

Virtual Meeting Setup

There are a few applications that can help you set up and deliver an online meeting or training.

Google Hangouts

The MLA Technology Committee, the Statewide Staff Development group, LATI and the MDLIBTECH community, have been using Google Hangouts for virtual meetings successfully since 2013.

In January 2018, Google began calling the enterprise version of their virtual meeting platform Meet. Maryland Library agencies that use the enterprise version of Gmail and Hangouts include the Maryland State Library, Prince George's County Memorial Library, Charles County Public Library, and Enoch Pratt Free Library. Meet is effectively the same thing as Hangouts.

The basic technology used by individual Hangout participants in a Hangout consists of a computer with webcam, mic, and speakers (or headphones), a good internet connection, and a Gmail account.

Meeting planners will want to use a facility where a small to large group of attendees can be on camera, all in the same room. In that case, the ideal room set up includes an overhead projector, room speakers, a webcam, and tabletop microphone, along with a good internet connection. Meeting planners will usually need to bring their own laptop to the meeting, and of course, they will need to use a Gmail account.

Below, you will find the MLA Technology Committee's recommended approach for meeting planners who want to include Google Hangouts to increase attendance at meetings.

[Google Hangouts Best Practices - May 2018](#)

[Google Hangouts Meet - January 2018](#)

[Google Hangouts User Guide - January 2018](#)

Conference Calls

Sign up for a free conference call number with these products:

[Uberconference](#) - Up to 10 people can join via phone or computer

[Free Conference Call](#) - More than 10 people, but limited to 20 minutes

Blackboard Collaborate and Ultra

PC-based live conferencing is available via the Blackboard Collaborate platform. (Blackboard Ultra is the newest platform and we are currently testing it). You can sit at your PC and connect to others at theirs by plugging in your headset with microphone (example) and using an online whiteboard with other features in a virtual room. These virtual rooms are available for staff training and meetings. The rooms can only be used for Maryland public library business (and MLA business). To use a room, you must reserve it via the Virtual Meeting Calendar. Please check with your staff development coordinator to make the reservation and obtain the room URL. (Room URLs cannot be posted here due to license agreement). For MLA meetings and events, please contact the MLA Office.

Here are some additional documents that you may find useful:

[Blackboard Collaborate Tip Sheet](#)

Blackboard Ultra Tip Sheet

Doodle is a free web-based application that allows you to easily schedule your meeting or training by polling participants for their availability.