



## It's Time to Hold Your Meetings Online

By Hewie Poplock • March 13, 2020

Like most members of Computer & Technology User Groups, I am in the high-risk group for coronavirus COVID-19. Many user groups are losing meeting places due to the disease. All clubs have many members who are reluctant to attend meetings.

Since we are technology users, whether beginners or gurus, there are ways for our groups to serve the members. Many groups have already used Zoom to have APCUG Speakers' Bureau presentations. Skype is another service for remote presentations.

You can test using Zoom for free. The free account can accommodate 100 users (including the owner and any presenters) 40 minutes. The Pro plan is \$15 per month (\$180 per year) for 100 participants and up to a 24-hour meeting. One member is the owner or host of the account and must sign in for others to participate. Zoom is quite easy to use and requires a very small file download and use.



Participants can join a Zoom meeting using any of the following: Windows, Mac, Linux, Android, iOS, & more. You can connect with a phone for just audio or use a phone for the audio portion and your computer for the video.

If your group is not a member of APCUG, it is time to join. Member benefits include the Speakers' Bureau, <https://apcug2.org/speakers-bureau/>. The Speakers Bureau features almost 100 Webinar presentations in 20+ categories. Be sure to scroll to the bottom of the page for an overview of what many of the speakers present.



internet access.

To have a member of the Speakers Bureau present to your group, your group may not need to have their own Zoom account. Using Zoom is free to the participant, with up to 100 people online. If you want your members to present and to hold question and answer sessions, you will need a group account and plan. All that is needed is a device, a microphone and speakers (a headset is best), and

If you are hesitant to do your own presentation, you can have your usual business meeting, q & a, and then play a YouTube video, perhaps one of the over 180 APCUG Virtual Conference presentations on the APCUG YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/APCUGVideos>.

If your group has not presented with Zoom or has not used the service, I suggest that you try the free version with a small group to get the feel of it. You can even use Zoom for your Board of Directors meetings.

There is ample help available through APCUG and many of us who use Zoom. There are many YouTube videos to help with understanding Zoom should you need it. There is even a YouTube Zoom Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/ZoomMeetings/featured> .

Another benefit of holding an online meeting is that you can record the meeting and then upload the recording to YouTube, for members who were not able to attend at the original time can still see the meeting and presentation. Your group can create its own channel on YouTube to store your recordings in one place. You have the ability to make your recordings private, so you do not have to share your board meetings with the rest of the world.

During this time when group meetings are being banned or canceled and your members will not attend a meeting due to the dangers, it is an opportunity for your group to try using online meetings. Test it first and have a few members become familiar with Zoom or whatever service that you decide upon. Each of your attendees can be at home and still get the benefits of your group.