**HYBRID MEETINGS IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

This material has been copied from the TIAA (Technology In Alcoholics Anonymous) discussion on Hybrid AA meetings:

If you would like to join their Forum, here is the link to their webpage where you may join:

**tiaa-forum.org**

Check out the various viewpoints. This should lead to a better understanding between us.

Love and Tolerance is our Motto…

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/12stepdantheman)

[**12stepdantheman**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/12stepdantheman)

Graham

[15d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/20?u=alwyn911)

[https://www.aagrapevine.org/magazine/2010/oct/anonymity-internet 1](https://www.aagrapevine.org/magazine/2010/oct/anonymity-internet)

October 2010

**ANONYMITY on the internetBy: DAVE S. | Cleveland, Ohio**

Breaking a Tradition can happen on social networking sites, but it’s easily prevented

THE Traditions are of the utmost importance for the survival of AA as a whole, but they were written in an era when methods of communication were fairly limited, consequently leaving some holes for the AAs of today to fill in. I remember when I first started thinking about anonymity, the Eleventh Tradition and the internet. Turning to the AA World Service pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity,” I looked for answers. The pamphlet says that websites should be considered public media, and therefore we shouldn’t use our full name or images on any public site. It goes on to say that “. . . the level of anonymity in emails, online meetings, and chat rooms would be a personal decision.”

Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/wrod1953)

[**wrod1953**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/wrod1953)

[15d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/21?u=alwyn911)

I found that true in many cases also

Woody R  
Stockton Ca

Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/davemcisaac)

[**davemcisaac**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/davemcisaac)

Graham

[15d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/22?u=alwyn911)

[**@rkr629**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/rkr629) Karl, with that logic, we certainly can’t trust anybody with a smart phone because they could potentially secretly video the meeting and post it on their Facebook page for the world to see. I’ve had to stop people (some with 20+ years of sobriety) in the process of videoing a birthday celebration during our meeting, which they planned on posting on Facebook!

There is no iron clad way of guaranteeing everybody’s anonymity in any meeting. My sponsor used to say, “If you want to get home before your wife hears what you said in the meeting, you’d better hurry!” That’s the risk we take when we allow people - especially alcoholics - into our meetings. We have no reason to expect someone to be videoing or taking screenshots just to blow our anonymity.

I’m just looking for more insight so our group can have an informed group conscience to decide where we go from here. There are several members with health and age issues who have been able to attend our meetings again now we are online and are afraid we will take this away from them when the lock down is fully lifted. Should we deny them this opportunity to again be a part of the group just because we are afraid of what someone might do?

Dave M

Sundowners goup

Pocatello, ID

Dave

2

Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/moose)

[**moose**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/moose)

davemcisaac

[14d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/23?u=alwyn911)

What ifs…  
Endless…  
Covid presented an opportunity to DO something.  
The what ifs, … were set aside, . and we all started doing, the best we could.  
And it worked.  
Moving forward there’s an opportunity to honour the primary purpose and continue innovating.

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Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/stephendpalmer)

[**stephendpalmer**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/stephendpalmer)

[14d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/24?u=alwyn911)

Hi All - Steve alcoholic Atlanta, GA. We’ve had a lot of positive reactions to our Zoom meetings as well, and many people who have moved expressed gratitude that they can visit and see old friends again. Our meeting is in a church and the wifi is sometimes spotty, so we thought one solution might be to have the chairperson set up the meeting, and launch through the app and leave phone open for offsite attendees to hear. People that are physically present would have the option to log in on their own phones as well if they want to be seen. Otherwise, they can just attend the physical meeting and only be heard on the phone by Zoom attendees - no issues of anonymity.  
What do you guys think?

Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/concretedunkey)

[**concretedunkey**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/concretedunkey)

[13d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/25?u=alwyn911)

Hi,

A few people in my local group have asked about this - I’m glad to see there’s a topic already running about it. There’s been some discussion within my group about ways to do this. There’s a couple mindsets we’re trying to accommodate - different levels of technical capability, different levels of resistance to change, and different levels of privacy concerns.

Minimizing impact on those members who want to meet in person is really crucial; they’re the ones that are going to be most resistant and yet someone in the room will also need to set the connection up. As usual, the human issues will play the biggest role in this. We’re going to try to mitigate that by mocking something up and having a working solution before we push forward with the group.

A big consideration is how to handle sound. Our group is fortunate to already have a simple sound system in-place with a microphone and speakers in the drop-ceiling. A computer would be hooked in to that; for those attending digitally, all would be normal.

For those attending in-person, there are concerns with passing a microphone around. One solution would be distributed microphones that pick up from a ways away, but there are potential technical issues there (does anyone have experience with microphone arrays?). Another solution would be to change the format to that of a call-up meeting, where members speak from behind the podium.

For video, we would get a display which would hang either in-front-of or behind the podium. There are concerns about having a camera in the meeting room. We may consider it a cherry-on-top thing, where it’s not something we push for. If we do have a camera, we could set it up so that it only looks at the person behind the podium (in a call-up style meeting). If someone were to share from the podium who wants to be visible to all, the lens cover could be opened (this could be a handkerchief). We could also have the camera set so that it only looks at part of the room.

We think that to run the meeting, it would be good to have both an in-person chair and a technical chair. If something goes wrong, the meeting would split and each chair would simply run the meetings separately. Otherwise, the in-person chair would have to get things turned on and connected. The technical chair would manage the web based members. Both would have admin rights over the digital portion.

We’re talking about introducing the hybrid meeting through the first (or early) in-person group conscience meeting. It would be in the form of someone bringing along a laptop, in order to give a voice to members of the group unable to attend in person. A laptop would just be at one end of a meeting table. We don’t have internet yet, so it may have to be online through a hotspot. I hope that’s enough bandwidth (that would be another big consideration - if the group is willing to get an internet connection).

Eventually, the group would need a computer that stays with the group. A laptop would be a simple solution, but may be liable to walk away. I’ve been looking into a Raspberry Pi, which would be more resistant to that. Once a keyboard, mouse, housing, power supply, USB-microphone line, SD card, camera, and some of the cabling required are included, it’s not exactly the cheap solution I was hoping for. But with spare time, it’s looking like a fun hobby. Troubleshooting may be less user-friendly, but it could be easier to run all the time. With the right scripts, it could be fairly locked-down, and only useful to run a meeting. It may be possible to have the remote chair control that computer… but that’s a bit more legwork. There is discussion elsewhere about using these for video-conferencing; it sounds like there’s options for Zoom, Google Hangouts, and others.

Does this sound doable? Reasonable? I’d welcome advice or feedback on any part of this. There’s a bunch of parts to this, but it’s fun to think about!

Thanks!

Jim A

1 Reply

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Reply

**10 DAYS LATER**

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/bill.w.ahegao)

[**bill.w.ahegao**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/bill.w.ahegao)

[2d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/26?u=alwyn911)

Honestly, my first suggestion about hybrid meetings is don’t do it. I gave a talk to a collection of people about hybrid meetings, you can find the audio here. It includes a Q&A.

[drive.google.com 22](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T7lEwsw1-EnIXgrv5A8xazozcYddPNdS/view?usp=sharing)

[**Coree\_H\_hybrid\_meetings.m4a**2](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1T7lEwsw1-EnIXgrv5A8xazozcYddPNdS/view?usp=sharing)

Google Drive file.

The idea that a hybrid meeting will replicate an in person meeting is a useless errand, and the biggest issue is having a stable enough internet connection to do this well. Then if you want to full replicate an in person meeting with Zoom… It’s just not worth it.

Play to the strengths of the platform, and don’t try to make it into something it isn’t.

1 Reply

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Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/jpkeeley)

[**jpkeeley**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/jpkeeley)

concretedunkey

[2d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/27?u=alwyn911)

Excellent insight and ideas Jim!

We (Woodstock Alano Club in Illinois) are planning a hybrid with a dedicated computer and camera.

TODAY WE REOPEN! We know some at the meeting and on Zoom will have a concerns about privacy, anonymity risk and internet security.

Our Zoom-only meetings were great, people came and loved it’s ease of accessibility from home or car.

Me being a Techboy for forty years have learned most fears, confusion and complaints came from Members with very little experience or knowledge of technology. I feel to every technology concern “There is a Solution”!

The technically inclined at the meeting today will find a whole lot in today’s meeting.

My biggest concern is connection, there is a solution to that too… That costs money. I’ll learn if my Hotspot does the trick. Then, we’ll need somebody to manage (as you mentioned) the tech aspect at every (?) meeting.

Thanks for your thought-provoking post!

Joe K

JPK

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Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/SusanDC)

[**SusanDC**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/SusanDC)

bill.w.ahegao

[2d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/28?u=alwyn911)

Many of us will be unable to attend in-person meetings for a long time. A hybrid meeting is not the same but does make an attempt to be inclusive. At least calling into the virtual meeting and passing the phone to the person speaking at the in person meeting would save on bandwidth

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Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/TimC-area06)

[**TimC-area06**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/TimC-area06)

[2d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/29?u=alwyn911)

Companies have been doing this for years.  
Like moving meetings to zoom, an idea that would have never flown anywhere in November of 2019, it will take some adjustment and creative thinking.

The one thing we have seen out of this entire virus mess, is that we can innovate, folks have become overwhelmingly interested in solution based meetings, that the unity statement at the bottom of page 17, Big Book, is a message worth carrying.

Rock and roll.  
Please keep us advised as we have three meetings we want to do this with.

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Reply

[](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/Cheri)

[**Cheri**](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/u/Cheri)TIAA organization group

[2d](https://discourse.tiaa-forum.org/t/hybrid-meeting-technologies/3442/30?u=alwyn911)

My home group has had the available space to continue in-person meetings but started zoom meetings to accommodate those who didn’t want to come to the hall - our group business meetings in the past 2 months have been an experiment in hybrid meeting and we finally found something that seems to work as we move forward - we have always had members that either temporarily or permanently couldn’t make it to in-person meetings and as a group we have decided that we want to keep some kind of virtual meetings to allow those members to stay involved with the group  
first i have to say that we do have adequate internet in our building  
we are using a Bluetooth speaker/microphone ($25) and hooking it to one device - both the speaker and microphone are good for up to 30 feet - we connect that to 1 device  
if other people want to join on their phone/tablet/computer for video they are welcome to - but they stay muted to prevent any feedback  
if someone doesn’t want to join in on the video portion they don’t have to but can hear as everyone in the room shares and can hear everyone on zoom share and can share themselves without any worry about being seen or identified if someone “unknown” bounces into the meeting -  
the in-person meeting leader is the one that makes sure that people not on video are not overlooked  
once we figured out this system it seems to have worked well at the last 2 business type meetings we have had - we will begin trying it at a few regular AA meetings starting in June  
i will let you know if this succeeds wonderfully or fails miserably