Remote Communications Tools
Your Hosts

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Defining Your Needs

• What business needs to be done? What can wait?
• Do we need to provide a way for attendees to be included in the dialogue?
  • Does that have to be verbally? Does it need video?
  • Can it be email or text, or can it be either?
• Do we need to provide a voting mechanism?
• Do we need to present or share materials?
• Are we offering options for phone and computer-based participation?
• Are we making accommodations for members as needed?
  • Have you accounted for members with hearing or vision impairments?
  • Have you accounted for members who do not have reliable access to a computer or internet connection?
POLLs
Governance

- According to Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, virtual meetings (such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and electronic or online voting) are not allowed unless provided for in the bylaws.
- Carefully review your League’s bylaws and the specific wording around meetings and items that need to be voted on.
  - What flexibility in location, format, or timing is offered?
  - Is this flexibility explicitly stated?
  - Are there provisions for emergencies or extraordinary circumstances?
  - What power is given to the President, Board, or members to alter the rules?
- If a virtual meeting is not explicitly accounted for in your bylaws,
  - Review the nonprofit laws of the state your League is incorporated in for further guidance.
    - These can usually be found on your Secretary of State’s website or by googling "[State]’s Nonprofit laws.
  - Use BoardSource for further guidance or to “Ask An Expert”
• Once you have determined that a virtual meeting is allowed or received the necessary permission to allow it:
• It is essential to create a system that upholds all rules and laws around credentialing, voting, and presentation and debate of materials.
• Failure to do so could result in the meeting and all business conducted during it to be challenged as invalid.
• When considering technology, it is imperative to track and record
  • Quorum,
  • Voting delegate status
  • Votes
• It is important to allow for a means for all delegates to share their voice
Platforms: Free or Included

- Many cell phones allow you to conference up to 5 people together. The exact number varies by phone, carrier, and operating system.
- You can have up to 32 people on Facetime and 50 on Facebook Messenger.
- Google Hangouts lets you video chat with up to 25 people.
- Ring Central’s free plan lets you host unlimited 2 person video calls and up to 100 people for a 40-minute call.
- Zoom’s free plan lets you host unlimited 2 person video calls and up to 100 people for a 40-minute call.
- Skype is still great. Many of us have used skype to stay in touch with friends and family and it can still be used for internet-only “calls” at no cost for up to 50 people.
Platforms: Paid

- **GoToWebinar** ([https://www.gotomeeting.com/](https://www.gotomeeting.com/)). This service starts at $49/month per account and increases depending on what you need.
- **Ring Central** ([https://www.ringcentral.com/](https://www.ringcentral.com/)) Ring Central’s paid services is $14.99/month per account and goes up from there. It is well suited to meetings of 4-24 people but can handle thousands.
- **Zoom** ([http://zoom.us](http://zoom.us)). Zoom’s paid service is ~$14.99/month per account and goes up from there depending on what you need.
- **Microsoft Teams** (formerly Skype for Business). If you are already and Office365 user, Teams can be a great option for up to 250 participants. It does not offer as many controls for larger events but is great for 15-50 people.
Other Options

• **Google Meets.** If you are a G-Suite user, you may have access to Google Meets which is the paid equivalent of Google Hangouts.

• **Join.me** has a low cost video and conference call options that ~$10/month may meet your needs. It is very similar to Zoom.

• **AnyMeeting** free and low cost webinars

• **FreeConferenceCall.com** (free teleconferencing; dial in numbers are not toll free). Due to high demand, it is recommended you start meetings at :05, :10 or 15 minutes after the hour.

• **FreeScreenSharing.com** (free online meetings; uses freeconferencecall.com for audio)

• **ooVoo** (video chat for small groups)
Bottom Line

• Do as much as you can with the free or included services and via email/texting
• Use Ring Central, Join Me, or Zoom as a paid service
• If you participate in Tech Soup you may get discounts
• Use FreeConferenceCall.com if you have folks with unreliable internet
• Be flexible. All of these systems are stressed and may become unreliable
Best Practices

• **Mute yourself if you are not talking.** Even small noises while you are not talking can degrade the audio quality of the person who is talking.

• **Use a microphone** or consider dialing in with a phone to improve your audio. Microphones on computers are often of very low quality.

• **If you are on video be aware of what is behind you.**
  • If you have a window behind you probably be a silhouette and not visible.
  • A high traffic area behind you may have children, pets, and housemates wandering through.
  • The art on your wall may say more than you are comfortable with in a professional context.

• If you are recording you **must verbally inform all participants that the conversation is being recorded.** Laws vary by state but it is a best practices regardless of the law.
Security Best Practices

- **Use waiting rooms.** Zoom and others have now enabled waiting rooms by default. This means the meeting host(s) have to move participants from the waiting room into the meeting. This helps prevent “Zoombomming”.

- **Don’t publish links/codes to your meetings on public sites.** Any one with a link can access your meeting. Using waiting rooms helps but not making the link available is best.

- **Know how to kick people out of you meeting.** Even with waiting rooms you may find an unwelcome guest in your meeting. Make sure you know how to remove someone.

- **Consider disabling file sharing and chat.** Disabling these features can reduce the mischief that can be done but these features can be valuable for working groups. You should make this decision on a case-by-case basis.
A little grace goes a long way!

Things will go wrong. Dogs will bark. People will forget to mute.

The ideal conversational combination consists of four people.

Beyond four people virtual meetings need increasing structure including

- Using the chat box for questions
- Establishing an order to go around and solicit comments

Consider how to make this meeting more than just a business meeting. This period is difficult and stressful for all of us and the community aspect of League gatherings is more important than ever. Ideas include:

- Speeches from your League president or other board members
- A keynote address or panel of speakers on League-related topic
- Virtual networking hours
- Celebratory videos or presentations
Content

• Watch lwv.org/covidguidance for LWVUS-created presentations and resources
• Virtual High School Voter Registration Lesson: powerpoint presentation with notes for League leaders to present or to provide to teachers
• Tool kits and actions kits on LMS
• Best practices for election events coming soon!
Public Presentations / Events

Tools
• Will you have multiple presenters?
  • Many of the meeting platforms Jason described: GoToWebinar, Zoom Video Webinars
  • Zoom + YouTube or Facebook Live
  • Lightstream Studio + YouTube or Facebook Live
• Will you just have one presenter?
  • Any of the above
  • Facebook Live, Periscope (Twitter), Instagram Live
  • Pre-recorded video
1. Go lwv.org/covidguidance
2. This webinar will also be available on the League Management site
Our Next Topic