

Accessibility norms for online meetings

Live captioning:

- Live captioning can mean a volunteer typing our captions in real time
 - Hiring a professional for this job is always best
- Zoom is great if the organization has Zoom beta, which supports live captioning. Otherwise, Google Meet is a good alternative.
- Zoom breakout rooms *do not* support live captioning.
- When people split into breakout rooms, invite people who want to keep using closed captioning to stay in the main room.
- Or assign people to create Google Meet rooms and invite people to those rooms for breakout rooms.
 - In this case, have the people in charge create the Google Meet rooms ahead of time and then post the link in the chat beforehand. People can be assigned to breakout rooms ahead of time (maybe the tech lead could put symbols at the front of each person's name) and then they'll click the appropriate link to enter the room. Allot a couple extra minutes for transitions with this.
 - Note: The auto-generated captions in Google Meet aren't very accurate
 - ***This is not a perfect solution! I'd really welcome other input here.

Chat norms:

- Having people sound off in the chat is really overwhelming for screen readers. The chat should be reserved for essential information.
- People can use the hand raise option to create a stack to speak.
- An alternate platform (i.e. Slack, Signal, Keybase, etc.) can be used to facilitate text conversation during the meeting.

Speaking norms:

- People should slow down their speech a little to accommodate live captioning and easy understanding.
- People should briefly describe themselves (name, pronouns, location, and a brief description of their video feed) when they start speaking.
- Limit side talk, music, and other obtrusive sounds.
- Everyone should be muted when they're not talking.

Roles:

- Someone should be appointed accessibility lead for the meeting - their screen name should be clearly marked. This person might also facilitate personal grievances during the meeting, though if it's a sufficiently big meeting these roles should be split up.
- Tech lead - on call to help with breakout rooms, mute/unmute people, and help with general issues

- ASL interpreter if appropriate

Other norms:

- If possible, send out a survey ahead of the meeting that includes questions about accessibility needs in order to make sure you're accommodating everyone at the meeting.
 - It could be as simple as: "Do you have any accessibility needs you'd like us to know about?" or "Is there anything we need to know about you to make sure we're accommodating you as best we can?"
- Clearly lay out time frames at the beginning of the meeting, and continue to be clear about times if/when they change as the meeting progresses.
- Allot a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to lay out accessibility norms, describe how to use closed captioning, point out accessibility and tech leads, etc.
- Allow people to enter the meeting a few minutes early to get acquainted with the platform.
- Give people space to voice their needs publicly or privately.
- Don't go more than an hour or so without at least a five-minute break, and make clear that people should feel welcome to take care of their needs throughout the meeting.