SEMDP advice on remote working

Holding virtual meetings

There are several different tools you can use to make video and audio calls over the phone or over the internet. This is not an exhaustive list, just ones that we have tested out ourselves to a greater or lesser extent.

The table below gives you a summary of each.

Tool	Phone in options	Online Video & Audio	Chat	Limitations	How do you set up a meeting?	How do you take part in a meeting?	Security	Screen sharing
Zoom	Yes (usually, but seems to be suspended at present)	Yes	yes	Free option limits you to 40mins for meetings of 3 or more.	Create an online account and then email out a meeting invite to anyone.	Click on the meeting link and either download the .exe file or join via web	You can set a meeting passcode	Yes
Microsoft Teams	No	Yes	yes	Meeting organiser needs to have Office 365. Only seems to show screens of last 4 people to have spoken.	Open Teams and create a meeting invite in your calendar. Identify who to send the invite to.	Click on the Join Meeting link either in the email or in your calendar	You can blur your background. The meeting organiser has to accept outsiders into the meeting.	Yes

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Skype / Skype for Business	No	Yes	yes	Skype and Skype for Business are two different systems so you can't contact one from the other.

For Skype, everyone needs an account. Skype for Business (paid for service) can be used to invite guests. | Log in to Skype. Search for participants by their Skype user name or email address. Use the call button to call them direct.

In Skype for Business you can set up a calendar meeting and send a meeting request. | While you are logged in to Skype, you can answer any calls. | Skype for Business is being replaced by Microsoft Teams, so Skype is regarded as 'old technology' | |
| Workplace / Facebook | No | Yes | yes | You need to be on the Workplace account to access Workplace chat & on Facebook to access Facebook chat | Set up a Chat with the people who you want to meet with, then click the phone or video icon to start your meeting. It's instant, there doesn't seem to be a calendar facility.

In Facebook, you'll find it through Facebook Messenger. | Open up the relevant chat group and wait for the meeting to start! | Meetings can only be held between invitees on the chat thread. | No |
| Pow Wow Now | Yes | Yes (with paid for package) | no | Conference call costs are high, with a per minute charge for the call + a per minute charge from your phone company | Sign in online and you will get a PIN. For the meeting, send the participants the dial in numbers and the PIN. | Dial into the meeting on your landline or mobile, using the Pow Wow number and the PIN for the meeting organiser. | Call can be accessed by anyone with your PIN | Yes (with paid for package) |

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Many systems have a recording option, which means you can record the audio (and sometimes video) for playback later. This could be useful for taking minutes for a meeting, but check everyone is happy to be recorded and whether that recording will be stored according to GDPR.

Virtual Meeting etiquette

It can be tricky at first to hold a virtual meeting with background noise and people cutting across each other, so here are some top tips about making sure things run smoothly.

1) Ask everyone who is not speaking to 'Mute' their microphone. This cuts down on background noise.
2) If participants are in the same room, taking part in the same meeting, it can cause feedback. Ask them to mute one mic and speaker or to share one computer.
3) For a large meeting, ask participants to use the Chat to ask questions or indicate they have something to say, rather than everyone trying to speak at once.
4) Meetings work best if everyone has seen the agenda and the chairperson manages the meeting closely. Give people clear guidelines on when and how they can ask questions (eg we'll take questions at the end of the Report) and try to go round in turn to ensure everyone gets a chance to speak.
5) If you are delivering a presentation, it can seem very strange, especially if you are not receiving any visual feedback. Speak slowly and clearly, and if you ask if there are any questions, wait for a good length of time to give people time to respond.
6) If you are not using video, then it is worth saying your name before you speak, as it can be harder to follow who is saying what each time.

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We have also included step-by-step user guides for Microsoft Teams and Zoom as appendices to this factsheet.

Sharing files

It can be easier to work together if key documents are available to everyone and can be edited by everyone.

- Microsoft Office 365 offers the option to share files through Sharepoint.
- A team can also set up a Google account and share access to files through Googledrive. To set up a shared Google account, you will need to set up a general gmail account and then share the login details with your team. The SEMDP team works in this way, so if you would like some advice on setting this up, just get in touch.
- Files can also be shared through Facebook and Workplace.
- Basecamp https://basecamp.com/ is a team file sharing and project management tool. It gives you a place to share messages, files, and to-do lists, with the option of sending email reminders to team members. You can try it for free for 30 days.
- Trello https://trello.com/signup is a project management tool that enables you to create lists, set deadlines and plan workloads in a user friendly format. You can also share files by adding them to a board which you then share with your team. Initial start up option is free.

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Advice on working from home

Socialise

Keep in touch with your team through phone calls, online meetings and chats. You may find it best to explain how different channels of communication should be used eg use emails for sharing key information, online team meetings for discussing ideas and Facebook chat for general keeping in touch and sharing pictures of pets!

Include volunteers and casual staff in your social conversations so they continue to feel connected with the organisation. Some charities have initiated Zoom 'coffee mornings' as a social activity to keep volunteers updated and involved.

Spend time away from your computer

Using screens for long periods of time can strain your eyes, while using a laptop is rarely good for your posture.

Review the guidance from the Health & Safety Executive https://www.hse.gov.uk/msd/dse/#

Check that your staff are appropriately risk assessed, trained and following guidelines. We would recommend staff working at home complete a DSE workstation assessment on the space they are using to work from and then look at ways to minimise the risks. People should also take regular breaks from their laptop or computer. Encourage staff to move and stretch – now is the time to intersperse working from home with a spot of housework!

Training is available from ihasco https://www.ihasco.co.uk/courses/landing/dse-training?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI_K_A65jW6AIVi7TtCh05BAsYEAAYASAAEgLcCfD_BwE

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Sources of museum support and information

All these websites contain information and advice on topics relevant to your role – both advice relating to the current crisis, but also case studies and factsheets relating to other topics. This may be an opportunity to revise policies or read up on an area of the sector you are less familiar with.

South East Museum Development Programme : support and advice aimed at museums across the southeast (particularly useful for small and medium sized museums), plus case studies and notes from trainings https://southeastmuseums.org/

Collections Trust : support and advice on all areas of collections care https://collectionstrust.org.uk/

Culture24 : Supporting arts and heritage organisations in making digital connections https://weareculture24.org.uk/category/what-we-do/

Digital Culture Network : providing advice on digital activities across the cultural sector https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/developing-digital-culture/digital-culture-network

The Digital Culture Network have also produced factsheets on Remote Working Tools and on Tools for running webinars and online training. https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/digital-culture-network/resources-support-events#section-1

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