



Virtual meeting resources

Things to consider when hosting a virtual meeting:

- Content & messaging
- Technology & accessibility
- What is the value of your virtual meeting?
- The planning timeline for a virtual meeting is less flexible than the planning timeline for an in-person meeting.
- A run of show for the meeting as well as for each individual session is critical to their success.
- Sessions should be shorter than in an in-person environment, more engaging, and use whatever engagement tools are available in the platform to encourage questions and interaction.

From Live to Virtual: Designing an Optimal Experience

Design thinking

- Know your audience (what are their needs? Why are they attending the virtual meeting? Will they find it beneficial?)
- Goals and strategy (is the goal to generate revenue? Bring awareness? Professional development?)

Explore

- Ideation (Great ideas come from diverse mind sets. Think outside of the box.)

Materialize

- Prototype
- Implement and learn

The Experience

- Audiences tune out. Virtual events should be entertaining, fast evolving with good content.
- Try to have dynamic speakers that can keep the audience entertained and engaged
- Have a Master of Ceremony or host to introduce speakers, make transitions, announce breaks, etc.
- Make sure presentation and photos look clean and polished on screen.
- Have fun!
- Script the flow of virtual meeting
- Make it interactive (polling, Q&A, gamification)

Four ways to help attendees have a successful virtual conference experience

Designing and developing engaging content

- Function over form. Making sure the technology and program work efficiently is more important than how “cool” it looks.
- Understanding the system and tools
- Use of green screen as an option if the speaker/presenter has distracting background.

Terminology

- Video conferencing - *Video conferencing is more suited for smaller groups. This technology allows users in different locations to hold meetings without having to be in a single place.*
- Webinar - *Webinars are an online service by which you can hold live meetings, presentations, and conferences through the internet. Focus based on presentation rather than conversation. Used for larger groups.*
- Webcast – *Webcasts are an online service by which you can hold live meetings, presentations, and conferences through the internet. Used for more interactive virtual meetings with several speakers. Webcasts typically require use of several programs to run successfully (.i.e., speakers present via Zoom, Micosite host webcast platform). Used for large audiences.*

Create list of technology check to-do items and tips for speakers, hosts, presenters. This may consist of testing WiFi speed, background noise and image, cleaning laptop camera lens, don't sit too close to the camera, find natural/comfortable state to present, etc.) Should live rehearse the flow if possible.

Tips on accommodating accessibility needs virtually

As we embrace an increase in virtual gatherings, we would like to provide tips and tools for facilitating an easily accessible, high-quality digital user experience for all attendees. In order to accommodate registrant requirements, AIA will offer closed captioning services on all sessions.

Common factors requiring accommodations that event organizers should query during the registration process include:

- a) Hearing
- b) Vision

There are many strategies organizations can employ to heighten their accessibility, in addition to the suggestions listed below, please take time to visit the [National Association of the Deaf](#) and the [National Federation of the Blind](#), and learn of more ways to make accommodations.

Tips

- Check in advance what participants of meetings will require in terms of accommodations. Identification of the type of service, which may vary by participant, will be important versus identifying a blanket solution.
- Have someone designated to type URLs or other resources, when mentioned, into the chat window - or follow up with participants after the meeting - to help facilitate finding those resources.
- Allow participants to ask questions either verbally, with or without using the hand-raising function, or by typing in the chat.
- Encourage folks to look at their name in the participant list and change it to their First and Last name if it defaulted to something else.
- Describe images, as this is helpful for blind and call-in attendees.
- Record meetings to enable future access.
- Share presentations ahead of time, when possible.
- Ask everyone to mute their microphone when they aren't speaking to limit background noise.
- Share transcripts with attendees for post-event review.

Accessibility Pages

In order to accommodate registrant requirements, AIA will offer closed captioning services on all sessions.

Digital meeting providers typically have resources or a tech person on staff who can provide information about the options available for making accommodations. Below are links to accessibility pages of commonly used virtual meeting platforms, along with a brief description of their offerings.

[Zoom Accessibility](#)

Closed Captioning- Capture every word said with closed captioning. Zoom integrates seamlessly with 3rd party closed captioning providers through our [Closed Captioning REST API](#).

Automatic Transcripts- Facilitate your understanding with [automatic transcripts](#). Transcripts are automatically generated and synchronized to make it easy to search and review meetings recordings.

Keyboard Accessibility- Accomplish all major workflows with ease using a keyboard. Zoom supports [Keyboard Shortcuts](#) for easy navigation of Zoom features.

Screen Reader Support- Use Zoom without a screen. We follow the latest accessibility standards to ensure that the product is fully accessible to the latest screen readers

[Teams Accessibility \(Live meeting\)](#)

Microsoft offers a variety of accessibility features, including live closed captioning for meetings, screen readers, and language translation. More features are coming soon, like audio suppression for background noise.

Adobe Accessibility (Live meeting)

The Adobe Connect Closed Caption Pod extension enables hearing-impaired participants to participate in online Meetings. The captions are transmitted to the Adobe Connect Meeting and viewed by the end-users. Meeting participants can customize the caption font size and color settings to enhance readability. Participants can even skip back to re-read previous captions and then fast forward to the current captions.

Participants may individually choose to display or not to display captions on their screen. Participants can optionally save the captions as a transcript and download them after a meeting.

Resources-

Virtual conferencing platforms provided by TSS:

Tool	Main Purpose
Cisco Jabber	Instant Messaging & Real-time Presence info, Receive and make calls with your office number, Voice and video calls, voice messaging (largely meant for 1-1 collaboration or small team collaboration)
Zoom	Primary Audio and Video conferencing platform for external communication - Meetings or Webinars (limited to 500 participants). Please contact the Meetings department (meetings@aia.org) for Webinars exceeding 500 participants.
Microsoft Teams	Primary platform for chat-based collaboration workspace with easy chat and presence functionality, Audio and video conferencing recommended for internal staff meetings, Teams site and collaboration.