do when hosting meetings.