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| Logo  Description automatically generated | **MARLI Online Producer Best Practices****Prepared by *eSkillz:* Supplemental Best Practices****1/9/2021** |

**Equipment and System Requirements** (Matt Leger)

**Transcript:** “Naturally, one of the first things you’ll want to consider as a Best Practice is your equipment and system requirements. As a **producer**, you’ll want to aim to meet not just the minimum system requirements, but the recommended system requirements and there’s a big difference.

* Meeting the minimum system requirements means you have the bare minimum needed to pull off a good production, but it does not mean you will have a good experience.
* On the other hand if you meet the recommended system requirements, you are much more likely to have a positive experience, and as a result, your audience will have a better experience too because you will be able to better support them, as well as better support the presenters and other hosts and co-hosts.​
* Think of it in terms of playing a video game. I’m sure most of us play some sort of video game these days, so it should be easy to visualize. If you are only meeting the basic system requirements to play the game, you can imagine that the game will be chopping and lag quite a bit.
* Versus, having a computer that can handle the recommended systems requirements, or higher, will ensure that you not only have a positive experience, but you also have resources to spare, which is important. In the production world, that translates to having poor audio, connection drops and frozen screens, versus, having a clear sounding audio, a stable internet connection and no lag, technical issues or freezing of your computer. As you can imagine, that is equally important in our world.
* **Because if the tech person goes down, who will save them? I could get into having backup Producers on hand here, but the point is, you want to better your odds of having a positive experience, in all facets, so that you can better help your audience and key stakeholders.​**

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**The takeaway here is that you not only want to aim to meet the minimum or recommended system requirements but exceed them. However, if you can’t do that for any reason, know that the recommended system requirements should be enough to get you by.​**

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That said, let’s start with taking a look what the system requirements are for the Zoom app.

* As you can see here, of course you need to have an internet connection, but we’ve found that the quality of your internet directly impacts your experience in Zoom. For example, if you have a 10 meg down, 1 meg up connection, your experience will not be as good as if you had say, a 100 meg down, 100 meg up, fiber connection. Seems obvious, but often overlooked.
* Your upload speed is especially important if you are planning to do a lot of screensharing or video streaming. I have a 1 meg upload, so when I stream videos through my screen share, they are choppy and play much poorly than if Mark were to play them, because he has a 100 meg upload speed. The same could be said for your ping, also known as your latency. This is how long the signal takes to get to the server that you’re connected to and back. With latency, lower is better, so you want to aim to have it as low as you can. Latency is another factor that directly impacts your Zoom experience, or any other virtual conferencing platform.
* You can test all this by going to *speedtest.net* or *fast.com*. I would recommend testing using different sites and also several different servers as some of them will display different results. You can then take an average of what you get to get an idea where you stand.​

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* Generally speaking, you will need an internet connection that offers at least 5 megs download, 1 meg upload and 100 ms of ping or latency maximum.
* We can see here that Zoom recommends that we use a broadband connection, so no dial-up [Pause for Laughs], or a 3G or 4G/LTE wireless connection. I would actually suggest you hard-wire at all times if possible.
* But if you have no choice but to use wireless, try to be as close to your Wi-Fi as possible or be in an area that has a good signal if you’re on data or other wireless connections.
	+ In general, wireless anything should be avoided if possible as it is not as stable.
* The minimum bandwidth recommendation by Zoom is 600 kilo bits per second up and down, which is quite low, but the recommended requirement is 1.5 megabits per second up and down.
* Now, in my experience, this is still too low and I always suggest exceeding both these recommendations.
* **Aim for 5-10 megs down, and 1-2 up… minimum! But more is always better. These days those numbers should be easy to hit. Again, use multiple speed tests to test all that such as speedtest.net or fast.com. Your ISP will also have as speed test usually. Use that one too.​**

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You’ll need a mic, preferably a headset.

* Cost is usually the biggest factor in quality, but not always.
* I use a Logitech H390 headset and only costs $40-$60 online.
	+ I’ve been told that it sounds quite clear. So, it depends.
* I would not recommend a wireless or Bluetooth headset because you run the risk of it dying, so go with corded.
* But if wireless is all you have, make sure it’s fully charged before your session begins and try to have a hard-wired headset handy as a backup.
* **USB is preferable to 3.5mm but 3.5mm will also do the job just fine.​**

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A separate mic and earphone combo will also work, it’s just not as convenient. More parts means more things that are likely to break eventually. If you need some headset recommendations, let us know in the chat and we’ll share a few suggestions.”​

**Pre-Conference Best Practices** (Marshall Hewitt)

1. Note: RLI events will not be recorded
2. Check for software updates so they don’t occur during your event
3. Disable your notifications and sounds​ in window’s settings
4. Close all unnecessary applications​ to conserve bandwidth
5. Test your audio mic and speakers​ through the Zoom meeting platform
6. Headset vs. mic and speakers​
7. Desktop audio, volume and using built-in mics (like on laptops)​
8. Test your telephone audio​
9. Test under the mic icon in the live session
10. Entering PIN if using telephone join​
11. #1 rule, if you are not speaking, you are on mute to avoid background noise
12. 
13. Change your name in the participant panel​ (if needed)
14. Use the invite from the participant panel if you need to provide someone quick room access
15. Set chat to proper recipient (usually not Everyone)
16. Have a separate IM going in non-Zoom app, like Teams or text between host and co-host.
17. If sharing screen, close all sensitive screens and anything that creates a popup.
18. Preload websites, videos, streaming, demos, etc so you don't have to search and activate them after you share your screen.
19. Always check if double muted: headset vs. Zoom mute/unmute.
20. Never chat anything you wouldn't want the entire audience to see, even if you think it's a private message.
21. Be sure you have exchanged cell numbers with your team in the event of an internet drop.
22. Keep you cell phone on silent during live session.
23. Agree on who and how question management will be handled. Who is on watch?

**Additional transcript on questions management** (Matt Leger)

 This can make it tricky to manage questions, especially if you have a large audience and the questions are coming in faster than you can handle them.

* It’s a good idea as a producer to have a Word document or a notepad open to copy the questions to and arrange them behind the scenes.
	+ That way, when Q&A time comes, you’ll be prepared to read them in order, or however you decide to handle them with your staff ahead of time, and the technical questions and comments will not get in the way.
* It can be difficult to decipher questions from the chat when scrolling through after a lengthy topic was covered.​​

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It’s important

* to also set the correct recipient from the To: menu.
	+ You can send a chat to everyone to collaborate or share in discussions,
	+ or you can send a chat to the staff and technical support if you are having trouble,
	+ or you can send a chat directly to another attendee or host.
* It all depends on the situation. These settings can also be modified.
* **You can also share files from the chat but this function is often turned off for security reasons.​​**

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