Zoom tricks and tips for Virtual events

As a platform for gathering a community, Zoom has a lot of advantages - it's flexible and free to use, many people have some familiarity with it, and it can generally handle a large crowd. However, it can be tricky to use if you haven't practiced.

We know Zoom cannot match an in-person experience. You'll be more likely to have a great time if you understand what Zoom can do, and what it cannot do. Read on for some Zoom tricks and tips, and troubleshooting hints.

Laptops and desktops - yes!! Phones and tablets - no!!
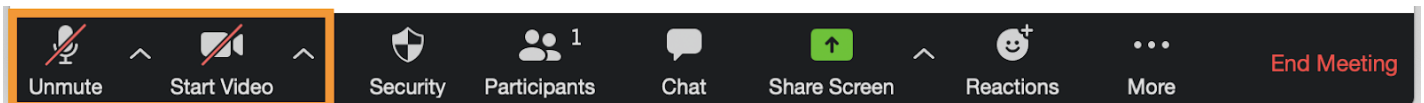
Zoom definitely works better on a desktop or laptop. Really, really better. If you have to use your phone or a tablet, many of the interactive activities will be less satisfying or even not possible. Your gallery view will be very limited and you will only be able to see one or maybe a handful of people at a time. Many of the instructions below won't apply, since the app is different.

Zoom setup

To maximize your Virtual Onas experience, see the instructions and recommendations below. Note that these instructions are all for a laptop or desktop. If you are on a tablet or a phone, you may not have the same options. Come early to figure out your situation…

Accessing and using Zoom controls

If you hover your cursor at the bottom(top, for some users) of your Zoom screen, you will expose the main controls:

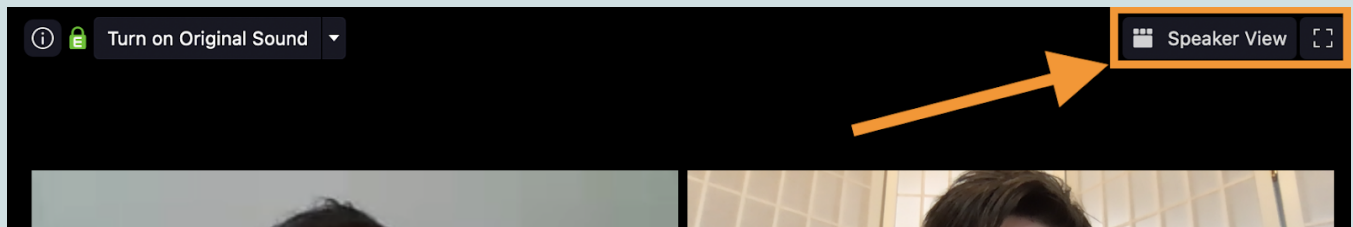## Be polite - mute your mic! (also - how to let your video shine)

You will be muted by default when you join the meeting. **It is Zoom etiquette to mute yourself unless you are speaking.** This is because in Zoom, you will only be able to hear one audio source clearly at a time. This is a hard rule. Zoom "chooses" which person to broadcast, and doesn't always get it right, if more than one person tries to speak at a time.

In order to keep our Zoom event moving along, activities will make it clear who is holding the Zoom mic (metaphorically speaking). You mute or unmute the microphone and video by clicking the mic icon in the lower left menu bar (screenshot above).

You can turn your video on and off by clicking the video icon.

Maximize your view

Zoom is better at simultaneous video than audio. To see as many people as your device allows, choose "Gallery view" from the top right corner (if it says "Speaker View" like below, it's already in gallery view!)

To make one person's video feed stay big, front and center, "pin" their video by selecting "Pin video" after choosing the three horizontal dots icon in their video screen:

"Nametags" on Zoom

Like the nametags we wear at ECRS events (but not so colorful or creative), Zoom labels your video with your name. You can change the default name Zoom assigns you by clicking on the three dots icon (see the screenshot above) and choosing "Rename"

Communicate and troubleshoot in real time with chat

Although you can't really talk all at one time, it's possible to "talk" simultaneously using the chat function. Select the chat function to expose the chat screen. From the chat window, you can send a message to the whole group or to one person (privately):