

# CONVERTING TO A HYBRID FORMAT

## ---TECHNOLOGY TIP SHEET---

*(based on one meeting's experience, strength, and hope)*

**These are simply reflections and recommendations based on our experience – they are not the only technology options for hybrid meetings! Also, please read the Decision Making Tip Sheet for discussion topics to consider.**

### ESSENTIAL TECHNOLOGY NEEDED TO MAKE A HYBRID MEETING FUNCTION:

- **Laptop(s)** – for good filming (so Zoomies can see those in-person) and for good viewing (so those in-person can see the Zoomies), there should probably be no more than 3 in-person attendees per laptop. So, based on your expected number of in-person participants, plan accordingly... (but we have definitely had meetings where we only had 1 laptop for 5 people, and it was fine – that's just life on life's terms)
  - If your meeting location requires you to use an ethernet cable to access the wi-fi network, then an ethernet cable (one for each laptop... or see below) is also essential for you
  - Keep in mind that, *if* your laptop doesn't have an ethernet port on it, you will also need an ethernet adapter for between the ethernet cable and your laptop
- **Officially, that's it...** unless you also want to bring charging cords for the laptop(s) if they are not charged up before the meeting

### BASICS OF SETTING UP AND USING ZOOM WITH MULTIPLE LAPTOPS:

\* This section only applies if your meeting is using multiple laptops simultaneously for in-person attendees.\*

**KEY POINT:** If you are using multiple laptops, then all laptops except for one will need to have their speaker volume turned completely off during the entire meeting; otherwise, there will be echoing and/or feedback sounds that will interrupt the flow of the meeting.

#### BEFORE THE MEETING - AUDIO OUTPUT / SPEAKER SETTINGS:

- For only the one laptop providing the sound, go into your computer's audio settings. Turn up the audio **Output** all the way (this is your laptop's SPEAKER) so that everyone who is there in-person will be able to hear the Zoomies when they talk... let's call this the **OUTPUT LAPTOP**
- There's probably access to your laptop's speaker volume on the keyboard somewhere (like on two of the F# keys across the top of the keyboard... one will turn the speaker up, and another will turn it down) or maybe on the bottom right-hand corner of your computer screen

#### BEFORE THE MEETING - AUDIO INPUT / MICROPHONE SETTINGS:

- Once you have all your laptop(s) set up for the meeting, each person should go into their computer's audio settings. Also in your computer's audio settings, increase the level of your audio **Input** (this is your laptop's MICROPHONE) to the highest level
- This is so the microphone is sensitive enough that it can pick up the comments and sharing from all of the in-person attendees, including those in the 'back row', for the Zoomies to be able to hear anyone in the room who talks

## DURING THE MEETING - CHANGING SETTINGS WHEN NEEDED:

**WHEN USING MULTIPLE LAPTOPS:** Below are a few key things that will be important to ensure that there will be no echoing and/or feedback sounds created.

- **All laptops** will need to make sure that their Zoom setting is “Muted” at all times throughout the whole meeting, except when someone at that laptop is speaking
- Then, follow these steps each time an in-person attendee wants to talk during the meeting:
  - 1) The **OUTPUT LAPTOP** must use their computer settings to turn off their laptop SPEAKER / turn it all the way down to 0... the exception to this is if the person who wants to talk is at this laptop
  - 2) The attendee who wants to talk, at the laptop they're sitting at, can then “Unmute” using their Zoom setting and begin to speak
    - FYI:** This means there will be no audio coming out of any laptops while the in-person attending is talking... but that will be okay because the Zoomies will be able to hear what that person is saying, and no audio is needed for everyone else who is in-person because they'll be in the same physical room as the person who is talking at the time
  - 3) Once the in-person attendee is finished talking, they should click “Mute” on their laptop's Zoom setting ...do not proceed to #4, though, if there is another in-person attendee who is next in line to talk
  - 4) The **OUTPUT LAPTOP** should then turn their computer settings audio speaker volume back up to the highest level so all can hear the next Zoomie who wants to talk

## OPTIONAL TECHNOLOGY YOUR MEETING MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER:

**SUGGESTIONS:** These technology items are some that might make your hybrid meeting function more effectively, depending on your meeting's specific needs and preferences. This is not an exhaustive list.

### FOR EASE OF USE:

- In order to improve the camera filming angle (so Zoomies can see the in-person attendees well), we have found it helpful to set each laptop up on some books or binders to raise it up higher. Additionally, we have to scoot the laptop back far enough away that the camera can capture multiple people in its camera angle for filming. These factors make it very difficult to reach each laptops' keyboard and trackpad during the meeting
- **Wireless keyboard & mouse** – because of the above factors, we find it helpful to use an external wireless keyboard and mouse that can be placed in front of one member. That member can then be in charge of using these, which are needed for getting to Zoom controls, computer settings of volume controls, typing in the chat section of Zoom, etc
- This same solution could be achieved with a corded external keyboard and mouse, also

### FOR LARGER MEETINGS (WITH NUMEROUS IN-PERSON ATTENDEES / MULTIPLE LAPTOPS):

- **External speaker** – ONLY ONE of these would be needed for communal use by all in-person attendees / all laptops. The external speaker can be placed in a central location within the meeting room, and then the external speaker's volume can be set loudly enough for all to hear when any of the Zoomies are speaking. In this situation, the **OUTPUT LAPTOP** will be the laptop connected to the external speaker. All other laptops will need to have their speaker volume turned fully off during the whole meeting (described in “DURING THE MEETING” above)
- **External microphone** – you can also get an external microphone that can be passed around the room to whichever in-person attendee wants to share; ONLY ONE of these would be needed for communal use. Let's call the laptop it's connected to the **INPUT LAPTOP**

**CAVEAT:** If you go with an external microphone, just be aware that any Zoomies who have their Zoom setting on Speaker View (instead of Gallery View) will only ever see the **INPUT LAPTOP** camera view highlighted, regardless of who is talking. Zoom automatically highlights the box of the laptop that is picking up sound – so in this situation, it will always be the **INPUT LAPTOP**. An example of this would be if Laptop A is the **INPUT LAPTOP**, but an in-person attendee who is sitting in front of Laptop C is talking into the external microphone, the Zoomies will still always just see the people filmed by Laptop A's camera.

- o **External speaker & microphone combo** – these can be purchased, also. Just be aware the same caveat explained about the external microphone will apply to this type of device as well

#### FOR CERTAIN PHYSICAL LOCATIONS:

- o **TV cable(s)** – if your meeting location has a big screen TV that you can connect your laptop to, then you would need a cable to connect the two. Hooking up to the TV would allow all in-person attendees to see the Zoomies better by having the Zoomies up on the big screen TV (but the laptop camera would still be used for filming). Your meeting location may allow you to borrow this cable while you're there each week. Regardless, you will need a cable that works with the specific brand and model of TV there, so be sure to check into that.
- o If your meeting location requires that your laptop(s) be plugged into the wall via ethernet cable in order to access the wi-fi, then you might consider one of the following:
  - **Longer ethernet cables** – our meeting location was kind enough to provide us with 2 ethernet cables... however, only one of them is long enough to reach over to the meeting table that we use (which is too heavy to be relocated in the room). So, depending on your physical space and the cables you already have, you may need to get longer ethernet cables that can reach to each of the laptops that you are using. *Keep in mind*, though, that you can only have as many ethernet cables as there are ethernet ports in the wall... so you can't expect to have 6 laptops, each with an ethernet cable, to be plugged into only 4 available wall ports
  - **Ethernet splitter & shorter ethernet cables** – a workaround for the above situation is to have one long ethernet cord that plugs into the wall port, reaches to your meeting table, then connects on the other end to an ethernet splitter laying on your meeting table. Then, you could get several shorter (i.e.: 3ft or 6ft) ethernet cables to run from the splitter to each of the laptops that you are using. **FYI:** Ethernet splitters can be purchased with different numbers of outgoing ports, such as 4 or 8, so you can get one that fits your meeting's needs

#### FOR CERTAIN LAPTOPS:

- o Many laptops (especially newer ones that are slim and light-weight) have a limited number of ports on them. For example, my laptop only has 2 USB-C ports. So, if I want to plug in more than 2 things, I need to utilize 1 laptop port to plug in a Multiport Hub
- o **Multiport Hub** – this is a small device that has a short cable on one end and, on the other end, a box (the hub) with many ports. It essentially turns 1 laptop port into 4 or 6 or 8 usable ports. The 1 laptop port is used to plug the Multiport Hub cable into, and then all of the ports on the actual Multiport Hub will work as outgoing ports
  - This device works in a similar way as the ethernet splitter does. For example, using a Multiport Hub would allow me to use 1 laptop port to actually connect 4 external devices – a charging cord, an ethernet cable, an external speaker, and a transmitter for a wireless keyboard & mouse – all at the same time... which obviously I couldn't do with only the 2 existing ports the laptop itself provides
  - These can be purchased in many different sizes (amounts of ports) and with different types of ports on them (depending on what you want to plug into the Multiport Hub)