Virtual Focus Groups  
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**Abstract**

Focus groups are an established evaluation method.  
They gather in-depth qualitative information.  
Focus groups are viable, economical evaluation tool.  
**Synchronous, real-time focus groups are gaining traction.**  
Synchronous, real-time focus groups are a viable option.

**Focus Group Locations**

- Marks Location of focus group sites  
- OSU Marks Location of OSU Campus

**Advantages**

- Saves time.  
  Saves money.  
- Reduces travel.

**Disadvantages**

- Technology problems.  
- Note taker availability.  
- Detail obfuscated.

**Relevance**

Extension Service provides research-based, non-traditional offerings to the larger community.  
**What is offered is affected by shrinking budgets.**  
Extension professionals must demonstrate program impact.  
**Focus groups are a viable evaluation alternative.**  
Technology is available that changes the traditional focus group method.  
**Virtual focus groups are an option.**  
Using a focus group format with synchronous, real-time visual experience.

**Conclusions**

Using Polycom resulted in synchronous, real-time visual focus groups.  
**Identifying effective alternative evaluation methods increases evaluators’ tool box.**  
Saved time, money, and travel.  
**As technology improves, more focus groups will use this option.**