

Technical Disclosure Commons

Defensive Publications Series

July 2021

Mechanism to Enable Participants to End Virtual Meetings Early

Daniel Keyzers

Follow this and additional works at: https://www.tdcommons.org/dpubs_series

Recommended Citation

Keyzers, Daniel, "Mechanism to Enable Participants to End Virtual Meetings Early", Technical Disclosure Commons, (July 07, 2021)

https://www.tdcommons.org/dpubs_series/4429



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Technical Disclosure Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Defensive Publications Series by an authorized administrator of Technical Disclosure Commons.

Mechanism to Enable Participants to End Virtual Meetings Early

ABSTRACT

Virtual meetings sometimes stretch to the time initially allocated to them even though many or all participants would prefer to end the meeting early. However, due to social convention, no participant may be in a position to indicate that they would prefer to end the meeting earlier than scheduled. This disclosure describes a mechanism that can be included in virtual meeting software that enables meeting participants to indicate, during an ongoing meeting, that they would prefer to end the meeting early, e.g., any time starting from the provision of the indication. Upon receipt of such indications from a threshold number of participants, the meeting can be terminated automatically, or participants may be provided a message that they may leave the meeting.

KEYWORDS

- Virtual meeting
- Online meeting
- Video conferencing
- Meeting schedule
- Long meeting

BACKGROUND

People spend a lot of time in virtual meetings, both in work-related settings as well as outside of work. Often, virtual meetings may extend to the time initially allocated to them even though many or all participants would prefer to end the meeting early. This is wasteful of participant's time as well as computational resources. However, due to social convention, no

participant may be in a position to indicate that they would prefer to end the meeting earlier than scheduled.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure enhances virtual meeting/collaboration software to include a mechanism that can be used to end virtual meetings early when indicated by the majority of the participants. A button or other element is provided in the virtual meeting user interface that enables each participant to indicate their preference regarding early termination of the meeting. For example, the participant can, at any time during a virtual meeting, select the button to indicate "I think this meeting should end as soon as possible, starting now."

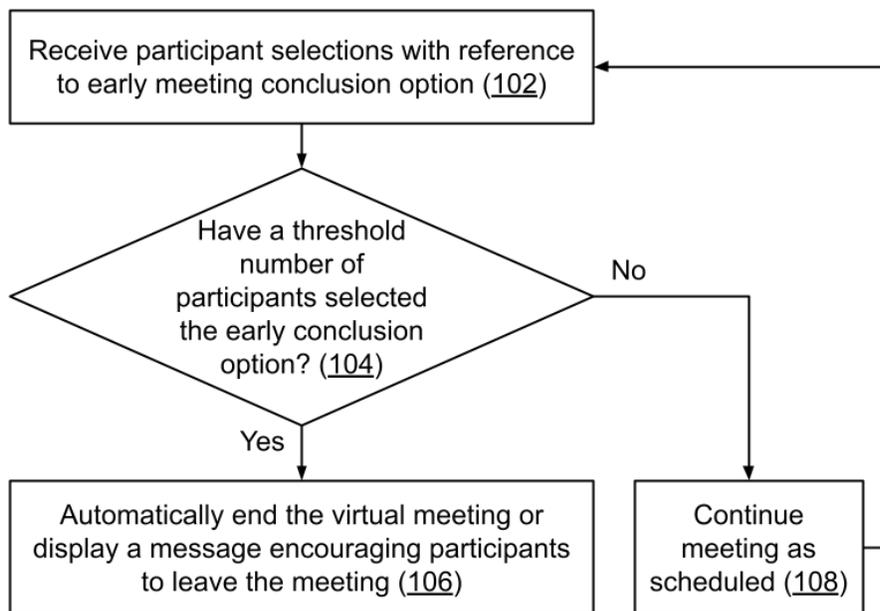


Fig 1. Mechanism for Ending Virtual Meetings Early

Fig 1 illustrates an example mechanism to enable participants to indicate that a virtual meeting should end early. During an ongoing virtual meeting, one or more participants can select the early meeting conclusion option to indicate their preference regarding terminating the

meeting early (102). The meeting/collaboration software records preferences indicated by the participants and determines whether at least a threshold number of participants have selected the early conclusion option (104). If the number of participants wishing to terminate the meeting early meets the threshold, the virtual meeting is automatically ended, or a message is displayed to all participants, encouraging them to leave the meeting (106). Otherwise, the meeting is continued as scheduled (108), and preferences from additional participants are received.

The threshold for the number of participants can be set by the participant that is the meeting host, by a system administrator, or other participants. Optionally, a random wait time (e.g., between 30-90 seconds, or other suitable period) or a wait time selected based on remaining time scheduled is added prior to automatically terminating the meeting or displaying the message. The wait time serves to protect the identity of the participants that may have selected the option to terminate the meeting early. In case of a two-participant meeting, the meeting is continued until both participants select the option; in case of a meeting with a higher number of participants, the threshold can be selected as majority of the participants (>50%), almost all the participants (e.g., all but 3 participants), etc.

Possible extensions to the process could include the following:

- Use of other available signals, e.g., speaking time distribution, whether content is presented, how many participants have turned camera/mic on, etc.
- Allowing participants to undo their choice, e.g., if an interesting topic comes up.
- Taking into account other user-permitted factors such as time remaining until the scheduled end of the meeting, time ongoing, how many participants have other meetings scheduled, etc.

- Allowing one or more participants to silently turn off the mechanism, e.g., if they still have agenda items to discuss)

By explicitly providing a mechanism that enables participants to indicate their preference regarding early termination of a virtual meeting, the described techniques address the problem of social convention (participants being too courteous to ask for the meeting to end). Further, by selecting appropriate thresholds for early termination, the meeting is ended only if that is the preference of a significant proportion of the participants.

The described mechanism can be built into any virtual meeting or collaboration software. Further, a button for early termination can also be provided in meeting hardware. Administrators or other users that control virtual meetings in an organization can be provided with options to enable or disable the early termination features described herein. User indications are obtained confidentially and are not shared with other participants in a meeting and are not stored. Only user-permitted factors (e.g., whether a user has an upcoming meeting) are utilized to detect whether early termination of a virtual meeting is appropriate.

Further to the descriptions above, a user may be provided with controls allowing the user to make an election as to both if and when systems, programs, or features described herein may enable the collection of user information (e.g., information about a user's virtual meetings or other scheduled events, a user's preferences regarding virtual meetings, or meeting settings), and if the user is sent content or communications from a server. In addition, certain data may be treated in one or more ways before it is stored or used, so that personally identifiable information is removed. For example, a user's identity may be treated so that no personally identifiable information can be determined for the user, or a user's geographic location may be generalized where location information is obtained (such as to a city, ZIP code, or state level), so that a

particular location of a user cannot be determined. Thus, the user may have control over what information is collected about the user, how that information is used, and what information is provided to the user.

CONCLUSION

This disclosure describes a mechanism that can be included in virtual meeting software that enables meeting participants to indicate, during an ongoing meeting, that they would prefer to end the meeting early, e.g., any time starting from the provision of the indication. Upon receipt of such indications from a threshold number of participants, the meeting can be terminated automatically, or participants may be provided a message that they may leave the meeting.

REFERENCES

1. Mastroianni, Adam M., Daniel T. Gilbert, Gus Cooney, and Timothy D. Wilson. "Do conversations end when people want them to?." *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 118, no. 10 (2021).