

Speaker Guide

In a nutshell

Please familiarize yourself with the [participant guide](#) first, and register as a participant on Discord.

In-person speakers

- [Please upload](#) a PDF of your slides by 24 Oct. We will use one central presentation laptop.
 - Only invited speakers will be allowed to use their own laptop (but please contact the LOC / **#speakers** channel in advance, so we know).
- In order to facilitate the flow between speakers, please adhere to the following:
 - In-person speakers should come to the technical desk 5 minutes before the end of the presentation preceding their own talks. This allows enough time to attach the speaker mic and do a sound check.
 - The session chair will introduce you.
 - You have 12 min to speak (25 min for invited speakers).
 - The technical desk will give you time cues to indicate when you are reaching the end of your allotted time slot. This will be a "2 minutes remaining" warning for talks and a "5 minutes remaining" warning for invited speakers.
 - The session chair will indicate when your time has elapsed and continue to lead and guide Q&A sessions after the presentation and keep to the strict limits allowed (3 min Q&A for contributed talks, 5 min Q&A for invited speakers).
- The session chair will read out questions for you during the Q&A period following your presentation.

Remote speakers & demo presenters

- Hang out in the **#speakers** Discord channel where the **@tech** team can find you. This is your primary means of communication with the tech team prior to your talk.
- The tech team will send you a Zoom link (this will also be posted/pinned in the **#speakers** channel).
- Speakers must log off from the virtual venue at least 20 minutes before the start of their own presentation (roughly at the time that the talk preceding your presentation starts) and log into the zoom room. Here you will wait and be connected to the technical team for setup.
- As a speaker, your main interface is Zoom. The tech team will take care of bringing your feed into the Virtual Stage and the meeting venue.
 - (If you're also watching the conference via the Virtual Stage as a participant, please close that page when it's time for you to connect to the Zoom link in preparation to speak.)
- The session chair will introduce you as speaker.
- The tech team will give you time cues during your talk. This will be a "2 minutes remaining" warning for talks and a "5 minutes remaining" warning for invited speakers.
- For the Q&A period, the tech team will connect you into the meeting venue: you will be able to hear the session chair read out questions, and you can answer them.
- Once done, disconnect from the Zoom room and continue to follow the conference via the virtual venue interface.

- Alternatively, if you have uploaded a pre-recorded video of your talk, please notify the tech team via **#speakers**, and they will play the video instead of bringing in your live Zoom feed. You may then directly engage with questions in **#live-questions** while the video is being played. The live Q&A session afterwards will be the same as for a live remote talk.

Follow-up Discussion

Your talk will have a dedicated channel on Discord (under the **TALKS** or **INVITED TALKS** category). Please monitor this, in case the participants want to engage with you further.

Training Sessions

Remote speakers have the option to connect to a training session for speakers and hosts. The tech team will schedule a 60 min training session on a daily basis (Sun-Wed). These sessions are intended to make sure that

everyone is familiar with the conference system setup, has the right tools installed, and knows which set of actions to follow.

The outline of each training session is as follows:

- Ensure speakers are registered on Discord
- Introduction to Discord and Zoom
- Test Zoom connection and audio/video links
- Run through the presentation workflow defined in the guides.

Details on training sessions will be available on the **#speakers** channel.

Speaker Checklist

- Read the [participant guide](#)
- Download the [Discord client](#) for your platform. If you already have this, please make sure it is the latest available version.
- Register on the [Discord server](#) using your registration code from the registration e-mail.
- Make sure your talk title and abstract are on the [schedule](#)
- Make sure you are listed as the correct speaker for your talk, and contact the LOC in case of changes.
- Check your speaker profile (find your talk in the [schedule](#), click through to see your talk page, then click on the speaker link at the bottom) and update it [via this page](#) if needed.
- Check your Internet connection and upload speed (should be at least 1Mbit/s).
- Download the [Zoom client](#) for your platform. If you already have this, please make sure it is the latest available version.
- Register an account on [Zoom](#), if you don't already have one.
- Join one of the training sessions (see above).
- Any questions? Contact the LOC and/or the tech team via **#helpdesk** or **#speakers**.

Technical Tips & Preparation

Internet connection

Be on a good and stable Internet connection. For the live presentation to go well, we will need to have a stable connection with you, with at least a few MB/s upstream bandwidth.

Use wired Internet

Please use a wired connection from your PC/laptop to your router to avoid Wi-Fi issues such as drops, latency and intermittent connectivity problems. This removes one failure mode from the setup.

Have an Internet connection backup plan

It is also a good idea to think about a backup in the form of a 4G mobile Internet connection. Practice switching quickly between your regular Wi-Fi / cabled internet and the mobile hotspot. If you are having bandwidth problems, consider turning off the webcam video feed, leaving only audio.

Failing internet

If all fails, and you have uploaded a pre-recorded session to the SFTP site, you can also ask the tech team to use it as a backup. See this helpful [video tutorial](#) from ADASS 2020 on how to self-record a backup presentation with Zoom.

Webcam considerations

Please use a webcam which provides a reasonably good picture. It does not have to be a FullHD webcam. Any recent laptop camera will do just fine.

The webcam should be positioned at or slightly above eye level. Having it film from a lower angle doesn't create a good perspective - and we want you to look your best 😊

There is no need to worry about looking into the camera all the time -- only every now and then is sufficient. We want you to focus on delivering your talk. If you need to look at your slides a lot, don't fret and just do it -- it is only natural! Unless your webcam has known issues, it is generally a good idea to set the camera settings to automatic, so that white balance, brightness and focus will automatically adjust without you having to worry about them.

Some webcams have problems with the autofocus, which causes them to often try to refocus (the older MS webcams had this issue). If you have one of these cameras, please consider manually setting the focus and turning off autofocus.

Webcam background

Choose a relatively clean area as your background, for example, a wall or a bookcase instead of piles of laundry or bolts and nuts. You should also double-check to make sure your background does not accidentally reveal any personal information, such as your home address or your cat's birthday via posts on a pinboard.

Virtual backgrounds

Zoom has a feature to add a virtual background. You may want to experiment with this. It can be used with or without a green screen backdrop.

Proper lighting

Try to find a place to run the presentation where you have good soft and indirect light from the front. You should try to eliminate or at least minimize all the other light sources in the room, especially from your back. If you wish to cover the window behind you, do not use venetian blinds for this, as they can seriously confuse your webcam.

Sitting in front of a bright window with the webcam facing towards the window, will cause the face to appear very dark. Using spotlights may create highlights which aren't ideal either.

Try not to wear anything too reflective, e.g. a dazzling necklace or a tinfoil hat (there are other opportunities to dress like a knight after your talk), as they'd act as reflectors and bounce light off you.

Audio considerations

Please use a headset, or earphones / headphones and a separate microphone (analogue, USB or Bluetooth) to give your presentation. Do not use speakers, either those built into your computer or laptop or external. The reason to not use speakers is simple: if the sound is projected in the room, then the microphone will also capture it, and this will create echo or reverb.

The reason to prefer a headset or separate a microphone is to have the microphone close to your mouth, ideally about 15 to 30 cm away for a separate microphone, or at the height of your chin for a headset. This way, your voice will sound clear and will not be easily obscured by other sounds, e.g. keyboard or mouse clicks. You do not want to get closer than that, or the microphone will also capture unwanted sounds - like your breath, lip-smacking or loud plosives. If your microphone falls around your neck area, it is advisable not to wear any dangling jewelry to avoid the rubbing sounds against the mic.

If you are still experiencing too much echo, you could try to move to a carpeted room, or simply add a rug or other fabric in the room to stop the sound from bouncing around too much. Make sure that you don't have a lot of background noise in the room when doing the presentation, since this reduces audio quality and can be quite disturbing for the attendees listening to the stream using headsets.

Zoom has built-in noise cancellation and volume leveling logic, so it'll take care to send good quality audio.

Sharing audio feeds in your presentation

If your presentation needs computer audio, please enable the “Share computer sound” option in Zoom:



This will then take the audio directly from your system feed and produce a good quality mix-in together with your microphone input.

Carefully manage your computer CPU load

Since Zoom will have to run encoding, screen grabbing and possibly virtual background detection all at the same time, it does consume some CPU power. Please keep this in mind when running demos or CPU heavy background tasks. Zoom should be given higher priority to make sure the stream doesn't die off or heavily degrade in quality. It is recommended that during the meeting, you close all the applications that you will not need for the talk.

Avoid using online IDEs or other Internet heavy tools

Unless you have a really good Internet connection with excellent upload bandwidth, please avoid using online IDEs, or other tools which take away upload bandwidth. Chances are high that these will cause your screen sharing or webcam video to become blurry and result in a rather poor attendee experience.

Avoid streaming to other platforms

Please avoid streaming your session to another streaming platform, in addition to Zoom. This often causes issues with applications fighting over webcam / microphone access, causes additional load on your CPU and removes Internet bandwidth, which can result in the Zoom stream to become jittery.

We will take care of all the necessary streaming on our platform and make sure that the attendees can follow your presentation as best as possible.

What if I'm having connection problems?

The online solution depends a lot on the Internet connection of the speaker. If

this goes down or lacks quality, the overall experience will be subpar.

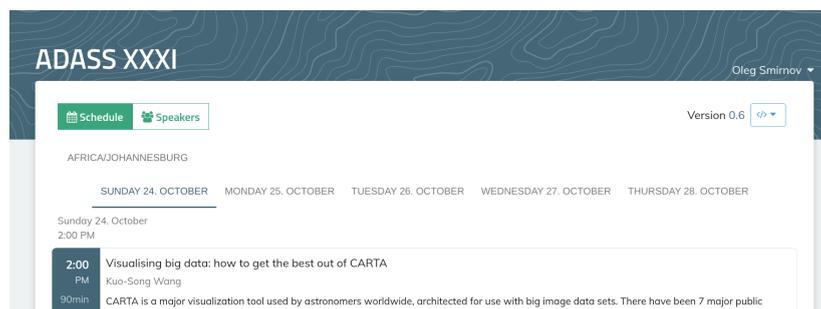
Some possibilities to address these situations:

- The speaker could try to reconnect using his or her mobile via 4G.
- If available, we could ask the speaker to dial-in with a telephone number to the session, so at least we will have the audio. In this instance, the host will need to share the slides that the speaker has previously uploaded to the FTP site.
- If you are having bandwidth problems, consider turning off the webcam video feed, leaving only audio.
- Upload a pre-recorded backup version of the talk and play this in case the connection goes down. See this [video tutorial](#) from ADASS 2020 on how to self-record a backup presentation with Zoom.
- We encourage speakers to upload these support and backup files, and follow the rules and files nomenclature described in the [Instructions for authors](#) section of the website.

Presenting at ADASS 2021

Being on time

The [live schedule view](#) tries to be smart and to display the scheduled times using **your local** timezone. What could possibly go wrong? Make sure it's not being too smart! If your browser is misconfigured or something, it might be picking up the wrong timezone.



Example. “AFRICA/JOHANNESBURG” is the timezone indication here.

The timezone the schedule is displaying itself in is given at the top of the schedule page, as in the screenshot above. If in doubt, consult the [single-page schedule PDF](#), which shows timeslots in SAST and UTC. You may use <https://www.worldtimebuddy.com> to help you in time zone conversion.

To ensure each session starts on time, remote speakers are requested to connect to the session zoom link at least 20 minutes before the start of your

presentation. Here you will be guided by the technical team to get you set up and ready for presentation.

Presentation workflow

On the day your talk is scheduled

- (Optional) upload latest slides to the SFTP site, so that attendees can download them from there and also for the tech team to use them as a backup.
- Have all your devices connected to power (especially your laptop if you're using one for the presentation). Running on battery power during a presentation is usually not a good idea. Having a fully charged battery as backup is a good idea.
- Check your connectivity and set up your backup mobile hotspot if needed.
- Prepare your PC / laptop for the session and check your setup.
- Turn off background updates (especially Windows updates can be annoying).
- Turn off any notification mechanisms present in your PC / laptop.
- Check the Discord **#speakers** channel for any announcements or questions from the session chair or tech team.
- Put a glass or bottle of water near your desk.
- Turn your mobile silent and relax a bit before starting.

When your session slot starts

- Please pay attention to the personal messages you receive in Discord.
- The tech team will ping you in Discord around 30 minutes before your talk starts and give you directions on how to board you in as speaker.
- Log off the virtual venue at least 20 minutes before the start of your presentation.
- Open the Zoom client and join the Zoom session with your real name using the link published on the Discord **#speakers** channel.
- Mute the microphone in the Zoom application for the time being.

When your time slot arrives

- The session chair will introduce the talk and speaker.
- Remember to unmute and start your webcam at this point.
- Start sharing your screen.

Present your talk

- The technical team will remind you of the time, 5 minutes remaining for invited speakers and 2 minutes remaining for talks.
- The session chair will host the live Q&A session, read out questions and have you answer them live via Zoom. Please keep the answers short.

Follow-up discussion can be done afterwards on your talk's Discord channel.

- Once the chair has concluded your Q&A session, mute yourself, stop screen sharing, stop the webcam sharing. You're all done!

After your talk

- You made it!
- Monitor your talk's channel under the **TALKS** (or **INVITED TALKS**) category for any follow-up discussion from the audience.
- Enjoy the conference!

Considerations for remote presentations

Since we're running an online event using screen sharing for content delivery, there are a few limitations / advantages you should keep in mind.

Images are great, motion picture doesn't work well

- Using images works great for online conferences.
- Using moving images or films does not work well, since the frame rate is very low and the attendees will only see jittery movement. See below for instructions on how to make this work for dedicated video sharing.

Presenting using screen sharing

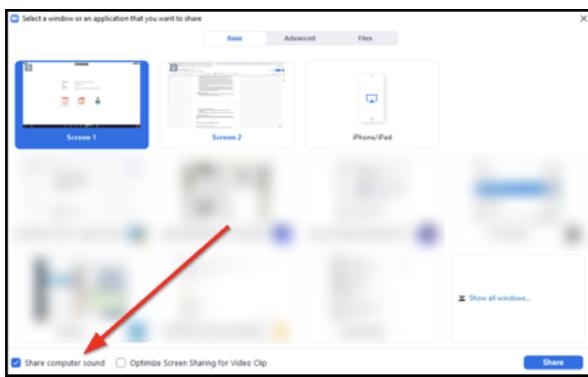
- All presentations are delivered using screen sharing, so you will have to have the application you're using for the presentation running (i.e. it's not possible to upload a PDF and present the PDF, as some conferences allow you to do).
- For screen sharing, please make sure you share an entire desktop and not only the application window. The latter often causes scaling problems and can also result in Zoom adding black / grey bars across the screen share to cover content from other windows.
- If you have a dual monitor setup to work with, you'll get best results if you run your presentation software on monitor 1 and the output on monitor 2. You can then share the monitor desktop in Zoom
- Please set the resolution of your shared desktop to 1920x1080 (1080p). Using a higher resolution is not recommended, since this causes issues with the Zoom Webinar streams. Using lower resolution is also not recommended, since the Zoom stream may then put black bars around the shared screen.
- Fast slide switches may not necessarily work well when streaming. It is possible that the upload from your laptop / PC is not fast enough to

update the stream completely and so the audience may not see what you wanted to show.

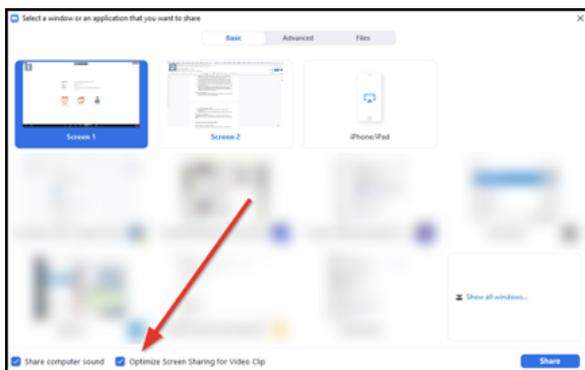
- Please check your Internet connection upload speed before the conference. Anything below about 1Mbit/s upload may cause Zoom to create a lag between the screen sharing and your audio, which will result in a very strange experience for the audience.

Using audio / video in your presentation

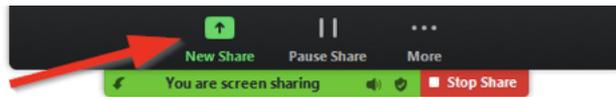
- If you need audio sharing in your presentation (i.e. you're playing a short film sequence or a synthesized sound), please use the special "Share computer audio" option in the Zoom sharing dialog.



- Sharing the audio via your microphone often results in artifacts due to the Zoom speech processing applied to the microphone input.
- If you want to show (full screen) video, you can temporarily switch to the optimization of video clips.



- This should only be done when sharing the video, since it greatly reduces the resolution of the streaming output.
- You can switch between the different modes by clicking on "New Share" in the sharing panel.



General speaker tips (that you probably already know...)

Practice!

This is the most important tip of all. The more practice you've had, the better your talk will be. Practice at home, practice saying it out loud, try to find some real people to try it out on friends, family, co-workers, in an online user group or a meetup.

And when you do it, get feedback, get a feeling for what works well and what doesn't, and make changes to improve your talk.

Less reading out bullet points, more excitement

While it is much more forgiving to read from your slides in the online setup, it is still good to look into the camera from time to time and remember the audience. Or if that is too weird, look at the host's video feed if you can, to get a bit of visual feedback. This can make you feel less nervous, talk more naturally and make the session more engaging.

Try to remember why you are interested in the topic in the first place, and channel that sense of wonder and excitement! And then imagine you are explaining that to an old friend so you can have fun together!

Tell a story

Read about The Hero with 1000 Faces. It might be a tech talk and full of facts, but every talk can be made into a story, into a journey. Put yourself in the audience's shoes. Take them on a journey.

Make it fun

Pictures instead of bullet points in slides. Pictures are great. Everyone loves cats. Throw in some jokes. Even bad jokes. Even a really bad pun.

Demos: always have a backup plan

Demos always go wrong. That said, it is probably less stressful to live-code in the online setup since it is a more controlled environment, and you are not physically seeing the burning anticipation of 500 people. And it is more interesting than bullet points. But you might still want to limit the amount, or to put it bluntly, limit how much can go wrong.

Apart from a lot of practice, have a backup plan! Can you prepare a version of the demo with screenshots instead? Or maybe record a live-coding / demo session in advance, so you can play the video if all hell breaks loose.

Keep the pace up

This is hard. Because I want to say “fast-paced talks are better”. But, when you're nervous, you tend to talk fast, and that's bad. Especially because a lot of people (even you!) might not be a native English speaker. So, force yourself to speak slowly and clearly. But! Don't let people get bored.

Instead, know your audience. Try and anticipate what they can guess, don't spend too long on things that are obvious (but remember that what's obvious to you may not be obvious to everyone). If it's obvious where you're going, then get there quickly! But when something is deep or not obvious or counter-intuitive, slow down. Pause. Give people time to realize it's true.

Final tip: relax!

*With thanks to the ADASS XXX (Granada) LOC,
as this guide heavily borrows from the ADASS XXX Speakers Guide.*