



A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO CREATING ONLINE EVENTS

Becki Cross
Event Manager and Strategist

2020 — THE YEAR OF ONLINE EVENTS

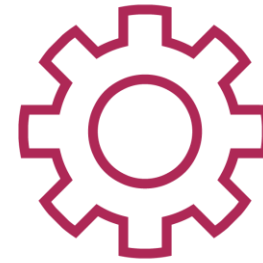
Now, more than ever, there is a need for events to move online.

This session will offer practical ideas, hints and tips for how to deliver online events in a creative and engaging way.

During this webinar we will cover:

- An introduction to different online events
- Practical advice about planning, managing and executing online content
- An overview of some different online platforms and options
- Tips about increasing engagement and interaction
- Ideas for creative delivery online

Presenting the Session Today:



Becki Cross
Freelance Event Manager
MD and Event Strategist, Events Northern Ltd
Associate Lecturer, UCLan
Formerly Deputy Editor of EventMB (eventmanagerblog.com)

20 years of experience running events.

Passionate about events and how they can help you to achieve your objectives.

Has worked on a wide variety of events including conferences, exhibitions, fashion shows, golf tournaments, festivals, gigs, awards ceremonies, New Year's Eve celebrations, dinners, parties, and more!

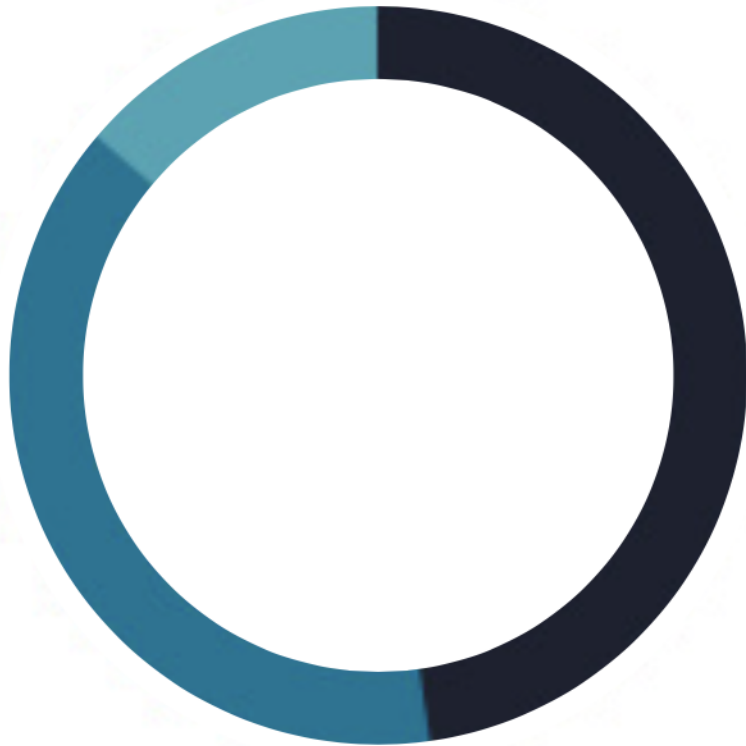
Experience of participating in and running webinars, online-only and hybrid events.

Developing my own event passion projects, including PlannerFest, developing virtual, hybrid and live event ideas.

TWITTER @BECKITRAIN

INSTAGRAM
@BECKICROSS

WHEN WILL LIVE EVENTS BE BACK? (SURVEY OF EVENT PLANNERS WORLDWIDE)



WHEN ARE YOU PLANNING TO GO BACK TO LIVE EVENTS?

- 47.7% - Oct-Dec
- 38.6% - 2021
- 13.7% - June-Sept

Total Sample: 1,286

**Meeting Profs When Asked
About the Last Event They Planned**



 @connectmeetings

**Every meeting prof right now
moving their live event to Q4 or virtual:**



PIVOT!

WHAT IS AN ONLINE EVENT?

An online, or virtual event, happens over the Internet/WiFi, and is joined in via a computer, laptop or mobile device

(rather than a traditional event, which is a gathering face-to-face).

THE BENEFITS OF ONLINE EVENTS



SAVE MONEY: VIRTUAL EVENTS ARE MORE COST-EFFECTIVE, BOTH FOR ATTENDEES AND HOSTS. HOSTS DON'T HAVE TO PAY FOR A COSTLY VENUE, CATERING, TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION TO GET STAFF ON-SITE, ETC.



SAVE TIME: ONLINE EVENT HOSTS SAVE TIME ON SETUP AND PLANNING. ATTENDEES SAVE TIME ON TRAVEL AND ARRANGEMENTS BEING AWAY FROM HOME AND THE OFFICE.



EXPAND ATTENDEE BASE: ACCESSIBLE TO NEARLY EVERYONE. MORE PEOPLE CAN EASILY ATTEND ONLINE EVENTS WITH REDUCED CONCERNS AROUND TIME COMMITMENTS, BUDGET, AND EVENT LOCATION - INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL ATTENDEES.



EXPAND POTENTIAL SPEAKER LIST: LIKEWISE, REDUCED COMMITMENTS FOR A VIRTUAL EVENT MAY ALSO MAKE IT EASIER AND WITHIN BUDGET TO GET INTERNATIONAL SPEAKERS, ESPECIALLY IF YOUR EVENT INCLUDES A MIX OF LIVE AND PRE-RECORDED SESSIONS.



VALUABLE CONTENT: THE CONTENT YOU CREATE FOR VIRTUAL EVENTS CAN BE GATED AND OFFERED ON-DEMAND OR REPURPOSED AND REUSED IN OTHER WAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.



HEALTH RISKS: VIRTUAL EVENTS MAKE IT EASIER FOR YOUR EVENT ATTENDEES TO STILL GET VALUE FROM YOUR CONTENT WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT GETTING SICK OR SPREADING THE VIRUS. FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE IT IS THE RESPONSIBLE THING TO DO.



MEASUREMENT AND REPORTING: IT CAN BE EASIER TO TRACK AND MEASURE THE SUCCESS OF THE EVENT AND REPORT BACK TO SPONSORS AND STAKEHOLDERS.

**ATTENDING A VIRTUAL
EVENT CAN MAKE PEOPLE
MORE INCLINED TO
ATTEND THE EVENT IN
REAL LIFE**

THE DOWN SIDE TO ONLINE EVENTS

Engagement: It can be harder to engage your audience through a virtual setting. F2F events can appeal to all the senses, online events can't – so you need to work harder.

Time/Learning Curve: If you haven't run online events before or are working with a new platform, you will need to invest more time learning about it and having lots of rehearsals.

Technology: Technology is not infallible and things can go wrong – internet connection can be lost, platforms can go down, etc.

Distractions: Distractions are tantalising close to your attendees.

Value/Drop Out Rate: People can value online events less than they would a face to face event and the drop out rate can be higher. It may be harder to get people to pay for online content.

Cues: It can be harder to read cues from other speakers and attendees.

Zoom Fatigue/Screen Time: People are having a lot of screen time and online meetings. And because cues are harder to read it can be quite draining.

Time Limited: Shorter can be better when it comes to online events.

Think Creatively: Creativity can be needed to emulate and recreate some of the benefits of F2F events – e.g. networking, exhibitors, etc.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ONLINE EVENTS

- One-to-One meetings

- Small group meetings

- Live Webinars – including the possibility of interaction

- Webinars-on-Demand/Webcasts - recorded sessions which are generally available on demand (often a recording of a live webinar).

- Online Training sessions - may be live, may be recorded, may be interactive.

- Online Workshops – a participative session delivered online

- Online Conference/Event – a larger online event which may mimic a face to face event and include networking, virtual exhibitors, workshops, multiple sessions

- Online Summit – a larger online event which takes place over several days

TIMELINE OF ONLINE EVENTS

1964: Video conferencing was first introduced by AT&T at the World Fair in New York.

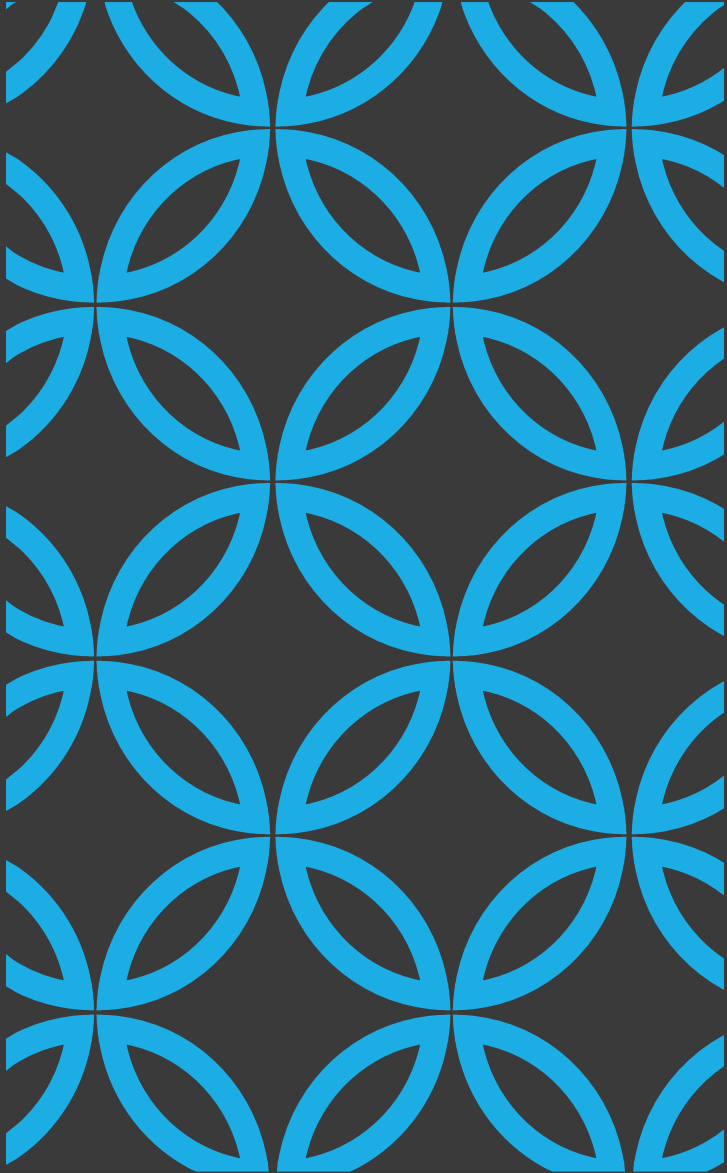
1990s: There was a surge in video conferencing technologies with more advanced video compression technologies which allowed the video image and sound to be transmitted in much smaller packets across the network, reducing the size of the live-streamed files. Video conferencing really took off as commercially-viable video conferencing solutions came to market.

2019: Online was still often seen as the poor relation to face-to-face events. Organisers were often worried about offering an online option (hybrid event) in case it stopped people attending in real life.

2020: A massive opportunity and leap forward for online events – including experimentation and exciting ideas and developments.

Virtual event software is in the spotlight.

Things may have changed forever – or at least for the foreseeable future – people will travel less, attend less events, and going forward people will expect a virtual option instead of/as well as F2F events.



POLL

FIRST THINGS FIRST

- Why do you want to host an online event?

- What do you want to achieve?

- Who is your audience?

- What will be the takeaways from the event?

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ONLINE EVENT SOFTWARE

What type of online event do you want to run? (training, workshop, meeting, conference, webinar)

How many people do you want/need to attend?

How many sessions do you want to run? How long will the event last?

Are you planning to do live sessions, on-demand ones, or a hybrid of the two? (For instance, a live keynote address where attendees can interact with speakers, surrounded by on-demand pre-recorded sessions.)

What do you want to happen when the event is “live” vs. when it’s “over”?

What online event experience do you plan to create for attendees? (For instance, does it include networking opportunities, discussion, exhibitors?)

What level of branding is needed? Are you happy to have branding visible from the software provider?

Is the content highly confidential?

Do you have a budget/what is your budget?

What functionality do you need other than the actual event tech (registration, marketing, storage, etc)

HOW MUCH DOES THE SOFTWARE TO RUN ONLINE EVENTS COST?

Tools to power your online events can range in cost drastically:

Free of charge options (often with limits to functionality/numbers/time)

Lower cost solutions are generally between £25 up to £500

You can employ a team of people to handle the tech and logistics for you for £5k plus

High-tech, sophisticated solutions with all the bells and whistles can cost £10,000 + per event, even if you manage it all yourself

SOME ONLINE EVENT PLATFORMS

Facebook Live

[GoToWebinar](#)

[HeySummit](#)

Instagram Live

[ClickMeeting](#)

[Big Marker](#)

Zoom

[EverWebinar](#)

[Hopin](#)

Teams

[WebinarJam](#)

[ON24](#)

Zoho

[WebEx](#)

[6Connex](#)

StreamYard

Virbella

[INXPO](#)

[And many more:](#)

<https://www.thesocialeffect.com/blog/list-of-the-best-virtual-event-platforms>

THE STEPS TO DELIVERING AN ONLINE EVENT

At the most basic level, the process is not very different from a physical event.

1. Decide the speakers, programme and format.
2. Advertise the event (remembering to make the what, when, where, who, why very clear). Do not share the actual event link until after registration/closer to the event, otherwise people will bypass registration.
3. Enable registrations for the event, collecting the information you need (name, email address, organisation). This may or may not be included within the software.
4. Keep attendees, speakers and stakeholders up to date in the lead-up to the event.
5. Prepare speakers, rehearse, test and create any pre-recorded content.
6. Make sure you're prepared for the event: set up the room and tech (virtually and physically), and check that the conditions are suitable for attendees and presenters.
7. Hold the event, making sure everyone is looked after throughout the entirety of the event.
8. Follow up after the event, including with different communications for those that participated and those that didn't show up, perhaps with details of how to watch/re-watch on demand.

REGISTRATION PLATFORMS FOR YOUR ONLINE EVENT

Via the online event software, if included and suitable

Eventbrite – free for free events.

There is also a donation option.

Ticket Tailor – online events are free until at least 1st September 2020

FOR YOUR ONLINE EVENT YOU WILL NEED...

In addition to the software requirements, you will also need:

- A webinar team: at the minimum, this will include your presenter, an administrator (with knowledge of the software) and ideally a support assistant (to moderate the session and, if interactive, to manage the chat room, answer any user problems immediately before or during the session and support the presenter).
- A suitable space to run the session (quiet, well lit, good internet connection).
- Appropriate hardware: a good camera/webcam and a high-quality microphone.
- Suitable quality slides (even if not using slides in the session, you will probably want to produce a pre-presentation holding slide).

ZOOM MEETING VS WEBINARS

	Meeting	Webinar
Description	Zoom meetings are ideal for hosting more interactive sessions where you'll want to have lots of audience participation or break your session into smaller groups.	Think of webinars like a virtual lecture hall or auditorium. Webinars are ideal for large audiences or events that are open to the public. Typically, webinar attendees do not interact with one another. Though Zoom provides options for you to get more social with your attendees, your average webinar has one or a few people speaking to an audience.
Best used for	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Small to large groups (2+ participants) for: Customer-facing meetings•Sales meetings•Training sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Large events and public broadcasts (50+ attendees) such as: Town halls•Quarterly updates•Educational lectures

Feature	Meeting	Webinar
Size	Up to 1,000 Participants	Up to 50,000 Attendees (by request)
Registration	✓	✓
Chat	✓	✓
Polling	✓	✓
Raise Hand	✓	✓
Live Streaming	✓	✓
Reporting	✓	✓
Reactions	✓	
Breakout Rooms	✓	
Practice Session Room		✓
Q&A		✓

ZOOM PLANS

Basic - FREE

The meetings you host will be limited to 40 mins and up to 100 participants.

Pro - £11.99 per month, per host

The meetings you host can last up to 24 hours with up to 100 participants (or pay for more – 500 participants for £51.99 pm,ph or 1,000 for £83.99 pm,ph). Activate advanced meeting controls, such as enabling and disabling recording, encryption, chat and notifications. Record meetings.

Add **Video Webinars** (starting at £32/mo)

Business - £15.99 per month, per host

Up to 300 participants (or pay for more – 500 participants for £51.99 pm,ph or 1,000 for £83.99 pm,ph). Company branding. Custom emails. Admin dashboard. Vanity URL.

WAITING ROOM

Please wait, the meeting host will let you in soon.

Molly Parker's Personal Meeting Room

[Test speaker and microphone](#)

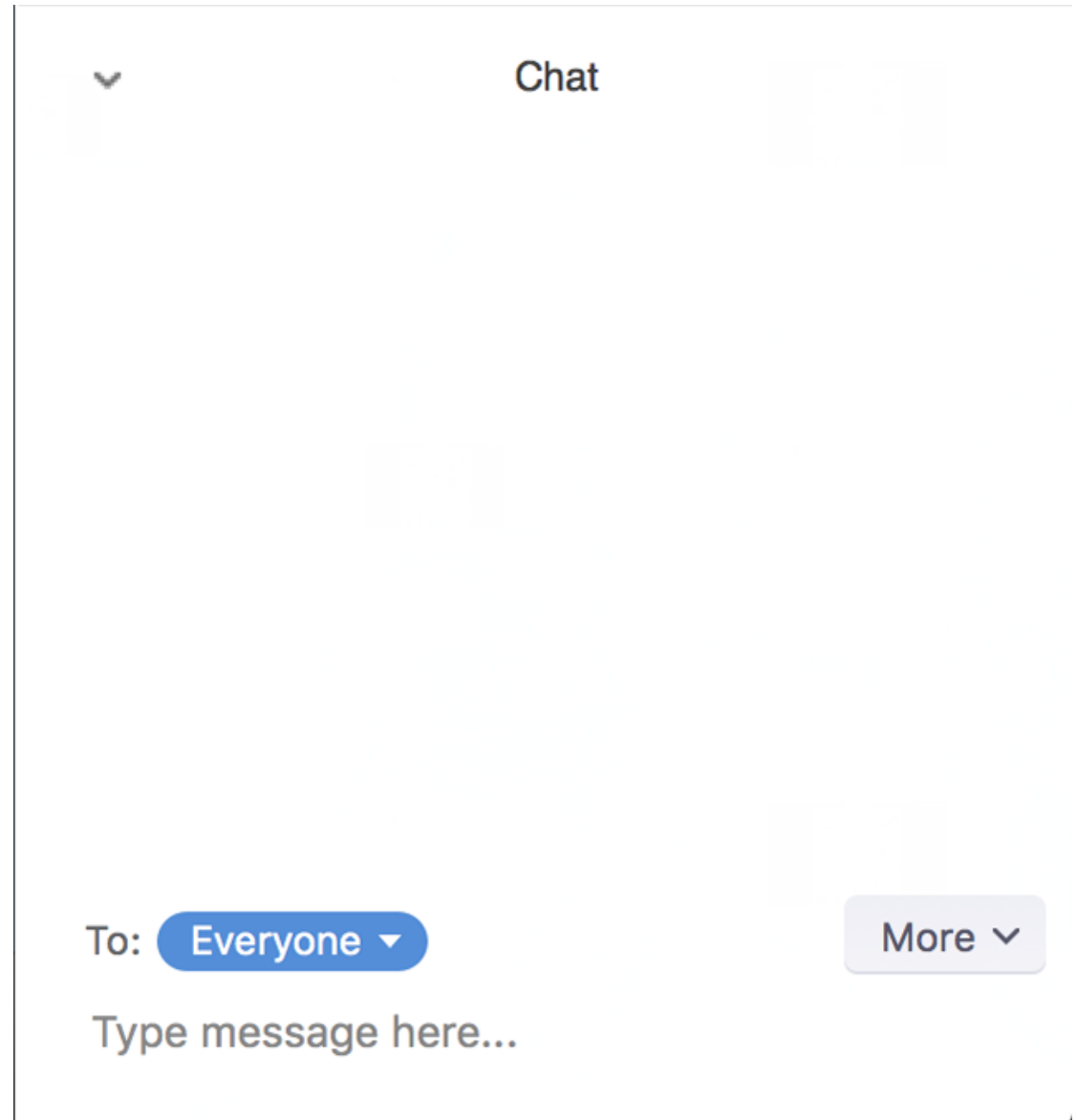
IN-MEETING CHAT

Group chat

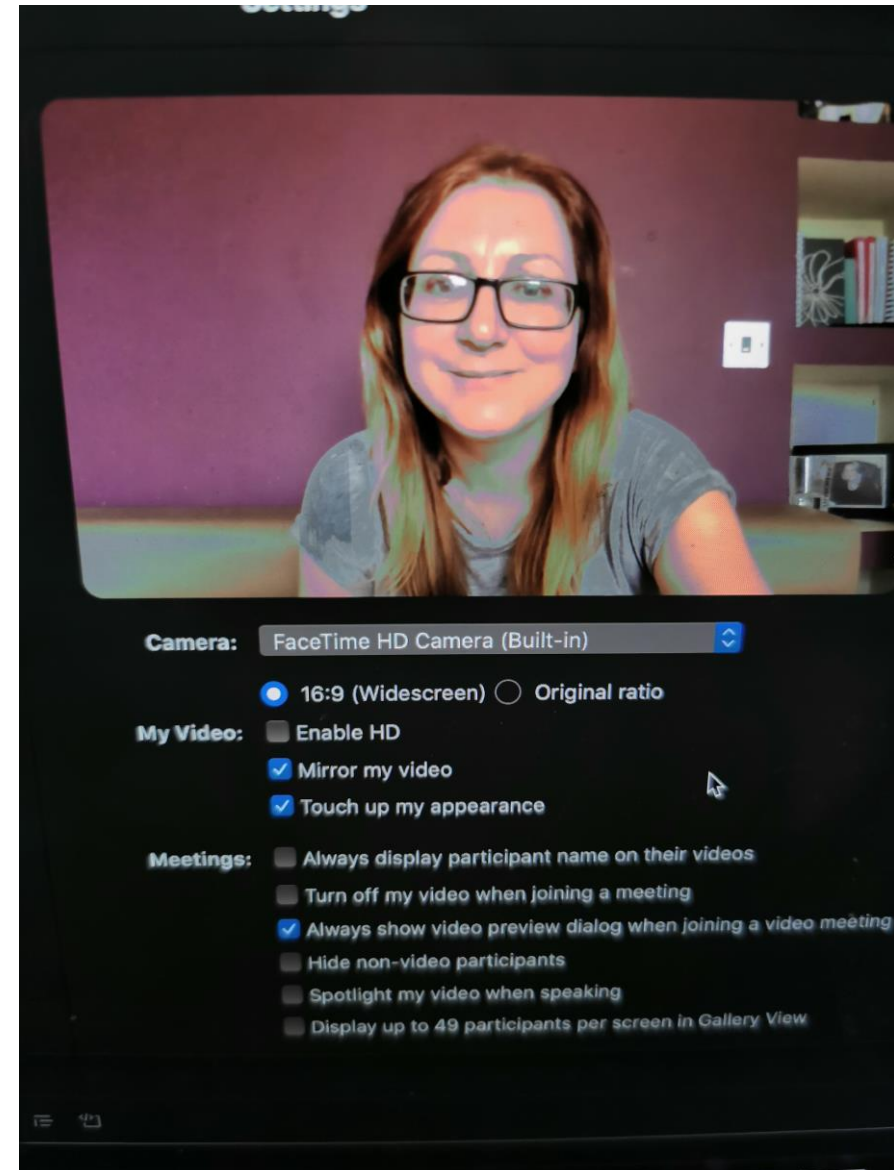
1:1 chat

Useful for technical support
issues

Useful for Q&A



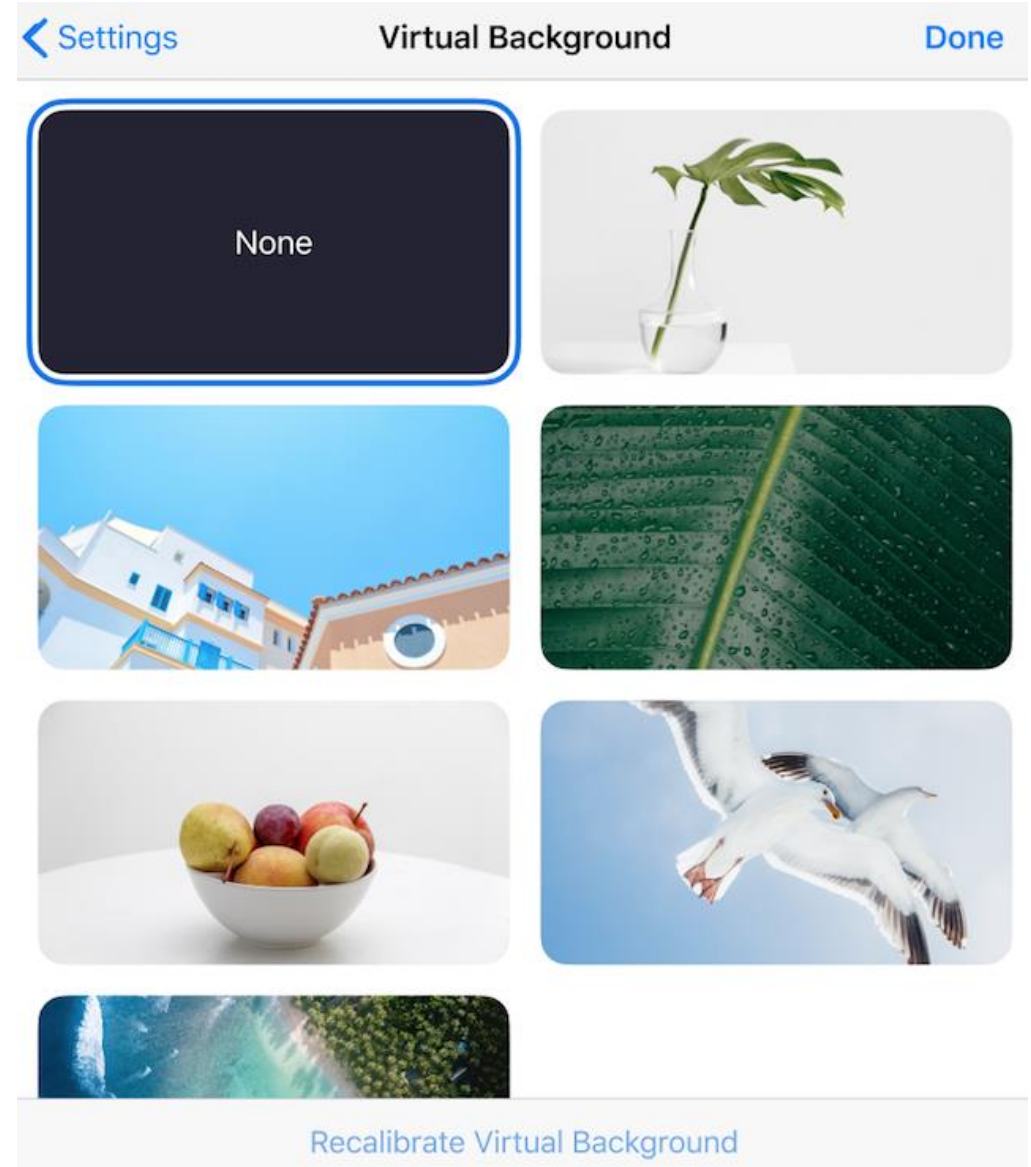
LOOK YOUR BEST!



VIRTUAL BACKGROUNDS

In a Zoom meeting click
the ^ arrow next to **Start/Stop
Video**.

Click **Choose a virtual
background...**





VIDEO BREAKOUT ROOMS

Video Breakout Rooms allow you to split your Zoom meeting into as many as 50 separate sessions for discussion, projects and more.

Let's try it!



ANNOTATE AND WHITEBOARDS

Host only

Enable all

ZOOM VIDEO WEBINARS



Chat: Set private and group panellist chat settings for attendees and panellists.



Q&A and polling: Manage and share audience input in Q&A dialog box where attendees ask questions with live or text answers.



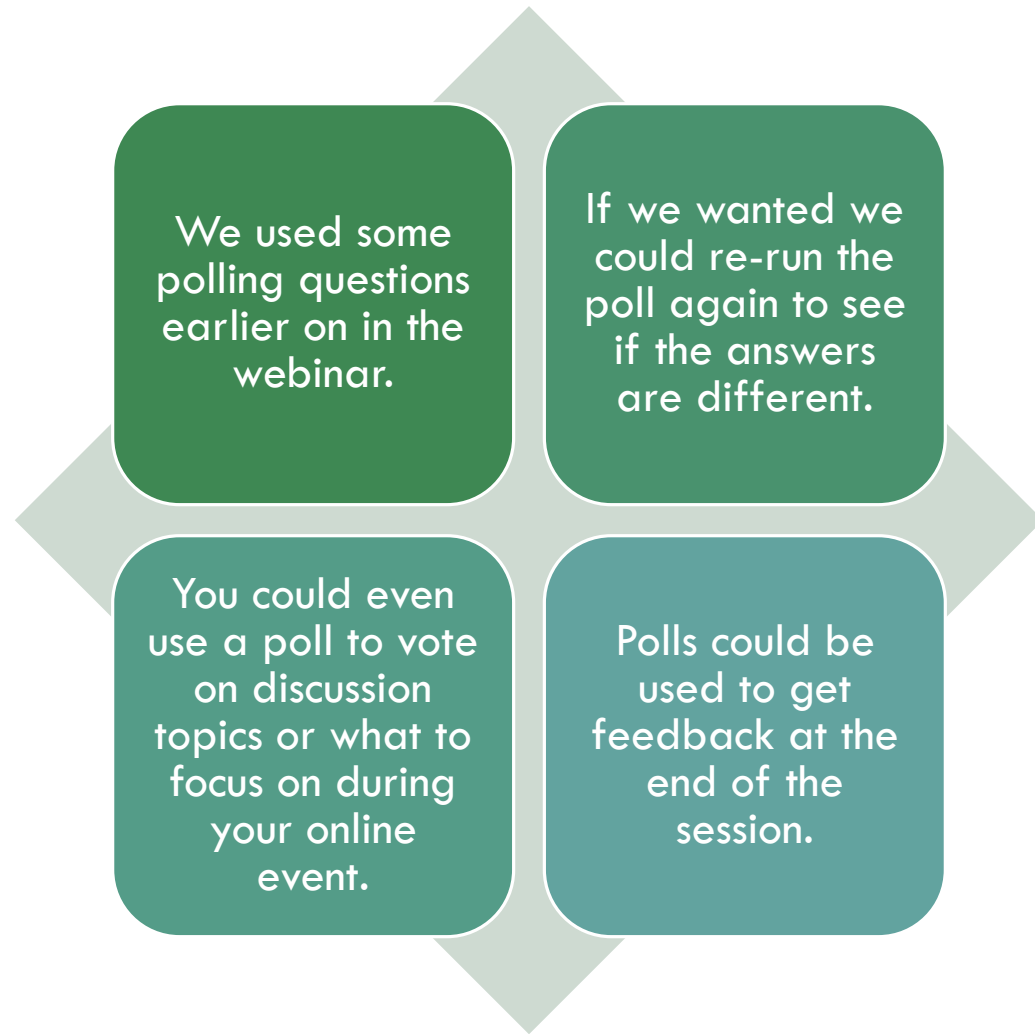
Attendee raise hand: Increase attendee engagement by allowing virtual hand-raising.



Promote Attendees to Panelists: Panelists can communicate with the audience, respond in Q&A, and share their video and desktops.



<https://zoom.us/webinar>



POLLS AND QUIZZES

CLOSE CAPTIONING FOR ACCESSIBILITY



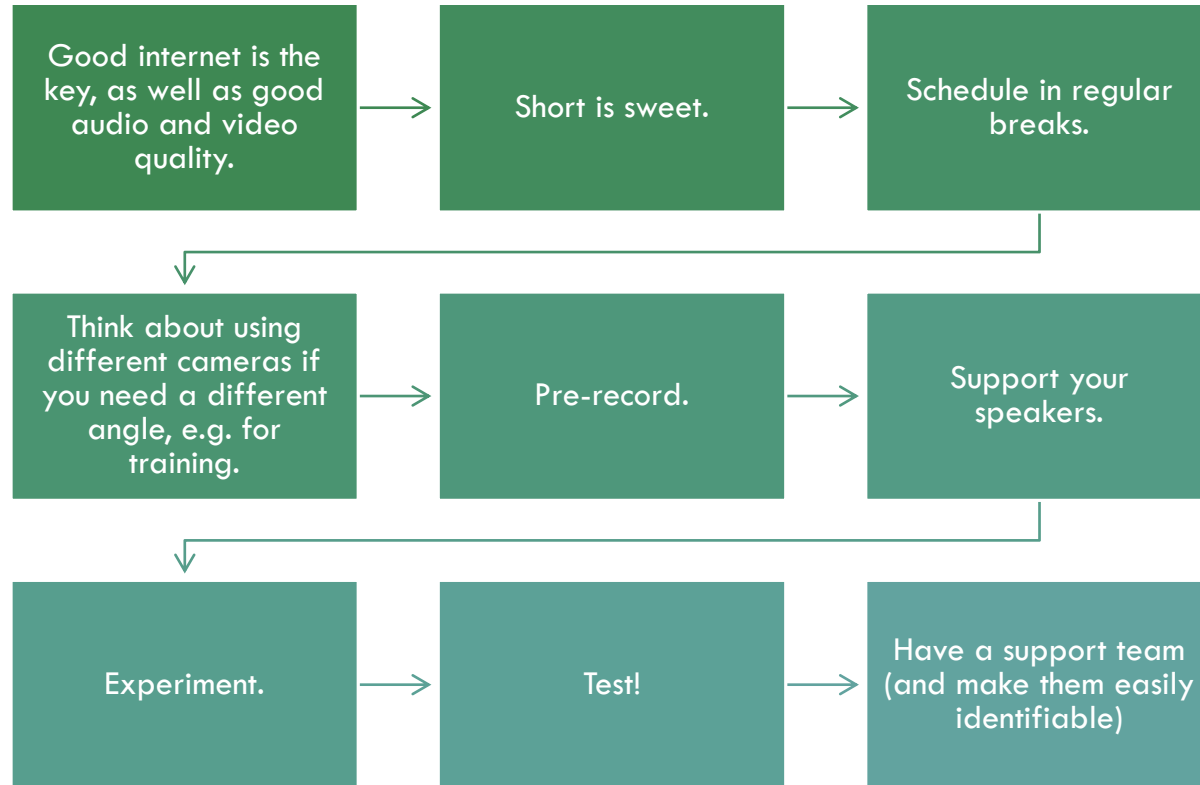
The host can type



You can allocate a participant to type



You can use automatic captioning, e.g.
<https://streamer.center/> - \$99
annually or \$9.97 per month –
automatic captioning and transcripts



PRACTICAL ADVICE

LIVE OR PRE-RECORDED?



WHAT'S YOUR OPINION ON PRE-RECORDED SESSIONS?

- 48.5% - I like them
- 29.0% - I don't like them
- 22.5% - I find it hard to tell the difference

Total Sample: 1,286

PRERECORDED CONTENT

<https://youtu.be/Oot-yM-7za8>



Choose Your Speakers Well



Focus on the Content



Virtual Goodies



Measure



Be Less Formal!

BEST PRACTICE TIPS FOR ONLINE EVENTS

PREPARE SPEAKERS



Eye contact!

Use **an external microphone, a high-quality external camera, and a good source of light.**

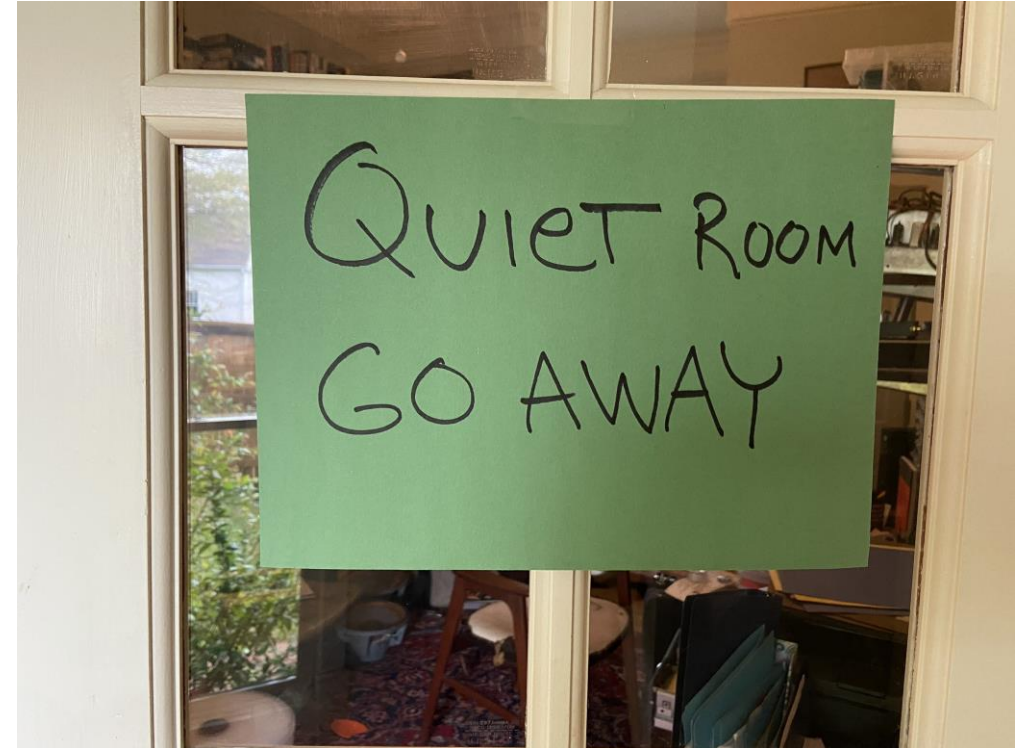
Encourage a **plain, light-coloured background.**

Create **speaker guidance well in advance. Share tips for presenting on camera.**

If pre-recording:

- **Collect video samples well in advance before recording.**
- **Get speakers to record in segments.**
- **Edit the videos for consistency.**
- **Use two devices for live presentations with slides.**
- **Create a smooth flow.**
- **Presenting to a real person will make it feel more natural.**

You would arrive early at a live event to see the space and sound check, do the same online. Prepare your 'space' so that you are confident everything is right before people dial in.



PREP AND CHECKS BEFORE GOING LIVE



PRE EVENT ATTENDEE INFORMATION

Prepare your audience and ensure they have the information they need, even if this is their first online event.

EVENTS...

ONLINE

EVENTS EVERYWHERE

ROFLBOG

DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY



Send out a goodie bag through the post



Deliver a picnic/pizza/snacks to your participants



Send learning materials



Virtual Happy Hour (Quarantini!)

AFTER THE EVENT

Email messaging and follow ups

On demand content

Add to your YouTube Channel

Create a Highlights Video

Make a Podcast

Write a blog post



CASE STUDIES: VISUAL MINUTES FROM A VIRTUAL EVENT



EVERYBODY JUMP ONLINE



CASE STUDIES:
VIRTUAL FÉIS ÌLE - #LAPHROAIGLIVE:

*Think of it as an informal
#LaphroaigLive:*

*No camera crews, no script,
no room full of Friends...*

*but a chance to sip a dram
and share a toast together
through the wonders of
technology.*

<https://youtu.be/WCH5vxfVfxo>

<https://youtu.be/u7CCKu8LBOQ>



BLOGOSPHERE VIRTUAL FESTIVAL

HAPPY PLACE FESTIVAL -

[HTTPS://WWW.HAPPYPLACEFESTIVAL.COM/](https://www.happyplacefestival.com/)

HAPPY
FESTIVAL
PLACE

WELCOME TO HAPPY PLACE VIRTUAL FESTIVAL.

We're excited to present a month-long schedule full of passionate people, music, and activities for your mental and physical wellbeing! Roam around our virtual grounds and discover all the amazing performances, tutorials, and speakers that are making this festival special!

Connect your mind and body, unlock your creativity, and find your Happy Place!

The festival is completely free, but we encourage you to donate to our wonderful **charity partners**.


WHAT'S ON TODAY

CLICK AND DRAG THE MAP
TO SEE POINTS OF INTEREST



CASE STUDIES: THE WEEKLY VIRTUAL PEN SHOW

Hosted via a Facebook Group




THE WEEKLY VIRTUAL PEN SHOW

Public group · 1.6K members

[Join Group](#) [Search](#) [More](#)

[About](#) [Discussion](#) [Members](#) [Events](#) [Media](#)

Unread announcements · 16

**David Nishimura**
8 June at 00:58 · 🌐

The show is now closed. Thanks to everyone for participating!

Next show opens Friday at 7pm GMT.
Remember that you can still contact and make deals with exhibitors during the week -- just no new posts.

👍 8

[Like](#) [Share](#)

About

Due to the coronavirus, many pen shows will be cancelled -- probably for a few months. I therefore decided to set up a WEEKLY VIRTUAL PEN SHOW GROUP where you can show and sell your pens. I hope this will help the pen community! Please read the rules! [See less](#)

Public
Anyone can see who's in the group and what they post

Visible
Anyone can find this group

New activity

Virtual stalls

Panel discussions

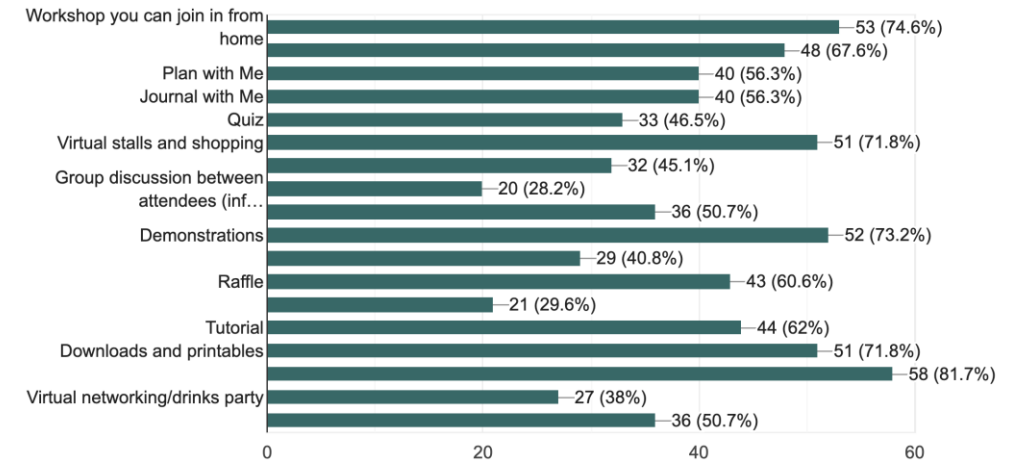
Fireside chats

Journal / Plan with Me

International speaker

Which of the following would you like to see in an online, virtual event (please tick all that apply).

71 responses



PLANNERFEST

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Online arts events (mainly USA): <https://creative-capital.org/2020/03/18/online-arts-events-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>

UK:

<https://www.tatler.com/gallery/best-virtual-online-events-may-2020-guide>

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/mar/28/cancelled-cultural-events-alternative-online-theatre-podcasts-comedy-art-pop-music-books>

Zoom – Running Engaging Online Events:

<https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Running-Engaging-Online-Events.pdf>

EventMB – Pivot To Virtual eBook:

<https://www.eventmanagerblog.com/pivot-to-virtual>



CONFERENCE CALL BINGO



**Is that a dog
barking??**

**Sorry is
someone
typing? It's just
really loud**

**[Loud painful
echo/
feedback]**

**What's that
noise? Can
everyone
mute?**

**Hello?
Hello?**

**Sorry I didn't
catch that, can
you repeat?**

**Sorry I was
on mute**

**I really think
we should
discuss
[unintelligible]**

**Can everyone
see my
screen?**