

Overcoming geographic barriers through video with Swivl



The challenge

In rural and remote school districts, geography can pose significant challenges for the students who must be bussed to school, the teachers who commute long hours, and the administrators and specialists who have to visit schools sometimes separated by hundreds of miles. This challenge is particularly critical in Alaska, a state with a land area of over half a million square miles—double the size of Texas. Yet across the entire state of Alaska, there are only a handful of specialists employed to work with students with disabilities and to provide professional development support to educators working in rural and remote school districts. In addition, teachers who want to attend professional development conferences simply can't make the often long, costly trips due to the distance.

Lyon Johnson is a Low Incident Disability Specialist for the Special Education

Service Agency (SESA) in Alaska. He travels thousands of miles across the state each year to remote schools, where he provides case consultation and technical assistance to teachers educating students with emotional disabilities. His trips can be time-consuming and cost thousands of dollars to travel to the farthest locations; weather problems, rough roads or small planes do not make the laborious trips any easier for him. He needed a way to provide his expertise and case consultations despite the barriers the massive distance sometimes presented.

The solution

When Lyon discovered Swivl, he realized that the technology offered him a cost-effective, secure and easy-to-use method of capturing video and began using the tool immediately. Suddenly, a trip to a remote location cancelled due to bad weather did not have to be rescheduled—instead, he will be setting up the device in his office so that he can provide case consultations remotely. When modeling demonstrations to teachers, such as how to best redirect a student with challenging behavior, the video component will be invaluable to him. Lyon and other specialists will be able to accomplish so much more in a remote consultation than with just a phone call, increase consultation activity hours, and save a significant amount of money on trips that no longer need to be rescheduled. Furthermore, Lyon can upload the video consultation to Swivl's cloud service so educators can view it at their convenience.

“Swivl offered a cost-effective, secure and easy-to-use method of capturing video.”



—Lyon

Swivl is also making a big difference in professional development in Lyon's territory. Lyon has introduced his peers to Swivl at education technology and other conferences in both Alaska and the lower 48." His peers have found it easy to attach the device's microphone while giving their presentations in order to deliver "national level" presentations to educators who might not be able to make the trip. In addition, specialists presenting at a conference who may have

become “weathered in” at a remote village school will simply be able to present remotely, right from their offices or current location.

Another piece of Lyon’s responsibilities as a specialist is to train educators, ensuring they are meeting the requirements necessary to work with special needs students. With Swivl’s data, Lyon will now be able to see if an educator or a paraprofessional has completely viewed the training videos necessary to receive credit for professional development. When writing a grant proposal and attempting to meet grant deliverables, this is vital information, which Swivl can provide especially when educators must participate fully, or in part, in a distance synchronous or asynchronous training format.

The outcome

Ultimately in-person instruction and training is the ideal way to work with students and educators, but sometimes geographical, weather-based and time-based obstacles can prevent such interaction, particularly in remote school districts. With Swivl, Lyon will be helping implement the second-most ideal scenario for consultations and professional development in Alaska, allowing teachers and other professionals more opportunities to collaborate, share ideas and improve their teaching methods to better serve their students with disabilities.

Get in touch!

These are just some of the ways Swivl’s technology is being put to use in K-20 classrooms across the country. To learn more about how Swivl can make a difference at your school, or to learn more about our demo program, contact us today by calling **888.837.6209** or emailing **sales@swivl.com**.

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