

## about serendipity: how to recreate the coffee break effect online ?

The most valuable outputs of participating to a conference are often the unplanned informal discussions, that lead to new ideas, new contacts or new collaborations. How can we recreate this effect in an online conference? The participants were divided in separate online groups of 3-5 people, and discussed this question.

These are some suggestions and ideas that resulted from these discussions:

- Have at some moments in the program randomly assigned breakout rooms of say 4-5 people (Zoom can do that), for 5 or 10 minutes, to let you meet people you don't know yet.
- Reserve discussion moments with some speakers or participants in advance. The conference provides you with a time slot and room to meet and discuss. Can be done "Tinder style": the meeting is established only if both people agree. Maybe future versions of videoconference software will offer such features.
- Don't forget that real breaks are important during exhausting online sessions. Don't fill all of them with yet another thing to do.
- Perhaps thematic discussion rooms about particular topics can be provided.
- Explain everything is an online whiteboard around which people can meet and discuss, while drawing.
- [ @Joern: which tool was this? ] Joern showed a tool for social interaction, couldn't write down the name
- Have some open breakout rooms available during lunch or coffee, such that people who want to discuss with a few people (also if not about science) can meet each other there.
- Online poster sessions: poster presenters prepare 1 slide with their most essential message/picture(s), and share that in a breakout room. Participants can visit these posters/rooms, and talk to the presenter. Only feasible if the number of participants is much larger than the number of presenters, to avoid that too many presenters are sitting for half an hour in an empty room. Participants should see the poster topics/abstracts in advance, such that they can make their list to visit.
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