How to improve accessibility on Zoom

There are many ways you can improve the accessibility of your Zoom sessions.

- **Share screen share materials ahead of the session:** While Zoom's screen sharing feature is enabled to be as accessible as possible for screen readers, sometimes sematic markup and full document content can be lost. You can make your content more accessible by providing the documents, notes, and website links to attendees in advance.

- **Describe your screen share content:** You can further enhance the accessibility of your screen sharing by describing what's on the screen. This is particularly important if you are using the annotation tool (screen readers currently cannot read content added using the annotation tool).

- **Share information about how participants can pin videos:** This is a useful technique to help participants stay focused on the presenter, but is also important for participants needing sign language interpreters. Here is a link to how participants can use the pinning feature to keep the interpreter's video thumbnail visible throughout the session.

- **Enable Closed Captioning:** You can integrate closed captioning into your Zoom sessions. Right now Zoom doesn't support automatic closed captioning of sessions in progress, but it does allow a few options with respect to closed captioning: (1) Either the host or another meeting attendee can type the closed captioning throughout the session OR (2) You can integrate a third party closed captioning service. For more information on closed captioning in Zoom, click here.

- **Send out the Zoom Keyboard Shortcuts ahead of the session:** Notify participants about the keyboard shortcuts they can use while in your Zoom sessions. Zoom has a list of the keyboard shortcuts here.

- **Use the chat box sparingly:** Not only is it difficult to monitor conversations in the chat box while also listening to a presentation, it can also be difficult to switch quickly between Zoom's different features when using assistive devices like screen readers.

- **Share chat box content through additional avenues:** You can improve accessibility of the chat box feature by reading aloud the questions that arise in the chat box before responding to them. You can also ensure chat content gets shared via different avenues as well. For example, if someone shares a link in the chat, share that information with participants via email after the session.

- **For further tips and pointers, check out the resources below:**
  - Paul Menton Centre: carleton.ca/pmc/
  - Tips on accessibility in Zoom colorado.edu/accessible-technology/zoom-accessibility-best-practices

- Zoom's accessibility features: zoom.us/accessibility

- Zoom's Accessibility FAQs page: zoom.us/accessibility/faq

- Zoom Accessibility Techniques for Meetings and Classes: itaccessibility.arizona.edu/zoom-techniques

- ASL interpretation: Zoom recommends using the pin and spotlight options to allow users to keep ASL interpreters visible at all times. Zoom has also recently announced the ability for users to pin and spotlight multiple video screens at a time, which allows users to keep their ASL interpreter window visible at the same time as the speaker's video. For further information on how to support ASL interpretation in your Zoom session, see:

  - Enabling for American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters: blink.ucsd.edu/technology/file-sharing/zoom/enabling-asl.html

  - Utilizing Meetings with Sign Language: emergencyaccess.info/2020/05/utilizing-zoom-meetings-with-sign-language/