

# Northword: Guide to Holding Digital Story Telling or Creating Events

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## So, you want to share stories online?

Essential questions to consider before you start:

### **What is the reason for holding the event?**

Is it for entertainment, education, or research?

Will it be an informal gathering, have featured speakers or storytellers, or a more formal webinar? Be clear about your purpose when organising the event.

### **Who is your intended audience?**

Look at your catchment- do you want local, national, or international participants? This will determine how best to publicise your event.

### **Who are your speakers and host?**

Invite speakers who fit your brief. Ask them for photos or biographical information to use in publicity. Make clear the running order of the event and the time available for presentations. Obtain copies of any presentations that will be shared.

The host needs to be briefed on introductions and timings.

### **How will you gather participants?**

First you need to have all your details confirmed: title, topic, date, time, speakers, outline, and details on how to register. Then set up your event on your chosen platform.

Eventbrite is an easy and recognised booking platform which can handle the admin for the event booking. Always check when bookings close, booking platforms usually have a programmed cut off preventing last minute bookings.

If using Zoom [never publish a meeting link publicly](#). Always set up your events to require registration in advance of the actual event. Post the registration link publicly to enable people to register using their own email addresses. This is more secure and takes away the risk of 'Zoom bombing'.

Requiring registration in advance of the event provides you with a list of participants. It is recommended that you use this list to issue a reminder the day before or on the day of the event as often people forget what they signed up for. Zoom allows you to do this easily.

Having a list of participants via registration means evidencing an event is easier, the host and speakers can use this to identify and connect with the audience and it helps you know when to start the event, e.g., almost all people have logged in.

Pro Zoom is limited to 100 participants, but you can buy an add on for up to 500 people.

## Publicity

Use lots of different methods to get the word out:

- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram...). Post on relevant community pages as well as your own organisation's social media pages to access new audiences
- Send out an e-flyer to mailing lists.
- Issue a press release to local newspapers, radio, and TV stations.
- Send a reminder to people booked on the event shortly before it starts (day of, hour before) to remind them to log on – give them the details in this reminder, make it as easy as possible.

## Technical issues – pre-event

Technical glitches can occur, but good preparation can reduce any issues.

Communication is essential therefore your speakers must be fully briefed on what is expected of them. Organise a tester meeting with the host and speakers in advance of the event to check sound quality and think about camera positioning and lighting – could it be better?

Sharing screen - Check a speaker knows how to share their screen. The host or organiser should always have a backup ready to display in case of issues. Presentations loaded as pdfs can be easily used by most systems.

Connecting - Advise that connecting to a router gives a much more secure signal.

Sound

- If sound quality is poor advise that video feeds are turned off.
- The organiser is responsible for making sure guests are confident in the basics such as muting and unmuting. On Zoom the space bar can be used to unmute briefly.

## Role of host – pre-event

Think about the various tasks required during the event and who will complete them. Defining this ahead of the event will help it run smoothly.

It is recommended that there is a Host and a Co-Host. This is a function/term used by meeting platforms like Zoom. Hosts and co-hosts should log in ahead of the event to set up these permissions.

### Questions to answer before an event:

- Who will admit participants? It is best to let participants gather in a virtual waiting room and admit at the start time of a meeting. Some platforms allow you to message the waiting room. It is a good idea to message confirming the event is happening and will open at the specified time.
- Will participants be muted or unmuted on arrival? This can be set-up in the event format.
- Will a chat function be enabled? Who will monitor the chat, respond to questions and queries and when needed bring these to the attention of the speaker/host? Chat is a great place to post useful links and contacts relevant to each speaker or what is being talked about.
- Can the chat be saved for evidence and follow-up?
- Will you record the event? Did you state this in the event information? Did the speakers agree to this?

### **Role of the Host (and co-host) and running a general event**

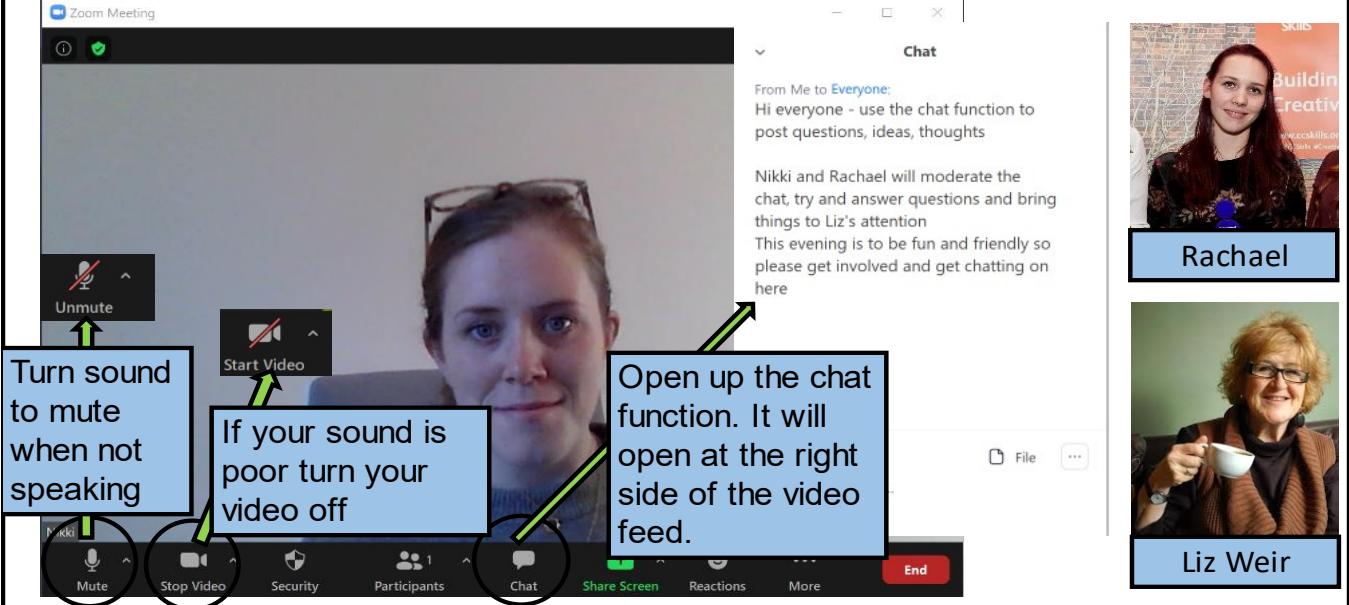
Participants should be admitted at the start time of the event. Someone should be given the task of admitting participants and monitoring the waiting room.

Each participant should display their name, not the name of a device. This is for safety reasons (Zoom bombing). Renaming is an easy task however if a participant isn't familiar with technology ask them to switch on their camera and identify themselves to make sure they are a genuine participant.

It is recommended that the Host makes some casual introductions as people arrive - ask participants for their locations. This provides an idea of the scope of the audience.

The host is responsible for ensuring guests are confident in the basics such as muting and unmuting. Take a few moments at the start of the meeting to run through the technical aspects of the system. This example was used at the start of Zoom events (see below).

# Using Zoom and who is who on here tonight



The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting window. The main video feed displays a woman with glasses on her head. To the right is a chat window with a message from 'Everyone' about using the chat function and mentioning moderators Nikki and Rachael. On the far right, two participant thumbnails are shown: Rachael and Liz Weir. The bottom toolbar includes buttons for Mute, Stop Video, Security, Participants, Chat, Share Screen, Reactions, and More. Annotations with green arrows point to specific controls: 'Turn sound to mute when not speaking' points to the Mute button; 'If your sound is poor turn your video off' points to the Stop Video button; 'Open up the chat function. It will open at the right side of the video feed.' points to the Chat button. Another arrow points from the chat window to the 'Start Video' button in the toolbar.

Zoom Meeting

Chat

From Me to Everyone:  
Hi everyone - use the chat function to post questions, ideas, thoughts

Nikki and Rachael will moderate the chat, try and answer questions and bring things to Liz's attention  
This evening is to be fun and friendly so please get involved and get chatting on here

Unmute

Start Video

Turn sound to mute when not speaking

If your sound is poor turn your video off

Open up the chat function. It will open at the right side of the video feed.

Rachael

Liz Weir

Mute Stop Video Security Participants Chat Share Screen Reactions More End

If you have a large number of participants background noise can be an issue. The host should 'mute all' but the individual speaker once the event properly starts. Make this clear to participants.

This should be monitored, anyone unmuted on Zoom will be at the top of the list of participants so can be manually muted by host or co-host.

If sound quality is poor advise that video feeds are turned off. The host might be able to switch all videos off.

A host can remove a participant at any time.

If recording the event, permission should have been confirmed by speakers and it made clear to participants at registration. The host should highlight this before recording starts, allowing participants time to leave, turn camera off or hide profile.

The host should set the ground rules and order of the event.

Are questions welcomed throughout or just at the end? Spoken or posted in the chat function? Name the person monitoring the chat function so they know they are working at the event.

The host should prepare a few questions to start a chat/Q&A session or to keep momentum and conversation going.



## **Gathering Stories, getting participants to talk at events**

If you want to encourage participants (not just featured speakers) to share stories, you need to provide prompts. Visual prompts like photographs, maps, video etc. linked to the topic can provoke discussion or memory sharing.

The host's role is very important, they need to draw out comments from people on-screen. This pre-supposes background knowledge of the subject, asking the right questions is particularly important. Preparing a list of likely topics in advance should help.

As conversation picks up no one person should be allowed to dominate the conversation. The host needs to be tactful about this. Often quieter people need to be drawn out and noisier people must be discouraged from going on too long.

These types of events can cover a lot of information and raise a lot of questions. The host/co-host should record or take notes to allow for follow-up with participants. Provide contact details for the main person to participants so they can send through information and material.

Some people are naturally reticent to speak out in front of a group but may well follow up after the event.

The host should draw the event to a conclusion on time, thanking speakers and participants.

Sessions should be evaluated by organisers, and participants should be given the opportunity to provide feedback.



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