

## Running Online Conferences – summary of discussion held at the CBMS Council Meeting on December 4, 2020

*In-person conferences have switched to online formats. What are the issues that member societies have encountered around different platforms? Which are the most reliable professional services? What problems arise when running these in-house, and what solutions have been found? What are the different revenue models that societies are using in connection with online conferences? What is happening to exhibitor revenue?*

NCTM: Had first ever virtual conference a couple of weeks ago. Overall success; technology ran smoothly. Attracted greater numbers than a typical regional conference. Having spaces for networking was important; participants reported this was valuable. [Showcare](#) was the platform. Had good participation/interactivity. Exceeded capacity of some of the tools.

AMTE: Using Zoom + [Guidebook](#) app. Posters asynchronous on [Flipgrid](#). Usually charge \$550 (includes meals) but for virtual, \$140 early/\$190 regular (lower costs for grad students). One-third of each session is supposed to be interactive at a regular conference; we are doing Meetings because that's what expected at our conference. Will have someone in each session to help moderate (pull questions from chat, etc.)

SOA: Had more attendees than in person for first two conferences. Fewer people in third conference. Charged about half.

TODOS: People have become comfortable with online venues. Webinar offerings this summer helped to improve membership

**Live versus pre-recorded:** NCTM was both live and recorded. SOA was mostly pre-recorded. The keynote is better live, but live is riskier.

**Panels:** There has been success with breakout rooms. People are accustomed to using chat and use it quite a bit. Has led to good, substantive discussions. Need to have someone in each session to help moderate as well as someone to watch chat and pull questions. Also, chat can be saved. Important to make video, chat, and slides available after the session.

**Informal interaction:** [Gather](#) enables participants to move around and talk to others that you are near.

**Deciding between face-to-face and virtual:** Will people be able to travel? Will people be able to get funding for travel? MAA is looking into hybrid conference for this coming summer. Hybrid is probably the future. NCSM found that their online conference broadened participation. There was a reluctance to offer an online option previously for fear it would give people a reason not to attend in person. This may require rethinking how to negotiate conferences. Combining in-person and virtual together can be costly. It is difficult to combine them and meet the needs of both groups. In-person and online might be run on different days, or in-person attendees might participate in on-line sessions in pods.

A good *force majeure* clause in the conference contract is essential.