

MOWW Education and Training Committee

To Zoom or not to Zoom

Background: Before COVID19 it was commonplace for geographically dispersed groups and committees of non-profits to hold conference, calls using “Free Conference Call Service” for quickie meetings. This service worked well for groups of 12 or less participants who knew each other and had worked face to face in group settings. Now comes the COVID19 stay home stay safe era. The need for meetings with participants not familiar with each other: the need for more frequent meetings; and the need for longer and larger meetings quickly revealed the shortcomings of the “Free Conference Call” meeting format. One day on an MOWW E&T Committee conference call the question arose: Should we try this new sheriff in town called a Zoom meeting for our next event. The critics say, isn’t that just a conference call with pictures of the participants.

Purpose: To answer the critics and report on Zoom potential in the new normal of the future.

Facts:

- Zoom is a video conference service available on your computer, tablet or smart phone.
- It can be free, but the free module is severely limited in time, participants, and hosting features.
- Pro Plan cost the host about \$15 month and can serve up to 300 participants for meetings up to 24-hour duration.
- Host controls the flow and efficient conduct of the meeting with invitation, mute and unmute commands, hand raising to speak, voting procedures and security options such as password and waiting room.
- Zoom is an American publicly traded company that upon inception received criticism concerning safety, security, privacy, and hacking. Over time Zoom has addressed these issues. Read their use agreements and make your decision. That said probably Zoom’s best feature “ease of use” contributes to hackability. To increase security, there are now meeting passwords and the host must admit you to the Zoom meeting to avoid being “Zoom bombed”, having unwanted attendees.
- Recordings can be made and saved.
- Host sets up the meeting but can delegate a participant to conduct the meeting.
- Participants must load the Zoom Application to participate.
- Initial learning to log onto video conference for first time participants is more difficult than dial up.

Extent of Current Use in MOWW: The Puget Sound Chapter has procured a 12 month hosting Pro Plan and have conducted a rehearsal, two staff meetings, and two general monthly Chapter meetings complete with the guest speakers scheduled for the COVID Cancelled in person

meetings of April and May. It is not known by me, but I would expect there are other Chapters, Regions and Committees who have Zoomed in the past few months.

Zoom Etiquette:

- Mute your microphone until you're ready to speak and raise your hand to speak.
- A moderator will normally have you muted, raise your hand to speak and the moderator will unmute you to speak.
- Enable your video, participants want to see each other.
- Set up your camera/computer device to keep lighting in front not behind you.
- Inform your family that you will be on a video call, if possible be in a quiet location with the door closed.
- Position yourself for a video view from about the waist up and not the top of your head. (Note: Test your video at <http://zoom.us/test>)
- Do not distract yourself or others by multi-tasking during a meeting.
- If moderating, do not shut down the feed before all participants have left.
- Prepare in advance.
- If moderating understand and use as appropriate security features such as waiting room and closing the meeting.

Going Forward the New Normal: With our geographically diverse Chapters, Regions and Committee memberships I believe the Zoom experience learned out of necessity during stay home stay safe operations will have a place in the new normal. The efficient flow of dialog in a Zoom meeting, the ability to bring up visual aids to learning, and to become better acquainted with participant companions will ensure Zoom has a place in the new normal. These advantages ensure Zoom is not just a conference call with pictures.

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