

How to Use Your Camera or Camcorder as a Webcam

In today's connected high-definition world, audio and video quality are everything. The built-in "HD" webcams in recent laptops are made with low resolution, tiny sensors that simply can't produce the best version of you — and you don't want to be that person stuck in the shadows.

If you already own a Canon VIXIA camcorder, or an EOS DSLR, mirrorless or PowerShot camera, there's good news: you most likely have a much better webcam at hand! Below, we've detailed a quick checklist of the gear and steps you need to take for your compatible camera or camcorder to perform as a high-quality webcam.

The Checklist

-  A compatible Canon camera or camcorder with a clean HDMI output
-  An HDMI cable with one end to plug into your camera/camcorder and the other end to plug into your HDMI video capture card
-  An HDMI video capture card
-  Software that will recognize the signal from your camera and capture card
-  A fully charged battery or an AC adapter (for those all-day meetings or longer streams)

So Why Should I Use my Camera/Camcorder?

Raise your hand if this has ever happened to you: you're on a video chat at night and you notice your face is in the dark, but your lamp is perfectly clear. How did that happen? Well, the webcam on your computer (or mobile device for that matter) might not let you adjust where your light source is coming from, and subsequently, what the camera should be focusing on — it simply sees the lamp and assumes that this is the main focus and adjusts to that. Most Canon cameras and camcorders, on the other hand, use Dual Pixel Autofocus technology and let you choose your focus point to tell the camera "Hey! Look at me!" The camera will be much better in low light than what a traditional webcam can offer, thanks to its much larger sensor.

Full-Frame
(EOS-1DX Mark III, EOS 5D Mark IV,
EOS R, EOS 6D Mark II, EOS RP)

APS-C
(EOS 7D Mark II, EOS 90D,
EOS 77D, Rebel T8i, EOS M, etc.)

1.0-inch CMOS
(Select VIXIA models)

**Webcam/
Smartphone**

Plus, since some internal and external webcams use plastic lenses due to size, weight and cost factors, the image might appear soft. With Canon's glass optics, your camera or camcorder will have sharper details and more vibrant colors. In fact, among the photography and cinematography communities, Canon has always been heralded for its great "color science" — keeping skin tones more natural and accurate looking.

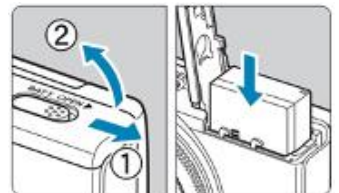


If you happen to have an EOS camera, there is a good chance that you have a feature called "Highlight Tone Priority" built into it. This feature is usually intended to bring out details of a very white object, such as the beading of a white wedding dress. Turning it on while video conferencing or livestreaming could help when your overall scene is too bright.

I Need This! So How Do I Do It?

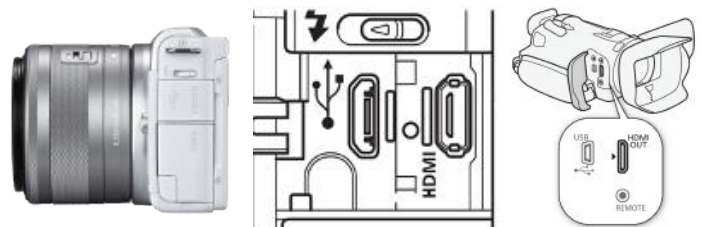
Step 1:

Insert a fully charged battery or an AC adapter (sold separately) into the camera or camcorder.



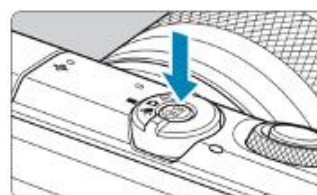
Step 2:

Connect the side of the HDMI plug that looks like the one you use for your TV to your HDMI video capture card; then, plug in the USB cord from the capture device into the computer.



Step 3:

Connect the smaller end of the HDMI plug to your camera or camcorder's port labeled HDMI.

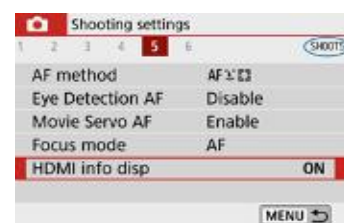
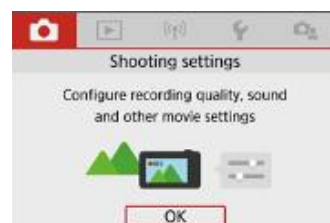


Step 4:

Turn on your camera/camcorder and put it into Movie Mode, if applicable.

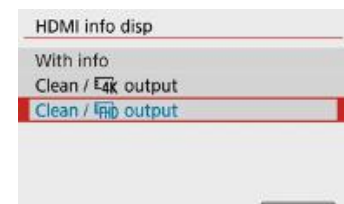
Step 5 (DSLR/Mirrorless/PowerShot):

On a camera that has clean HDMI, press the Menu button, go to the [Shooting settings] (red tab with a camera icon) and find [HDMI info disp]. On a camcorder with clean HDMI, skip to step 6.



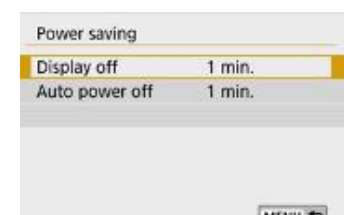
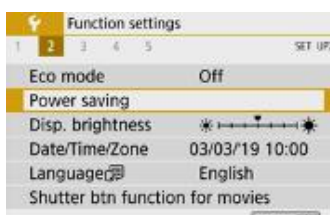
Step 5A:

Press the [HDMI info disp] menu item and choose the resolution output that your capture device uses.



Step 5B:

From the Main Menu screen, go to your [Function settings] (yellow tab with a wrench icon). Find the [Power saving] setting and select [Auto power off] and set it to [Disable]. After this is completed, skip to step 7.



Note: Doing this will not automatically power the camera off, so a spare battery or an AC power adapter is recommended for longer sessions.

Step 6 (VIXIA):

Press the Menu button on your VIXIA camcorder and go to [Display setup] then [HDMI max resolution].

Step 6A:

Select the desired maximum resolution and then select the back arrow.

Step 7:

Download and open a streaming software application such as Open Broadcaster Software (OBS).

Note: Your streaming software will need to set your Canon camera or camcorder as a video capture device. Refer to your software's manual for instructions.

Step 8:

The last step is to set your web conferencing or livestreaming software to recognize your capture device and you are done!

With your own Canon camera or camcorder, a video capture card and some software, you are able to take your video conferencing and livestreaming to the next level! Using this as a basis, you'll be able to scale up into professional livestream interviews or host online classroom setups with multiple cameras and some additional gear.

Enjoy your virtual connections — and stay safe!

Canon