NAOC 2020: Guide for Virtual Oral Presentations

This document presents requirements and guidelines for giving an oral presentation at the upcoming Virtual NAOC 2020, based on accepted best practices for giving effective online presentations. *Please read through this carefully as you prepare your presentation, and also again well in advance of presenting at NAOC*.

We will be using Zoom Webinars for oral presentations (including oral papers, lightning talks, symposia, and plenaries). For poster presentations, as well as roundtables and networking events, we will use Zoom Meetings. *This document is aimed primarily at those giving standard oral presentations via Zoom Webinars*. If you are unfamiliar with Zoom, you can find out more about the platform here. You can also sign up for a free limited membership, which is handy for practicing your presentation. Note also that the hosting platform for the conference will be EventPilot (info here), which will coordinate the conference and help participants navigate the Zoom presentations and other events.

General

Your oral presentation will be given during a 90-minute session. There are up to six oral papers in each session, and up to 13 concurrently running sessions during each time block. Each session will have a moderator and a technical support specialist. Each session will be recorded, and will be made available for viewing by all registered attendees for 30 days after the end of the conference.

You will have 13 minutes (exactly) for your presentation, including time for Q&A. We strongly recommend that you spend **10 minutes giving your presentation** to leave 3 minutes for Q&A. At the end of the 13 minutes, the moderator will end your screen sharing to allow the next presenter time to set up (i.e., there will be a two-minute transition between presentations).

To give your talk, you will run your slideshow (Powerpoint or some other suitable software) from your own computer, and will share your screen so that others can see the slides. After you have finished the presentation, audience members can ask questions via the Chat function of Zoom, with the moderator overseeing and verbally asking you the questions.

Below we give details on how to set up and practice Zoom, how to design your slides, and how to sign into your session and give the presentation. In addition, *all presenters are required to attend a short training session during the week of 27-31 July or 3-7 August*. You can get more information about training sessions [here](#).

Setting up Zoom and other technical stuff

It is critically important that you prepare your technology well in advance of the actual presentation date. Important guidelines are given below. In addition, you should watch the video from ATIV Software, the company that developed the EventPilot platform we will be using for our virtual conference; you can find that video [here](#), and other useful technical tips can be found [here](#).

● *Download the Zoom Client app onto the computer you will use for your presentation*. The app is required to give a presentation (but not for audience participants). You can download the Zoom Client app [here](#). To avoid unnecessary complications, please ensure that your Zoom app is up-to-date with the current version. We strongly recommend that you use a computer, rather than a phone or other hand-held device, to give your presentation.

● *Use a modern browser that is updated to the latest version*. Chrome and Safari, as well as others, should work.

● *Test your internet speed*. You can do this at [Fast.com](#) or by using an appropriate app. The minimum speeds needed are 4 Mbps (download) and 2 MBPS (upload). Be sure to test from the location where you will be giving your presentation. If your internet speed is not adequate, or if you cannot present your paper "live" via Zoom for other reasons, you will be able to upload a pre-recorded video of your presentation that can be shown during your session. Instructions for this are given below.

● *If possible, use a headset*. The audio for audience members is far better if you use a headset with a microphone.

● *Test and practice Zoom on your browser*. This is particularly important if you have not used Zoom much in the past. To do this, go to https://zoom.us/test and then click "Join." Familiarize yourself with the controls for audio and video. Practice muting and unmuting yourself, and turning on and off your video. Add a virtual background (see official NAOC backgrounds below). Make sure that your headset speakers/microphone are connected properly. In general, make sure that you are comfortable with running Zoom.

● *Share your screen*. You should also make sure that you are comfortable with sharing your screen through Zoom. In our experience, the Zoom test site does not allow for screen sharing. Thus, when practicing prior to the NAOC, and if able to do so, we recommend that you set up a meeting and log into that meeting from a second device in addition to the computer that you will be using to give the presentation. This second device will allow you to see what your presentation will look like to other attendees (but turn the audio off on this second device to avoid feedback). (Alternatively, you can

recruit a friend to log in and help you practice, giving you feedback on screen sharing as well as other aspects of your presentation.) Once you have your mock-meeting going, click the "Share Screen" icon at the bottom of the Zoom window on your presentation computer. This will open a new window that will allow you to select the window that has the audience view for your powerpoint (i.e., just the slides). Then click "share" to start the sharing. *If you have videos or sounds in your presentation, make sure to click the "share computer sound" box before clicking "share."* Note that exactly how you arrange the windows and share your screen will depend a bit on how you are configured (e.g., if you have one monitor versus two on your computer). So you should play around with it to find and get comfortable with a way of screen sharing that works well for you (e.g., allows you to see your presenter notes if you have them).

Guidelines for effective slides for online oral presentations

If you are giving an oral presentation, it is important to keep in mind several guidelines aimed at giving an effective presentation. Many of these guidelines are relevant to any presentation, but become particularly important for online presentations. An example slide illustrating most of the points below can be found [here](#).

- *Key points (detailed below)*: Your presentation will be 10 minutes in length; we recommend but to not require that key text on slides be in two languages; use a 16:9 aspect ratio; use a helpful color scheme; keep the top right corner of each slide empty; avoid videos and animations; use closed captioning if possible.

- *Languages for text*. To facilitate understanding by most or all participants, we are strongly recommending (but not requiring) that all presentation slides present text in two languages: English and one other (likely Spanish, but could be Portuguese or French). This will help facilitate understanding by those who are not fluent in whichever language you give your presentation. We recommend that you seek help with translation from fluent friends and online resources, but NAOC also has volunteers who can also help with translations (information can be found [here](#)).

- *Aspect ratio*. You are not restricted in the aspect ratio you use for online oral presentations. However, we strongly recommend an aspect ratio of 16:9, as this nicely matches the dimensions of many computer monitors.

- *Colors*. Please use a color palette that will facilitate comprehension by people who have some form of color blindness. Recommended palettes and other tips can be found [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), as well as at other sites. Note also that black/dark text on a white/light background is easier to read than light text on a dark background.

- *Avoid having too much content on each slide*. Spread content over several slides where possible or needed. Conversely, don't spend too little time on each slide, or you risk losing the audience. A good rule of thumb is to spend approximately 1 minute on each slide. Also limit the amount of text on each slide; use just enough words to make the key points, and avoid whole sentences. Use graphics rather than text where possible. Also, many participants will watch your presentation on a small screen, so use large fonts

(18-24 point is good). Keeping the amount of text to a minimum will help facilitate the use of two languages (see above).

● *Plan a talk understandable in multiple modalities*. Some audience members will only be able to see your slides, but not to hear you. Some audience members will only be able to hear you (or to read the transcript afterwards, potentially with the help of Google Translate), but not to see your slides. Make sure your talk is as understandable as possible to folks who can only see you or only hear you.

● *Keep the top right corner of each slide empty*. Zoom displays a small window that shows the speaker (you) while screen sharing, and this small window is sometimes displayed in the upper right corner, and so may cover up any text/info you have there. It also might be good to leave a small margin on the bottom and top of the slide to accommodate possible positions of the Zoom ribbon.

● *Avoid videos and PowerPoint animations*. Videos embedded in Powerpoint slides, particularly those with a lot of action and movement, tend not to play well over Zoom. We recommend against using them unless absolutely necessary. Always avoid videos and GIFs with strobes or flashing lights. Sound files seem to play OK over Zoom. If you have a sound file or a movie with sound embedded in your talk, be sure to turn on "share computer audio" when sharing your screen in Zoom. Similarly, animations (especially those with a lot of movement) and complex slide transitions tend to not play well over Zoom and should be avoided. However, we have found that GIF animations play OK over Zoom and might be a good alternative to embedded videos, if possible.

● *Closed Captioning and Translation*. NAOC strongly recommends that you use captioning, if possible, to facilitate participation of individuals in the audience who may be deaf or hard of hearing. Some versions of Microsoft PowerPoint (but unfortunately not all), and also Google Slides, offer captioning of the words you speak during your presentation. You merely need to turn on the option during your presentation.

  o To find out if your version of PowerPoint allows captioning, and also to learn how to use it, please go to this site.

  o To find out about using Google Slides with captioning, go here.

  o In those same versions of PowerPoint and Google Slides you also have the option of translating your spoken words into another language. Unfortunately, it is not possible to do captioning in both your native language and also translation to a different language at the same time. NAOC recommends prioritizing captioning in your native language over translation to another language. Please become familiar with these features ahead of time.

Practicing your presentation

Possibly even more so than for a traditional presentation in front of a live audience, *practice is critical to giving a good online presentation*. After you've created your presentation, run through it several times, on Zoom, to make sure that you can deliver it smoothly and also manage the screen sharing and other technical aspects. If you have the Zoom app installed, you

can start a new meeting, with just you as the single participant, to practice. The tips below will help you prepare to give a smooth presentation. You can also get some good advice from the online video "Deadly Sins of Online Presentations" from EventPilot, available here, as well as from several of the other helpful websites found in the appendix.

- *Use your computer*. Use the same computer that you will be using for the actual presentation. If possible, do not use a phone or tablet or other mobile device. Make sure that you are using a modern browser that has been updated to the current version.

- *Position yourself*. Your screen should be at eye level so that you are not looking down at it (if necessary, raise the computer using a stand or books). Your face should be well centered, and you should be standing just a tad further from the screen than you normally would so that your arms can be seen. Make sure that you are not backlit by a bright light (e.g., open window) behind you, and in fact it is good to have a source of light near the computer shining onto your face (if possible, natural light or light that is not too harsh is best).

- *Pay attention to your background*. It is best to have an uncluttered background that won't be distracting, preferably a blank wall. Consider using a very simple virtual background. NAOC is recommending that you use the virtual background that can be downloaded here. Additional info about virtual backgrounds, including computer system requirements for using a virtual background, can be found here.

- *Dress appropriately*. During your presentation you will be visible to the audience; please wear something that you would be comfortable wearing in front of an in-person audience at an NAOC meeting or equivalent. If you will be using a virtual background, it is best to wear clothing that is high contrast against your real background; this will allow the virtual background to look its best throughout the presentation.

- *Look directly into the camera as much as possible during your presentation*. If you use notes or a script, make sure that they are positioned near the computer camera so that you can read them without looking away. One handy trick is to place your notes directly behind your computer on, for example, a music stand or white board. If you have two monitors, arrange them so that your PowerPoint notes are on the monitor with your camera and the presented slides (to be viewed by the audience) are on the other.

- *If possible, use a headset*. The audio for audience members is far better if you use a headset with a microphone.

- *Use a timer*. Timing is critical for an online presentation. Use a timer (e.g., on your mobile device) to be absolutely certain that you can give your presentation in the allotted time (10 minutes for standard oral presentations). During the actual presentation, you will use a timer and also will be prompted by sounds (see below).

- *Don't rely too heavily on notes*. Practice enough that you don't need to read your notes, or at least enough that you don't seem like you're reading! It is far more engaging for the audience if they feel like you are talking, rather than reading, to them. Keep in mind that when presenting, if you only have a single screen, you will not be able to use presenter mode and so will not have access to your notes. If you absolutely need to

have notes, you should consider having a second monitor, or have the notes accessible via another means.

- *Practice speaking slowly and clearly*. Remember that you don't need to cram in every single detail, but rather focus on presenting the key points. This will help the audience follow your presentation. This also will facilitate closed captioning and make your presentation more accessible to participants who are hard-of-hearing, and to those whose first language is not the same as that being used during the presentation.

Giving your presentation (live)

You will be giving your presentation during a session with several other presenters. Be sure to log into that session about 10 minutes early. The session will be run by a moderator and technical support person.

- *Signing in for your session*. Your session will be a Zoom Webinar, and as a presenter you will technically be a "panelist" in the webinar (the session Moderator will be the Host, and the Technical Support Volunteer will be the Co-Host). As a presenter/panelist, you will receive two emails prior to your presentation: one from Zoom and one from ATIV Software (EventPilot). The email from Zoom will have a personalized link that allows you to join the session as a panelist. *It is critically important that you join the session using this link*; do not join through EventPilot, as you would then be a participant (audience member) and will not be able to present. Open the email on the computer that you will use for your presentation and click the link to join. This will open a browser window that will allow you to join the session as a panelist. You should plan to join the session 10-15 min before the actual start of the session; the Host/Co-host will already have the session up and running at that time.

- *Minimize use of other internet devices during your session*. If possible, make sure that others in your location aren't using the internet during your session, and turn off wifi on all devices other than those you will be using for your presentation, and/or plug your computer into the ethernet with a cable.

- *Minimize other distractions*. If possible, it is best to keep other human beings and pets out of the room during your session to minimize distractions. Similarly, it is best to have a simple, uncluttered background behind you, or a very simple virtual background (if your computer supports it). NAOC is recommending that you use the virtual background that can be found [here](). Turn off the computer notifications that might pop up on your screen, and also set it to "Do Not Disturb" if your computer supports that (for Mac users, you can get info [here]()). In fact, it is best to only have the bare minimum number of apps open on your computer (usually just PowerPoint, browser and Zoom), so turn off email and other things that may pop up during the presentation.

- *Follow all of the presentation steps you used during practice*. Make sure you have an uncluttered background (or virtual background), keep yourself centered on screen with camera at eye level, dress professionally, etc.

- *Timing*. For a virtual meeting, it is absolutely essential that all presentations stick to their allotted time. In addition to practicing your presentation several times to ensure

timing is good, keep your eye on the time. The email you receive from ATIV will have a link to a countdown timer. Open that email on a device separate from your computer (e.g., your phone), and open the timer. Place the device/timer in a place near your computer camera where you can see it, and start the timer at the beginning of your talk. We will also be playing sounds over the meeting to alert you at 8 minutes, at 10 minutes (when you should have finished the presentation and are in Q&A), and at 13 minutes (Puerto Rican Bullfinch, end of the session). When you hear the Bullfinch, finish up immediately as your feed will be shutting off within seconds!

● *Q&A*. We will be running Q&A for the presentations via the Chat function in Zoom. Audience members will type a question into the Chat window. The session moderator will keep an eye on these and will select questions to ask you verbally.

● *Finishing your presentation*. After the Q&A, or even before (after you finish the talk), stop screen sharing. At 13 minutes, the Bullfinch will sound and the Moderator will mute your mic and stop screen sharing so that the next speaker can set up.

Pre-recording presentation (for those anticipating technology issues)

We strongly encourage all presenters give their talks "live", as described above, because experience shows that live presentations are far more engaging for the audience. However, we recognize that a live presentation may not be possible for some (e.g., due to poor internet connectivity). Accordingly, it will be possible to pre-record your presentation and upload that recording to be shown during your session. Again, we strongly encourage you to give a live presentation if possible. *Please use the pre-recorded option only if necessary*.

There are several different ways to pre-record a video of your presentation. We recommend the approach outlined below, which uses Zoom, but other options can be found [here]. Additional tips on recording your presentation can be found [here].

● *Making your video*. These instructions come from ATIV Software (maker of EventPilot), and seem to work well. Tip: you may want to create a very short practice video first to practice before doing your whole presentation.

  o If you haven't already done so, create a free Zoom account at [https://zoom.us]

  o Install and open the Zoom application on your computer

  o Click on the **arrow** next to the text "New Meeting" to either record with or without the webcam

  o When prompted, click on **Join Audio Conference by Computer** so Zoom will record your computer's microphone

  o Click on the **Share Screen** button

  o In the window that appears, select the **Desktop** option to capture your entire desktop or select specific applications

- o Once selected, click the **Screen Share** button and the chosen screen or application will have a green border surrounding it to verify that it is being shared

- o At the top of the screen, move your cursor to the green area where your meeting ID is listed and a menu will appear

- o Click **More** > **Record**

- o When you're done recording, go back into your zoom toolbar and click on **More** > **Stop Recording**

- o At the top of your screen click **Stop Share**

- o At the bottom right of the Zoom application click **End**, then **End Meeting for All**

- o The Zoom app will begin compressing the screen recording and save it on your computer

● *Uploading your video*. Information on how to upload your presentation can be found here.

Appendix: Online Resources

There are a number of online resources that provide input on how to give effective online presentations. Here are just a few.

EventPilot and Zoom Guides

Zoom Support: https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/201137166

Zoom session virtual participant guide: https://ativ.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/24000053016-zoom-virtual-session-participant-guide

Zoom tricks to give a better presentation: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-best-zoom-tricks-being-better-virtual-meeting-silke/

How to record a presentation ahead of time: https://ativ.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/24000054732

Guide for introductions: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/professional-keynote-intros-your-virtual-events-3-silke/?trackingId=z0RA4mph8ZJbOFaSC6b%2F4Q%3D%3D

Optimizing PDFs for online use (relevant for posters): https://ativ.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/14475-optimizing-pdfs-for-mobile-use

Speaker setup video: https://vimeo.com/426002984/d562552461

Speaker training - Deadly Sins: https://vimeo.com/426034969/aaa7f983b1

Other Guides and Resources

Best Practices For Virtual Presentations: 15 Expert Tips That Work For Everyone: https://www.forbes.com/sites/maryabbajay/2020/04/20/best-practices-for-virtual-presentations-15-expert-tips-that-work-for-everyone/#42415f733d19

Virtual Presentation Tips: https://www.duarte.com/virtual-presentation-tips/

10 Tips For Giving Effective Virtual Presentations: https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/insights/10-tips-giving-effective-virtual-presentations

9 Tips For Giving Engaging Virtual Presentations: https://pantheon.io/blog/tips-for-virtual-presentations

Tips for Creating a Virtual Presentation: https://www.stinsondesign.com/blog/virtual-presentation-tips