Running a Hybrid Event
A guide by Cari Dubiel for Sisters in Crime

Running chapter events on Zoom is hard enough. Once you add the presence of live people into the mix, it gets even harder!

Planning

Considerations to think about before starting your plan:

- **Space** - where does your chapter meet? How large or small is the space?
- **Sound** - who needs to be heard? Does everyone need a microphone or just the speaker? Can everyone hear the people who need to be heard?
- **Video** - who needs to be on camera? Is the speaker going to be in the room or on Zoom? Do you need multiple cameras?
- **Available tech** - Do you have a projector available to you? Does each person use their own device or are devices shared among the in-person group? Do you have multiple or portable microphones?
- **Live stream or recording** - Are you recording or streaming the program to make it available outside of Zoom or other collaborative software?

Your event is going to evolve differently based on these scenarios. You may also have different events that require different technology configurations! Oh, the horror…

Scenario One

Here is a sample scenario:

Your chapter is in North Carolina, and your presenter is in California. Your group is meeting at a local library. Some of your attendees are staying home, and others are meeting in a small meeting room at the library. The library has access to a projector but not a sound system. What do you need to do?

1. Create a Zoom meeting ID and send the link to your group members who are dialing in from home.
2. Send the link to your presenter (make sure everyone is clear on the time zones!)
3. See if you can do a practice session ahead of time with the library or tech person.
4. Make sure your presenter has a webcam and microphone for themselves.
5. Use a laptop that can be plugged into the library’s projector, either via USB or HDMI. See if you can use a laptop that has onboard speakers. If not, get a set of speakers you can plug into the laptop.
6. During the meeting, project the Zoom application and use the speakers for sound.
a. Do people in the room need to ask questions? They can come over to the microphone and ask.
b. People participating on Zoom should stay muted and use a “raise hand” emoji if they have questions. The host can then unmute them.
c. Build in extra time for possible problems.

But what can go wrong?

- **Speakers don’t work or people in the room do not have sound** - Testing the equipment ahead of time will help you troubleshoot these issues. If it is a Windows PC, you can check the sound settings by typing “sound” in the bottom search bar:

  ![Sound settings](image)

  Then you can check your output - is it on/plugged in/turned up? Does it need to be marked as the device to be used?

**Output**

Choose your output device

Speaker / Headphones (Realtek...)

Certain apps may be set up to use different sound devices than the one selected here. Customize app volumes and devices in advanced sound options.

**Device properties**

Master volume

⚠️ Troubleshoot
- **People on Zoom need attention or assistance** - I strongly suggest designating one person, either on Zoom at home or in the room on a different device than the projected one, to help the folks who are only on Zoom.

- **The Dreaded Echo** - In hybrid meetings, it is super important that people stay muted if they are not talking! Echo can destroy the call quality for both the people in the room and the people online.

**Scenario Two:**

Now let’s look at a more complex scenario.

You are meeting at the local rec center in a larger meeting room. The meeting room has a projector and a sound system. It is big and has a lot of echo. Your presenter will be in the room, but some of your members want to attend via Zoom. What do you need to do?

1. Your presenter doesn’t need the Zoom link (yay!) but your audience does. Make sure to send this out in plenty of time for the program.
2. Does your presenter have slides? They will have to be shared via Zoom so the folks at home can see.
3. Do your friends at home need to be able to see the speaker? You may need a separate camera to film them, especially if they are screen-sharing.
4. Your presenter will need to be miked and loud enough for both audiences. See if you can test ahead with the rec center’s tech person and sound system to test both of these possibilities.
   a. If you have access to a wireless microphone, this will help tremendously.
   b. Accessibility is so important already! But it’s even more important in this situation, where your Zoom audience may feel left out by not being in the room. Make sure closed captioning is on.
5. You **must** have a person in the room on Zoom besides the presenter so that person can help to facilitate the conversation in chat, as well as adjust the stream from the camera and/or slides if the presenter has issues. The presenter should not be asked to facilitate in both spots at the same time.

*But what can go wrong… again*

- The sound system for in-room amplification may not play well with the one used for the call. You might need two microphones. Watch out for echo/feedback, especially in a large room.
- Zoom participants may get discouraged/feel left out, especially if the sound is bad.
- Zoom participants may not be able to hear questions from the in-person audience. Like in the previous scenario, you’ll have to make sure that the questions get miked.
Don’t even try to stream music concerts… just a tip from your local librarian who is being asked to do this. ;-) 

Technology Recommendations

*Some Technology Recommendations* - Things you should just have around, or your meeting place should have around, if you are doing events like this a lot.

- Wireless microphone
- Extra wired microphones in case of emergency
- Portable USB camera - [https://www.consumerreports.org/webcams/best-webcams-for-videoconferencing-a2611139859/](https://www.consumerreports.org/webcams/best-webcams-for-videoconferencing-a2611139859/)
- Portable external speakers
- Several devices (laptops, iPads, iPhones)
- Camcorder type camera - [https://www.epiphan.com/blog/best-cameras-for-live-streaming/](https://www.epiphan.com/blog/best-cameras-for-live-streaming/)
- Projector