## Zooming into lockdown routines

Since the lockdown began, we have all had to find ways to remain connected to our teams and colleagues while being away from the office. This has translated into an exponential increase in the amount of our working hours being spent in videoconferences. In an effort to share lessons learned and to make our new way of working the next best thing to real-life connection, we've collected a few thoughts around good practices for successful videoconferencing.
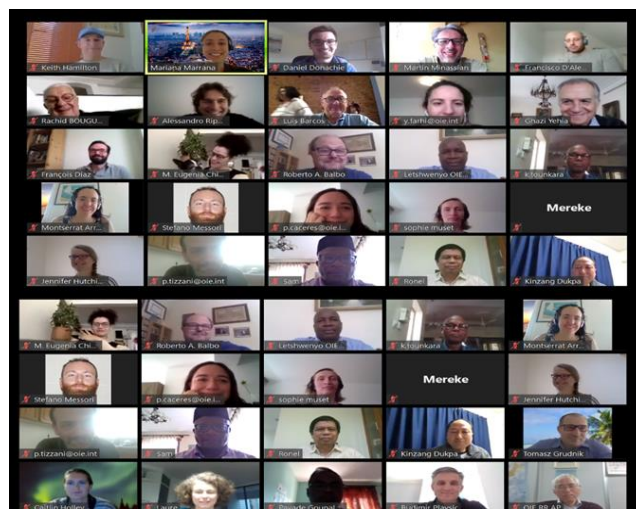
For some of us, the day might start with a team meeting. Whether your morning routine leads you to being fresh and awake at 9 am or not, you would definitely benefit from the Zoom function that automatically shuts off your camera and microphone when you enter a call – it gives you a few extra seconds to arrange your set up. You can also try the 'Change background' feature, if that's appropriate for your meeting's formality. If you're hosting the call, you can opt to mute everyone automatically when they arrive. This is especially helpful when you have a latecomer joining, who may accidentally 'Zoombomb' someone else's intervention.


We can tell you from experience that backgrounds can be distracting – one second you're hearing your colleague talking about the progress of their project, the next you're trying to figure out if that thing on your other colleague's coffee table is a real buffalo skull or not (true story!). If possible, it's recommended to have a neutral background. This doesn't apply to kids and pets – everyone understands this aspect of working from home and appreciates the occasional visit of little friends, both furry and non-furry.

By lunchtime, some of us are at our 3rd call of the day. From our experience, large attendance calls tend to fall at lunchtime to cover the East-West time zones. In these larger calls, let's not overdo it – we don't need to attend every call we are invited to if other members of our team will be there and can provide a summary. Calls with numerous participants are a great opportunity to use the **Chat** and **Raise the hand** functions, to avoid stopping the flow of the meeting and allowing the speaker to decide when to reply to questions. It is also a good idea to check with the organizer before forwarding meeting invitations. And where possible, do consider the length of your call (this is one reason why Zoom basic has a 40-minute time limit), we know focusing on a screen for a long period of time can be fatiguing.

A lot of us will be missing the in-person interaction with our colleagues but do remember Zoom can be used to ensure you keep up those all-important coffee and tea breaks with your team.

With regard to 'Zoombombing' concerns, even though OIE Zoom meetings are private, as the connection information is not given publicly (e.g. on social networks), it's good practice to secure your meetings. Zoom provides a number of options to secure a meeting while scheduling it and offers options for improving security during the meeting as well.
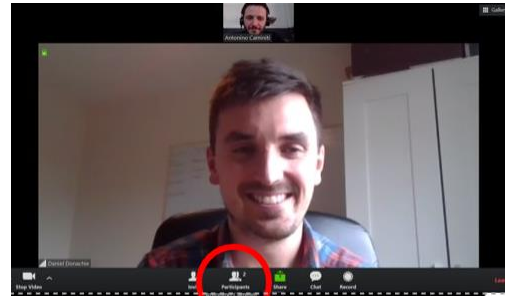
When scheduling a meeting you can:

– Password protect it so only participants with the password can join;
– Enable **Wait for host to join**, to prevent someone entering your meeting before you join;
– Enable **Waiting room**, which creates a queue from which you can admit or exclude participants try to join your meeting.

While your meeting is under way you can:

– Lock it, when all your attendees have joined, to ensure no one else can join even if they have the meeting ID;
– Restrict sharing to you, the host, and enable it only when a participant needs to share their screen;
– Disable private chat, to let your attendees chat only with you but not with one another privately.

A final thought… do ensure that you dress appropriately when the camera is on to prevent any moments of embarrassment.

More information:
Challenges with Zoom and some proposed guidance

We wish to thank our colleagues, Mariana Marrana, Dan Donachie and Abdoul Aziz Salissou Mayana for submitting this article to the OIE News Team.

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