

A guide to supported online event platforms

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current need to maintain social distance, we need to consider how live events of all scales and types can be delivered online.

While online delivery cannot replicate all aspects of live experience, the early weeks and months of lockdown have demonstrated both the potential and limitations of online events, with people of all levels of digital literacy engaging with new online platforms and forms of digital interaction.

This guide will map existing event formats at Goldsmiths against supported digital platforms, explore what works, and outline the level of support event organisers can expect.

It's important to keep in mind that the principles that underpin successful event planning, promotion and delivery have not changed, even if the medium in which they take place has. As such, this guide should be read alongside [existing guidance](#).

Common Goldsmiths event formats and supported platforms

- Talks, public lectures, panel discussions, in-conversations, Q&As (Microsoft Teams Live Events or [YouTube](#))
- Workshops, seminars and masterclasses (Teams Live Events / Zoom)
- Performances (YouTube / Teams Live Events)
- Exhibitions (Blog / sites.gold)
- Walks and tours (Teams Live Events, YouTube or streaming Zoom to YouTube)

Webinars / online meetings: Zoom / Microsoft Teams Live Events

Zoom has become the lockdown app of choice for everything from family get-togethers to online catch-ups with friends.

Anyone familiar with similar applications like Microsoft Teams and Skype will need little introduction to Zoom.

Anyone with the meeting link and password can join a Zoom session without downloading it. This was not initially the case for Microsoft Teams, although the new Teams Live Events

extension includes this functionality and allows organisers to reach audiences of up to 10,000 participants. Staff can request Teams Live Events from the IT Service Desk.

However, with this increased accessibility comes the risk of unwanted guests gate crashing your event. Therefore, we recommend only sharing your session links with participants who've registered using a platform like Eventbrite.

Zoom and Teams Live Events two-way video functionality facilitates conversation similar to in-person interactions, making it a good fit for events where participants need to engage with a facilitator and each other.

However, the most successful sessions are highly structured and well facilitated. A well understood format, such as a quiz, translates well, whereas open discussions tend to stutter.

It's also straightforward to share slides, images, audio and video through both platforms.

Zoom meetings (freemium)

- Host up to 100 participants
- 40mins limit on group meeting
- Desktop and application sharing
- Personal room or meeting ID
- Private and group chat, Raise hand, Host controls, Breakout Rooms and Whiteboarding

Microsoft Teams Live Events

- Host up to 10,000 participants
- Multiple presenters / speakers
- Desktop and application sharing
- Personal room or meeting ID
- Private and group chat, Raise hand, Host controls, Breakout Rooms and Whiteboarding

Strengths:

- Two-way video perfect for interaction / participation
- Native screen sharing and ability to share slides and other content
- Chat function
- Established as the video conferencing app of choice in lockdown
- No special technical skills or equipment required
- Recording function

- Meetings and Webinars on a paid plan can be streamed to YouTube and Facebook (Zoom webinars only – paid tier)

Weaknesses:

- Concerns over security and data protection (Zoom)
- 40-minute session limit for users on the free tier (Zoom freemium)
- Video quality can suffer with multiple participants streaming video
- Sessions require a clear structure and proactive facilitation
- Event link access to sessions should be managed using another third party application, such as Eventbrite

A good fit for... Meetings, workshops or highly structured activities based on participation and interaction

A poor fit for... Large scale events light on participation and interaction, unless using the Webinar function on a paid account

Useful links:

- [Zoom guides and resources](#)
- [Microsoft Teams Live Events how to](#)
- [Functionality comparison – Zoom and Teams Live Events](#)

YouTube – ‘Go live’

YouTube isn't just a video hosting platform, anyone with a Google account and webcam or mobile can sign in to YouTube and 'go live', streaming to anyone with the link.

Live streams are also discoverable by anyone visiting the site, greatly expanding the potential reach of your event.

You can interact with your audience using live chat, and share the link to your live stream across social media platforms using YouTube's share tool.

All streams are automatically archived and accessible once the stream has ended.

Strengths:

- Established platform understood and trusted by audiences

- No special technical skills or equipment required
- Discoverable by YouTube users
- Easy to share to social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook
- Archived streams and can be re-shared, repeat viewed and analysed for evaluation purposes

Weaknesses

- One-way video
- Limited interaction and audience participation
- No native screen sharing (E.g. slides, images, audio and video clips)

A good fit for... Talks and lectures, performances

A poor fit for... Workshops or small-scale activities based on participation and interaction

What if I want to show slides or introduce multiple speakers in different locations?

You can show slides, images, audio and video directly from YouTube, but need to download additional software, which is more technically challenging than hosting a Teams Live Event.

The benefit is that streaming to YouTube makes your event discoverable by YouTube users who might not otherwise have known about it.

The most commonly used free software is [OBS](#) and [StreamLabs](#).

This software allows you to set up your stream to include your camera (or even two cameras), slides, and videos. Guides are available online but the Communications team can assist you with the initial set-up if needed.

You will need to create a separate scheduled livestream on YouTube, which will provide you with a 'stream key' that will link your software to YouTube. [A guide can be found online](#).

Instagram Live

Instagram Live allows Instagram users to broadcast live to their followers and engage with them directly through comments and chat.

It is most useful for those who already have a big audience on Instagram and are happy for their content to not reach beyond that audience.

Instagram users can also appear as guests on another user's Instagram live. In that case, audiences of both accounts will be able to watch the Live. This can be a useful way of introducing yourself or your account to another related audience.

Levels of support

Goldsmiths Communications Team manages official accounts for both YouTube and Zoom. Access is limited to those events that are *for* the public, not merely open to them.

The means through which we decide on the appropriate level of support is by assessing the likely external impact of your event.

We will endeavour to provide the best support based on the resources at our disposal. It's important to note that our approach will develop as we experiment with new and existing platforms.

Some Departments have YouTube and paid Zoom accounts and will be able to support your event where we cannot. All members of staff can access Teams Live Events by contacting the IT service desk.

If you you're planning an event and have questions about the support available to you, contact communications@gold.ac.uk

Key contacts and resources

- [A practical guide to arranging and promoting public events](#)
- [Principles for putting on a public event](#)
- [Public engagement at Goldsmiths](#)

Public engagement (Zoom / Teams)

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