

## EXPERIENCE EXCHANGE

# A guide for honor society virtual induction

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## ABSTRACT

Nursing honor society or professional organization induction is a time-honored tradition that has encountered obstacles related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ceremonies and their subsequent receptions once formally conducted in person, are being relocated to a virtual format. This has necessitated better understanding of informational technology applications and their use among society and organization board members seeking to uphold induction ceremony tradition. This article provides information to guide individuals on different types of technologies and their selection process. In addition, recommendations for conducting a virtual induction ceremony are shared.

**Key Words:** Honor society, Professional organization, Virtual, Induction, Information technology

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Honor societies and professional organizations are of the utmost importance for recognition of student excellence and support of the transition from a novice provider to an experienced clinician.<sup>[1]</sup> With the increased number of nursing programs offering online education, having a virtual society or organization is essential for including distance learners as members. In addition, the recent pandemic has necessitated transitioning once in person activities to virtual events. Information technologies afford an opportunity for recording important membership milestones such as a formal induction ceremony providing both new and current members participation virtually. Given the numerous recording technologies available, choosing one that is the best match can be a challenging task. Therefore, the purpose of this article is to provide guidance when choosing a virtual software and review technology applications for recording that may be readily available through one's academic institution or can be purchased for a reasonable cost. In addition, recommendations for planning and recording a virtual induction ceremony

are shared.

## 2. BACKGROUND

Online education has continued to grow in enrollment for over a decade, while traditional on-ground classroom enrollment demonstrates a downward trend.<sup>[2]</sup> Nursing is among many academic majors that have chosen a distance learning platform. Approximately 600 of the current 700 RN to BSN undergraduate programs offer an online component,<sup>[3]</sup> and the majority of MSN and DNP graduate programs offer partial or fully online curriculums.<sup>[4]</sup> This has necessitated a change among honor societies and professional organizations to create virtual communities for acknowledgement of outstanding academic student achievement. Further, revelation of the novel coronavirus otherwise known as COVID-19 has drastically changed the traditional academic environment. What started as a crisis has now turned into a longstanding trial on the normalcy of daily functions. This has required defining a "new normal" often resulting in virtual environments for gathering groups of individuals. In addition, costs

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and delays associated with travel have made in person meetings less desirable. However, moving events that could once be held onsite, to a remote or virtual setting is creating a greater challenge in assisting students to feel as if they “fit in” to their virtual honor society, or professional organization. Students who participate in virtual induction may feel a greater sense of belonging encouraging them to sustain membership after graduation.<sup>[5]</sup> Membership in turn can further support the student with transition into professional nursing practice through networking, employment opportunities, and additional scholarship opportunities.<sup>[1]</sup>

### 3. CHOOSING VIRTUAL SOFTWARE

The rapid growth of the Internet and information technology (IT) has forever changed the educational landscape and recognition of student excellence. IT offers an ideal pathway to grow virtual communities with the Internet providing a platform for both synchronous and asynchronous communication.<sup>[6]</sup> There are numerous applications that allow individuals to digitally record events, lectures and projects, and then share them virtually for viewing. However, selecting an application to accomplish this can be a daunting task. With the prolonged pandemic causing continued virtual gatherings for formerly personal events, the importance being familiar with how to select an IT application and awareness or basic understanding of different applications has grown. When possible, if you have access to IT staff, it is useful to tap into their knowledge and expertise to find applications used within your academic institution. If IT staff are not available, there are several items to consider when choosing an application: 1) Equipment—do you have all the necessary cameras and microphones for recording? Will this virtual induction be live and interactive requiring use of more than one camera or, will this be pre-record? 2) Cost of the application—do you have monies set aside and if so, how much? Or, do you need something free of charge?<sup>[7]</sup> 3) Will your presenters be local or remote for moderating the ceremony and sharing slides? 4) Does the application allow screen sharing for slides? and 5) Is the application simple and easy to use? Or, will you need IT assistance from someone outside of the institution?<sup>[8]</sup> A summary for choosing IT is provided in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Consideration for IT application selection

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equipment Availability</li> <li>• Live vs Pre-Recorded Event</li> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Location of Presenters</li> <li>• Ability to Screen Share</li> <li>• User Friendly Application vs Additional IT Assistance</li> </ul>
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### 3.1 Information technology applications

As previously mentioned, there are many applications to use for a virtual event. When determining which applications would be most useful to host a virtual induction, we first consulted our IT department for their expertise and recommendations based on several criteria. IT staff identified those that were most “user friendly” for faculty and students and as such, already being utilized for various teaching scenarios throughout the university. This supported ease of use through already tested applications. Further, cost effectiveness, availability, and access by many viewers were taken into consideration. As a result, some common, user friendly, video conferencing or learning management system supported applications often used in education were identified that may be suitable for induction. These applications consisted of Zoom, Panopto, BigBlueButton, Microsoft Teams, Voice Thread, ScreenOmatic, and Camtasia. Although some of these IT applications have free versions, many require a fee to receive full benefits of use.

#### 3.1.1 Zoom

Zoom is a popular collaborative IT application that allows for high quality and secure video conferencing, group messaging, screen sharing and recording. One can access the synchronous online presentation or pre-recorded video without prior knowledge of the application. The presenter simply emails the link to audience members for direct participation or to watch at their convenience. Zoom offers several versions, including a free version that limits the amount of time for presenting or recording to 40 minutes. However, Zoom can create a greater workload on the computer’s central processing unit during live video conferencing causing it to run slower.<sup>[9]</sup>

#### 3.1.2 Panopto

Panopto is one of the top software video platforms used in higher education and is highly rated by successful corporations as user friendly in creating and sharing a professional video. Panopto provides video and screen sharing with a PowerPoint presentation or other application in a live or pre-recorded format. Further, there are minimal audience viewer delays since the server offers a high-quality product and Internet platform. Note, some users have found Panopto cumbersome and difficult to edit. A free trial is offered, and prices are available upon request.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### 3.1.3 BigBlueButton

BigBlueButton was created specifically for learning management systems and has the ability for live or recorded audiences. However, it is an open-source web conferencing server thus free to use if the user complies with the licensing agreement. For use, the software requires installation on an

Ubuntu Linux server. Some find the installation and operating system maintenance problematic. If needed, a managed web hosting company can be consulted and paid to maintain use of the BigBlueButton server.<sup>[11]</sup>

### 3.1.4 Microsoft teams

Microsoft Teams is fully integrated with Microsoft Office 365, making file sharing easy while connecting with individuals nationally and internationally. However, this makes it one of the more expensive platforms to use since it comes as a package with Microsoft Office 365. Costs for a subscription can range from \$6.90 to \$17.20 per user each month. Teams is easy to use with screen sharing options and video recording, reliable 24/7 connection, and has instant messaging features. It does provide support options such as videos, webinars, and classes as well as live chat support. However, the wait for connecting to a live chat may be lengthy.<sup>[12]</sup>

### 3.1.5 Voice thread

VoiceThread is a web-based application that allows business or educational connections using images, videos, documents, and presentations in an asynchronous conversation. The recommended network connection for use is WiFi. VoiceThread can be fully integrated into a learning management system, accessed by mobile app, or desktop platforms. It is easy to edit and provides analytics on participant usage. You and others can talk, type, and draw right on the screen, and the application allows for flexible, anytime access. There are several options for purchasing from a single user (one instructor and up to 50 students) license to entire school license.<sup>[13]</sup>

### 3.1.6 ScreenOMatic

ScreenOMatic is a screening casting software used by universities and businesses that allows for recording, screen sharing, webcam, editing and publishing with ease and doesn't need to be downloaded for use. There is a free version and two paid versions (\$1.50-\$4.00/month). The free version only captures part of your screen, is limited to 15 minutes in length, adds a watermark and needs a separate microphone, while the paid version has full screen sharing, accesses the computer microphone, and has additional editing features.<sup>[14]</sup>

### 3.1.7 Camtasia

Camtasia is known for ease of use. It has both recording and editing options, providing an all-inclusive package to its users. When recording there is a feature allowing you to choose a partial or complete screen depending on what is necessary for your video. Footage can be edited by removing and then combining video portions or adding additional videos, slides, or pictures to create one continuous recording. In addition, titles or annotations can be included to create a higher quality, professional product. Camtasia is a great

choice for users desiring basic recording options with more editing capability and can be purchased for \$249.<sup>[15]</sup>

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL VIRTUAL INDUCTION

Although choosing the IT application that will best support your virtual induction is critical, there are additional factors when planning the ceremony to take into consideration. Be sure to send clear, concise, and professional appearing invitations to potential members who meet predetermined membership criteria. Reserve any additional equipment necessary from your academic institution such as a laptop, web cam, and microphones.<sup>[5]</sup> Determine who among your board members will be trained as a "super user" and moderator to ensure successful operation of a live or recorded ceremony. Prepare a professionally appearing and formal presentation by using slides available from the society or organization<sup>[5]</sup> and rehearsing in advance of the virtual induction date. Finally, decide how the virtual induction format will be shared such as synchronous, pre-recorded, or both and effectively communicate this with new and current members. Recommendation summary provided in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Recommendations for Successful Virtual Induction

- Determine Format Pre-recorded, Synchronous, or Both
- Send Professional Invitations
- Reserve Equipment and Room for Ceremony
- Have a Board Member IT Application "Super User"
- Prepare and Rehearse a Formal Presentation

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Internet has provided an ideal platform for sharing information and creating virtual communities. By capitalizing on IT applications available for digital recording, honor society and professional organization induction ceremonies can easily be viewed among new and current members online in a synchronous or asynchronous format. Although not inclusive of all available applications, the aforementioned information technologies are readily available for use among any society or organization committed to strengthening their virtual community through recognition of individual member value by means of an induction ceremony. Continuing the time-honored tradition of an induction ceremony assists in strengthening existing and new honor society and professional organization membership. Utilizing a virtual platform that is well understood provides an alternative solution to maintain this tradition.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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