Distributed Agile in the Enterprise and Virtual Spaces

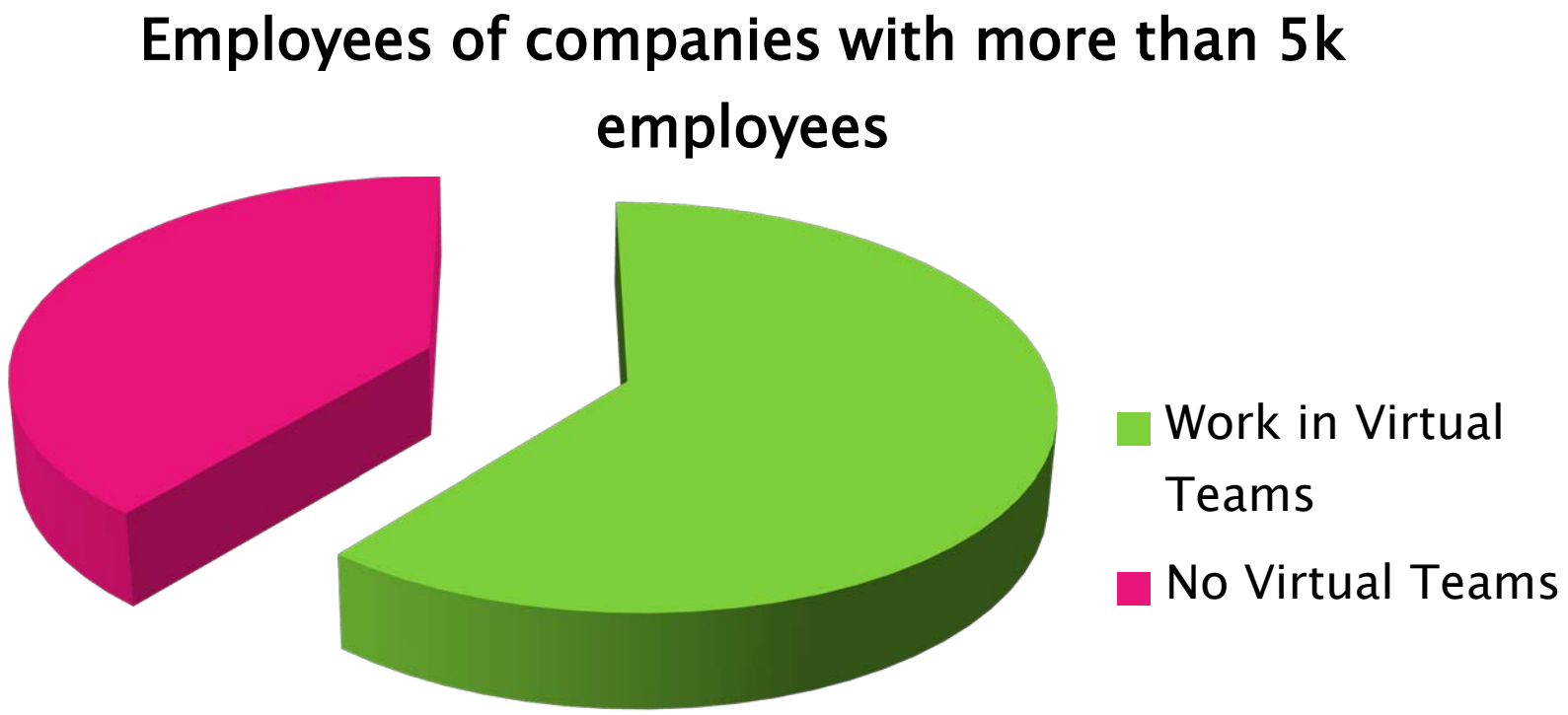
Melinda Stelzer and Bill Opsal

Examples of Team Distribution

Agenda

- Enhancing collaboration in distributed teams
- Partial collocation and its pitfalls
- Pushing team performance a step beyond
- The biggest pain point for distributed teams

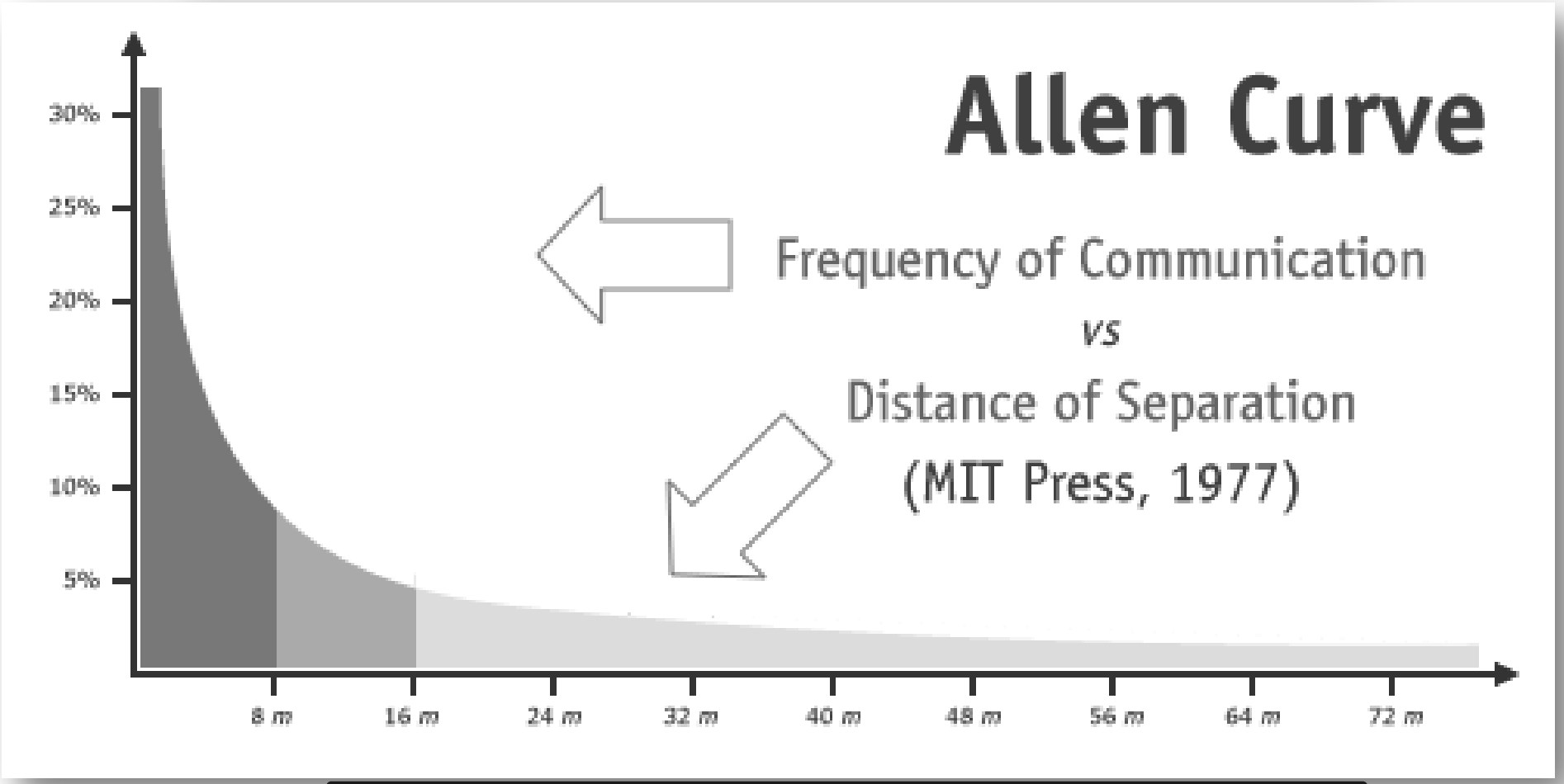
Who's working with virtual teams



Martins, Gilson and Maynard, 2004

Collaboration in distributed teams

Collaboration in distributed teams



Thomas J Allen, *Managing the Flow of Technology*

Exercise (part 1)

- Stand up
- Find someone in the room you have never met
- Walk over to that person (do not speak)
- Introduce yourselves to each other and converse for 2 minutes

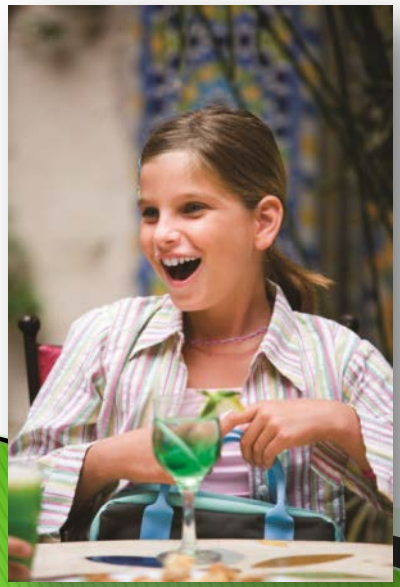
Exercise (part 2)

- Guess what…
- Find someone else in the room you have never met
- Walk over to that person (do not speak)
- Put on a blindfold
- Introduce yourselves to each other and converse for 2 minutes

What did you notice?

Rapport

- “A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.”*



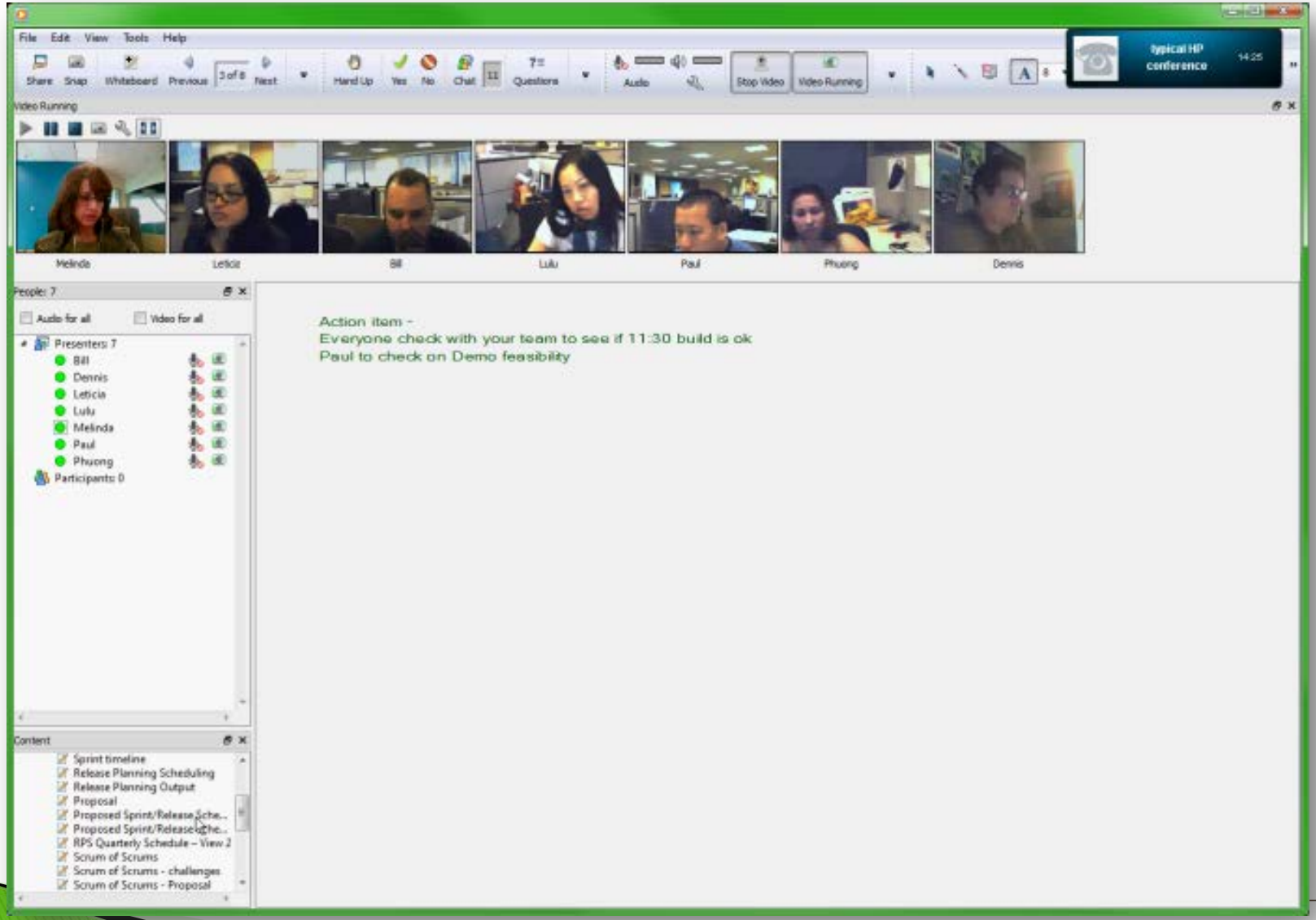
*Oxford Pocket Dictionary of Current English

The 5 Dysfunctions of a Team

Patrick Lencioni, **The Five Dysfunctions of a team**

“When trust goes up, speed goes up and cost goes down”

– Stephen M. R. Covey, Author of **The Speed of Trust**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Share Snap Whiteboard Previous 3 of 8 Next
Hand Up Yes No Chat Questions
Audio
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typical HP conference
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Melinda
Leticia
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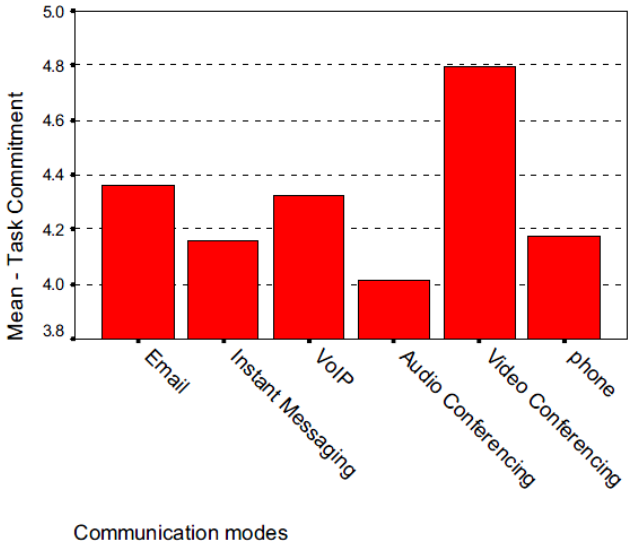
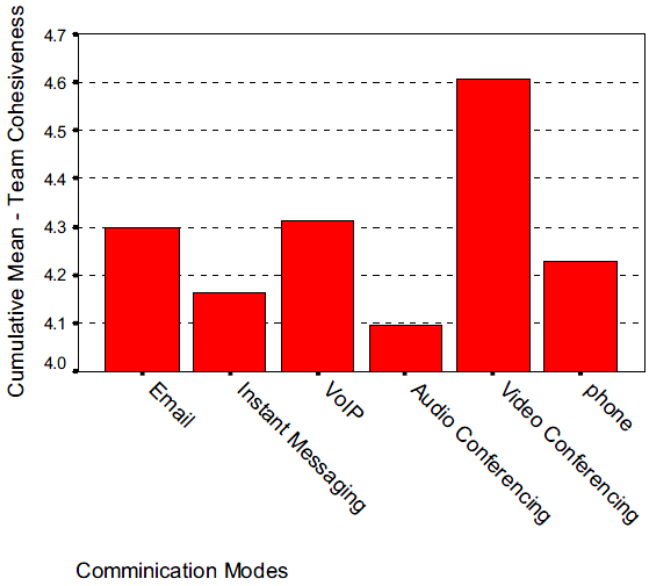
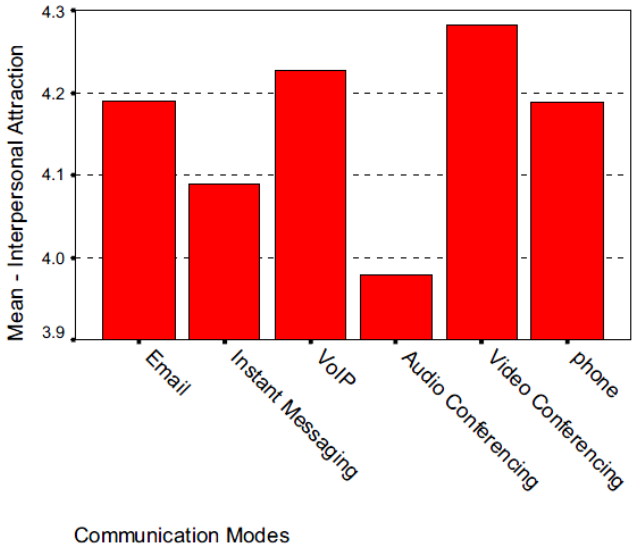
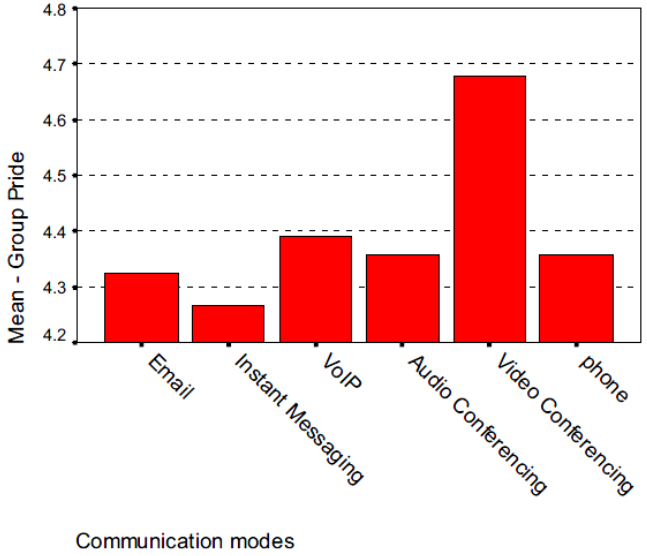
People: 7
Audio for all
Video for all
Presenters: 7
Bill
Dennis
Leticia
Lulu
Melinda
Paul
Phuong
Participants: 0
Content
Sprint timeline
Release Planning Scheduling
Release Planning Output
Proposal
Proposed Sprint/Release Sche...
Proposed Sprint/Release Sche...
RPS Quarterly Schedule – View 2
Scrum of Scrums
Scrum of Scrums - challenges
Scrum of Scrums - Proposal
Action item -
Everyone check with your team to see if 11:30 build is ok
Paul to check on Demo feasibility









Ehsan, Mirza and Ahmad, 2008

Pitfalls of partial collocation

Photo by Jeremy G. Thomas

Participatory Culture

1. Relatively low barriers for engagement
2. Strong support for sharing creations with others
3. Informal mentorship
4. Members believe their contributions matter
5. Care about others' opinions of self & work

"Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute when ready and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued."

Henry Jenkins

Level the playing field

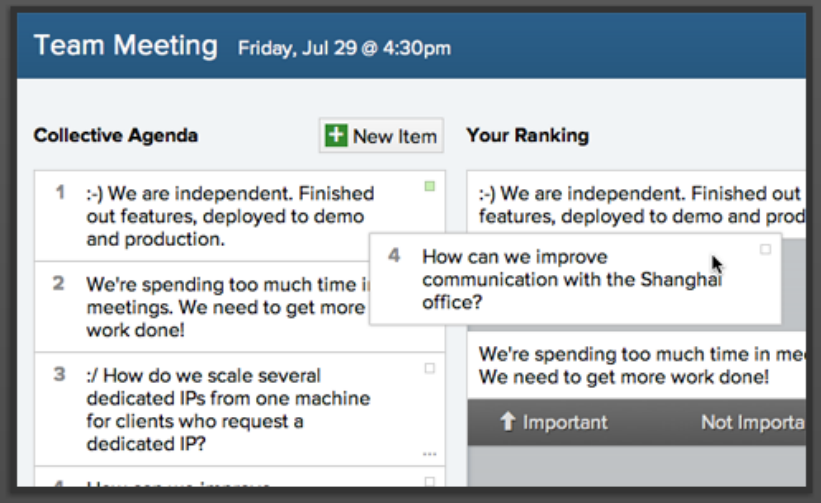
Sign In

ACTION ITEMS

An app for effective meetings.

Enter the date and time of your next meeting

07/20/2012 5:30pm Schedule It!



Keep meetings relevant and focused

Vote on your agenda as a team, then discuss the important stuff first. Track your pace as you go.

Promote action and accountability

Assign action items, then review them at the next meeting.

Keep everything in one place

Access comments from past meetings. Use labels to keep things organized.

Technology Stewardship for Distributed Teams, John David Smith
Distributed Team Collaboration in Organizations: Emerging Tools and Practices, Chapter 10

Photo by Chirstopher Augapfel

Going a step beyond

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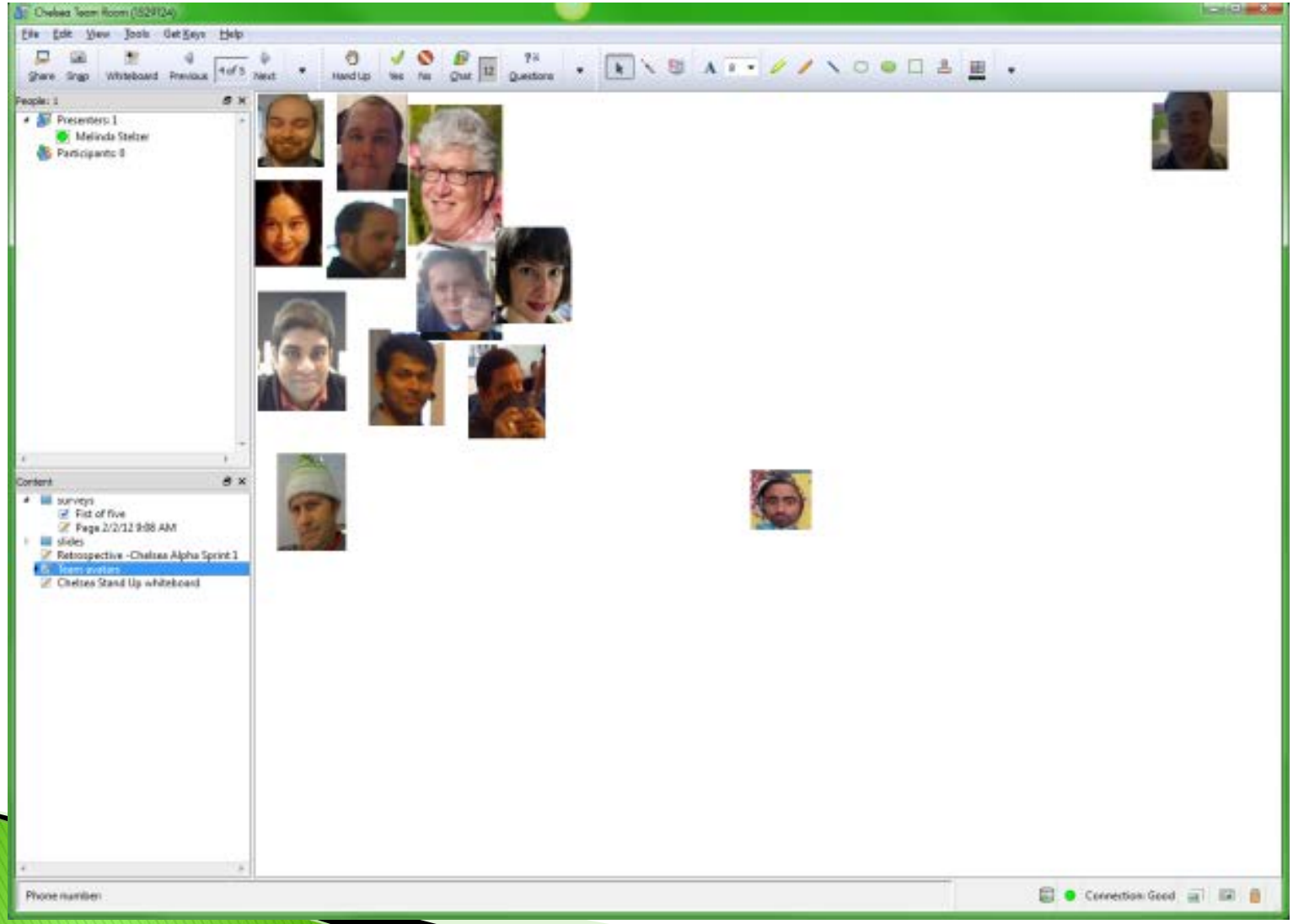
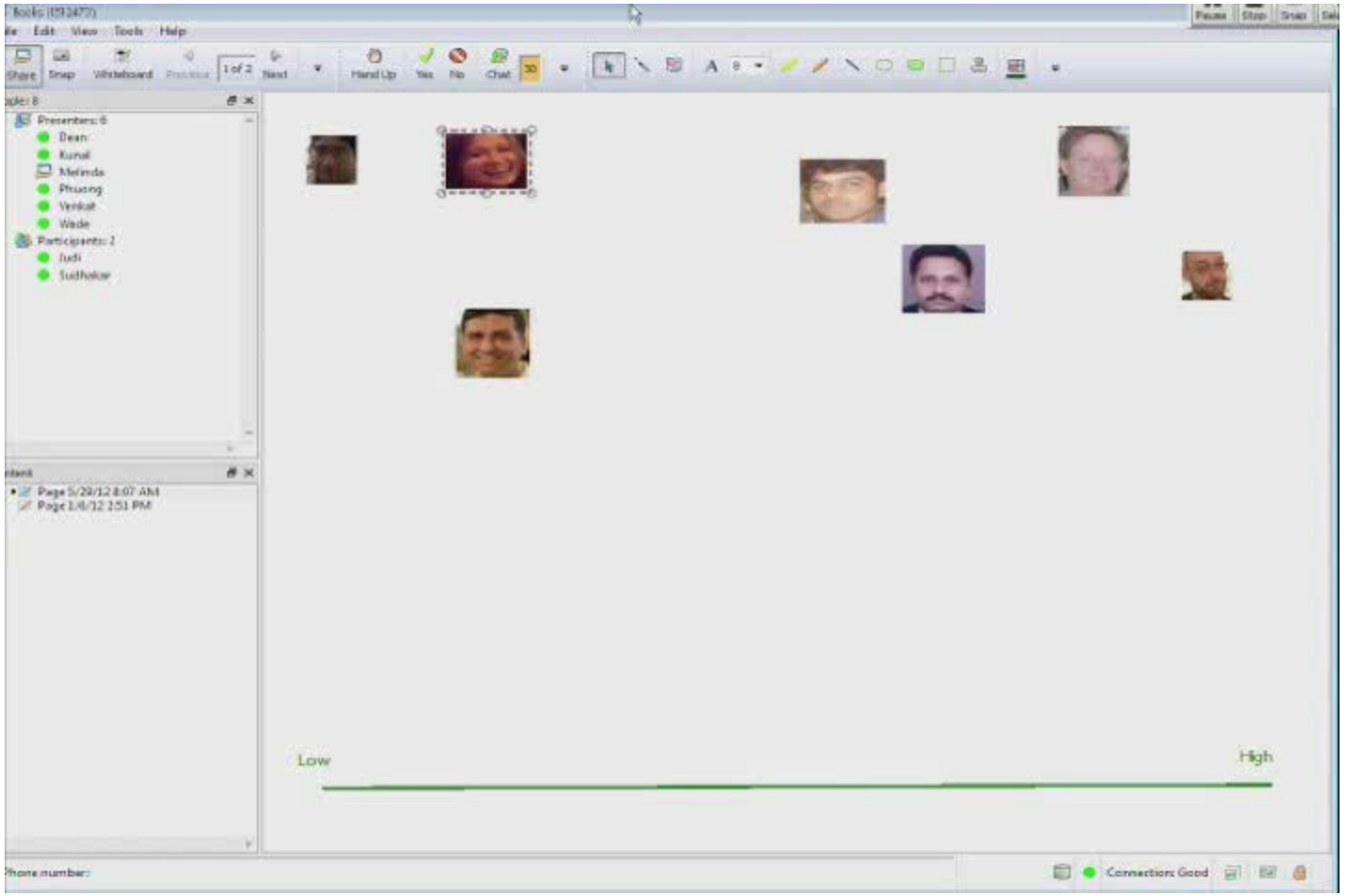
Beyond the basics

Geography games

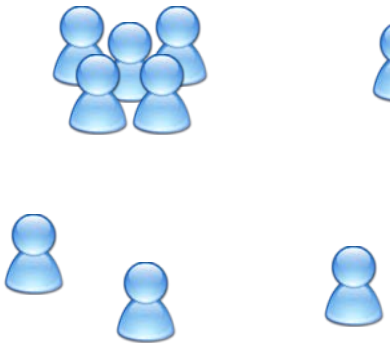
Geography games in virtual environments



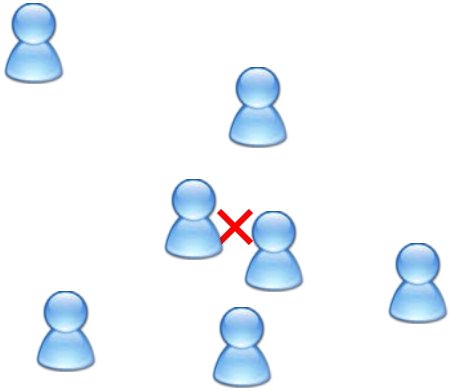
Geography game in virtual room



More possibilities

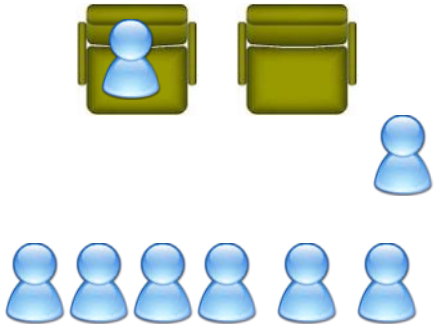


Tribes



Constellations

Continuum



Fish bowl

Six thinking hats

The biggest pain point for distributed teams

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Spectrum of Distribution

Collocated

Collocated Part Time

Distributed with Overlapping Work Hours

Distributed with No Overlapping Work Hours

"The goal in structuring teams should be to minimize pain according to levels of distribution."

Woodward, Surdek and Ganis,
A Practical Guide to Distributed Scrum

Best approach: Eliminate or minimize large time zone differences

Summary

Summary

- Collaboration is harder with virtual teams
  - Without face to face contact, rapport is harder to establish and maintain
  - Use Video
- Participation gets stifled by unequal access
  - Level the playing field
  - Be considerate to remote team members
- Team building can be done remotely through shared virtual spaces
  - Get creative!
- Large timezone differences are painful!
  - There is no silver bullet
  - Look for ways to collocate as much as possible

Distributed Hyper productivity

- Jeff Sutherland and Xebia achieved hyper productivity with distributed teams
  - XP
  - Half in Utrecht, half in Gurgaon, India
    - time difference: 3.5 hours)
  - Fully collocated initially (5 sprints)
  - Video meetings (Skype)
    - Daily stand-up (15 min)
    - Scrum of Scrums
    - Sprint planning (4 hours)
    - Retrospectives (2 hours)
  - Regular travel
  - Digital burn-down
  - Always-open Skype connection
  - Wiki
  - Computerized whiteboard (Smart board)
  - Shared code repository and build system
  - Project newsletter each sprint

- Fully Distributed Scrum: The Secret Sauce for Hyperproductive Offshored Development Teams, Sutherland et al, Agile 2008.

Photo of Utrecht by Chris Sobczak

INFORMATION
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