

## UNSW SCIENCE DIGITAL EVENT GUIDELINES

The purpose of this document is to provide tips and general guidance on how to run a digital conference or large event. [Click here](#) for online teaching resources and advice. This document should be read in conjunction with DEx's guide to [Online Event Accessibility](#) and Science's Digital Event Inclusivity Guidelines (TBA).

### Digital Event Benefits

Hosting digital conferences and events requires learning a new way of event management. Luckily, digital platforms provide a lot of opportunities to improve the impact of our events.

- **Environmental sustainability** – Hosting and participating in digital events has significant environmental benefits. Business travel, predominantly air travel, contributed to approximately 13.6% of UNSW Science's total carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in 2019 [1].
- **Accessibility** – Not being tied to a physical location opens your event up to a wider range of participants and speakers by minimising traditional participation barriers. It is often very easy to record digital events, allowing them to be continuously shared and watched with minimal effort by the host.
- **Collaborative** – Digital platforms encourage engagement through chat, whiteboard, and polling tools. Many platforms allow you to create breakout spaces for networking and workshopping. Conversation threads can easily continue after presentations.
- **Financial savings** – Hosting a digital event can significantly reduce costs associated with venue hire, travel, registration, and catering. You may need to budget for IT equipment, website hosting, digital licenses, and technical support.

### Things to Consider

- Pay close attention to the content of your event. Unlike face-to-face events where the venue, catering or atmosphere of an event can hold people's attention, a digital event depends more heavily on engaging content. [DEx recommends](#) keeping content punchy, 'Online is not the place for discursive rambles'.
- Have a back up platform or plan prepared in case your event experiences technical or connectivity issues. Have the contact numbers of event organisers and key participants written down should someone be unable to access the internet.

- Make sure to notify participants and presenters of any required room, internet speed and equipment set up.
- The [Equity Diversity and Inclusion Principles](#) are still relevant online. Ensure that you have a diversity of speakers and consider having an Acknowledgement of Country or Welcome to Country.
- Set out any housekeeping guidelines that you would people to follow at the beginning of the event.
- The host or moderator of the event should arrive early to manage any technical issues. While waiting to start an event, consider sharing a slide with an agenda or a message saying that the event will start soon. Alternatively, you may wish to use a virtual waiting room.
- It can still be helpful to set up an Eventbrite registration page and send out post event surveys to capture information from your attendees.
- Ask permission from presenters and notify participants if you plan to record the event.

### Digital Event Challenges and Mitigations Strategies

Challenges	Mitigation Strategies
I am unfamiliar with a digital event platform	UNSW IT has a lot of <a href="#">online guides</a> to help you learn new platforms and offers service desk support for Teams and Zoom. DEx has also released a <a href="#">digital event guide</a> . You can also post questions to one of the UNSW communities of practice, such as the <a href="#">UNSW Teams Champions</a> . Thoroughly test all the features of the platform well in advance of your event to gain confidence with the platform. Ask a team member to do this with you so you understand the experience of participants, the presenter and moderator.
How do I prepare my presenters for the event?	Provide presenters with detailed information on the event schedule and hosting platform well in advance of the event. You may want to have a dry rehearsal with your presenters to increase their confidence. In the week leading up to the event, ask the presenters and moderators to test their A/V set up and to retest it 20 minutes before the event. Try to have your presenters ready on standby before their presentation. Always have a backup plan or platform ready in case you or the presenters have technical issues on the day.
There are so many platforms, which one do I choose?	The range of digital event platforms can be overwhelming. The good news is that most platforms share similar features. When deciding which one to use, think about: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The most important requirements for your event. e.g. Do you need to have virtual breakout rooms? Do your participants require a low-bandwidth platform?</li> <li>The number of participants that you are expecting. Each platform will have a limit on the number of users it can support.</li> <li>What platform will you, your presenters and participants find the easiest to use.</li> </ol>
How do I facilitate an event without seeing everyone?	Consider distributing housekeeping guidelines before a large event so everyone has a good understanding of how the event will run. These guidelines often include how you would like people to ask question and how you would like people to use their camera. Please note that it can be difficult and fatiguing for people to have their cameras on for extensive periods of time. Referencing an agenda will help people understand the schedule of the event without visual cues. Consider checking with your audience that you are being clearly seen and heard, and that your pace is appropriate. If your session is interactive, call out for responses at designated times and give your audience enough time to provide comments. You may want to throw to a particular person or use the chat / hand raising feature to manage questions. For large events consider asking someone to summarise or moderate chat questions.

## Popular Digital Event Platforms

Platform	Good For	Key Features												
		Participant limit	Video / audio sharing	Waiting room	Breakout rooms	Whiteboard	Screen sharing	Chat feature	Hand raising	Live recording	Moderation level	Guest registration	UNSW licenses	
Blackboard Collaborate Ultra	Workshops and talks	Up to 250 people	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High – features can be easily customised for one-way or two-way communication	Link required	UNSW staff can access Blackboard Collaborate Ultra
Microsoft Teams Meeting	Large meetings	Up to 250 people	Yes	Yes	Being rolled out	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Organisers can mute participants and control who can present	Link required	UNSW staff & students have access to Microsoft Teams accounts
Microsoft Teams Live Event	Large 'view only' events	Up to 10,000 people	Presenters only	Yes	No	No	Presenters only	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Only a few pre-selected people can present. The chat feature is moderated	Link required	
Zoom Meeting	Meetings and workshops	Up to 300 people	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	High - moderators can disable chat, place participants in instant waiting rooms etc.	Zoom software required	UNSW staff receive a licensed account

## Useful Add Ons

Platform	Good For	Key Features	UNSW Accounts & Licenses
Eventbrite	Event registration and pre-event questions	An online event ticketing and attendee management platform. Users can track attendance, set up ticket payment, ask attendees custom questions and send out messages to ticket holders.	Most schools and units will have their own Eventbrite account. The Faculty also has an account that can be used by staff.
Sli.do	Event questions and feedback	A simple question and polling platform. Participants can post questions anonymously and upvote preferred question. It can be easily incorporated into conferences and meetings.	UNSW Science has a paid Faculty account that enables moderation.

## Recording Content

You may want to have pre-recorded content in your live-streamed event or make your event completely pre-recorded. If you are recording content at home, make sure to test your audio and video quality, as well as your internet connection speed. Your upload speed should ideally be at least 6(SD) - 13(HD)Mbps. Pay attention to your background and lighting as this can impact the professional feel of a recording. You can also use a production studio on campus to record content with a green screen (this is a costed service managed by DEx). Popular places to store video content include YouTube for external audiences and OneDrive and [Stream](#) for internal audiences. The [UNSW Brand Website](#) offers guidelines and templates for producing video footage.

## UNSW Event Resources

- UNSW Hospitality provides [paid streaming support](#)
- [UNSW Events Toolkit](#) – see [Digital Events at UNSW](#)
- [UNSW Social Media Portal](#)
- [UNSW Branding Guidelines](#)

[1] Unpublished UNSW Document, 2020 (TBA Oct)