What's New in BigBlueButton 2.7

The updated version of BigBlueButton includes several changes and new features to improve usability, engagement, and general performance.

Usability

Layout
Teachers can choose how to view their students using the Manage Layout feature. There are options to:
- customize the layout and drag the learners' webcams to either side of the presentation or the bottom of the Chat panel
- set the layout to view all webcams only under the Chat or Shared Notes panel
- view all participant webcams in a grid which replaces the presentation and moves it to the bottom of the Chat or Shared Notes panel. This will allow the teacher to see all participants of the session and spot the person who is speaking easily.

Camera as Content
This feature allows using the webcam video in the main presentation area. This could be helpful if a presenter has real objects or a background they would like to show during the class.

Disable Viewing Own Video Stream
If a presenter prefers not to see their own webcam, they can use the option, Disable self-view. This leaves the webcam on for others to see, but turns it off from their own view.

Downloading Presentations
This new option allows users to download an entire presentation in its original form (without new whiteboard annotations) or download the presentation with the session's whiteboard annotations included. There is also an option to download the PDF file that BBB converted from a PowerPoint presentation.

Timer and Stopwatch
A timer and stopwatch have been added to BigBlueButton 2.7. These are shown to everyone in the session and are accompanied by an audio notification that is played when the countdown is over.

Wake Lock
This feature keeps the screen on and prevents it from dimming or turning off if the keyboard or mouse are not used during the session.

Engagement

Reactions Bar

Participants can now respond to a speaker by choosing emojis from a configurable Reactions Bar. These emojis appear near the users' name in the participants list and will remain there for a pre-set duration of time or until the user removes them.

New Whiteboard Features

A guide to keyboard shortcuts for whiteboard functions has been added to the presentation screen Options drop-down menu.

Two toolbars are available as well:

- Styles toolbar, which allows participants to choose colors, fill, line patterns and size of annotations
- Tools toolbar that allows participants to duplicate, rotate, unlock, group, move, align and erase annotations, or add new ones.

Exporting and Pinning Shared Notes to the Whiteboard

These new features allow instructors to convert the Shared Notes to a presentation and make them available on the presentation screen. Edits and annotations can be added to these Notes if needed.

Exporting Breakout Shared Notes and Whiteboard Annotations to the Main Room

Shared Notes from Breakout Rooms are converted into PDF files and can be shared in the Main Room after the Breakout Rooms end. These become available as a presentation in the Actions Menu.

Setting up Polls

This option allows instructors to use ready-made poll responses (e.g. True/False, A, B, C, D), or custom-make their own input and prepare polls ahead of time.

Moving Users between Breakout Rooms

Using the Manage Rooms option, instructors can quickly drag and drop users between different Breakout Rooms.

Accessibility

Closed Captions

Using this feature enables users to turn on Closed Captions in their language of choice. Note that this feature is available for Chrome, Edge and Safari browsers and might appear in different locations of the BigBlueButton screen on different devices.

Changing Audio Test Volume

The echo test that appears at the beginning of a BigBlueButton session can now be adjusted for volume.

Larger Recording Button

The Recording button on top of the page is enlarged for improved accessibility.

Enabling Dark Mode

Users can now toggle between Dark Mode on and off sliders to change the background color on their screen.

Pinning a Webcam

Users can pin another participant's webcam to make it visible through the whole session. This feature is especially useful when sign language is being used by a participant and others want to see their webcam during the session.

Setting Webcam Background Image Brightness

This feature allows users to adjust the brightness of their background webcam image by using the brightness slider as they see fit.