

Report from Committee Appointed to Draft Proposed Rules for Electronic Meetings

For December 13-14, 2014 LNC meeting

Submitted by: Estrada, Hayes, Johnson, Katz, Mattson, and Wiener

The committee members quickly realized that we needed to actually evaluate potential host software for electronic meetings before we could have a good feel for what kinds of rules were going to be needed.

We asked LNC members for information about the spectrum of operating systems we needed to attempt to accommodate. Even though only 10 people responded to this request, even that subset of info made it clear we need a host with broad compatibility.

We gathered a list of 12 potential vendors, came up with a spreadsheet of comparison metrics, and started analyzing. 7 of them were eliminated without even testing them because we quickly found deal-killers in their specs. Deal-killers included: some were just screen-sharing systems (no web-camera features) designed for one-way information flow, cost (including one that was 5-digits annually and another high-4-digit one), focus on high-def video such that a wi-fi internet connection was not adequate, failure to support a wide-enough spectrum of operating systems, failure to support any mobile devices, and terms of use that required each participant to agree to receive text messages from the company.

For each of the other 5 potential vendors, we scheduled weekend trial runs to kick their tires. One of those 5 was found to be unviable because it was designed more for webinar scenarios where only one person is presenting and the rest are just listening. When just a few of us tried to all use webcams simultaneously, we experienced extremely throttled bandwidth, poor quality audio that cut in and out, and video that would freeze. It had no hand-raising feature, didn't allow the host to share documents (only video), and didn't let anyone but the meeting host know much about the status of the other participants.

After the trial runs, the other four (Fuze, WebEx, Adobe Connect, and GoToWebinar) were deemed to be potentially viable options. Attached is a spreadsheet spanning two pages showing the comparison metrics for these final four.

Adobe Connect came out as our clear preference, primarily for its ability to allow more simultaneous webcams, its support for a wide range of devices and operating systems, its hand-raising feature, and its extra participant statuses that can be used to conduct votes, share non-verbal feedback, claim preference in recognition, show a participant has stepped away, and many other potential uses. As a side benefit, Adobe Connect was the only one that advertised that it has extra functionality for vision-impaired participants. With all these features, the cost is quite reasonable.

With help from a few other LNC members not on our committee, in testing we were able to successfully connect to an Adobe Connect meeting with Windows XP, Windows Vista, Windows 8, Mac OSX, Linux, iPhone, iPad, and Android devices. We had as many as 11 simultaneous webcams on with good audio and video performance.

Our first proposed rule is that we will use Adobe Connect. It offers the most features accommodate use of RONR. Because of the features of that platform, we found that there were some rules we didn't need to write because the software itself provides a natural and obvious method. The other rules we did feel were needed are attached for the LNC's consideration next weekend.

	Fuze	WebEx - Premium 100	Adobe Connect	GoToWebinar
Cost Per Year	\$96/year or \$240/year	\$69/month	\$45/month/host for 25 seats - thru Clarix \$500/year/host for 100 seats	\$79/organizer/mo - GoToWebinar
# of audio participants	125	100	25 seats per host, audio or video	100 audio
# of video participants	12	7	25 seats per host, audio or video - up to 1500 thru Clarix	6
Audio connection method	VOIP/toll-call costs after 60 days	VOIP or dial-in	VOIP or can connect own toll-free teleconference system	VOIP or dial-in - use their phone system or own tele conference system
OS supported	Windows 7+, Mac OSX, iOS, Android	most major browsers, iOS, Android	iOS, Android, Blackberry Playbook, any browser with Adobe Flash	Host can use PC or Mac - Attendees can use PC (XP+ with IE, FF, Chrome), Mac (OSX 10.7+ Safari, FF, Chrome), Chromebook, Linux, iOS7+, Android 4.0+, Windows Phone 8 or RT
Hand-raising?	Yes - all can see in app, but not if connect with browser	No - chat box	Yes	Yes
Preference in recognition?	chat box	No - chat box	Yes - hand raising technique	Yes - hand raising technique
Interrupting OOD, 2nd, PtOrd	chat box	No - chat box	status indicators	raise hand, chat box
Host mute noisy participants?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Host remove a participant?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Participants tell who is speaking?	Yes - 2 methods	Yes	Yes	Yes - in audio panel
Means to submit written motion?	chat box or email	chat box or add to files	Chat box	chat box
How to know who is on?	all see participant list	all see participant list	all see participant list	attendee list
Who sees muted participant?	all see microphone status	all see microphone status	All attendees see all statuses	presenter only
How to determine quorum?	roll call	answer roll call	"step away" or other on-demand status checks - answer roll call	answer a roll call
How to take votes?	chat box	chat box -set our mic status or use arrow annotations on a shared document	agree/disagree status, hand raising, or the poll feature	answer a roll call - or hand raising
Host can show documents?	host can screen share	share desktop or application	share screen or application	share screen or application
Others see chair/secretary status?	Yes	check video	Yes	only the presenter
Moderator hand controls to others?	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Web-service or install software?	download/install software - optional browser connection has fewer features	web-service with a plugin to install	web service with an Adobe Flash plugin	web-service with a 1-time install
Chat box?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

	Fuze	WebEx - Premium 100	Adobe Connect	GoToWebinar
Side conversations possible?	Yes	Yes - one or everyone	Yes	Mac
Audio record the meeting?	Yes - with paid acct	Yes - video records also	Yes	Yes
Manage entry for ExSession?	has private/public meeting	set password - lock meeting	set password - lock meeting	approve registrants
Notes:	no Windows XP, Vista or Linux for app, though can join through browser with fewer features - browser version can't see raised flags, can't customize screen layout, can't undock chat box, etc.	Gary Johnson was not able to get in - got generic error while using Chrome on Vista - got it to work with Firefox	get custom and persistent URL for meeting locations - don't need different access code for each meeting	can have people register to attend and they are sent unique link to join the webinar - automatic email of meeting reminders
	Alicia (only one using XP) never got microphone working in the test so had to dial in	1 GB persistent storage in "files" tab	persistent storage	GoToMeeting doesn't have hand-raising and poll features, but GoToWebinar does - poll has to be configured outside of meeting, and only shows % results rather than counts, though the vote is in the
	Dan had trouble sending group invitations & had to send individual invitations - may be solvable	can set up contact list to use for invitations	has functionality for visually impaired participants	generates rather elaborate reports about the meeting
		less functionality from ipad - has no whiteboard controls	easy to do screen grabs, host can email chat log and discussion notes to self, status settings are great, has a polling feature	can save copies of chat log
			iPad app had most features, but no "step away" status and could only see one active video at a time	

Proposed Rules for Electronic Meetings

Recommended by committee composed of: Estrada, Hayes,
Johnson, Katz, Mattson, and Wiener

1.02 Meetings

6) Meeting Minutes

[snip]

Meeting minutes for face-to-face [or electronic](#) LNC meetings may be promoted from draft status to official during the time between LNC meetings as follows:

[snip]

7) Electronic Meetings

- a) [All electronic meetings will be conducted via the Adobe Connect / Citrix service.](#)
- b) [Each usage of the term “committee” within these electronic meeting rules shall be construed to include both the LNC \(as the board of the Libertarian Party\) as well as committees.](#)
- c) [Each committee member calling for an electronic meeting must do so by emailing the entire committee and specifying the date of the meeting, time of the meeting, and the topic\(s\) to be addressed. Meetings must be so called no fewer than 2 days in advance for committees with fewer than 10 members, or 7 days in advance for committees with 10 or more members. These time limits do not apply to the LNC's Executive Committee, the LNC's Advertising and Publications Review Committee, and the Judicial Committee.](#)
- d) [Electronic meetings may be called by either:](#)
 - [The committee Chair, or](#)
 - [1/3 of the committee members or 2 committee members, whichever is greater.](#)[However, the call of an electronic meeting can be canceled if a majority of the committee members email a cancellation request to the entire committee prior to the scheduled time of the meeting.](#)
- e) [For electronic LNC meetings, messages calling or vetoing a meeting must be sent on the LNC-Business email list.](#)
- f) [When a sufficient number of people have issued a call for a meeting, the committee Chair or Secretary shall issue a notice of the meeting to each member and alternate of the committee. In addition to the standard notice content, the meeting notice shall describe how to participate in the meeting.](#)

- g) Each participant must provide his own equipment and connectivity, including but not limited to any computer, internet access, web camera, microphone, earphones, or telephone. Participants have the right to participate in an electronic meeting by telephone, however they should use a computer connection if feasible so as to be able to more fully use the Adobe Connect features. The organization is not responsible for providing a central location for physical attendance of an electronic meeting. For face-to-face meetings, electronic participation is not allowed.
- h) Each participant must accurately identify himself by name when joining the meeting.
- i) Electronic meeting participants must try to eliminate, as much as possible, background noise, echoes, and call waiting interruptions. Participants shall not place their telephone connection on hold if the system has music or messages playing while in that mode.
- j) All participants legally consent to having the meetings recorded, should the committee opt to do so.
- k) Electronic meetings are special meetings such that only the topics listed in the call of the meeting may be considered during the meeting.
- l) For original main motions, the committee Chair or Secretary shall document the time at which the vote tally was announced. A participant with voting rights who was present during the debate of the motion but who lost his connection to the meeting may still reconnect to the meeting and cast his vote on the motion no more than 5 minutes after the announcement of the vote tally.