

10 TIPS FOR ATTENDING A VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



WRITTEN BY KATE ROBERTSON, ASEG PRESIDENT

Virtual conferences are becoming more and more common in this new Covid-era. The virtual Australasian Exploration Geoscience Convention (AEGC) is less than a week away, and I'm here to give you tips on how you can maximise your virtual experience!

1. Prepare your space- Where will you be watching the conference? Booking out an office space, visiting a library or other quiet space, or setting up a comfy and quiet spot at home in advance will help you to enter 'conference' mode (and help mix up the routine a bit)
2. Set an out-of-office reply. You wouldn't hesitate to set an auto-reply on your emails when attending an in-person conference, so don't make things harder for yourself for a virtual conference. Set an auto-reply that you are attending to virtual AEGC and thus may not respond to emails in as timely a fashion as usual.
3. Block out your calendar! This should stop meeting invites coming in on a week where you have more than enough on your plate already
4. Snacks!! Have your conference morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea prepared in advance. Don't forget a few treats (perhaps try baking some brownies, cookies or scones or your conference treat of choice) to get that conference feel.
5. Let friends, colleagues, family etc know that you will be a bit busier than usual this week attending a conference. With evening social events too for the conference, it might be a bit tricky to find the time for a dinner with friends or other optional commitments that might pop up
6. Engage! While we will all miss the in-person human connection (particularly those in lockdown) there will be plenty of opportunities to catch up with old friends and colleagues, and network and make new ones. Make the most of the video chats, the live Q and A's, post about the conference on social media and use the conference hashtag #AEGC2021 to connect with others who are attending.
7. Plan your schedule in advance-access the conference platform early and add talks to your schedule online- or, do it the old fashioned way and print out the program and circle what you plan to attend.
8. Step outside your comfort zone- set yourself a goal each day whether it's to ask at least two questions to presenters during the day, to have a video chat with an exhibitor, or to engage with a poster presenter about their work.
9. Plan your conference attire. While if you're attending the conference from home, pyjama pants on the bottom might be okay, but you might not want to get caught in your fluffy dressing gown when a video chat comes through!!
10. Make the most of the content for a whole month on the virtual platform, re-watch your favourite talks or the ones that you missed