



Description

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The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has been a trigger for humans to adopt newer methods for the dissemination of information among professionals. One such method is the accelerated adoption of virtual conferences. It is now vital to accept the technological revolution in networking, both as a response to the pandemic as well as for the benefits it holds in the long run. The STM industry is not kept aloof from this technology-driven transition. Virtual scientific conferences are the new networking platforms for scientists across the globe from the comfort of their desks.

In this article, we will discuss the best practices for virtual meetings that would benefit researchers attending these online conferences.

The Benefits Are Real!

More Opportunities to Attend:

With the rise in virtual conferences, it is now possible for researchers to attend as many conferences as possible, which might not have been possible earlier.

Easy Networking Options:

Many conferences provide agendas and speaker details in advance enabling attendees to connect with a wider range of people.

Saves Time, Money, and Efforts:

Attending conferences has always been an expensive and time-consuming practice over the years. However, with virtual conferences, it is easier to connect with experts, panelists, and attendees from different parts of the globe without having to worry about travel, accommodation, and other miscellaneous expenses.

Enhances Your Focus:

As you do not have to travel incessantly across the globe, battling your sleep cycle, it does not drain your energy and lets you focus on the conference and contribute more to your work.

Quick Feedback:

Online conferences allow participants to raise their queries right away through [interactive sessions in the form of Q&A](#).

Environment Friendly:

Virtual conferences eliminate the usage of paper brochures, pamphlets, supplementary materials, etc. and instead makes these resources available online for easy access. Furthermore, as there is not travel involved it significantly reduces the carbon footprint and makes such conferences truly environment friendly.

The Other Side of the Coin!

The transformation of in-person conferences to virtual ones has brought with it challenges along with opportunities. The limitations that accompany these virtual conferences while attending them remotely are seldom inevitable.

Delays in the Conferences:

It is often found that virtual conferences tend to begin later than the said time, mostly due to technical glitches at the organizer's end.

No Accessibility Due to Certain Virtual Conferencing Software:

As virtual conferences are organized for attendees globally, it requires the attendees to download specific applications to join the meeting. In some geographical areas, permissions to download and use certain applications is restricted. This has also led to vast differences in the number of registrations and the actual number of attendees.

Incompatible Browsers or Corporate Firewalls:

Some organizations have firewalls in their systems that block certain web applications. This restricts researchers from joining virtual conferences through their work systems.

Lack of Conferencing Tools:

Not all researchers have high-end audio equipment to attend virtual conferences. This disrupts the call quality and audibility in a virtual conference.

Slow Internet Bandwidth:

A good internet connection is important to avoid [technical glitches during virtual conferences](#). Not only the speed of internet, but also the consistency of network, simultaneous downloads, and other factors impact the quality of the call.

Difficulty in Screen Sharing:

Sharing your screen is another crucial part of virtual conferences. It is often found that the screen lags as it is being shared across networks hindering the flow of the conference.

Accidental Sharing of Sensitive Data:

There is a chance of you unintentionally highlighting sensitive information on your system when connected to different servers, or while sharing your screen. This accidental sharing of sensitive data could cause you and your organization a huge loss.

Pre-preparative Strategies to Attend Virtual Conference

Familiarize with the Conference Tool:

As we are new to the world of virtual conferences, it may be difficult to know all the functions of the conference tool that is being used. Hence, it is recommended to take some time before the conference to understand the tool. Learn how to access sessions, check your audio input and output, camera, screen resolution, etc.

Mark Your Calendar:

Block your calendar by setting a reminder. This allows you to [schedule other important work and prioritize your activities](#) accordingly, so that it does not clash with the timings of various sessions during the conference.

Schedule Your Virtual Time According to the Agenda Received:

You can view the agenda provided by the organizers in real-time, while some of it could be saved and watched later. Manage your time as per the agenda to get the most out of the conference.

Meal and Snack Breaks:

You do not want to starve through the conference. An empty stomach will disrupt a smooth high-

intensity learning session at such conferences. Hence, plan your snack and meal breaks to keep you energized and active throughout the conference.

Update Your Social Media:

Update your social media handles to inform others in your network about the virtual conference. Give its details and other necessary information so that your peers know about it as well.

Making the Most of Your Virtual Conference Experience

Just attending the conference isn't going to take you anywhere. Your purpose for having attended such [conferences must be to boost your career](#). Here, we discuss a few [strategies you can use while attending virtual conferences](#) to benefit from the same.

Take Notes:

Though it is an online conference, go old school and take notes on a paper notepad. This will keep you focused throughout the conference.

Set Up Appointments:

Connect with the organizers, presenters, and key speakers at the conference. Schedule an appointment with them to expand your network in the field.

Network with Peers:

Get in touch with your peers via LinkedIn, Facebook, ResearchGate, etc. who have also co-attended the conference.

Review and Re-watch:

Sessions of virtual conferences are often available on-demand, either during the conference or after it. You can re-watch the sessions you want and review them to make the most of your learning experience.

Interactions:

Participate in group activities such as online quizzes, games, etc. to build a rapport with other attendees.

QnA:

Clarify your doubts by asking queries during the QnA session [hosted by the speaker or presenter](#).

Now that most conferences are held virtually, we would want you to follow these practices and let us know how it has changed your experience of attending virtual conferences. Let us help you get better

at attending online conferences by answering your queries [here](#). You can also visit our [Q&A forum](#) for frequently asked questions related to different aspects of research writing and publishing answered by our team that comprises subject-matter experts, eminent researchers, and publication experts.

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