

To: ALA/ALCTS/CaMMS Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access
From: Jessica Hayden, Chair, Virtual Participation Task Force
Subject: Report from the Virtual Participation Task Force

Charge

The CC:DA Virtual Participation Task Force is charged with exploring ways to lower the barriers to participation in CC:DA, especially for representatives from liaison groups and from specialist communities. The Task Force will explore all possible options for increasing the flexibility of CC:DA meeting participation, including but not limited to virtual meeting and remote attendance options. The Task Force shall submit recommendations to the full Committee by November 15, 2018.

General Comments

The Virtual Participation Task Force explored the viability of CC:DA holding mixed in-person and virtual meetings. As outlined in the report that follows, the Task Force concluded that this type of hybrid meeting is feasible and recommends testing the proposed procedures at upcoming meetings of CC:DA. The charge of this Task Force as well as selected procedures have been discussed with leadership within ALCTS, and it is our belief that there are no obstacles to proceeding with the recommendations herein. If testing proves successful, the hybrid meeting model discussed should make it easier for CC:DA voting members and liaisons to fulfill the obligations of their appointment.

Background

During the 2018 American Library Association Midwinter Meeting, discussion took place during the CC:DA meeting regarding the increasing difficulty voting members and liaisons face in attending two in-person meetings each year. In this era of decreasing library budgets, travel funding is one of the first things cut for many institutions, leaving participants to self-fund professional development and service-related travel. The Committee agreed to form a task force to investigate ways to ease barriers to attendance.

Relevant Bylaws, Policies, and Statements

In writing our report, we examined the written policies of ALA, ALCTS, and other divisions as they pertained to virtual participation. We also consulted with officers from these divisions regarding practices for virtual participation. None of the policies or bylaws consulted forbade virtual or mixed-attendance meetings. In fact, many of the written bylaws, policies, and statements may be applied to virtual as well as in-person attendance.

ALA

The ALA Bylaws allow virtual meetings and provide for mail votes. Article II, section 4 specifically says, "Membership meetings may be held virtually, and the Executive Board shall establish the procedures for such meetings." Article VIII, section 8 specifies voting procedures in ALA-level committees: "Votes in the Executive Board, Council, committees, and task forces may be taken by mail, electronic system, or conference call, provided that all members are canvassed simultaneously," and sets a default time limit of 30 days for votes, unless the body specifies a different time limit.

Other ALA regulations also allow for virtual meetings. ALA Regulations and Guidelines: Conferences and Meetings stipulate that all meetings should be open to all ALA members, although "registration requirements apply" (A.7.4.4). A.7.4.1 defines a meeting as

an official assembly, for any length of time following a designated starting time, of the members of any board, committee, taskforce, commission, etc., during which the members do not separate except for a recess and in which the assembly has the capacity to formalize decisions. Conference calls, Internet chat sessions (and their equivalents), and in-person meetings are recognized as meetings subject to the open meetings policy (ALA Policy 7.4.4). (Asynchronous electronic discussions by electronic mail or other asynchronous communication methods do not constitute meetings because they are not an official assembly with a designated starting time.)

"Notice of meetings held outside of Annual Conference and Midwinter Meeting must be announced ten days prior to the meeting and the results of the meeting must be made public no fewer than 30 days after" (A.7.4.2).

ALCTS

The ALCTS Bylaws specify no meeting schedule in Article X on committees. Section 9 of that article says, “Committee votes may be taken formally in person at meetings or by electronic device. Votes may also be taken informally when appropriate to the issue.” According to Keri Cascio, the former ALCTS executive director, “We do not have written policies [on virtual participation] specific to ALCTS.” She referred to the ALA open meetings policy.

Other Divisions

We consulted [LITA’s Tips for Facilitating Virtual Meetings](#), which documents that LITA committees are allowed to conduct virtual meetings, and that Adobe Connect is the preferred medium for those meetings. We also consulted with Jeannette Smithee, the former ASCLA President, who echoed the support for the use of Adobe Connect or conference call numbers made available to ASCLA committees for free. Citing the ALA open meetings policy, she stated that all meetings were announced in advance via the division listserv and other appropriate online discussion lists, and in ALA Connect (marked as public). Anyone who wants to attend is welcome, but must register with the ASCLA office first to get the access instructions. Former LLAMA President Pixey Mosley said that for the work LLAMA does between conferences they primarily use the conference call model for the president and board meetings. LLAMA has been using GoToMeeting more on the meetings with ALCTS and LITA officers about the possible realignment. Other LLAMA committees have been using WebEx or Google Hangouts and working on documents.

Remote Meeting Software

While CC:DA has representation from several ALA divisions and groups, the committee is under the oversight of ALCTS. Therefore, software/online meeting platforms must be provided by ALCTS. Currently, ALCTS has three options for virtual meetings: GoToMeeting, GoToWebinar, and Zoom. GoToMeeting provides 25 seats; GoToWebinar, 1,000; and, Zoom, 100. Use of these platforms must be scheduled through the ALCTS office. GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar require an ALCTS staff member to start the session. In discussion with Keri Cascio, she indicated that Zoom may not require ALCTS staff to start the meeting, but this was unconfirmed since Zoom was in the process of being acquired.

Currently, most use of the virtual meeting platforms provided by ALCTS occurs with committee meetings happening outside Annual and Midwinter meetings. In discussions with the Task Force, Keri Cascio did not foresee problems with scheduling an ALCTS-provided meeting platform during conferences. Should conference use during in-person meetings increase over time, CC:DA and/or ALCTS may be forced to consider additional options and a larger number of licenses.

When completing the standard meeting request form for the Midwinter Meeting and the Annual Conference, committee chairs have the option to request a “Skype kit.” When asked about the Skype Kit, Megan Dougherty, ALCTS Program Officer for Continuing Education, responded, “The Skype kit is a laptop with a webcam and a mic for the purposes of having remote participation. It is an extra cost.” Task Force members have experienced some technical and sound issues in using Skype for other meetings, so CC:DA should consider these issues before deciding to use this product.

Accessibility Issues

The ALA Policy Manual (Section A.7.1.3) states that

Local arrangements committees, headquarters staff, exhibitors, and others involved in the planning and execution of conferences and meetings of the Association shall be aware of and sensitive to the problems of conference participants with disabilities, in the selection, planning, and layout of all conference facilities, especially meeting rooms and exhibit areas.

The same considerations should be incorporated into the planning of virtual meetings, or when considering the opportunity for virtual participation in face-to-face meetings of all ALA divisions and groups.

Very little information related to accessibility was found related to GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar. They do not provide a VPAT (Voluntary Product Accessibility Template) or obvious information regarding accessibility features on their website. (A VPAT is a document that explains how information and communication technology [ICT] products, such as software, hardware, electronic content, and support documentation, conform to the [Revised 508 Standards for IT accessibility](#).) The results of a search in the support community online indicates that the [software does not have the ability to integrate live captioning](#); as of August 2013 the software [did not function well with screenreaders](#) such as JAWS; and, as of June 2015 the [product was not 508 compliant](#). The software does offer the ability to record the meeting/webinar and a transcription is created and available at that time. 3PlayMedia provides [instructions on how to add captions to GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar recordings](#).

According to the [Skype support online](#) information, the following accessibility features are built into the interface: VoiceOver built-in screen reader, ability to increase/decrease contrast settings, and ability to zoom content. Skype for Windows desktop also supports NVDA (NonVisual Desktop Access) and [call captioning is available](#) on Skype (Version 8) and on Skype for Windows 10. Skype calls can be recorded and are available in the chat account for 30 days. Microsoft provides a [number of articles](#) focused on using Skype with a screenreader. Microsoft does provide a [VPAT](#) that covers various versions of Windows 10. While many of the features of Windows 10 work with Skype, the VPAT does not include pre-installed apps such as Outlook Email, Skype, etc.

According to the company's [website](#) "Zoom is committed to ensuring universal access to our products and services, so that all meeting hosts and participants can have the best experience possible." The company provides a VPAT, which covered the most recent version of the software as used with a number of platforms such as Windows, MAC, iPhone and Android. Accessibility features include: the ability to provide live captions, resizable text, and compatibility with standard screen readers such as VoiceOver on iOS and OSX platforms, TalkBack on Android devices, and JAWS and NVDA for Windows platforms. Zoom meetings include the option to automatically transcribe the audio of a meeting that is being recorded.

Based on this information as well as personal experience with the above products, the Task Force recommends Zoom as the product provided by ALCTS that is most accessible to the widest audience. While Skype provides numerous accessibility features, members of this Task Force have experienced technical and sound issues when using Skype for virtual meetings. While Zoom does not provide automated or machine-generated captioning, ALCTS will provide captioning services if requested by the committee chair. Automatic recording/transcription files provided by Zoom may also be useful

as an additional information source for CC:DA interns when writing meeting minutes.

Task Force Recommendations for Remote Participation

Using Zoom

There are three ways to participate in a Zoom meeting. Participants may connect with a Zoom Client, the Zoom web client, or by telephone.

Zoom Client

A Zoom Client is available for download. Plugins for the client are issued with some frequency. It is recommended that participants check the client just before a meeting to allow time for any updates to complete prior to the scheduled time. It is preferred that participants use the session URL to connect to the meeting.

Sound and microphone preferences can also be set to start a meeting with the microphone turned on or off. Meetings could be set by default to begin with the microphone muted for all participants. A chat feature is available for meetings. It can be used to ask questions while others are speaking, and allows for posting of website links pertaining to discussion topics.

Zoom Web Client

The Zoom website describes the pros and cons of the web client. "The Zoom web client allows joining a Zoom meeting or webinar without downloading any plugins or software. However, the web client has limited features and functions best on Google Chrome."

Telephone

If a user is unable to connect with a Zoom client, they may need to connect to the meeting by telephone instead. This method offers limited access to meeting features, but it is a good last minute option.

Zoom Account

Zoom also offers a personal account that can be created at no cost. This allows for customization of default meeting preferences. If a webcam is not available, a user may upload their photo for display during a meeting. This is preferable to a blank display.

Practice Sessions

It may be desirable to offer practice sessions to help participants become familiar with the meeting software. These sessions can be held by the webmaster and/or interns a week or two before the scheduled CC:DA meeting. Participants can practice adjusting audio and video settings and learn more about additional Zoom features that may be used during the meeting.

Monitoring Virtual Participants

The Task Force recommends that at least two members of CC:DA be assigned the task of joining the online meeting, possibly the webmaster and one intern. These individuals will ensure that comments from virtual participants are shared with the full committee, facilitate the requests of virtual participants to speak, and communicate any votes from virtual participants. Those monitoring the virtual participants will also be the first line of communication regarding technical or sound problems.

Troubleshooting

If a participant is unable to connect to the meeting, they should check that they have the correct or updated link for the meeting. A meeting link may occasionally expire before the scheduled meeting or the session host may need to update the meeting link.

At times, a connection to the meeting may fail due to a problem with the online meeting software, the computer, or a mobile device. If a user is unable to reconnect to the meeting, they may need to restart their device before beginning a new session. It is recommended that participants use the option to test their microphone and video settings before the meeting begins. The audio volume level can be adjusted if needed. CC:DA may want to explore additional support options.

Committee Discussions

Virtual participants can participate through the chat mechanisms included in all the available meeting platforms. Committee members monitoring the online meeting software will share comments provided by virtual participants. Virtual participants may also choose to speak by notifying those monitoring the meeting software to move a microphone closer to the computer. Special care will need to be taken to ensure that any documents discussed and presentations given are visible to the virtual participants. We recommend that presentation slides/links be provided ahead of time and shared to committee members to ensure those attending virtually have access.

Voting

Per current CC:DA procedures, five voting members constitute a quorum. Voting members participating virtually should be considered present when establishing a quorum. The committee member assigned to monitor online participants will provide votes of these members. In the event of a “straw poll” non-voting, liaison members may also vote virtually.

Recommendations/tips to Chair for running a meeting that includes virtual participants

- Determine how many members of CC:DA will participate remotely and if they require additional accommodations, such as captioning. The Chair should gather this information three months prior to the scheduled meetings.
- Contact ALCTS to reserve use of the online meeting software for both meetings of CC:DA.
- Provide login information to those joining remotely.
- Request a meeting room that has Wi-Fi access.
- Ensure that all documents/presentations available to in-person participants are also made available to all virtual participants.
- Take a few minutes at the beginning of the meeting to give remote participants instructions on how to ask questions or make comments.
- Check whether any questions have been submitted from remote participants before moving to each new item of business.
- Do a sound check for remote participants at the beginning of the meeting to make sure they can hear all microphones. If visual presentations are made, share the presenter's desktop in Zoom so that remote participants can view their screen.
- Make sure all statements are made into a working microphone.
- Allow time for CC:DA members participating remotely to periodically comment or ask questions. It will be more difficult for the Chair to recognize their desire to speak.
- Ensure that votes are registered from all members, present and remote.

CC:DA Charge, Procedures

According to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised 10th edition, the bylaws would have to be amended to allow for electronic meetings:

The bylaws may authorize a board or committee (or even a relatively small assembly) to meet by videoconference or teleconference. If they do, then such a meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows persons participating to hear each other at the same time (and, if a videoconference, to see each other as well). The opportunity for simultaneous communication is central to the deliberative character of the meeting, and is what distinguishes it from attempts to do business by postal or electronic mail or by fax. It is advisable to adopt special rules of order and standing rules, as appropriate, to specify precisely how recognition is to be sought and the floor obtained during videoconferences and teleconferences. (RONR, 10th ed., pp. 482-483, 28-5)

While CC:DA does not have official “bylaws”, it is the opinion of the Chair to propose an amendment to the [CC:DA procedures](#) to include those related to hybrid in-person and virtual meetings.

Testing

The Task Force recommends an initial test of these procedures at the 2019 Midwinter Meeting. The number of participants for this test should be limited to two or three. Ideally, at least one virtual participant will have a short report to provide. This would provide CC:DA with an opportunity to see if there are concerns that need to be addressed.

The Task Force could create a short questionnaire (see Appendix B) that we can give to the people who have to do extra work to make the virtual participation happen as well as both virtual and in person participants. A summary of feedback received will be provided to CC:DA following the Midwinter Meeting. This summary will help the Committee evaluate the successfulness of the initial test and inform its decision regarding further testing at the 2019 Annual Conference and expansion to more virtual participants.

Areas for Future Consideration

If virtual participation proves successful after a period of testing with CC:DA members, expansion to remote options for non-CC:DA members could be explored. Procedures for advertising the availability of virtual and accessible meetings would need to be developed at that time. In all cases of virtual participation, CC:DA should be mindful of registration requirements for meeting attendance. Virtual participation in CC:DA meetings should never cause a loss of revenue for ALA.

Appendix A. Resources

ALA Bylaws, Article II. Meetings:

<http://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/constitution/bylaws#meeting>

ALA Policy Manual, Section A:

http://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/policymanual/updatedpolicymanual/ocrpdfofprm/cd_10_1_Section%20A%20New%20Policy%20Manual-1%20%28final%2011-17-2017%29%20with%20TOC%29.pdf

ALCTS Bylaws, Article X. Committees: <http://www.ala.org/alcts/about/governance/bylaws#10>

CC:DA procedures: https://alcts.ala.org/ccdablog/?page_id=1847

GoToMeeting/Webinar 508 compliance: <https://community.logmein.com/t5/GoToMeeting-Discussions/Accessibility-of-GoToMeeting-td-p/170336>

GoToMeeting/Webinar caption & subtitles: <https://www.3playmedia.com/solutions/how-it-works/how-to-guides/captions-and-subtitles-in-gotomeeting-or-gotowebinar-recordings/>

GoToMeeting/Webinar live captioning: <https://community.logmein.com/t5/GoToWebinar-Discussions/Integrating-Closed-Captioning-with-GoToWebinar/m-p/164224#M8866>

GoToMeeting/Webinar screenreading: <https://community.logmein.com/t5/GoToWebinar-Discussions/Accessibility/m-p/172106>

Microsoft VPAT: http://download.microsoft.com/download/4/2/7/42720f49-1b05-4f66-80d7-1e13dabc59f3/windows_10_client_rtm_vpat_080315.docx

Revised 508 Standards for IT accessibility: <https://www.section508.gov/manage/laws-and-policies>

Skype accessibility: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA12371/what-accessibility-features-are-available-for-skype>

Skype captioning: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA34542/how-do-i-set-up-and-use-skype-translator?q=deaf>

Skype for Business accessibility: <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/accessibility-support-for-skype-for-business-fbe39411-6f25-405d-acb4-861735865d18>

Zoom accessibility: <https://zoom.us/accessibility>

Appendix B. Sample Questionnaire

1. Do you have prior experience using this or similar software?
2. Did you experience problems (technical, sound quality, etc.) with the software? If yes, please briefly describe the problem encountered.
3. What did you like most about attending this meeting virtually?
4. What did you like least about attending this meeting virtually?
5. What additional comments do you have regarding mixed in-person and virtual meetings?

Appendix C. Task Force Roster

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