Google Hangouts Meet
MLA Technology Committee, January 2018

In mid-January 2018, **G Suite customers** (such as @maryland.gov, @pgcmls.info, @prattlibrary.org) were migrated to **Hangouts Meet**. Meet is basically Hangouts with a new look and feel.

Private, personal “@gmail” accounts still have the classic Google Hangouts that has been around since 2013.

**Hangouts Meet interface**

- **Mute mic, Hang up, and Mute camera** buttons are on the **bottom of the window**.
- **Thumbnails** of the participants appear along the **right side of the window**. Thumbnails cover up the chat window.
- **Chat** is accessed on the right side of the window. Chat covers up the thumbnails.
- **Present now** is the Meet name for Screenshare. The icon is near the **lower right corner**.
- The vertical 3 dot **More options** icon, in the **lower right corner**, is where you find the mic, camera and speaker settings.

Note: When G Suite users invite ordinary @gmail users to a Hangout, they may have to explain the new interface to the @gmail account holders.
Using Calendar to schedule the Hangouts Meet

Every youtube tutorial seems to start by suggesting you use Google Calendar to create your hangouts. Calendar is a very efficient tool, especially if you are planning a work meeting around people’s schedules.

Your guests
- receive an email invitation that includes the link to the video call,
- the event is added to their Google Calendars,
- the Calendar event also includes a Join video call link, and
- their mobile devices remind them when the meeting is about to begin (if they have Google Calendar on their mobile).

New Google Calendar, Fall 2017

Add a title.
Click MORE OPTIONS.
Under **Add video conferencing**, choose **Hangouts Meet**.

Under **Guests**, add the G Suite / Gmail addresses of the people you are inviting.
The addresses you add to the guest list will receive an email invitation.

- **The invitation** will contain:
  - RSVP links (Yes, Maybe, No) – you receive a notice whichever they choose.
    - If the recipients click Yes to the invitation, an entry for the event will be added to their Google Calendar.
  - A link to join the video call – which they can use whether they reply, or not.
  - If the invitation goes to a non-Gmail, or non-G Suite, address, the invitee will be prompted to sign into Gmail in order to access the Hangout.

- The **video call link** will be active as soon as you SAVE the event in Calendar.
  - You can use the link to practice joining/leaving, muting, etc., with people you have invited to the meeting who do not have Hangouts experience.
Using Meet to schedule a Hangouts Meet

G Suite customers’ Hangouts icon, found among your Google apps, is now labeled Meet.

Meet main menu

When you click on the Meet icon you have two choices.
+ Start a new meeting

Start a new meeting is an unscheduled meeting; a meeting on the fly. Guests may be unavailable.

After you click START MEETING, a box with a URL will appear. Copy and email the URL to everyone you want to invite to your meeting.

If someone sends you email containing a Meet URL, click on it to join the video call.

Caveats about using of “Start a new meeting” for scheduled meetings

- When the invitees click on the link you sent, they are prompted to click a box labeled ASK TO JOIN MEETING, and the meeting planner has to ADMIT them, one by one.
  - With Start a new meeting you are committing yourself to the distraction of managing the comings and goings of the invitees when you are run the meeting.
  - When Google Calendar is used to schedule a meeting the participants are able to admit themselves.

- Using Start a new meeting is like using Calendar to schedule the meeting without the benefit of having the event show up on your calendar, or your guests’ Google Calendars, or any mobile Google Calendar users receiving a meeting reminder on their mobile.
Use a meeting code

The code is the string of characters at the end of the URL.
- URL meet.google.com/wpp-zhgz-inw
- Code: wpp-zhgz-inw.
- Because the code is not the whole URL it is only useful for G Suite meetings within a G Suite organization, such as just among Pratt staff, or just among PGCMLS staff.

If someone sends you such a Meet code:

1. Copy the code.
2. Click on the Meet icon in Google apps.
3. Click on Use a meeting code.
4. Paste the code into the pop up.
5. Click JOIN.

It is a lot less work for guests if meeting planners just send the URL, or plan the meeting in Calendar.

Google has given Hangouts an air of being a serious, business communications platform by re-branding it with the name Meet and providing the Meet access point described above. At a practical level, however, using Calendar for planning and accessing video calls is easier and more efficient.