

## PRESENTATION TIPS FOR ONLINE EVENTS/INTERVIEWS

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### Set up your presentation area

- **Background:** Avoid fake or blurred-out backgrounds. No windows. Plain walls are fine, or neat/interesting backdrops like a tidy bookshelf or wall with art/plants. If you have to record from a bedroom, make sure it's really neat.
- **Camera height:** Your laptop camera should be on the same level as your eyes. That's usually higher than you think it is so use books or a box to get the laptop higher. Don't simply angle the screen up or you'll suddenly have four chins.
- **Lighting:** Place three sources of light around you, one on either side and one facing you behind your laptop. These light sources can be windows but better to move some small lamps around.
- **Audio:** Your audio is the most important element. Best quality is an over-ear headset with integrated mic; second-best is earbuds with a mic; third-best is laptop audio and mic with no headset; worst is AirPods, unless you're recording on an Apple device.
- **Notes:** Setup your notes/script file so it's side-by-side with your camera screen so you can refer to your notes without having to look down/look to a new screen.

### Dress up

- Business dress: Solid, contrasting colors are best (don't wear a white shirt against a white wall).

### Interview tips

- **You're interviewing a panel/several other people:**
  - Plan your questions so you can direct them to specific people. ("Sally, please begin by sharing some of your background in the role..."). This helps speakers know when they should talk and avoids people talking over one another. On video you always want just one person talking at a time.
  - Let your panel know to keep their responses short, and that not everyone will answer every question.
  - Structure your questions so you can get some sound bites. Likely you'd never produce the full video for an entire roundtable/panel discussion for readers because it would be way too long. Most likely you'll be snipping out some clips and dropping them into a story.
  - Consider logistics: Use a paid/professional Zoom account so you have the ability to record, adjust your settings so you're seeing everyone all the time rather than just active speakers and make sure your speakers know what to expect. Practice this step!
- **You're interviewing one other person:**
  - Same as above
  - For logistics, if you want a side-by-side finished product, or a finished product where editors can show you the interviewer now and then, you'll need to record the interview on Zoom with your interview subject pinned to the screen, and you'll need to simultaneously record yourself on your phone from roughly the same eye-angle.
- **For all scenarios:**
  - Ask your question and be silent while people respond. Nod and smile to show agreement but avoid audible agreement ("mmhmm" or "oh really?").
  - Pause a beat longer than you normally would between questions in case you need to edit/cut around that question later.

- Your Zoom recording produces an audio track as part of the recording that you can run through Otter for a transcription.

#### Transitions:

- **Live:** Chat with your event organizers ahead of time so you know how you will be introduced, what buttons you need to press, and how they would prefer you end your segment.
- **Recorded:** Remember to say hello and introduce yourself, and avoid time cues. (Don't say "good morning" because it may not be morning when people view your recording.) Script yourself a closing to avoid awkwardness. ("That concludes my presentation, thank you for watching and I look forward to seeing you in person soon.")

#### Technical difficulties/Speakers or interview subject messes up:

- **Live:** Don't panic. If you lose connection, just calmly close out open windows and re-log in.
- **Recorded:**
  - **Presenting by yourself:** Pause, let the video keep running, gather your thoughts and just begin again at the beginning of whatever section you messed up.
  - **Interviewing others:** Acknowledge you're pausing the conversation, but keep the recording going. Take your time to regroup and start from the beginning of the question. Leave some pause in the tape before you begin again so editors can cut segments together more easily.

#### Timekeeping:

- **Live:** Use the "Alarms & Clock" timer on your laptop so your phone is free for texts from conference organizers.
- **Recorded:** Use your phone but you may want to disable the ding.

#### Final checklist

- Turn off your phone audio but keep it nearby for quick text or Teams messages, or timekeeping.
- Turn off (sign out, don't just minimize) email and Teams on your laptop so you don't get audible notifications. Turn off any other program that uses your camera.