NAATW 2020 Collaborative Virtual Gathering Report
By Zoom - Sep 12, 2020

This document was collaboratively created by event participants, NAATW committee members and presenters. (Thank you!)

For reference on what we published last year, see this PDF document.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/16Cg--8ALibA6xsg2tnbjUHYaELaU5Pd8/view?usp=sharing

11:00 - 11:15 am	*Opening Remarks*	*Welcome to our Virtual Gathering*

Doug G., NAATW Steering Committee Chair

Notes:

The workshop is recorded and will be published online. If someone mentions their full name, it will be redacted in post-editing.

Zoom Etiquette. Slack chat. Slack channel. Chat in Hospitality room.

11:15 - 12:15 pm	*AA Technology Comes of Age: three perspectives*	*Three members share how the general use of technology has evolved in their areas*

Hiroyuki K., Tokyo, Japan

Cindy M, Hazlewood, MO

Chris M., Atlanta, GA

Notes:

Hiroyuki K.

"How the general use of Technology has evolved in Tokyo, Japan".

- *"VIRTUAL TOKYO YOUNG PEOPLE'S GROUP" - Every Saturday @ 22:30 Japan time. Collecting 7th Tradition over PayPal.*

- ○ *Zoom Meeting ID: 318 391 954*
- ○ *Password: TYPG2020*
- *AATokyo.org. Webmaster put meeting information here with Zoom link to join meetings. Tokyo (but not rest of Japan) is linked with MeetingGuide app.*
- *AZYPAA - Asian Young People In AA convention*
- *AA in Japan celebrating its 45th Anniversary (AA in Japan founded in 1975) with a special edition of "Dr. Bob & The Good Old-timers"*
  - ○ *Question: how can GSO provide this book? Made a quick online bookshop during pandemic w/ online payment method (also bank transfer). Office is receiving 10 orders/day.*
- *Hiroyuki serves on GSB*
- *Two separate online intergroups were set up - one each in English and Japanese languages*
- *Aids were created for users providing instructions on how to do digital payments.*
- *Intergroup registered with GSO in Japan*

Questions for Hiro that we didn't get to during the session:

1. Please reproduce your appeal (on first or second of Hiroyuki's slide) to financial donation. Excellent appeal

   ### *From Hiro's presentation:*

   In keeping with A.A.'s Seventh Tradition of self-support, we accept contributions only from A.A. members.

   Contributions and Self Support

   The Seventh Tradition states:

   "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

   While contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, the Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not

only their group, but also their intergroup/central office, local services, district, area, and the General Service Office remain self-supporting.

2. How many people are volunteering with you?

> Tokyo Intergroup has a webmaster and in the Intergroup committee, they have about 8 members, chair, treasurer, H&I and more.

> And working with 4 members in Tokyo for updating Japanese online meeting website.

Cindy M.

- *Special worker for North County Intergroup in Hazelwood Missouri*
- *Started w/ Paper-based system. No inventory tracking. Mostly a cash-based operation. Mistakes in accounting.*
- *Improvements made: online banking, Quickbooks. USPS bills became emailed bills. Auto-withdrawal of fixed expenses. Procedures written down and used to onboard new special workers.*
- *Shutdown & transition to remote-working*
- *Intuit stopped supporting QuickBooks 2014. Cindy bought 2020 version w/ in-the-cloud data storage*
- *Squarespace website. Tried to put PayPal donation button up. Squarespace Support couldn't even get PayPal button working… Decided to get a new website.*
- *Webdev wizard gave a quote of $400 for upgrade: nco-aa.org*
  - *Zoom meeting listings,*
  - *meeting submission form,*
  - *donations (PayPal, CC, supporting specific group recipients)*
  - *Online bookstore (tracks inventory!)*

Question for Cindy that we didn't get to during the session:

1. Does GSO allow the use of the copyrighted (or trademarked) "blue people" on the aa.org website by other AA entities?

Answer taken from:

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/terms-of-use#:~:text=Can%20we%20use%20the%20%E2%80%9Cblue,use%20exclusively%20by%20the%20A.A.W.S.

Can we use the "blue people" graphic from the home page of www.aa.org on our local A.A. website?

The Blue People graphic is a copyrighted design and registered trademark of A.A.W.S., Inc., with all rights reserved for use exclusively by the A.A.W.S. Board, AA Grapevine Board, the General Service Board of U.S./Canada, and General Service Office of U.S./Canada. Therefore, A.A.W.S., Inc. does not grant permission to use the Blue People to any other A.A. entity and/or to create a derivative of The Blue People for any use.

Chris "Crispy" M.

- Atlanta Area Intergroup

- *Contact:*
  - *Email: crispy@atlantaaa.org*
  - *NAATW Slack: Crispy - https://naatw.slack.com/team/UNKCPGARJ*
  - *TIAA: @Crispy*
- *Challenges:*
  - *Resistance to change - "We've always done it this way!"*
  - *Lack of knowledge - "What if an ad for alcohol appears in the Meeting Guide app?"*
  - *Fear - "Our anonymity will be destroyed online!"*
  - *"AA Speed" - Technologists are not used to moving so slowly!*
- *Hotline:*
  - *Overview:*
    - *Atlanta AA has a 15-hour/day (9am - midnight) AA hotline*
    - *Paid answering service ($500/mo)*
    - *A/S calls volunteers - If one does not answer, they call another, etc.*
    - *Once connected, the caller is transferred to the volunteer*

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- ○ *Inherited problems:*
    - ■ *Contact lists out of date*
    - ■ *Lots of info written on paper*
    - ■ *Keeping up-to-date volunteer contacts*
    - ■ *Lack of accessibility to accurate information*
    - ■ *No backup volunteers*
    - ■ *Volunteers forgetting their shifts*
    - ■ *Statistics calculated by hand*
- ○ *Improvements:*
    - ■ *Google Sheets to track volunteers, shifts, Google Maps API used to visualize where calls are coming from*
    - ■ *Google Voice number & Gmail address (both free) shared between hotline chairs (not volunteers) so they see the same incoming SMS / emails*
    - ■ *Google Drive to share reports, information, documents, data with volunteers and Intergroup reps*
    - ■ *[Hotline Committee Web Page](https://atlantaaa.org/atl-intergroup/service-committees/telephone-hotline/) (https://atlantaaa.org/atl-intergroup/service-committees/telephone-hotline/) with accurate information*
    - ■ *Online Google form for sign-up*
    - ■ *Printed flyers distributed and posted at physical meetings with QR code and [bit.ly](https://bitly.com/) (https://bitly.com/) shortlink to hotline web page & sign-up form*
    - ■ *[Twilio](https://www.twilio.com/) (https://www.twilio.com/) (paid service, ~$5/mo) used to automatically send out reminder SMS to volunteers before their shifts start (custom python code on droplet)*
    - ■ *CSV file output from paid answering service, automatically processed (custom python code on droplet), and imported into Excel for reporting (moving to G Sheets soon)*
    - ■ *G Maps API for "heat map" of caller locations*
- ○ *Future improvements:*
    - ■ *When a volunteer calls to find a 12-step volunteer, the callee doesn't recognize the caller's number, so often they don't answer (suspected spam). Use some type of messaging app to allow direct messaging between volunteers*

- ■ *Move from A/S to automated call routing technology*
- *Virtual Meetings:*
  - *Zoom: (https://zoom.us/)*
    - ■ *Over 200 meetings in the area have gone online via Zoom*
    - ■ *For IG meetings, steering committee meetings*
    - ■ *Using Zoom's native voting feature for committee elections*
    - ■ *Some considerations to protect against Zoom Bombing (https://atlantaaa.org/covid-19-updates/#online-meetings)*
  - *Digital Contributions:*
    - ■ *Lack of donations now that the physical basket is not being passed around :-(*
    - ■ *Preso on various online contribution opts, how to set them up, advantages/disadvantages, and how to get going: https://atlantaaa.org/2020/07/20/virtual-basket-keeping-aas-7th-tradition-online*
    - ■ *Covered: G Suite, Venmo, CashApp, PayPal & Zelle*
    - ■ *PayPal money pool does not charge a fee*
  - *QuarantinedAndSober.org: (http://quarantinedandsober.org)*
    - ■ *Crispy's homegroup*
    - ■ *Formed at beginning of COVID-19 Pandemic*
    - ■ *Meetings twice per day*
    - ■ *Online contributions, meeting script, service sign-up, literature readings all online and linked from web page*
    - ■ *Virtual automated Zoom bot host: UsherBot (https://github.com/apresence/ZoomController/blob/master/README.md) (free)*
    - ■ *Using MailChimp (https://www.mailchimp.com/) for newsletter/contact management (free)*
- *Central Office:*
  - *Atlantaaa.org https://atlantaaa.org/ - Atlanta Area Intergroup*
    - ■ *Digital Ocean https://www.digitalocean.com/ droplet for hosting (~$8/mo)*
      - *Advantage: Backups, lots of control, custom scripting, etc.*
      - *Disadvantage: Requires technical expertise with Linux, scripting, etc.*

- *[Wordpress](https://wordpress.org/))https://wordpress.org/)*
  - *Very easy to use, especially for non-technical folks*
- *[12-Step Meeting Plugin](https://wordpress.org/plugins/12-step-meeting-list/) (https://wordpress.org/plugins/12-step-meeting-list/) with data feed to [Meeting Guide](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide) app (https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/meeting-guide)*
  - *[Listings](https://atlantaaa.org/meetings) (https://atlantaaa.org/meetings) for physical and virtual meetings and temporarily closure information*
  - *Added support via custom code (PHP) for virtual meetings*
  - *Added site-wide password to meeting information to protect against Zoom bombers (Who is the founder of AA?)*
  - *Online submission for new meeting submissions, updates to existing meetings, and to report incorrect/folded meeting information*
- *G Suite (Free for 501c3's)*
  - *Emails and distribution lists for committees and roles rather than individuals (Ex: staff@atlantaaa.org, tech@atlantaaa.org instead of joej@..., chrism@...)*
  - *Google Drive for shared docs*
    - *Password-protected read-only G Drive for IGRs*
    - *Password-protected read/write G Drive for staff*
    - *GSuite's secure for Non-profits not for gmail accounts*
    - *Password-protected read/write G Drive for steering committee members (also r/w to IGR & staff drives)*
  - *DNS hosting*
- *SSL certificates from https://letsencrypt.org (free)*
- *CDN caching by https://cloudflare.com (free)*
  - *Contributions - Paypal:*
    - *Various types:*
      - *Individual one-time contributions*
      - *Groups*
      - *"Faithful Fivers" - Automatic recurring $5+/mo contributions*
    - *Processing charge, but lower rates for non-profit*
    - *FUTURE: Venmo, CashApp, etc. (No processing charge!)*

- ○ *"Tech Soup" (https://www.techsoup.org/) - if you register as or already are a non-profit, you get access software, services and hardware for free or cheap. For example, the full G Suite is free through Tech Soup for 501c3's*
- ● *Closing Suggestion:*
  - ○ *No single person should sole have control/access over technology, accounts, money, or anything else. This is a program that enables us to live full lives, and during a full lifetime we can expect people to relapse, get sick, lose interest, move away, even pass away. If only single individuals have control/access, the individual may take that with them*
  - ○ *This has played out over and over again in AA's history. Just ask anyone who has been in service for an extended period of time*
  - ○ *Our local Intergroup and a number of local groups are actively minting and recruiting for co-chairs for every chair position for this purpose*

Questions for Chris that we didn't get to during the session: (responses were provided by Chris after the event)

1. What is Your response to the member who is concerned about Google collecting data on google users - eg on themselves. they are Concerned that the resultant info is "sold"/ used to target online marketing to the user. Hence the member refrains from create a Google login. Currently, our meeting has put most documents are now stored on google software...all our names phones emails are in those documents. Secondly, to use the documents, members have to create google account, thereby giving google awareness of their identity

    a. There are a few mitigation options I am aware of:
        i. If you are concerned about mixing personal information with AA, you can always create a separate account that you only use for AA.
        ii. As an AA group or entity, use of a G Suite account (free for nonprofits) provides you with the same privacy that a corporation would have.
        iii. If you share your document to "anyone with a link", then anyone can access the document without having to log in or have a Google account.

iv.   Use some other service which has a privacy policy that is acceptable to your group members.

v.   Don't store the information online. You can always track it in a local Excel spreadsheet, or text file.

b. Addressing the concern itself:

i.   Play the tape forward - what is the concern? Are you afraid Google is going to expose you as an alcoholic, or put you on some sort of "black list"? What do you think that would do to Google's reputation?

ii.   Almost all modern technology offers convenience in exchange for privacy, and it seems that ship has already sailed. Just think about what happens when 50 people congregate at a physical meeting and each of their phones/devices have location tracking on ;).

iii. Anyone who wishes to can always choose to *not* use Google, or for that matter, any other online service or technology that introduces any privacy concerns.

2. Have you submitted your Digital Contributions ideas as a suggestion for a Service Material piece?

If you are referring to the GSO, I did email them the document shortly after I published it, but have not received a response.

3. Are you willing to be a G Suite Admin Sponsor? ;-)

In general, we call that being a "service sponsor". You bet! Hit me up on email. My only condition is that, once you become proficient, be willing to be a service sponsor to someone else :).

4. Chris, How does qurstion work on zoom. Does it work with meeting guide app?

Sorry, unless "qurstion" is some kind of new tech/site/app I haven't heard of (I Googled it but couldn't find anything), I cannot understand the question :).

12:15 - 1:00 pm	*3D Virtual Reality Meeting Demo*	*Experience what an AA meeting looks like in Alt Space*

Kalen C., Mike N., Scott F. and Margie D., Port Clinton, OH

Notes:

Kalen & Mike: AA in Virtual Reality (3D space)

- *Dana S. sharing about Oculus Quest - immersive. Attended a "Campfire world on" Alt-space VR. It occurred to him that this might be a suitable platform for AA meetings/gatherings. Lauren J. helped him get set up.*
- *Kalen C. started a meeting in Alt-space in March.*
  - *You can 'physically' move around.*
  - *Alt-space already had meeting spaces prior to Covid-19*
  - *Started to have people attend regularly*
- *Mike N. got VR equipment to help with his therapy following a stroke*
  - *Discovered Dana's meeting. Texted Scott*
- *Scott F.*
  - *7 years of meetings on Skype, helping Mike N following his stroke*
  - *Helped Mike with meetings in Alt-space.*
  - *You can put banners in the room!*
  - *He says "we need our own world"*
- *Margie D. - one of the founding members of AA in Alt-space*
  - *Volunteered to teach Alt-space 101 to newcomers to Alt-space.*
  - *Covid-19 hit & she joined the Alt-space AA meetings*
  - *Realised that she & others missed their home meeting venues*
  - *Put out a request on Discord for a world-builder, (an individual named "Trash Panda" on Alt-space, had a family member in recovery and was willing to help).*
  - *Trash Panda created 1 home for AA meeting space, and 1 home created for AA museum*

- - *5 meetings / week in Alt-space VR.*
- *(Virtual meeting tour given by Mike N.)*
  - *Main meeting space w/ readings, schedule, traditions/steps*
  - *Outdoor space for chatting*
  - *Kitchen*
- *Dana: Adding the custom virtual world was a huge leap forward and made the experience far more personal.*

They said to get started visit www.altvr.com

Notes: AA in VR in Altspace Link:
[AA in AltspaceVR](#)
[https://account.altvr.com/worlds/1380157178672840784/spaces/14574948938772652 62?fbclid=IwAR17tjU0LOIyl8hMCxw2a_msb3M8dGUeApL0_7gi7bsppjGgu3ip5c7b2ak](#)

[Get AltspcaeVR in 2](#) ([https://altvr.com/get-altspacevr-2/](#))

[AA in AltspaceVR FB group[](#) ([https://www.facebook.com/groups/aa.in.altspace.group/](#))

Questions for the 3D VR Presentation team we didn't get to during the session:

1. @kalen said you can move around - can he explain that a little more

   With a headset, you have hand controllers where you can move your avatar (yourself) through the environment. Altspace has a number of tutorials that can help with that. Or you can also move a bit in your home environment space. With an untethered quest, it is fairly simple to just physically turn around and your avatar will also be turning around in the space. Plus, if your home space is configured large enough (in an empty garage, for example) you can physically walk in your space and you'll be walking correspondingly with your avatar in the 3d world in VR (though usually that is limited in comparison to the 3d world size).

   Also, you can walk around the virtual room by walking around where you are, certain headsets setup guardians around your actual room so you don't walk into actual walls by alerting you. See - youtu.be/NHgGOL-_Euo .

As for the 2d mode on your computer, you would be clicking on keyboard to move. Here is an article on that - https://medium.com/causespacevr/altspacevr-101-2d-mode-on-pc-f75f074bd545 (While I've done 2d modes in a couple of other online games, haven't with altspace personally, though others attending meetings here have.)

2. Have any of you studied the bandwidth requirements for VR meetings vs online meetings like Zoom?

   You need a 5GHz connection to use Altspacevr. A stable connection is required, or you will crash.

3. What equipment is needed and cost?
4. What is the "Go" equipment you all bought to participate in Alt Space? I think they said Oculus Go? Is it like a PlayStation format?? Cost?
5. Can you use other VR (like play station VR) along with Oculus?
6. If someone never did vr before, where do they start?
7. Can a phone be used? Other important requirements?

   [This answers 3,4,5,6,7 and 13] Various VR headsets work with altspace and you can access it without a headset from your PC or Mac. Headset range in price the new oculus quest 2 is $299 and other headsets can be found used for $300 or less used. For an updated list of supported devices go to https://altvr.com/getaltspacevr-2/ .

8. Is Altspace available on Mac Computers

   [This answers 8 & 14] Yes, though limited functionality and only to computers rather than iphones. Here is a link for that - https://altvr.com/altspacevr-mac/ .

9. Are the VR Alt Space meetings listed at your local entities meeting lists? (i.e. Intergrpoup, Central Office, local Area or Districts, OIAA?)

At this time the meeting are not listed with GSO we are formalizing this as the group grows.

10.   Does Alt space cost money?

Altspace itself does not cost money at this time. It is currently free.

11.   Do we have to create our avatar separately? New to this format!

Your avatar is created within altspace for its applications. A default or generic avatar is created by altpace, but you can customize the look if you want.

12.   Is it possible to visit the room from a regular computer?

It is possible to visit the room in 2d mode from a regular computer, yes.

13.   What do I need to do on my I-pad please??

[Same answer as 3,4,5,6,7] Again, various VR headsets work with altspace and you can access it without a headset from your PC or Mac. Headset range in price the new oculus quest 2 is $299 and other headsets can be found used for $300 or less used. For an updated list of supported devices go to https://altvr.com/get-altspacevr-2/ .

14.   Does Alt space work on Mac?

[Same as 8] Yes, though limited functionality and only to computers rather than iphones. Here is a link for that - https://altvr.com/altspacevr-mac/ .

15.   Margie, can you hug each other?

You can simulate a hug by getting close to another avatar. You can't feel it, but it's amazingly close and as we are all starved of hugs, it's the best substitute. If you don't like hugs you can put your avatar in a personal bubble to keep other away.

16.   When you are speaking with a newcomer or anyone 1X1 is it private or can everyone hear all? Like in Zoom when you unmute.

Voice carries much like it does in the real world. If you walk away from the group with someone and talk 1 on 1, it is somewhat private depending on how far away you are much like in real life. During the meeting, we often put people temporarily on megaphone so everyone can hear.

17.   is there a master list of all available vr aa meetings?

There is a list of meetings using AA World in atlspace (currently 4). There is the possibility that other venues are having aa meetings or others may be started in altspace without using the aa world meeting space (each meeting is autonomous, of course).

18.   Will a Facebook account be necessary for access to the virtual reality technologies mentioned today?

Facebook is moving toward requiring facebook account for its VR headsets. So, facebook is becoming required for oculus. However, altspace does not require a facebook account for 2d and there are other headset systems out there.

19.   Can you pass a basket in the VR virtual meeting?

At this time, we do not pass a basket during a meeting. But there are other online sites, such as the old 2d Second Life, where contributions can be made during a meeting. Depending on the service providers involved, this is likely to become a feature in the future for VR.

20.   Could you use the Cardboard VR to connect with your smartphone?

After reading about it some more, it won't work with Google Cardboard.

21.   Can we get the contact information for the presenters for more info/discussion?

Yes, Michael D N is happy to give out his contact details.

22.   In your initial presentation was the presenters pre-recorded prior to the Q&A?

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The video Mike started was pre-recorded, then the portions after that were live at the meeting. So, there were two parts to it.

1:30 - 2:45 pm	*Meeting Formats: Online, In-person or Both!*	*Three members share their experiences with various formats for Recovery Meetings, Service Meetings & Assemblies and members with accessibility needs benefit from online formats*
Royce E., Freehold, NJ *Monica F., Chicago, IL* *Ginger S., Area 47 NY*		

 Notes:

Royce E.

- *Due to covid- zoom became the go to meetings*
    - *ZOOM PRO $14.99 LIMIT 100 PEOPLE*
    - *$50.00 500 PEOPLE*
    - *$90.00 1000 PEOPLE*
- *TECHSOUP PROVIDES DISCOUNT FOR ZOOM MUST HAVE 501c3 NON-PROFIT*
- *ZOOM IS "EASY TRAVEL" FOR OUT OF TOWN SPEAKERS*
    - *BRING SPEAKERS AND ATTENDEES FROM AROUND THE WORLD*
    - *ALLOWS PEOPLE IN SELF QUARANTINE TO ATTEND*
    - *MAY ATTRACT NEWCOMERS*
- *ANONYMITY A CONCERN- MAY BE ABLE TO STAY MORE ANONYMOUS*
- *HYBRID- HAVE BOTH PHYSICAL AND ZOOM MEETING AT THE SAME TIME*

- ○ *PHYSICAL MEETING FOLLOWING COUNTY GUIDELINES FOR COVID SAFETY*
- ○ *ZOOM MEETING- ALL IN ATTENDANCE CAN HERE WHAT IS GOING ON DURING THE MEETING*
- ○ *COMMITTEE MEETING BE HELD FACE TO FACE- VISITORS ATTEND VIA ZOOM*

Additional notes submitted after the event:

Recommended 2 ppl co-chair technology and all tech positions have procedures in writing!

"Novel" means new presentation of a virus/disease.

Groups on the top of triangle and started virtual meetings. People who wanted to stay in touch who understood their lives depend on it.

·   Apple Face Time allows up to 32 people. Small scale. Provides remote desktop access.

·   Zoom is cheap and accessible to the newcomer – all they need is a meeting ID and password to join an AA meeting.

·   Microsoft Teams requires you to know who the attendees are ahead of time, so does not allow your meeting to be accessible to newcomers.

·   Free Zoom is capped at 40 minutes. For an hour meeting, likely need 90 minutes – 10 minutes ahead of time to welcome newcomers and 20 minutes for fellowship after. Cost is $14.99/month for up to 10 participants. Another $50 for up to 500 participants, and another $90 for up to 1000 participants.

·   Others require you to pay 1 year in advance, be a 501c3 and open a bank account and have an IRS EIN number.

COVID-19 shut down Hybrid meetings in September. Used a large screen TV in a meeting hall. And headsets so people could be physically distances and participate online if health at risk of attending in person.

Special Equipment needed for in-person and hybrid meetings now:

·   Small groups – group laptop

·   Larger meetings – external screen and individual headsets

·   Sanitizing equipment

·   Contact Tracing is tricky. Capturing names, email addresses and phone numbers.

Questions for Royce that we didn't get to during the session:

1. I've seen some hybrid meetings where the in person group will break off during the meeting to have their "own" meeting separate from the Zoom meeting. Have you heard of groups addressing this? I've heard that people in the room feel disconnected from the zoom meeting and they have a preference for in person rather than join in on the online meeting.

   Personally, I haven't heard of any situations like this. There are some face-to-face meetings that start and then break into one or more small groups. For instance, a large meeting will start and then newcomers and some experienced AA members will go to a separate room to provide an orientation or newcomers meeting. A situation like this can be easily accommodated in the hybrid model by using Zoom breakout rooms. You can read more about this at https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206476093-Enabling-breakout-rooms

   The situation that you're describing sounds more akin to a familiar problem in face-to-face meetings in a large room. You sometimes have three or four of our fellowship happily chatting away while the meeting proceeds, oblivious to what's happening around them. In this case the Chairperson has to address the situation. I would have no problem letting a group know that this is a hybrid meeting and we're going to be all inclusive. If that's a problem for any of the in-person attendees, we have a big parking lot outside most AA meetings where they can have their own private meeting. If it's raining they can even catch a quick shower.

   I have to remember that hybrid meetings are a new experience for just about everyone and these situations may not be caused out of any malicious intent, just ignorance of the new meeting etiquette. Still, ignorance must be addressed or people will stop attending both the face-to-face and virtual components of this meeting.

   One final thought, rude behavior, with the possible exception of Zoom bombing, didn't start with virtual meetings. Every AA meeting has been subject to members who want to hijack the

meeting instead of sharing the time, members who refuse to follow the group conscience ("We all know the group conscience is to avoid crosstalk, but…") and members who want to carry on private conversations with the person next to them. This behavior won't change in hybrid meeting, in fact it will become exasperated. The challenge is to define what problems are caused by the application of new technology and what problems are simply a manifestation of existing human conditions.

2. Re: hybrid mtgs. What have you found to be the best spot for the mtg chair and secretary to be during the mtg - Online, or in the building?

Let me start by saying it depends what type of meeting it is. First, we'll take the case of normal recovery meeting, something you would find in meeting finder, possibly a step, big book, open discussion, etc. In this case I believe the primary function of the Chairperson is to prepare for the meeting and introduce the leader. In a face-to-face meeting this means opening the meeting room, ensuring somebody is making the coffee, setting up the chairs if necessary or finding someone to do so, handing out the readings and preparing the Leader by explaining the format of the meeting. In our "new normal" there's probably going to be no coffee to be made but the Chairperson will have to start the virtual component up the meeting. Of course, all these tasks can be delegated as per the group conscious. In this case I believe it's best for the Chairperson to be in the physical room. Now when it comes to the group secretary, and treasurer for that matter, the part they play in the meeting is to present a report. I don't see any difference between them being in the physical room and then being on a virtual connection. In fact, if they do call in from a virtual connection, they can easily display reports with everybody in the physical and virtual space using tools supplied by the software company.

If, on the other hand, we're talking about a business meeting, be it a group, District or Area I would have a different response. In the case of a group or District I would expect the Chairperson to be opening the room; however, an Area meeting might well have a dedicated trusted servant who's tasked with making sure the Area office is up and

running for the Area Committee Meeting. In this case I believe the Chairperson could serve equally effectively regardless if they were in the physical room or coming in virtually. The secretary on the other hand, would probably be better off in the physical room. Our ACMs run between 4 and 5 hours, and taking notes is very tedious. I believe that the secretary might have difficulty hearing all the speakers in the physical room if they connected virtually. It's certainly worth testing beforehand if they want the flexibility to connect virtually.

3. Do you have experience using Projector Screen Paint - High Definition 4K Ultra White or such to project on a smooth wall for Hybrid meetings in a large room?

I don't have any personal experience using Projector Screen Paint but when has that ever stopped an alcoholic from sharing?

Let me start by sharing some high-level information on the topic to bring everybody up to speed. The basic idea is that a projector is used to shoot the Zoom screen onto a wall in your meeting space. Obviously, you need the landlord's permission to set this up. Now it's obvious if you have a big empty wall you can simply project onto it regardless of what color the wall is or any imperfections. Still, it would be better if the wall was as smooth and clean as a movie theatre screen. To accomplish this a primer coat is put on the wall after spackling and sanding out any imperfections (gouges in the wall, bumps, etc.). Next, the wall is painted with two to three coats of a specialty, white paint. While you can use normal white paint, screen paint is usually significantly brighter than normal white paint and has a composition that prevents or lessens reflections and hot spots.

Whether or not this is a good solution for you in your given situation is a question only you can answer. First, this only works with the landlord's permission and may not work well in a room that you're sharing with other groups. If you're in a club house or Area

office this might be an alternative to hanging a projection screen. Let's look at some of the pros and cons of a painted-on screen projection screen.

The pros, and for that matter the cons, revolve around a couple of basic situations. First, once completed the new painted screen looks very professional. I added the word new because overtime scuffs and scrapes are likely to occur and will degrade the look and functionality of the painted screen. The manufacturers all recommend that scuffs be removed by painting another layer in the screen area. A gallon of decent screen paint costs between $170 and $190.00 according to a quick perusal of Amazon. More advanced screen paint will set you back $249 a gallon. These costs do not include primer, black paint for the borders, brushes, sanding tools, etc. The costs do not include the labor to do the installation. We can usually find some painters among our membership who are happy to volunteer; just remember that this is more exacting work then simply slapping up a coat of paint in a utility room.

A variety of 120-inch screens are available on Amazon for under $50. Even if you choose a larger size or a better-quality screen chances are you can find something more economical then painting it on your wall. With proper care, the painted screen will probably last longer so that should be a consideration.

Your big screen looks like an empty piece of wall when not in use. Having been a trustee of a clubhouse for several years I know that Alcoholics abhor a vacuum. They'll want to slap something up on that wall when it's not being used as a screen. No matter how much you ask that the area not be touched, you'll walk into find flyers for latest group anniversary, picnic announcements, holiday parties, all taped to your painted screen. Be grateful when they haven't found a way to hammer a pushpin into the wall. The psychology is very different with a conventional screen attached to the wall. People are certainly less likely to tape a flyer to a conventional movie screen. They might pull the screen off the wall and lay it in a corner of the room though.

The other consideration is that once you paint a screen on the wall you can't easily move it somewhere else. A portable screen, even one you've attached to the wall, can probably be taken down and moved to another wall if the orientation of your room is changed. It can also be moved to another facility if a rent increase or the sale of your room by the landlord forces you to move.

I suppose my final thoughts on the matter are this, do you want to be using a screen and projector anyway? Large screen TVs have come down in price dramatically. They can be mounted to the wall without running a power cord across the floor, a situation which might be difficult with the projector. When you add up the cost of a decent projector and a screen painted on to the wall you might be looking at a comparable price. It's true that you can project a larger image on to the wall, without breaking the bank on a huge video monitor but you should consider all possibilities before moving forward on your project.

In my configuration of the Area 44 office, which I didn't go into tremendous detail in the white paper, I specify dual large screen TVs both mounted to the front wall, one to the left side up the officer's table and the other to the right side. During something like an Area Committee Meeting both monitors would be driven via HDMI split from one PC. This gives the entire room a good view of what's going on. Sound for this configuration is fed directly into the speaker system from the PC. Now, when committee meetings (PI, CPC, Corrections, etc.) take place only one screen is used. If two committees are meeting simultaneously, each monitor is driven by a separate laptop and the monitors sound is used as the output. Partitions can be placed down the middle of the room, like those used for cubicles in companies, to make it easier for each side to concentrate on their individual presentations.

I realized that this information may only be the start to answering your question. If it helps you think about what's a priority in your given situation then I believe the answer that's most useful will be revealed to you.

Monica F.

 - CHICAGO AREA 19- 20 DISTRICTS CHICAGOAA.ORG

- *250 ONLINE MEETINGS*
- *2974 PHYSICAL MEETINGS*
- *NEED TO GET MORE PARTICIPATION IN SERVICE COMMITTEES GREW OUT OF TRAFFIC, PARKING, AND THE FACT THAT OFFICE WAS LOCATED DOWNTOWN, IN 2018*
- *They doubled participation in service once they went online*
- *THEY HAVE HAD CONFERENCES, EVENTS, ASSEMBLIES, AND MORE ALL VIRTUALLY*
- *AREA SERVICE SHARING SESSIONS- VIRTUAL*

Additional notes submitted after the event:

· Chicago is doing all of its Service Work Virtually!!!

· Chicago has 35K recovering alcoholics across 945 square miles.

· 5.1 million people in 20 districts – 16 geographic and 4 linguistic (Polish, Spanish, Russian)

· Assemblies are held every 60 days! ~750 members attend each assembly.

· 2,974 meetings; 250 virtual meetings (not sure I captured these stats correctly)

· $800,000 area budget with 14 Committees

· Since June 2020, the Aarea Committees meet monthly virtually for service work. Better participation since traffic is unbearable and it can take 1 hour 45 minutes plus $16 parking to get to an Area Committee meeting.

·   Area Assembly is held every 2 months. 175 people attend since virtual. Normal attendance is 100.

·   6 motions were passed at the last Assembly. 2 Area Assemblies held online. Officer nominations just received.

·   In August the Illinois State Conference was held online.

·   Had no idea how much work this would be. At least 3 times the amount of work.

·   Next Service Assembly is Sat 9/26, noon.

·   Area 19 has an office in downtown Chicago. AA has been in Chicago for 81 years. Earl T brought AA to Chicago and was the first office manager. *GSO designed its office after the Chicago office.*

A19 - Chicago area assembly every 60 days online. Area 19 Service assembly monthly for committees.

Observed A 49 - NYC area elections earlier today - 249 electors & 80 observers this am to learn how it can be done virtually.

Areas are able to help remote communities and more people getting to AA mtgs.

Sharing loss of members due to in-person mtgs w COVID & online memorials being held.

Hybrid meetings need work before safe.

 Revisit how we communicate/carry the message. TIAA important.

Questions for Monica that we didn't get to during the session:(responses are pending - will be added shortly)

1. How do you do ASL and Spanish Language Translation in Zoom meetings?

2. Are minutes from earlier Area Service Sharing Sessions available? Thank you.

Ginger S.

AREA 47 ACCESSIBILITY CHAIR

- *HEARING IMPAIRED*
  - *READING LIPS JUST AS IMPORTANT AS HEARING WHAT IS SAID*
  - *COVID-WEARING MASK IS HINDERING THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE*
  - *AUTOMATED CAPTIONING- TRANSLATING TEXT*
  - *VIRTUAL MEETINGS PREFERRED*
- *VISUALLY IMPAIRED*
  - *ANDROID ACCESSIBILITY SUITE*
  - *APPLE- VOICE OVER*
- *ACCESSIBILITY MEETING*
  - *2ND AND 4TH MONDAY*
  - *7-8PM EST*
  - *690 393 7306 pwd: AREA 45*
  - *If anyone wishes to be added to the All Area Accessibilities Meeting Contact List please feel free to email me at Area47aacontact@gmail.com*

Additional notes submitted after the event:

Zooming in from New Hampshire. Part of the TIAA Forum for years. Represent/serve in upstate NY. Home to bury her dad and help her mom who has cancer. Life on life's terms. Sobered up in Area 8 San Diego. Had to get a jet pack to be able to zoom in for this workshop – no internet here.

Deaf v **d**eaf: Deaf means born deaf and ASL is only communication deaf means severe hearing impairment.

Blind can now use tablets for virtual meetings. Android and Apple have apps to add to "see" by ear. Android is called Accessibility Suite and Apple is called Voice over.

With COVID-19 and meetings moving to virtual, a lot of people can get to meetings who could not get to them before.

How to fund ASL (American Sign Language) needs to be revisited now. Is it the groups? Districts? Areas? Responsibility?

All Area Accessibility Meeting you are all invited to attend: Meeting ID: 690-393-7306; Password: Area45 – 2nd and 4th Monday, 7-8PM EST

Contact Area47aacontact@gmail.com if you want to be added to the All Area Accessibility Committee – focus is threefold: (1) equitably (2) accommodation and (3) accessibility

2:45 - 3:15 pm	*TIAA Update*	*What's new, what might be coming and what people would like to see in the future (poll)*
Lew G., Westminster, CO		

 Notes:

TIAA- FORUM: https://tiaa-forum.org

- *42% of attendees already are members of TIAA Forum*
- *Online Community to support our primary purpose*
- *Was born out of the NAATW to see if we could keep the conversation about technology going between workshops*
- *About ½ of membership are supporting technologies; ⅓ are interested parties who may or may not be using tech in their service*
- *Between 2015 - 2019, forum membership grew to around 600 members. We are currently at 1,700 members due to Box 4-5-9 article and fellowship scramble in response to COVID-19*
- *Discourse Software (https://discourse.org) used for community forum*
- *TIAA-FORUM became a registered Colorado Association in 2019. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit IRS designated organization.*
- *Support structure includes Administrators, Moderators and an elected Board.*

- *Winter 2019 Box 459 Article featuring both NAATW and the TIAA Forum was published and increased interest / growth in TIAA membership. (Article can be found here: https://www.aa.org/newsletters/en_US/en_box459_holiday19.pdf)*
- *Significant growth after March 2020 (COVID-19)*
- *Self-supporting through member contributions*
- *Question - relationship between TIAA and GSO?*
    - *No formal relationship, although there are some members of the forum that are GSO staff as well as current and past Board Members.*
    - *Membership policy is that Forum members are either AA members or non-members that are doing direct service to AA service organizations*
- *Questions - Linking to TIAA?*
    - *Anyone is welcome to link to the TIAA public page (https://tiaa-forum.org)*
    - *Encourage participation in forum*

Additional notes submitted after the event:

Co-founded and current board president of TIAA Forum; 40 years in IT, nearly that long sober

Survey: 175 of 310 attendees answered: 42% yes familiar with TIAA; 48% not familiar

1,700 members in TIAA. Slow and steady growth until Fall 2019, when Box 459 article published (that is when I joined TIAA) then COVID-19 arrived.

In August 2019, TIAA became a 501c3.

Board: Adam, Cheri, Lew, Lisa and Ross

Administrators: Adam, Ginger, Lew, Lois and Tim

Discussion about G-Suite

- *Google GSuite product is a commercial product and therefore provides commercial-level security (i.e. does no data mining) if using the paid version. The G-Suite product for non-profits is exactly the paid basic version, just "free" for nonprofits.*
- *TechSoup Screening from GSuite. Once approved by TechSoup, you will have access to sign up for GSuite for non-profit.*
- *No Special Access for AA. GSuite access is for all non-profits (IRS recognized 501(c)3 organizations*

3:30 - 4:00 pm

Protecting our traditions and implementing technology through an informed group conscience

While conducting different types of virtual meetings, do we consider safety, security and anonymity and what's healthy for our membership versus right or wrong?

Buck R., Lewes, DE

Read more about it: The AA Guidelines – Finance:

MG-15 - AA Guidelines Finance (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mg-15_finance.pdf)

EIN Individual Request - Online Application (https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp)

select "view additional types"

select "community or volunteer group"

Receive EIN within 24 hours to email of your choice.

Safety card for AA Groups

F-211 - Safety Card for AA Groups (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-211_SafetyCardforAAGroups.pdf)

A.A. press release regarding digital platforms

[AA Groups Using Digital Platforms to Find Sobriety During Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak (https://www.aa.org/press-releases/en_US/press-releases/aa-groups-using-digital-platforms-to-find-sobriety-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)](https://www.aa.org/press-releases/en_US/press-releases/aa-groups-using-digital-platforms-to-find-sobriety-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak)

The brochure "A.A. Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix"

[F-3 - Self-Support Where Money & Spirituality Mix (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf)](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf)

Read more about it: AA Guidelines - Internet

[AA® Guidelines - Internet (https:/assets/www.aa.org//en_US/mg-18_internet.pdf)](https:/assets/www.aa.org//en_US/mg-18_internet.pdf)

*[**Delaware General Service Assembly** (http://delawareaa.org/forgsrsandothers/7thtradition52320.html)](http://delawareaa.org/forgsrsandothers/7thtradition52320.html) Service Material from the General Service Office FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PRACTICING THE SEVENTH TRADITION AT VIRTUAL MEETINGS:*

[SMF-223 - FAQ on Practicing the Seventh Tradition at Virtual Meetings (https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf)](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf)

NY Intergroup Best Practices:

[Remote Meeting 7th Tradition Best Practices – New York Inter-Group (https://www.nyintergroup.org/remote-meetings/7th-tradition-best-practices/)](https://www.nyintergroup.org/remote-meetings/7th-tradition-best-practices/)

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Delaware's Box of Technology

http://delawareaa.org/forgsrsandothers/7thtradition52320.html

Platforms from SF/Marin Intergroup

Digital Contribution Platforms - Intergroup | Central Office serving SF & Marin (https://aasfmarin.org/digital-contribution-platforms)

Technology, Professionals and A.A. (a sample from the General Service Office)

F-13 - About AA - A Newsletter for Professionals - Summer 2020 (https://www.aa.org/newsletters/en_US/f-13_summer20.pdf)

Considerations: Calls to Actions?

1. Are we sharing these issues *completely* with our home group, our district, our Assembly, our Intergroup or Central Office? Are we making the necessary changes suggested by the majority? Did we give the minority a fair hearing?
2. Do we wish to reconfigure how we work our own personal program and consider what meetings we attend to feel safe? (such as more Zoom vs less face-to-face?)
3. How best should we talk about weaving our 36 principles with our technology opportunities or technology needs.

Additional notes submitted after the event:

Inventory this morning. On 12 Step calls. Do we consider:

Is this solution safe, secure and good for AA as a whole?

If our solution is good or bad or maybe right or wrong?

 Discussed and reviewed multiple documents:

·   AA Finance Guidelines (yellow 6 pager)

·   IRS regulations affecting groups, districts, areas,

·   Safety in AA (white 3 pager and 2 sided yellow card)

·   AA Safety in Digital Platforms

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· COVID-19 – COVID-19—COVID-19 and Public Health

· Avoid personal bank accounts or apps

· Money & Spirituality pamphlet, doesn't address digital

· AA Group Treasurer pamphlet, doesn't address digital

· Suggest avoid using personal bank account, personal apps like Venmo, PaypPal, Zelle, Cash App, Google Pay, Stripe, Apple Pay.

· Resources to look to:
  o NYC Intergroup has Best Practices
  o Delaware Box of Technology
  o San Francisco / Marin County Intergroup

How bad is it (AA's finances)???

· Greg T, GSO general manager – see letters.

· Withdrew $3 million from reserve.

· June and July group contributions up slightly.

Concept 1 – Bill W – our money goes to help us carry the message

Concept 2 – Tradition 7 –

Are we protecting our Society from outsiders money? Have a letter that your treasurer sends money back to if group does not know whether the money is from someone in AA.

Using Venmo, PayPal, Zelle, Cash App, Google Pay Stripe and Apple Pay.

<mark>Recommends "7th Tradition Collector"</mark> independent of Group/District Treasurer since so much technology needs to be assessed and shared for informed group conscience selection for digital 7th Tradition.

THIS is the NEW NORMAL.

Questions to ask your group/district/area members:

Are we sharing public health issues completely with our homegroup, district, area,
Intergroup/CSO?

Are we keeping our members safe? Is our meeting safe?

COVID is not an outside issue, it is inside our meetings. AA complies with the law.
Public health orders & guidance is the law, including contract tracing.

Questions that came in for Buck during the presentation that we didn't get to:
(responses were provided by Buck after the event)

1. I have noticed that members are not as careful with anonymity when using technology. Many shrug and say something like "I don't understand this technology stuff", seemingly naive about the real risks to themselves and others. How do we persuade members to apply the same caution to technology tools that they do when meeting in person? More generally, is there a discussion about technology adoption vs adaptation in AA? **RESPONSE: good question! It all comes down to having a complete and transparent group business meeting where the technologist gives the presentation and then the questions are asked by those who respect the fact that the Traditions are not negotiable. "Back to the drawing board" is not a bad response from the group to the technologist. It reminds me that our last name is Anonymous, so we might want to practice this thought in all our affairs -- even if it isn't easy.**

2. What is the way to approach 'Insurance liabilities' with face2face meetings? Do districts or areas offer an umbrella policy? This issue has come up with establishing brick n mortar locations....i ask this in this forum as it is a cost or an exclusion? any suggestions on investigations or solutions? some recommendations besides health mandates for safety is insurance. **RESPONSE: With the addition of Covid-19, many churches and other meeting places are asking for an insurance rider or seperate policy. What's at play here is liability that nobody gets sick and dies, and if that does happen, the meeting place doesn't want to be held responsible. While this is not a new idea -- it's been around for many years -- it's**

emblematic of the "new" agreement with organizations making space available for AA meetings. I'm not surprised, all things considered. You may want to contact the Group Services desk at GSO for the experience of groups dealing with this reality.

3. As an intergroup office mgr, I am often asked during the Pandemic who is contributing & who is not. My answer? None of your f-ing business. No, these donations are not anonymous either by check or Pay Pal-I WILL NOT DISCUSS WITH ANYONE who is/isn't donating or how much. My lip is zipped on this one. **RESPONSE: We agree with your principles! Here's the rub: lots of service boards (my Assembly and assorting InterGroups included) don't always list personal contributions anonymously. The records -- not the printed list or nor the financial statements -- should show who gave what, *but* the line for individual contributions should be no more than the sum of contributions, not the breakdown of each person. PS - AAWS operates like this, too.**

4. Very few groups are set up to have a group bank account. I doubt they will. Especially with smaller groups. This has historically been part of our unorganized system. And yes, treasurer's have taken the money. And people have gotten drunk. But we go on and end up okay. I am not sure how we change this. **RESPONSE: Sadly, the words of Bill W. come to mind, "AA won't be hurt from outside the Fellowship, AA will only be hurt from within." You make an excellent point, but my question is why do we keep paying for the same real estate over and over? We are unorganized in some ways, but as a sponsor has reminded me, "now that we know better, we should try to do better."**

5. Regarding outside contributions - when receiving a check in the mail do you contact the person who wrote it to ask "are you an aa?" what if the check is drawn from a bank (not a personal account) and the person you contact is a 3rd party check writer (like a trust manager) and they won't give out the giver's info - and we aren't going to ask that 3rd party if the giver is an AA... This is becoming more common, especially with 3rd party check writing services where it may not be possible to directly contact the giver. **RESPONSE: we briefly dealt with this terrific question on Saturday. Just as a review, when in doubt, send it back with a note that asks the member to contact the treasurer so that we know a member is contributing. FYI - this is the same procedure AAWS uses when an unknown writer has a check sent to AA.**

6. Tech related because of the 3rd party check writing services out there…
   RESPONSE: Third party check writing is a fairly easy product to resolve when dealing with anonymity. Because a person's full name is normally on the check or draft, an instruction from the group treasurer -- and announced at every meeting -- should include a statement like: "if you use pay-by-check from your bank, please remember to state on the information line the word Member --" hope this helps.

7. Can we please have a copy of this presentation so we can easily access the links? **RESPONSE: I'm told that all of the presentations should be available later this week. <<Links captured in notes at top of this section>>**

8. Goods/Service or Friends/Family? Different online payment options allow one to designate payment as service or friends. Service incurs processing fee, friends doesn't. Implications for AA principles in choosing friends for 7th tradition?
   RESPONSE: Your insights are much appreciated   What's problematic here is not the fee -- remembering of course that AA pays its own way -- but the same issue of personal vs group bank accounts is in play, which means the risk is just as great. The difference? "Friends" accounts are available for everyone to see, hence the question of anonymity. The easy answer is present the options to the group or meeting and see how many want to do what's best for everyone: safety, security and anonymity --

4:00 - 4:15 pm	*Designing the Online User Experience: How Pro's Do It*	*What AA can learn from professional UX designers*
Lisa R., Albany CA		

Notes:

● *UX Design - How do users interact with technology? How does the interface change the experience?*

- *UX Design is online and off-line (not just technology based)*
- *YOU are not the user! (we all bring biases to the process)*
- *Can the user complete the task and was it a good experience - did they come back?*
- *UX experience starts with the "thought" to do something*
- *Test and Iterate often*

Additional notes submitted after the event:

Above my head - UX Designers takeaways for AA.

Avoid likes, go for evidence - who used it and how long did it take to use?

80:20 rule applies ;-) that I understand!

Ah. AA needs to start thinking like UX Designers!

Establish measurable performance metrics: ie

Want 80% AA user base to be able to find a meeting in 30 seconds.

Test.

Teach.

Walk through websites online.

Teach members how to navigate.

Redesign until you meet the goals you established.

Questions for Lisa that we didn't get to during the session:

1. How do we go about finding participants for user testing for AA sites?

   Depends on what exactly is being tested but in general, once a user profile is established for target user, recruiting a few acquaintances who are thought to be capable of honesty is how at its most elemental level this is done. Example, asking a co-worker who has absolutely no 'skin in the game' and barely knows

any involved in any aspect of the site or AA as a whole even would be a good candidate.

2. What UX testing/design parameters change within the anonymous nature of our program?

More info would be needed to determine this as testing is part of the design process. Where testing is concerned, if developers of the sites are themselves not members, taking care to anonymize test subjects who themselves are members would need to be planned for. Where other design activities are concerned, certainly the need for anonymity must become one of the objectives in evaluating certain task flows (ex., Task: Attend an online open meeting; Benchmark: User remains unidentifiable throughout the entire process from gaining access to exiting... etc.)

3. What are best practices for gathering usability input from users?

Depends on the user profile of users targeted and budget of the client. I teach Ux in one of California's community colleges and students learn multiple ways of collecting input beginning with the simplest, cheapest, and easiest: 'thinking aloud' studies.

4:15 - 4:45 pm	*Wagtail vs Wordpress*	*Another way to easily propagate meetings to the Meeting Guide*
Timothy A., Philadelphia, PA		

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Notes:

Many thought online meetings would mean we would miss newcomers. Some of us went the extra step of making sure there was lots of information available on how to get online, having a toll-free number for folks who had run out of minutes on their plans.

What we found was the opposite and that we had actually removed some obstacles for newcomers to attend meetings.

Many AA webpages are still using the Wordpress meeting list. This list provides a JSON feed that is needed to populate meetings on the Meeting Guide app.

This presentation has a demo showing what they could do for a meeting finder in python and django

Here's a link to a project which allows you to print booklets from the Meeting Guide JSON feed: https://github.com/code4recovery/booklet-generator

Notes submitted for addition to crowdsource notes after the event:

Now meeting lists on Wordpress. From Philadelphia: One size <u>does not</u> fit all.

Interesting: ==12 step recovery groups are anarchists.==

80:20 rule useful worldwide.

Traditions 3, 5 important.

AA flat membership since 1990s. May see an uptick since COVID-19. We have lowered the entry barrier, so more newcomers and members attending more meetings if keep Zoom up and running.

Tradition 4 – special attention for technology and Intergroups/CSOs.

Now Intergroups /CSOs have APIs with the AA Online Meeting Guide.

Now AA has a specification on how to share meetings worldwide!!!!

AA SEIPA website is not WordPress, but Wagtail - in Philadelphia.

Nice interface for linking maps, addresses, zip codes, geocodes and can re-geo-code for building entrance, how to get into building. Nice.

Questions for Tim that we didn't get to during the session:

1. What language is he speaking? Way too technical without definitions.

I appreciate that diving into new technologies can be difficult. I've spoken at and attended many technology conferences (the "T" in NAATW, after all!), and look at talks where I don't understand a lot of the lingo as an opportunity to learn. I apologize if some of my talk was a bit overly technical. Let me provide some industry terms which folks running a website for AA would benefit from knowing; the definitions all come from Wikipedia:

Language or Programming Language: A *programming language* is a formal *language* comprising a set of instructions that produce various kinds of output. *Programming languages* are used in computer *programming* to implement algorithms. Most *programming languages* consist of instructions for computers.

Web Framework: A **web framework** (**WF**) or **web application framework** (**WAF**) is a software framework that is designed to support the development of web applications including web services, web resources, and web APIs. Web frameworks provide a standard way to build and deploy web applications on the World Wide Web.

Content Management System (CMS): A **content management system** (**CMS**)[1][2][3] is a computer software used to manage the creation and modification of digital content.

RESTful API: **Representational state transfer** (**REST**) is a software architectural style that defines a set of constraints to be used for creating Web services. Web services that conform to the REST architectural style, called *RESTful* Web services, provide interoperability between computer systems on the internet.

Within the context of AA technoloy, we use a programming language and a web framework to create the Twelve Step Meeting List and Wagtail Meeting Guide web applications used by many of our intergroups to show their meetings on their website. These web applications also from the meeting list as a RESTful API for the Meeting Guide mobile application available on iPhone and Android. We use a content management system built in the programming language and web framework to allow users, typically from an intergroup office, to modify meetings and pages to appear on the web.

Here are the entities used by the software:

Entity	Language	Web Framework	CMS	JavaScript Framework
TSML	PHP	Wordpress	Wordpress	jQuery (and soon, ReactJS)
Wagtail Meeting Guide	Python	Django	Wagtail	ReactJS

I hope these definitions help.

2. Every time Wordpress does a major update it breaks our Wordpress (changes how it looks) site. Would using Wagtail prevent this from happening.

This was one of my major frustrations with WordPress. I won't say Wagtail is issue-free: I don't think there is such a thing as a pain free upgrade path. However, I've found the Django and Wagtail ecosystems to be more responsive to security issues, clear in their upgrade documentation, and more modular in their plugin approach. I've run into many fewer conflicts with additional plugins and packages with Wagtail than I had with WordPress. However, there is a fairly steep learning curve to switch your

language, framework, and CMS. I'd recommend trying Wagtail For Beginning to see if it is for you: https://learnwagtail.com/wagtail-for-beginners/

3. Does this mean if you purchase Wagtail (how much?) you can just enter all your info in a spreadsheet, push a button, and it populates automatically and shows up in meeting list format?

Wagtail is free, open-source software. If you're curious, check it out here: https://learnwagtail.com/wagtail-for-beginners However, you do *NOT* need Wagtail to use the Google Spreadsheet as as source for your meetings. The only requirements for using the Google Spreadsheet are:

- The Google Spreadsheet itself, created in the proper format.
- A single HTML file that has a pointer to the spreadsheet, and the ReactJS Meeting Guide source code (about 20 lines of HTML total!).

I would recommend building a caching system in something like Django or PHP, however. This could be done in a few lines of code that retrieves the JSON from the spreadsheet, and writes it to a flat file on disk, with a query variable flag to refresh it. If there's interest in this as a drag and drop solution, it might be something we in the Code 4 Recovery group could work on.

4. What are the files needed to start using this

You can find all of the code and documentation here: https://github.com/code4recovery/ Of particular interest:

- The ReactJS Meeting Guide with Google Sheets support: https://github.com/code4recovery/react
- Wagtail Meeting Guide: https://github.com/code4recovery/wagtail-meeting-guide

- The JSON specification for the Meeting Guide app and ReactJS Meeting Guide:

  https://github.com/code4recovery/spec

- The TSML WordPress plugin:

  https://github.com/code4recovery/12-step-meeting-list

Thank you for the questions! I hope these answers and clarifications help out.

4:45 - 5:15 pm   *Future AA technologies post COVID19*   *This session will cover potential future technologies AA might need post COVID19.*

Lois L., St. Louis, MO

Notes:

Future will not be the past

Build Back Better

Scenario Planning

> *How Might AA Change Post-Covid?*

Experience

- *What is the newcomer's experience?*
    - *Digital outreach?*
- *Will online groups and "hybrid" meetings be integrated into AA?*
- *Will we expand or change the way that we do institutional work?*
    - *Entry to facilities are limited*
    - *Institutional compliant technology - i.e. HIPPA*

Economic

- *Will some entities collapse or grow due to digital adoption?*
- *How do we adopt to support services or more affordable ways of doing things?*
    - *Physical offices*
    - *7th Tradition Collection*
- *Will we change how we use our contributions?*
    - *Hardware/Zoom fees*
    - *SAAS*

- *AA-informed vendors (i.e. preservation of anonymity)*

New Channels of communications

- *Keep or expand the use of more immediate forms of communication*
    - *WhatsApp*
    - *Facebook Groups*
- *Should we maintain or operationalize some of the things that we use to share information*
    - *Some meetings (i.e. Boozers in Bathrobes) makes all meeting files available for download*
    - *Mailing Lists?*
- *What does communication look like at scale?*

Cross-Pollination of AA

- *We are now able to share how we solve issues*
- *Will remote service meetings and workshops become the norm?*
- *How do natively online groups fit into the service structure?*
    - *Are online groups tied to any "geographic" area?*
- *Will we start serving not where we live or where we are needed?*
- *Do we need a truly international service structure?*
    - *AAWS is really focused on US and Canada*
- *Time Zones…*
- *Streaming and Hosting Services*
- *Session Software - HIPPA Compliant*
    - *De-Identified Video - synthetic anonymity*
- *"AA-Informed" practices*

How Might AA's use of Technologies evolve to support the changes??

Prepare for a wide variety of unplanned futures

Do the next right thing

- *Ask for help*
- *Pay attention to "news for the future"*
- *research , experiment, guide, advise*

- *Ground ourselves in the traditions and concepts*

Foundational Questions

- *Is the spirit of AA continuing?*

Notes submitted for addition to crowdsource notes after the event:

AA can take from the business world:

Typical Crisis Timeline:

1 Respond – manage continuity

2 Recover – learn and emerge stronger

3 Thrive - prepare for the "new normal"

3rd phase is Thrive…where we want to get to.

Build back better & fix things previously broken.

Scenario Planning:

· How might AA change post COVID-19?

· How might AA's use of technology evolve to support this?

· What is the new normal in AA?

 4 critical uncertainties:

1. Effects on traditional ways of carrying the message.

· Newcomer digital packets example provided.

· Greater accessibility

·   Will online and hybrid be integrated into AA?

·   Expand how we do institutional work?

·   What technologies will groups, districts, areas need to do their service work?

Needs:

·   Institutional compliant Technologies for Service Work?

·   Not just coffee pot and basket but instead digital TV and headsets for members?

2. Economic impacts on different levels of service entities.

·   Some entities may collapse.

·   Change contribution directions to hardware -screens & headsets- software subscriptions and paid technical providers.

·   Digital contribution options need to be AA compliant.

3. Effects of new channels of communication and information.

·   Share information.

·   NYC and SF Intergroups awesome suggestions.

·   Newsletters?

·   Communication at scale for AA?

·   Internet for AA??

·   Event aggregation??? For General Service Conference??

4. Effects of cross-pollination of AA culture/structure.

·   Will remote service meetings become the norm?

·   How fit online into service Structure?

· Can members now serve where we live?

· GSO staff outside NYC?

· Called AAWS but only North America?

· Develop a Robust Strategy & prepare for a wide variety of services.

· Do the right thing.

· Ask for help.

· Need more people to learn tech and help. Step up. Tech people are wearing out.

· Research, experience, guide, advise.

· Ground ourselves in 12 Traditions and Concepts.

Resources:

· 2 Business: Tim O'Reilly – Welcome to the 21st Century and Kevin Kelly – Deloitte

· 4 AA: About AA, Box 459 Summer 2020, 2020 General Service Conference Report, TIAA

Questions for Lois submitted during the session: (responses were provided by Lois after the event)

1. *I'm an archivist in Area 72. I'm looking at implementing running a server And using Win 10 Pro on 3 machines at the repository for 5 archivists to work virtually from home to build our digital presence. When will the two communities Archives and AA tech work collaboratively to ensure what we do will go forward hand in hand to preserve the histories being created in the digital world. (For example. The platforms changed in 2002–we in archives don't have those digital records...)*

LL: I definitely see how these two areas have a lot in common - I could see a start with mapping the similarities between the two and how we might help each other

2. *I am a special worker at an AA Central Office. How can we still offer opportunities for the fellowship at large when some of the needs we have in Technology do require a special skills? How can we make service opportunities available to the majority of the fellowship?*

   LL: I think we need to do some tech sponsorship - we need to teach folks how to help

3. *Do you have a URL for a digital newcomer packet? i would like to suggest to my group*

   LL: Not exactly - but here is what my group added to our online meeting format

   Is there anyone here for their first meeting since their last drink?

   Tell the newcomer We are pasting some AA information and members are pasting their phone numbers via private chat. If you'd like to receive this information via email pls. Send your email to the host via private chat and we'll mail it to you.
   Tell males or females If you are willing to take calls from newcomers pls. send your phone number to [newcomer name] via private chat

   [**Co-Host start paste via private chat**]
   The Meeting Guide app will help you find meetings:
   https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.meetingguide
   https://apps.apple.com/us/app/meeting-guide/id1042822181

   The pamphlets below are helpful to newcomers
   https://aa.org/assets/en_US/p-24_anewcomerask.pdf
   https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-15_Q&AonSpon.pdf
   [**end paste**]

4. *We clearly need a way to find a meeting that does NOT lead us astray. I tried recently to find meeting I knew of in Eureka, CA and was mislead to a commercial site sponsored by treatment center.....their 800 number had NO meeting info. The local Central office URL was quite obscure, witihout the name Eureka in it (I would ahe had to know the COUNTY name of the Eurka meeting to find it) so I was unable to find it by search engine. I would suggest some kind of MARKER or even a TradeMark that helps us KNOW we are at an AA URL.*

   LL: this is why I'm a big fan of the Meeting Guide for finding meetings - I also think AA entities SHOULD include Alcoholics Anonymous in their name - even though guidelines recommend against it

5. *Do you see specialized AA technical services like specialized AA conference tapers arising? (Paid businesses which cater to AA?)*

   LL: Yes - I think we need that - its a fine tradition 8 line and probably a hard role to take but I think AA entities need it

6. *Has anyone considered creating a nonprofit with the specific goal of servicing other AA groups and entities from a technology perspective? I'm not talking about sharing information (like NAATW), I'm talking about setting up Zoom accounts, G Suite, PayPal etc. directly under the nonprofit and providing the service to AA groups. Can you see any challenges with this kind of setup?*

   LL: I'm not aware of one yet but I think we should experiment with different models. I do think there are challenges - Tradition 4 for example - I'm also aware that there may be legal ramifications associated with sharing

7. *50% to 60 % of the people in the U.S. with Alcoholism or Alcohol use disorder die without knowing about A.A. or what it does per NIH. How can we address that as a Fellowship?*

LL: I think we need to be MUCH more friendly with our friends - this is strong CPC work - but the GSO presentation said they are working on adding better keywords and tags to help our media like our youtube videos be easier to find

8. Service Entities are paying lots of fees when dealing with digital contributions. How can we work cooperatively to cut cost of getting funds?

LL: My opinion is we should pay what it takes for these tools - we may need to try to share services and therefore share the cost

5:30 - 6:45 pm	GSO & Grapevine Panel	We'll hear from GSO staff on status, planning and updates for Netsuite, AA.org, Meeting Guide Social Media and general updates on additional technology related topics from GSO

Lorna G, Director of Technology Services, GSO

Clement C., Senior Manager of Communication Services, GSO

Racy J., Public Information Coordinator, GSO

Jeff W., Group Services Coordinator, GSO

Niurka M., Web Coordinator – AA Grapevine

Notes:

<u>Jeff W GSO- Group Services Coordinator</u>

Great day so far. Thank you. VR equipment awesome. Attends the TIAA Forum.

Mentioned article in Box459 on how the role of intergoups have responded through the crisis

Virtual regional forums will start in 2021 - they think it will be more presentation but they are going to work on including interactivity

How does Technology impact us/GSO?

· *Our transition from the ERP system to NetSuite Enterprise was very challenging, especially for records, groups (group numbers had to be 9 digit for online contributions) and for online contributions.*

· *Caused delays in getting GSR and DCM kits mailed out, letters on contributions.*

· *Starting to bear fruit. Especially when COVID-19 hit.*

· *Lorna personally made sure each employee had technology set up systems – hardware and software – to work from home since GSO office closed by mandatory state public health orders.*

· *Thanks to NetSuite. GSO launched radically new webstore.*

· *Still work to do with Records. Expect to launch to replace FMV for Registrars in Dec 2020.*

· *Serves as the liaison to Intergroups/CSOs.*

· *Resilience and pivoting of Intergroups offices in listing meetings virtually! ->>Thank you Lee!!*

· *TIAA Forum sharing in May really informed GSO. Look to the Fellowship for what to do.*

FYI the TIAA Forum that GSO is speaking about is where I get a lot of information and share with D17.

Lorna is New Director of Tech Services

· *hired by GSO just before COVID-19.*

· *IMO: Miracle. God choosing to remain anonymous.*

· *Creating a task force with 2 are Registrars -likely will expand to more*

NAATW 2020 Collaborative Virtual Gathering Report
By Zoom - Sep 12, 2020

 Racy is current PI staffer – PublicInfo@aa.org

· GSO staff rotate every 2-3 years. 3rd assignment at GSO.

· Since COVID-19, explaining all of the press inquiries groups, districts, area and GSO received when groups chose to move online w COVID-19 Pandemic.

· Changing advisory action to develop a plan.

· Good reminder: <mark>Internet communications may be someone's first and last impression of AA.</mark>

 Clement holds another newly created position, Senior Manager, Communications Services

· He has been part of TIAA and NAATW for at least 4 rotations.

· 100,532 meetings; 145,063 meetings as of June Not sure if these numbers are correct or if they are online only.

· Expecting to hire a Product Manager to guide GSO

 Julie G is GSO's Digital Analyst,

· Non-alcoholic employee

· Working behind the scenes for us, on video, audio, internet content.

 Niurka is GSO's Web Coordinator for GV/LaVina

· Non-alcoholic,

· Spanish/English speaking.

· Originally free-lance, now FT employee.

· Demonstrated how to find GV articles online, search by title or year or topic. This is new.

· Recall GSO opened free online GV access w COVID 19.

NAATW 2020 Collaborative Virtual Gathering Report
By Zoom - Sep 12, 2020

(Later learned this free GV access closed July 1, 2020)

GSO Regional Forums:

- · *All 2020 and 2021 live Regional Forums are canceled.*
- · ***Regional Forums in 2021 will be Virtual only.***
- · *2 upcoming Regional forum virtual events in 2020: USCANs*
  - o *One for Western North America; another for Eastern North America.*
  - o *Dates: 12/5 and the 12/19,*
  - o *Times: noon to 8 pm.*

Regarding Technology, SCO improvement. But no guarantee that treatment houses won't take AA information. So GSO very cautious before posting since searchable on Google.

6:45pm -7:00 pm	Closing and Fellowship	Wind up
Steering Committee and Participants		

>500 registrants for today's workshop

>300 participants today

Those who registered will receive an email when PowerPoints are posted on NAATW website, ~3 weeks

Questions: info@naatw.org

NAATW 2020 Collaborative Virtual Gathering Report
By Zoom - Sep 12, 2020

For those who were unable to get into the Crowd source note taking, Send your notes to: CarolynO@naatw.org

All session audio and computer presentation video (images and content presented on screen by presenters) will be recorded.

To maintain AA's tradition of anonymity, NAATW will not publish anyone's last name or face.