



NAOC 2020: Guide for Poster Presentations

This document presents requirements and guidelines for giving a poster 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 poster presentation, and also again well in advance of presenting at NAOC.*

For poster presentations, as well as roundtables and networking events, we will use Zoom Meetings. Oral presentations will be using Zoom Webinars. *This document is aimed primarily at those giving poster presentations via Zoom Meetings.* 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. 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 Overview

Your poster presentation will be available to conference attendees in three different ways: (1) as a static pdf with an optional prerecorded 3-minute audio file that is available to attendees throughout the conference and for 30 days afterwards via an individual online link; (2) as a live (3-minute) presentation that you will give during a 30-minute block with 4-5 other poster-presenters, followed by a live Q&A session for each group of presenters; and (3) through a recording of the entire live session, which will be available online through an online session link to attendees for up to 30 days post-conference. For all of these, you will need to prepare just one poster (in PDF format) and a 3-minute talk, which will be prerecorded (for the initial link) and then given live.

The first thing you will need to do is to design and upload your poster and prerecord your 3-minute audio presentation (this audio recording is optional but highly recommended). See below for detailed guidelines and instructions. *You will receive an email with a link and instructions for uploading your PDF and recording the associated audio file before the conference begins.*

You will also be assigned a 30-minute “poster session” during the conference in which to give your poster presentation live along with 4-5 other poster-presenters (there will be up to 13 concurrently running sessions during each time block). Each live session will have a Moderator and a Technical Support Specialist. The Moderator will introduce you and display the PDF of your poster that you had previously uploaded. You will be given a maximum of 3 minutes to talk about your poster. You can give the same talk that you previously recorded or you can change it slightly, as long as you stay within 3 minutes. After all of the presenters in your group have given their talks, there will be a live Q&A involving all presenters in your 30-minute session (in the approximately 10-15 minutes remaining). Attendees in the audience will be able to type their questions into the Zoom Chat feed, and the session Moderator will read those questions for you to answer. Each live session will be recorded and will be made available for viewing by all registrants for 30 days after the end of the conference.

Below we give details on how to set up and practice Zoom, how to design your poster, and how to sign into your session for 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.* More information about training sessions is available [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 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 using and running Zoom.

Guidelines for designing effective poster presentations

Posters will be accessible to registered attendees through the EventPilot app, and will have an optional accompanying audio presentation. Poster PDFs and accompanying audio presentations will be available at any time throughout the conference or 30 days after the conference ends for viewing. A link will be sent to all poster presenters one to two weeks before the conference to upload your poster file and record the audio narration. The audio recording will be done during the upload process, and we recommend using a microphone or headphones with a microphone to facilitate a clear recording.

- *Technical Requirements.* All posters must be in PDF format. All PDF files will have a maximum upload size of 10 MB, and in fact smaller (approximately 5 MB) is better. Once you have created your poster in your software of choice (e.g., Powerpoint, Adobe Illustrator, Google Slides), simply save your poster as a PDF. Once you have your PDF, you can reduce the file size by using this [website](#). Additional tips for optimizing the pdf of your poster for online viewing can be found [here](#).
- *Design Recommendations:* There are no restrictions on dimensions, but keep in mind that while it is possible to zoom in to any section of the poster, we recommend keeping the poster to a size that is comprehensible on a screen. We also recommend keeping text to a minimum and using a large font size (e.g. 18-24 pt) to facilitate comprehension. Keep in mind that some text may need to be in two languages (see below), so we recommend using graphics or other visuals when possible for explanation. We also recommend using discrete, well-labeled sections on the poster to help viewers follow along with the audio file and during the live presentation.
- *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.
- *Languages for Text:* To facilitate understanding by most or all participants, *we are strongly recommending (but not requiring) that the titles and abstracts of all posters be presented 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 the primary language of your poster. You are also welcome to give other text in two languages, if space allows, but this is not required. 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](#)).

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*. Your poster will be accompanied by a 3-minute

audio recording that will allow you to narrate and “present” the poster to your audience. After you’ve created your poster, develop a narration to present the key points, and then practice it on Zoom to make sure that you can deliver it smoothly. 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.

- *Your audio presentation can be no more than 3 minutes.* This is an absolute maximum to ensure proper timing of the online sessions.
- *Refer to different sections of your poster by name.* When participants view your poster with prerecorded audio, they will be able to zoom into particular sections. Likewise, during your poster session, the Moderator will be zooming into those sections. You can direct the viewers to any particular element of your poster that you want them to zoom into as you speak (e.g., Methods, Table 1, Figure 1, etc.).
- *Use your computer.* Use the same computer that you will be using to record the 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.
- *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 make your presentation more accessible to participants whose first language is not the same as yours. Remember that anybody viewing your poster can view it for as long as they like – it is only your audio that is limited to 3 minutes.
- *If possible, use a headset.* The audio recording is far better if you use a headset with a microphone.
- *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.

Recording your audio presentation

Once you have prepared your poster and practiced the presentation that goes with it, you are ready to create an audio recording of that presentation. The overall process for doing that is described in this short [video](#), and also is summarized below.

- *You will get an email invite from EventPilot.* This email will prompt you to upload your content, and will include a link for accessing the site to do that. Just click on the link.
- *Upload the PDF of your poster.* Once you are at the EventPilot site, click on “Virtual Poster” and you will be prompted to upload the PDF. Simply follow the onscreen instructions to navigate to the file and upload it.
- *Record your audio.* After you upload the PDF file, it will appear in your browser with a record button (red button with a microphone) at the bottom of the window. Once you

are ready, simply click the red button. This will start a short countdown, and when it hits zero start talking. *The length of the recording will be pre-set to 3 minutes*, so it is imperative that you get your entire overview of the poster into that time window (practice ahead!). Click the red button again to stop the recording, and then click the “done” link. This will take you back to the content management window, where you can replay the recording. If you are happy with it, you are done. If you are not happy with the recording, you can delete it (click the trash icon) and redo the recording.

Preparing for your live poster session

Meeting attendees will be able to access your poster, with its audio recording, at any point during the meeting and for 30 days afterwards. During the live poster session, you will give the same 3-minute presentation as was in the recording, but you will be doing it live. (It can differ slightly from the recorded version but still may not exceed 3 minutes.) At the end of the session, after all of the members of your group have presented their posters, there will be a live Q&A where you and the other presenters will be able to answer questions from the audience. During your presentation and the Q&A you will be on screen and visible to the audience, and so it is good to prepare for that as described below.

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

Attending the live poster session

During the live poster session, your poster will be presented by the session Moderator and Technical Support Specialist. Note that *poster presenters will not be sharing their screens during their 3-minute live presentations*, but the moderator will share the appropriate poster (without playing the prerecorded audio). When it is your turn to present, the Moderator will introduce you and will display your poster PDF to the audience. You will be given exactly 3 minutes to talk about your poster. The Moderator will zoom in on key parts of the poster as you are talking (again, it helps to have well-labeled sections to your poster!). Be sure to direct the viewers to any particular element of your poster that you want them to zoom into as you speak (e.g., Methods, Table 1, Figure 1, etc.). Poster presentations will be grouped into 30-minute sessions of 4-5 posters, run as a Zoom Meeting, and at the end of each session there will be a Q&A involving all presenters in the session. Attendees in the audience will be able to type their questions into the Zoom Chat feed, and the session Moderator will read those questions for you to answer.

- *Joining your poster session.* Poster sessions will be started and run by the Moderator. To join, simply join the Session (Zoom meeting) through the EventPilot online planner or app.
- *Q&A.* Anyone attending the live poster sessions will be able to ask questions through the chat. Meeting attendees will also be able to message poster presenters questions at any point during the conference via direct messaging on Slack.
- *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.* So that you are not distracted, it is best to keep other human beings and pets out of the room during your session. So that your viewers are not distracted, it is best to have a simple, uncluttered background behind you, or a very simple virtual background. 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 (for poster sessions, you will probably only need to have your browser and Zoom open), so turn off email and other things that may pop up during the presentation Q&A.
- *Good luck, and have fun with it!*

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=zORA4mph8ZJbOFaSC6b%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>