Streaming school events can cause apprehension but it's not as difficult as it appears, and it can be done with little to no cost to your school. Most of our broadcast programs already contain the equipment needed to stream the first event.   In this article I am going to share some of the basic things needed to help you stream your school events live so students, parents, your community, and beyond can view them them on the web.

First let me explain a little bit about streaming and what makes it work.   Streaming video content is done by sending compressed content over the Internet to a streaming server at a streaming company (IE: Limelight, Dacast, Livestream and many more). The stream is retrieved by the viewer from a player embedded in a website and displayed in real time on a computer or mobile device. The viewer does not have to wait to download a file to play a streamed event. Instead, the media is sent in a continuous stream of data and is played as it arrives. Due to technical factors, there usually is a very short delay in the video from the actual live event.

My school streams approximately 100 to 125 live events a year and we have become very proficient at it. Much of the equipment we currently use is industry standard, but we started small and cheap! Our partnership at STN with US Education TV, powered by the ESE Networks, has allowed our member schools to stream our events on their platform for no cost. This is very beneficial, as they provided the platform and support needed to stream our events. Are there other ways to stream for free out there? Yes, but it usually comes with no support, no archiving of the events and some have advertisements running on your stream. Others limit the amount of viewers watching at a time. This is how they are able to do it for free.

So with that basic understanding of the operation, let's get started with what you will need for a basic broadcast setup. First, you will need a single Mac or PC computer and some free encoding software.   Second, you need an Internet connection from the computer. It is preferable that the computer be hardwired to the Internet but, if wireless is all that is available, it can be used if it is stable. Most of our schools have sufficient Internet speeds, however, I suggest in both cases you test to ensure it has the proper speeds needed and it is a reliable connection. I would start by performing a speed check on the connection to determine if it is sufficient. You can do this by clicking this link.   This website allows you to run a speedtest to see if you are within this range to properly broadcast. (The ESE Networks training site will help you determine if you have the required speeds.)

Now, we will start with one camera and a way to capture the video and audio signal into the computer. Most new computers have the ability to capture the video and audio from a camera. (IE: HDMI, DVI etc) Next, you will need encoding software that can take the video and audio from the camera and encode it for the receiving ingest server.   I prefer Open Broadcaster encoding software as it seems to do a little better job keeping the audio in sync while broadcasting. Here is the link to their website and it is available in a Mac or P/C version.

Adobe also makes software for the P/C or Mac environment. You can download the free Adobe Flash Media Encoder Software at this [link](#).

The final step is placing our credentials, stream ID, and RTMP address into your encoder.   We are now ready to send a single camera feed with audio out to the world. From here the possibilities are endless. Just take a moment to think of the things that your school could broadcast for the world to see. (Graduation, sporting events, parent meetings, special events, and more)

Once you successfully upload your first event, I believe you will see how easy it is and from there continue to expand how and what you broadcast. Before you know it, you could be streaming using multiple camera angles, advanced switching, instant replays, several audio sources and much more. I recommend you contact the folks at ESE Network for a free site and get connected to the ESE Training site for additional information. They are always a toll free phone call away to answer all your broadcast questions.

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