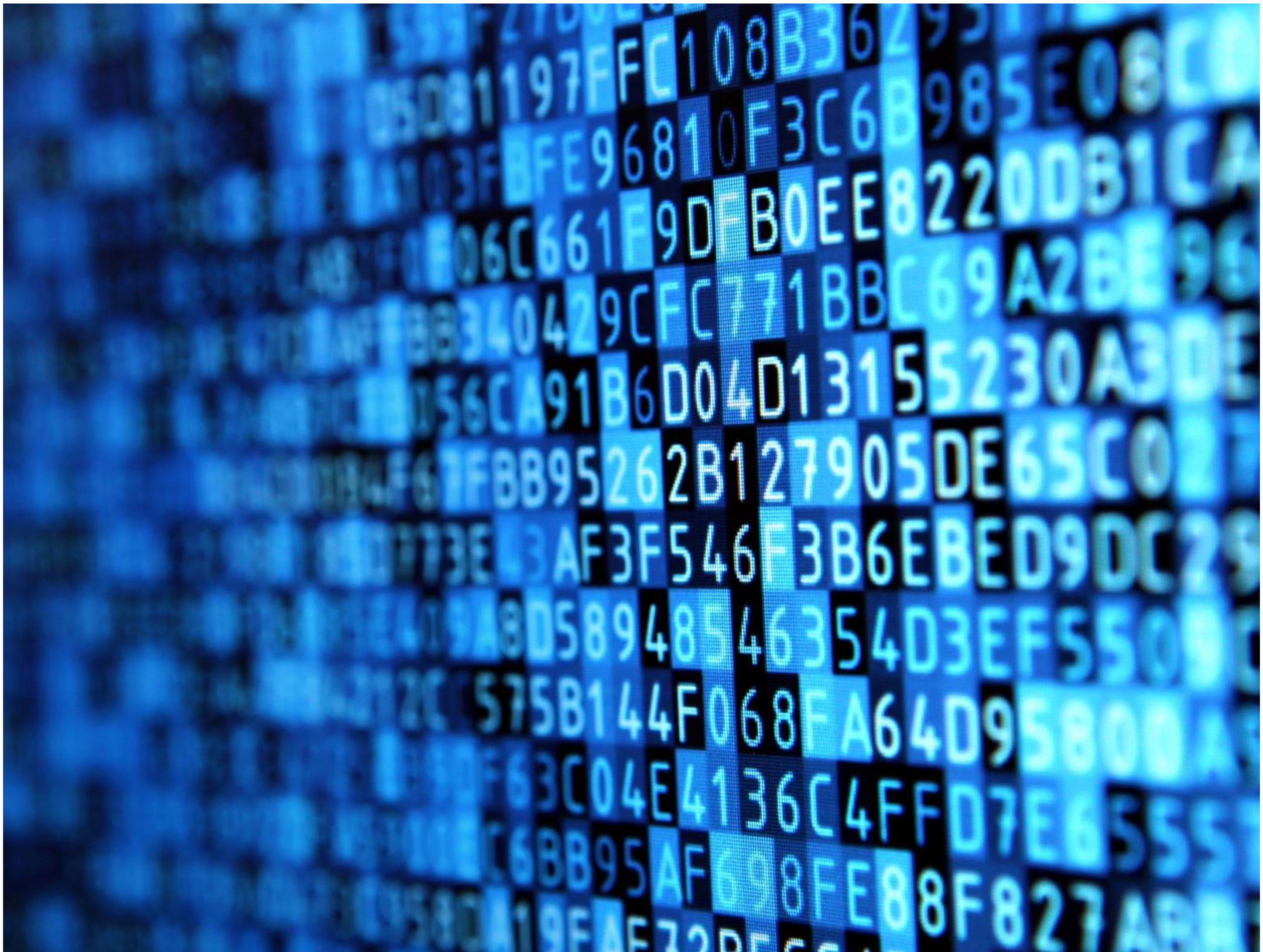

Digital Activism: Concepts and Tools

A Guide for ICT-based Community Engagement

DeSo
Development Solutions

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Contents

1. Introduction

Digital activism has been gaining steady prominence in the past few decades, following the technical innovations in online mass communication. Since the emergence of digital activism in the late 1980s, and particularly with the advent of social media, digital activism is gradually becoming an integral part of the work of civil society organizations. Nevertheless, the year 2020 was a year of upheaval, when from a supplementary tool, information-communication technologies (ICT) became the only medium for communication and activism. With the expansion of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide, many social movements and civil society organizations had to rethink their strategies for communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries and redesign their community engagement strategies. While in-person activities and events were severely restricted, online action has been on the rise.

Technological developments in ICT in the past decades have opened the way for unprecedented opportunities for outreach, communication, and organization. With the ever-expanding offer of tools and forms of online interaction, being up to date with the latest technological developments can multiply and strengthen the impact of the work of activists and civil society organizations (CSOs).

The aim of this guide is to provide support to civil society organizations for ICT-based community action. The guide represents an introductory tool for CSOs that aim to implement ICT and digital strategies in their activities and communication with target groups and relevant stakeholders.

The Guide is produced in the frame of the project *Strengthening the Capacities of Civil Society for ICT-Based Community Engagement*, implemented by Association for equitable development Development Solutions, and financially supported by the Balkan Trust for Democracy, a project of the German Marshall Fund of the United States of America.

The Guide is structured in two parts. The first part is dedicated to the main concepts of digital activism, providing an overview of the main advantages and disadvantages of ICT-based activism and specific strategies and tools. The second part represents a step-by-step guide in using different digital tools and integrating them in the work of CSOs.

Part 1: Digital Activism – concepts and forms

2. What is digital activism – definitions and key concepts

Digital activism is a term that has been gaining prominence in public debates in recent years. It is a broad term encompassing a wide variety of tools and practices. A broad definition of digital activism refers to the term as the use of information-communication technologies (ICT), such as blogs, podcasts, social media, email, videoconferencing, webinars, to ensure communication of messages to large audiences, coordination between the actions of individuals and groups, with the aim of ensuring more effective civic action. This is consistent with the definition of the concept provided by Encyclopedia Britannica, which defines digital activism (or also known as cyberactivism, Internet activism, web activism) as a “form of activism that uses the Internet and digital media as key platforms for mass mobilization and political action” (Fuentes, 2014)

The beginnings of digital activism can be traced back to the 1980s, and the dominant forms have been dependent on the available/most used technologies in a certain historical period. One example dates to the mid-1990s, when a group of citizens, at the announcement of banning rave music festivals and open-air rave music parties, “bombarded” the email account of the cabinet of the then Prime Minister of the UK, John Major.

Several years later, a political asylum seeker in the U.S., Daniel Mengara from Gabon, in 1998 created a web page – *Bongo Must Leave*, to promote public support for the overturn of the three-decades regime of Omar Bongo in Gabon. As a result of the activities of the movement, five members of the movement were imprisoned in 2003.

The advent of social media has created revolutionary opportunities with regards to the possibilities of mass communication, coordination, and global action. This was evident during the events of the Arab Spring in 2011, most notably during the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions.

Even though the shift towards digital activism is gaining momentum, this process goes in parallel with other developments. Namely, after the initial wave of optimism regarding the potential for social change due to the impact of social media, some scholars (such as Erica Chenoweth, Zeynep Tufekci) warn against the emergence of efforts to undermine these developments. These efforts involve the (governments’) attempts to exert more tight control over the internet service providers, with the aim to monitor and censor information flow through digital networks. One such example is the “Great Firewall” in China. Other efforts involve attempts to prevent od restrict activists from getting and maintaining Internet access.

Surveillance is much less costly and easier to administer online. Repressive governments can easily gain a comprehensive picture of activists' online activities, even when activists take precautions against surveillance (Pinckney, 2020). Namely, often the very technological developments that enable digital activism are used to suppress its impact.

2.1. Digital activism – an advantage or disadvantage?

There are contradictory views on the impact of digital activism on creating positive social impact in general and political participation in particular. The following chapter is going to discuss some of these aspects.

One of the key criticisms directed at digital activism is that it cannot avoid the most common disadvantages associated with the digital divide i.e., that it provides unequal representation favorizing individuals and groups which have greater access to digital technologies and possess the knowledge and skills to effectively use these technologies. This knowledge implies that the groups which are often most excluded (on socio-economic, cultural, or other grounds) often lack access to these technologies (despite the fact that these technologies are more ubiquitous and affordable, they are never completely free), such as the poor, the marginalized and excluded, the elderly, are groups which are at disadvantage in the digital realm.

A second criticism is related to the very nature of online communication. The fact that online communication is often impersonal, it is not often followed by motivation for in-person contact or action.

Another aspect in this debate is related to the nature of social media which enables us to pick and choose with whom we are going to interact. The fact that we can pick to exclude (block, ignore) persons and groups whose opinions are different (or opposing) to ours, can create a distorted view on the degree of acceptance of our perspectives, opinions, and attitudes towards social issues.

A third aspect is related to the unfortunately coined term “cyberbalkanization”, referring to the tendency for online debates to evolve in a situation where the protagonists are more concerned with looking for arguments to defend their position or to undermine the position of their opponents (often turning to ad hominem insults) instead of working towards understanding other people's positions and opinions.

2.2. Digital activism and political participation

There is no definite perspective on the issue whether digital activism contributes towards or undermines political participation. The experts that favorize the former base their arguments on the fact that digital technologies provide historically unprecedented opportunities for mass communication, coordination, and action, that require significantly less resources than conventional forms of activism.

The supporters of the latter perspective assert the argument that the Internet, and social media in particular, are occupying so much of people's free time that there is less available time and motivation for in-person activism. This is the perspective that supports the opinion that digital activism is to blame for promoting a culture of "lazy activism" or "clicktivism". Namely, people are more inclined to sign an online petition, than to go through the trouble of signing an actual petition (in many countries, online petitions are not valid). Or "liking" and sharing a video from a protest regarding a cause they support, instead of turning up at the event and creating greater impact.

Namely, engaging in activism online (such as clicking "Like" on someone's Facebook post or retweeting a trending hashtag on Twitter) requires less effort and less forethought than signing (or setting up) a petition or joining in a demonstration on the streets. Because of this, Rees concludes that "messages and ideals can get brushed aside in the push for more clicks, likes, impressions and page views when campaigning online and the information superhighway is now bumper-to-bumper with causes and campaigns which can make it difficult for any of them to achieve meaningful impact. Just like with traditional media, a lot of the time, certain campaigns and causes only start to gain momentum once a prominent individual or organization picks up on it" (Rees, 2020)

Nevertheless, there are examples where the combination of online and offline forms of activism is particularly effective. The *Black Lives Matter* and the *Me Too* movements have successfully managed to combine online and offline modes of action to create pressure for social change. In these cases, digital activism is not an end in itself, but rather a mechanism for raising awareness, promoting support and coordination of in-person civic action.

In the summer of 2014 in support of Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, one of the most massive online campaigns took place – the Ice Bucket Challenge campaign. The campaign featured videos of people, including a number of global celebrities, tipping buckets of ice water over themselves before nominating three other people to do the same, asking to make a donation to the ALS Association or other ALS non-profit.

A number of criticisms arose relating to the campaign, accusing it of being self-congratulatory, focusing primarily on fun rather than donating money to charity, and substituting a trivial activity for more genuine involvement in charitable activities.

3. Tools for digital activism

3.1. Social media

The impact of social media has been mentioned in the previous chapters, discussing the history of digital activism. The diversification of social media provides different opportunities and challenges for communication with target audiences. Social media are a convenient tool for organization with little resources to multiply their audience reach, inform potential constituents regarding activities and new developments in their sphere of work, and even coordinate activities and events with remote audiences and activists.

A common mistake CSOs make when using social media is using the same type of content and sharing it through different social media.

Some of the benefits of including social media in an organization's communication strategy include:

1. Improvement of transparency, governance, and accountability of organizations,
2. Support for organizations to directly engage with audiences through a simple and cost-effective medium,
3. Allowing for quick dissemination of timely information,
4. Establishing a transparent venue for public discourse,
5. Helping create a responsive civil society,
6. Helping organizations to engage segments of the population difficult to reach with traditional media(Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 24).

When deciding to strengthen your online presence through social media consider dedicating a staff position for this work. Creating a position for a qualified person (for example, social media coordinator) to manage the social media presence of the organization is critical to the success of your efforts. Regular development of content for a variety of platforms that use different forms of communication, managing online discussions and other types of audience engagement, regular posting of content is a full-time job; assigning and intern or putting this amount of work on your communications officer may not provide the results you are expecting.

New social media platforms emerge daily and staying on top of these developments may be critical for your success in the use of these platforms.

3.1.1. Types of social media

Social networking sites – represent "online communities that allow users to create a profile and cultivate a social network of friends and followers. Users may communicate with others in the network by sharing ideas, activities and events through updates and photos" (Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 9). Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram and Tik Tok are some of the most popular social networking sites.

Blog – A blog, is "an online communication platform through which a blogger (the person who submits content to a blog), can regularly share stories, photos, videos or links according to the subject matter of the particular blog. It is often likened to a journal because most blogs are written in first person and offer a more personal narrative compared to content traditionally found on a website" (Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 9). Blogs are convenient way for communication with target audiences, and curate a content rich platform for their followers, through sharing of stories, opinion pieces of staff members, volunteers, stakeholders, and beneficiaries.

3.1.2. How to select social media?

Geography can play a large role in determining what platforms people use, based on what they have access to in their given location. Another aspect to consider is demographics. Not all groups use the same media, for example, younger generations tend to gravitate towards particular social media that are less popular among the older generations.

Audience segmentation is one of the great benefits of using social media. Make sure that you use appropriate format and language to communicate your messages most effectively to your target audience. Different social media provide excellent opportunities for audience segmentation and targeting. Different parts of the population can be targeted with different outreach, tailored to the preferences of each social-demographic segment. The most important steps involve learning and understanding of your target audience(s) and its behaviors, then develop content and invest resources to a platform that has the potential to reach the audience (Counterpoint International, 2014).

This will primarily depend on the profile of your target group. If your target group are young people, you will need to be present on the social media that are their preferred choice – in the past few years, Instagram and Tik Tok have been the dominant media young people use.

The second choice is related to your preferred type of communication. Different social media rely on different types of dominant mode of communication. Although Facebook may be adequate for both discussions, files, photographs and videos, your Twitter presence will be effective if you are skilled in creatin of short effective messages.

Instagram and Tik Tok rely on visual communication – photographs, short videos. Bear in mind that these types of media may be excluding persons belonging to certain vulnerable groups or persons with disabilities – such as persons with vision impairment.

By engaging with its audience on social media, an organization has the opportunity to foster relationships in which honesty and open sharing can strengthen joint actions. Genuine interactivity can be achieved by asking questions and responding to comments (Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 38).

Your content should be honest and genuine, facilitating the process of building trust with your audience and helping your organically growing your online audience. Do not forget that traditional media ethics also apply to social media.

The language you use to communicate with your target audience is also important and should be part of your communication strategy. The level of education, preferences of communication, primary language of your target audience should all be taken into account when developing an effective social media strategy. Using a plain language, without a lot of jargon, may be the best option when you are not sure of the characteristics of your target audience (or you are dealing with a heterogenous target audience), allowing readers to easily navigate and understand the information you are sharing (Counterpoint International, 2014).

While social media engagement requires time and efforts investment in development of content, you can also use the existing resources of your organization: program literature, research, photos, and videos, which can be adapted to the platform's niche and format.

Interaction with your target audiences can be achieved by:

- Fostering dialogue with followers through addressing audience feedback, respond to questions and ask questions to demonstrate your organization is listening.
- Launching polls, live chats, or other interactive strategies, which creates distinct opportunities for engagement and offers valuable insight into the audience.
- Creating opportunities for offline engagement by inviting followers to events, workshops and lectures and share pictures from the events to continue the engagement (Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 38).

Interaction with other fellow organizations involved in your sphere of work can be strengthen through social media through (Counterpoint International, 2014, p. 38):

- Following and communicating with organizations with a similar purpose. Whether they are local or in another country, you can exploit the opportunities to learn from others and share or replicate best practices.
- Leading a joint campaign, making greater impact through joining resources for a joint cause.

- Promoting the work of other individuals or organizations. This demonstrates an organization's appreciation for the people it supports or works with, and it may encourage others to reciprocate the gesture.
- Follow and engage with trendsetters and influencers in the field. Comment on their posts, share anything that may be relevant and build toward collaborating with them.

Social media dos and don'ts (Counterpoint International, 2014):

Do	Do not
Evolve with change - Social media platforms are constantly changing and evolving. Organizations must always be prepared to adapt to these changes and adjust their strategies accordingly	Post for the sake of meeting your daily posting quotas - If there is nothing of value to share, then it is better to not post at all.
Post with a purpose - There is a reason an organization has a presence on social media. Stay true to this purpose and share content that is aligned with it.	Use poor quality photos - Every post is a direct reflection of the organization. A poor-quality photo is a missed opportunity for engagement and reflects poor judgment.
Use appropriate tools - Carefully select appropriate tools for desired results. If the intent is to build an online community, use a social networking site instead of a photo sharing site.	Use generic and irrelevant messaging - Be genuine and respectful of your audience's time. Share something that adds value to their experience.
Integrate and promote content across multiple platforms - Repurpose content and share it on other platforms, but always adjust leverage the platform's benefits.	Respond with a derogatory tone to negative comments - If an organization's policy is to respond to negative comments, then do so by maintaining a positive tone, and offer a solution whenever possible.
Be both methodical and spontaneous, and always relevant - Posts and comments should always be timely and appropriate for the venue and audience.	Share too much - Be mindful not to inundate your audience with too much information. Avoid sharing too much about yourself. Always exhibit humility when sharing. It is appropriate to celebrate success, however.

Stay active and engaged - Engagement is key to success. If it is not possible to maintain an active presence on a platform, it may be best to reconsider its objective	Over post - Know your target audience and post relevant, timely information. Quality over quantity.
Share multiple posts each day - When appropriate, maximize exposure by sharing posts at different times of the day, being mindful of different time zones. The goal is to capture the attention of an audience that may have missed an earlier post.	

3.1.3. Measuring the impact of social media

Monitoring and measuring your performance on social media are crucial to understanding if these methods are helping to achieve your goal. Monitoring social media activities means listening to what people are saying directly to your organization and about your organization on the one hand, but also quantifying these activities into useful metrics. Some social media platforms offer tools that are built-in to the site. But there are also many useful third-party tools that offer both basic and more complex analytics either for free or for a cost.

Learning to use social media analytics can be a daunting task for some. It takes some time and little practice, but it is well worth getting a better understanding of the impact of your social media presence. The social media coordinator, or other members of the organization’s team involved with management of the social media pages. The insights gained through the analytical data should be used to adjust the organization’s social media communication strategy. Online tutorials are common on the respective websites for each of the analytics tools.

Most social media platforms provide built-in tools to analyze social media activity and feedback, and support adjusting your strategy in communication with your stakeholders and beneficiaries. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, and Twitter. Some of these sites also allow users to export the analytics data for archival purposes or to view and analyze them offline. This can also facilitate the merging of data with social media metrics retrieved from third-party sites to gain deeper insight into trends among your organization’s social media platforms.

3.1.3.1. Facebook

Facebook's Page Insights offers page administrators valuable page insights through dynamic and interactive graphs and visuals. The data can be accessed simply by visiting an organization's Facebook page and looking for the tab that will direct you to the Page's Insights. Key features:

1. The number of people reached.
2. Post clicks.
3. Reactions, comments, and shares.
4. Total video views and viewing behavior details.

3.1.3.2. YouTube

YouTube Analytics offers analytical data for your YouTube channels and each video posted on the channel. This tool is quite simple to navigate and useful for analyzing performance data for both new and old videos.

Key features:

1. Monitoring viewership data, visitor demographics,
2. Understanding which traffic sources drive the most views to your content,
3. Analysis of subscriber rates to your channel,
4. Monitoring views and interaction with your videos to learn how effective they are.

3.1.3.3. LinkedIn

If you have a page dedicated to your organization on LinkedIn, you can also obtain and analyze analytical data by clicking on the analytics tab on the Company Page. The data is delivered through a simple interface and offers insight on posts, followers, and page activities.

> Always protect the privacy rights of employees, partners, contractors, beneficiaries and children.
>
> Personal and identifiable information of adults should only be shared with their consent. For children this information should only be shared with the permission of a parent or guardian.
>
> In the process of obtaining consent to use someone's personal and identifiable information you must be specific in regards to where you intend to use their information. There is a difference between using someone's photo on a printed brochure and using the same photo on a blog or video online.
>
> Protecting sensitive information such as addresses, birth dates and phone numbers is also very important. One way to help prevent unintended sharing of sensitive or confidential information is to not collect information online unless it is necessary.

Key features:

1. Visitor demographics: Learn about the LinkedIn members who are showing an interest in your page,

2. Custom button clicks: Each LinkedIn business profile can include one of the following action buttons: Visit website, contact us, Learn more, Register, and Sign Up,
3. Understand the demographics of your followers and determine what drives them to your organization's page.

3.1.3.4. Twitter/Tweet deck

Tweet Deck is Twitter's monitoring and management tool. Tweet Deck is completely free to use for organizations who have a single or multiple Twitter profiles to manage. Key features:

1. Set up filters to monitor conversations and mentions on Twitter,
2. Schedule Tweets in advance to target audience at peak times,
3. Monitor and manage unlimited accounts through a customizable interface.

> Throughout your online presence make sure you respect intellectual property rights. Text, photographs and other content is almost always automatically protected by copyright the moment it is produced. This protection is legally strengthened by posting a copyright notice with the content.
>
> There is also a large number of materials available online where the owner has either completely or partially given up their copyright protection, to allow the content to be disseminated more freely. Material that falls into this category can be listed as Creative Commons. This can range from a complete relinquishing of rights, to varying levels of access, where for example all noncommercial use is acceptable, while commercial use is not.

3.1.3.5. Key performance indicators

The best way to start analyzing the key performance indicators of your online presence is to select which indicators are relevant for your work: engagement, reach, mentions by key influencers or click-through rates. Most available analytics tools, regardless of whether these are built-in tool provided by the social media platform or third-party tools, can provide data relevant for the analysis of these indicators, and even export the data.

Use the data obtained through these analytical tools and assess whether your organization's social media strategy is working effectively. In conducting this assessment, you can base you can use the following key performance indicators, tracked by the majority of social media analytical tools (Counterpoint International, 2014):

- **Engagement Rate** – the engagement rate measures the number of times your audience interacts with a page by liking a post, commenting, or sharing. It is of strong importance to your social media performance to share content that is both engaging and relevant to the audience. Evaluating engagement rates will help reveal the type of content your audience finds most interesting and will allow your organization to adjust its strategy accordingly. Evaluating engagement rates also allows an organization to identify key influencers. These are the individuals who demonstrate high engagement with the content your organization shares and are likely to share the content with their personal networks.

- **Key Influencer Mentions** – this key indicator measures the number of mentions by users identified as key influencers due to their regular engagement with your organization's network. While having Key Influence Mentions of your organization or dissemination of your social media content on their personal network can help reveal whether your strategy is working, since such mentions have stronger reach and more influence within your targeted demographics or communities.
- **Reach** – this is an indicator of the overall number of individuals following and visiting a site, their geographic location and frequency of their visits. This indicator provides information on whether and to which degree you are reaching your target audiences. Based on the findings, you can experiment with new content and change the frequency of posts. The more demographic information you have on your audience, the better you can cater to their interests.
- **Social Click-Through Rates** – this indicator measures the number of times an audience member clicks on a link shared on a social media platform. Ideally, links should drive users to any one of an organization's web portals, e.g., blog, website, or other online network. Measuring the click-through rates will allow an organization to see trends. The growth in the number of click-throughs is a good indicator that an organization is successfully increasing engagement. On the other hand, if the click-through rates are low, it may be necessary to reevaluate how content is being presented and to reframe the messaging.

Apart from quantitative analysis, it is equally important to engage in qualitative analysis of your audience engagement on social media. Quantitative data can show trends, but cannot provide in-depth information regarding the type, characteristics, and quality of engagement you are achieving. For example, quantitative data can show a growing number of comments on your posts, but if this engagement is with a negative tone (which cannot be identified solely through quantitative data), qualitative analysis can help you identify what changes and adjustments you need to make in your social media communication strategy.

3.1.4. Writing for social media

Writing for social media requires some basic knowledge on how to effectively formulate the messages you want to convey – in general, there is a view that users tend to respond to certain phrases and words better than others. The Bhutan Media Foundation has developed guidelines for CSO activists engaged in content development for social media (Bhutan Media Foundation, 2020, pp. 29–31):

1. Use keywords research – in social media, keywords are mostly relevant because they let you learn the language of the people you are targeting.
2. Research the interests of the audience. Always have in mind who your audience is, speak to their interests and sensibilities. If your target demographics is niche in a way (i.e., age, income level, interests, etc.,) feel free to use references. If your audience is more diverse, avoid using any specific references that might alienate them.
3. Write a piece of content repeatedly, in as many different ways as possible, to determine the most effective piece.
4. Avoid adverbs. Adverbs are words that "qualify" actions words, i.e., verbs. So, they dampen whatever energy verbs bring.
5. Avoid using vague language and impersonal tone – this is the exact opposite of the Associated Press stylebook, the most popular editorial style in writing. Using a folksy approach will make your messages more understandable to a broader audience.
6. Be straightforward, start with the objective of the message and end with a call-to-action.
7. Avoid vague words.
8. Avoid irony and sarcasm and be careful with your humor.
9. Keep it short and be precise. Long posts do not have the advantage on social media, if your audience must scroll to read the entire post, you may to achieve your expected reach. Reserve long texts or messages in links shared with the post.

3.2. Online Blogs

Online blogs can be a great strategy for communication of relevant information related to the work of your organization, its activities, recent developments in the sphere of work etc. Online blogs have several advantages over other digital tools, according to World Bank Blogs:

- "A blog can extend an institution's influence by attracting development policymakers and practitioners to engage in a way that is more interactive than websites and e-mail.
- Blogs can create a forum for expert commentary and analysis on burning development policy issues.

- Easy-to-read, incisive informal writing can demystify jargon, cut straight to the chase and make the case for important policy issues that are not in the spotlight; The feedback loops created by the blog could lead to new audiences and collaboration opportunities" (World Bank Blogs, 2005).

Incorporating blogging in your communication strategy requires some preparation. The common steps to start online blogging:

1. Select the person in your organization that will oversee blogging. Some CSOs have a communications team or dedicated person or team for managing the social media presence of the organization. Regardless of whether your organization has a dedicated communications person or team, it is worthwhile to discuss and decide who will create the content for the blog. A blog is a conversational piece with a pinch of personal opinion about a theme or topic and it is not imperative that the communication team takes care of it. Other people in your organization, even associates with a flair for creative writing, can work on content development.
2. Identify content developers in your team – as mentioned, the communications team may not always be the best choice; you can opt for one or even several persons to write content for the blog. What is important is that they have the ability and skills for creative writing and are comfortable with producing content on a regular basis (they might need to be relieved from some work obligations to dedicate time and efforts to the blog).
3. Decide on topics and frequency of blogging – the overall theme may be associated with the cause of your organization, bearing in mind the author(s) should be conversant on the topic, with good theoretical and practical knowledge. You can opt for weekly posts if you have one author, and then determine the optimal frequency through analytical data on audience engagement.
4. Use a conversational style of writing – avoid using heavy words and jargon unless the blog is dedicated to an informed audience.
5. Add spin to the content - a blog must be written in a reader-friendly style. An interesting title is also especially important for a blog, one that evokes interest and curiosity.
6. Use multimedia – to add quality to your blog, include practical examples, pictures, videos, graphics, where appropriate and possible. You can even adapt existing materials and include them in your blog, such as further reading samples, which can engage the reader better.
7. Engage with your audience – reply to comments and address any feedback timely.
8. Develop a personal, not institutional tone of the writing – do not start sentences with 'Our organization believes…' For blogging – personality, a face, a voice,

doubt, ambiguity etc. are infinitely preferable to corporate press releases full of ‘must’ and ‘should’.

9. Create community dialogue – open your organization by allowing comments and dialogue. Whether you are “asking for feedback, sharing stories, or urging people to take action, providing a place for your community to share back with you shows your openness to feedback and interest in the community” (NCVO Know How, 2018).

3.3. Online petitions

Online petitions have become increasingly popular in recent years, resulting in some governments introducing e-government models for participation. Regardless of whether your country has introduced online petitions as a form of civic participation, online petitions can be a great strategy for mobilizing citizen support for a joint cause.

Some regard online petitions as a new form of democratic innovation that could revive democracy, help measure public opinion, help citizens put issues on the political agenda or serve as an entry point for greater political participation (Berg, 2017).

Others, more skeptical analysists, point to the reduced effort and cost of signing a petition online and thus classify online petitions as “meaningless” slacktivism, because it both requires just minimal effort and personal commitment. When political participation is reduced to providing a name and an e-mail address online, it raises questions of what effects the lowered participation costs have on the political behavior of citizens. Online petitions have a somewhat indistinct role in representative democracy as there is an ongoing debate of their effectiveness. Critics argue online petitions might lead to decreased legitimacy of democracy as the petition process often fails to reach its goals (Berg, 2017).

Online petitions can be either formal or informal. The success of an online petition depends on several aspects: firstly, petitions where citizens see a clear relationship between their participation and its outcome are more likely to lead to support; secondly, online petitions abundantly covered by mass media coverage will attract more attention and hence reach greater support among the citizens.

3.4. Email

Despite the decrease in use with the years, the email remains one of the most direct ways to ensure one-on-one communication with your target audiences. The decrease in use is mainly due to the advanced spam filers email providers are continuously upgrading.

However, email communication can be useful, especially for dissemination of electronic newsletters, that everyone interested in the work of your organization will periodically receive.

There are several benefits in using newsletters to promote the work of your organization:

- It provides and constant source of traffic on your website. This is important in the era of rapid decline of organic engagement on social media such as Facebook, and banner advertising made almost irrelevant by ad blockers. Even written press releases can often get ignored by journalists and editors.
- This is a relatively cheap way to promote the work of your organization. Paid advertisements in the form of online banners, social media ads are considerably more expensive than email marketing.
- Measuring the performance of your online newsletter is relatively simple. Your email statistics provide you with all the information you need to do this: open rates, click rates, unsubscribe rates, bounces, which user terminals were used to open the newsletter and when, which links are clicked on, etc.

How to create an effective email newsletter:

- Identify your target audience, these need to be persons with interest in the spheres of your work or your organization. Take into account what are the preferences of your target group, based on demographics, location, preferred interests.
- Define your most relevant content. It is always good to mention results achieved, but do not waste too much of the limited space. Focus on current and upcoming events/activities and make sure you describe how your constituents can support your work and/or get involved.
- You can also use professional emailing platform that can make the development and management of the newsletters much easier.
- Slowly build your newsletter subscribers list. Add a subscription widget to your website. Using a double opt-in process will make sure that no fake email addresses will become part of your database and subsequently damage your reputation and deliverability.
- Promote your newsletter on your social media pages and highlight the benefits your prospective subscribers may have.

To be able to successfully use email and avoid spam filters you need to:

- Create your mailing list, consisting of contacts of people that are genuinely interested in your work. Therefore, self-subscribing is a better option that using contacts of persons acquired through participants' lists at your organization's events.

3.4.1. Tracking your email reach

Using a specific service to track the reach by your email promotional efforts will provide you with a clearer knowledge on how your audience responds to the emails you are sending. Newsletter services often offer tracking of delivery, opens, clicks, and unsubscribes:

- Open rate: The percentage of subscribers who have opened the newsletter.
- Click rate: The percentage of recipients who have clicked on at least one link or call-to-action.
- Conversions and/or revenue per click: The percentage of readers who have executed the desired action after left clicking on the target page (purchase, download, read complete blog article, etc.).
- Unsubscribe rate: The percentage of users that have cancelled their newsletter subscription.

The insight provided by these analytical tools can help you optimize your future newsletters - if your open-rate is low, this may indicate that your subject line is not clear enough. If only few people click on the links in your newsletter, try to make your call-to-action (CTA) stand out more. If a lot of users are unsubscribing, take another look at your contact list or try grouping your contact list into more specific segments to get a more narrowing targeting (Redondo Tejedor, 2020).

3.5. Online surveys

An online survey is a structured questionnaire that your target audience completes over the internet generally through a filling out a form. Online surveys can vary in length and format. The data is stored in a database and the survey tool generally provides some level of analysis of the data in addition to review by a trained expert.

Unlike traditional surveys, online surveys offer companies a way to collect information from a broad audience for truly little cost.

Advantages of online surveys:

1. Increased response rate - the low cost and overall convenience of online surveys may bring in a high response rate, since respondents get to answer questions on their own schedule at a pace they choose.

2. Low cost - collecting data does not have to be costly as conducting an in-person survey. There are plenty of websites and platforms that make creating your survey free or very affordable.
3. Real-time access to data – since online surveys responses are stored automatically you have access to monitor the data collection process. These turns analyzing your results into effortless and immediate action.
4. Convenience - respondents answer questions on their own schedule and can even have flexibility with completion time. Rapid deployment and return times are possible with online surveys that do not use traditional methods. And, if you have bad contact information for some respondents, you will know it almost immediately.
5. Design flexibility - surveys can be programmed even if they are very complex. You can add intricate skip patterns and logic. You can create the layout, questions, and answer choices with no hassle.
6. No interviewer - since respondents are not disclosing their answers directly to another person, it is easier for them to open. Interviewers can also influence responses in some cases (Howard, 2019).

Nevertheless, the are also some disadvantages when conducting an online survey. Take these in consideration before deciding whether online survey is the right method to get the data and information you need:

1. Fraud - if your survey is long and/or confusing you might get fake answers. Since there is less accountability, the chances for people just hitting buttons to finish are high. Check the questions you use carefully. People often take surveys because they are promised a reward at the end, resulting in them not accurately contributing to your study.
2. Limited sampling and respondent availability - certain groups of citizens are less likely to have internet access and have technical knowledge to respond to online questionnaires. Your sample may also be skewed by predominantly involving people which are inclined to respond to such surveys, which may not be your target audience.
3. Possible cooperation problems - online surveys could be deleted and ignored. No Interviewer The lack of a trained interviewer to clarify and probe can lead to less reliable data (Howard, 2019).

3.6. Webinar technologies

Webinars represent a tool that can help overcome the basic disadvantages of online activism, such as clicktivism and “lazy activism”. Dating back to the 1990s webinar technologies today represent an excellent tool for real-time/synchronous communication between people in remote locations. Webinars offer several advantages:

- They lower costs for event organization: they alleviate costs for travel and accommodation, time spent for travelling, and lower costs for sharing relevant materials for the event (in the case when these can be shared online).
- Webinars are time-wise efficient events, much more focused on the topic and tend to cover larger amounts of material in a shorter time span.
- Webinars can be successfully combined with other offline forms of activism.
- The design of the majority of webinar platforms is very intuitive, providing ease of use even for persons which are using the technology for the first time.
- The possibility for recording of webinar events makes them a great asynchronous tool for communication, with the possibility to disseminate the content through other social media platforms.

3.6.1. Webinar tools and functionalities

Webinar technologies offer a variety of tools that facilitate the management and interaction of a live online event. In the next subchapter, several of these functionalities will be presented:

3.6.1.1. Dashboard

The Dashboard, or the participants list provides the host with relevant analytical information about the ongoing webinar session, such as: number of attendees, active presenters/speakers, raised hands, etc. Some webinar platforms offer additional information, such as the type of device the attendees are using to join (smart device or a personal computer), or data on what number of participants is actively engaged in the webinar – by presenting the share of participants which are viewing the webinar application instead of the ones that leave it running in the background.

3.6.1.2. Sharing content

Webinar platforms provide opportunities for sharing different types of content – from basic slide presentations to interactive presentations, to different types of files and applications, and audio and video materials.

3.6.1.3. Interaction functionalities

Apart from real-time audio-visual communication, webinar platform interactivity features also include the use of polls (presented in other subchapter), organization of group work in the frame of breakout sessions, as well as integration of other functionalities and applications that facilitate collaboration and interaction in the online environment. Text Chat

The chat tool is one of the most basic webinar and videoconferencing tools. Essentially, it allows the participants in the webinar session to communicate to other participants through a real-time text messaging tool. Some platforms allow all participants to see the messages, while others allow the option for one-on-one messaging between the participants/presenter. More advanced webinar platforms have “breakout rooms”, separate rooms where participants can chat privately. The text chat is one of the most exploited webinar tools providing the basic form of interaction in all types of webinars. The “breakout rooms” are especially important being one of the rare tools that facilitates group collaboration between the attendees. Using this feature, the lecturer can divide the attendees into groups, and engage them with problem solving tasks. In this way, the “breakout rooms” feature can significantly improve the effectiveness of a webinar session (Karajkov & Dimitrovska, 2016, p. 57).

3.6.1.4. Whiteboard

Whiteboards are important in terms of encouraging attendees to participate. The participants can create diagrams and charts, highlight text, and use a variety of different annotating tools. The lecturer can grant control of the whiteboard to the participants, which can be highly effective for opening the webinar session or a brief brainstorming.

3.6.1.5. Webinar Recording

3.6.2. Organization of events through webinar platforms – guidelines and challenges

A common mistake organizations make when organizing events through webinar platforms is the mere transfer of face-to-face events in the online realm. This was a common strategy at the start of the pandemic of Covid-19 and the introduction of restrictive measures, which prevented many organizations from implementation of activities, maintaining communication with stakeholders and beneficiaries, etc.

Webinar technologies provide great flexibility and can be used for a variety of events:

- Meetings
- Seminars
- Trainings
- Debates

However, the design and implementation of such activities through a webinar platform is significantly different that organization of face-to-face events. To effectively organize online events, one needs to be well acquainted with the specific characteristics and limitations of the online approach. The following subchapters will explore some of these features.

3.6.2.1. Duration

While you can surely use webinar platforms for continuous online events lasting for several hours or even a full day, this is not the optimal approach.

Online event participation is different from face-to-face events requiring much more concentration and motivation. Attendees join through their devices and the only interaction for most of the event is realized between the person and the device. They cannot engage in spontaneous communication with the presenter and other attendees, and the availability of other content on the device can be distracting. Hence, participation in live online events requires a solid amount of concentration and dedication.

One webinar session should not be longer that one hour, including time for presentation of content, discussion, opening and concluding remarks. If the activity you are implementing requires more time and content, you can try to organize a strongly topic focused event or divide the event into several sessions with longer breaks in between. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed below.

3.6.2.2. Webinars as one-off events vs webinar series

Webinars as one-off events are more convenient for organization. They can accommodate from a dozen to several thousand participants. They are convenient because they do not require continuous communication with attendees which need to join multiple webinar sessions (reminders, invitations, etc.). Usually these are events where limited interaction can be achieved between the speakers and the attendees. To have a better insight into the profile and preferences of attendees at one-off webinar events with large numbers of participants, you can use various polling tools. Nevertheless, in an event with several hundred or thousand participants, even the use of polls can be subject to debate.

To attend one-off webinar events, attendees need to have prior knowledge on the subject matter, but also knowledge and skills for using the webinar platform. Moderators and IT support persons have limited opportunities for one-on-one communication with participants, with limited opportunities for offline communication at a large event, which can also be costly (for example, international phone calls).

Opting for a series of webinars sessions comes with different opportunities and challenges. Webinar series can be organized during one day, or in the form of sessions in different days. They require greater organization effort, since the same number of participants needs to be properly informed, reminded and facilitated to attend multiple webinar sessions, which requires investing more time and effort. Therefore, these are not events that should be organized with large groups of attendees. On the other hand, webinar series can be more flexible events, not requiring a strict structure or scenario. They provide stronger opportunities for interaction between the moderator(s) and the attendees, which can result in greater involvement and commitment to the event.

3.6.2.3. Size of group in webinars

Interaction in an online environment (even when it is related to an online event) is not spontaneous and should be planned and incorporated in the structure of the webinar event. Depending on the number of attendees, there are certain limitations. Small webinar events (with 5-10 attendees) are very flexible in terms of the types of interaction you can achieve, providing the optimal environment for one-on-one communication with each of the participants, content sharing by multiple presenters, learning-by-doing type of trainings etc.

Webinars with 10-20 participants also allow certain degree of interaction, which has to be moderated and needs to be structured by a set of rules accepted by all attendees. Nevertheless, if you are going for in-depth discussions with all of the attendees, the size of such group may not be best suited for it.

Webinars with large number of participants (20+) do not provide strong opportunities for interaction. Interaction can be best maintained using other tools, such as polling, which provide quick feedback from large numbers of attendees.

Regarding the structure of webinars, which can vary significantly, depending on the lecturer's preference of different webinar features, as well as the plurality and levels of interaction, and the number of participants at the live webinar session, there are several types of webinars (Karajkov & Dimitrovska, 2016):

1. Webinars for up to 6 participants: Webinars with a low number of participants facilitate high levels of interactivity, since the number of participants allows peer-to-peer and participant-lecturer interaction. The structure and the content of the webinar are much more flexible, and the lecture can be adapted to the special needs or prior knowledge and specific interests of the learners.

2. Webinars for 7-20 participants: The larger number of participants determines the structure and the content of the webinar lecture, which is more rigid, although it allows a moderate degree of flexibility. Interactivity is limited to a certain amount

of audio/video responses (the educator can select who will be allowed to talk). Audience feedback can be ensured though the polling tools. Polls, voting and “raising hands” tools greatly facilitate interactivity for these types of webinars.

3. Webinars for over 20 participants: The size of the audience means a rigid structure of the webinar, with most participants likely to stay anonymous. There is also a strong assumption that learners will not be able to follow the learning process as a group. The level of interactivity in this type of webinar depends mostly on the size of the webinar team. If the lecturer is on his/her own, only polls can be used to get feedback from the participants. If there are other personnel (moderator/other trainers) chat can be used, regarding that is pre-sorted for the trainer. The specific possibilities also depend on the technology (webinar platform) which is used.

Depending on the type of interaction you want to achieve at an online event, you can implement the following strategies (Karajkov & Dimitrovska, 2016):

1. Discussion: Moderators and speakers should not dominate the webinar session but facilitate more interactive and meaningful contributions by participants during the meeting.
2. Creating a social climate: Creating a positive and friendly environment could help learners remain engaged and reduce the problems that might hinder their participation. Engaging the learners in task-based collaboration is also important to increase connectivity among participants.
3. Provision of materials to be discussed: Topics or materials to be discussed during the webinar should be provided before the meeting.
4. Facilitation of small group discussions: If possible (depending on the number of participants) small group peer-to-peer discussions can facilitate more effective learning (Park & Bonk, 2007, pp. 319-320).
5. Active learning: Keeping the participants active and initiation meaningful activities will result in high-level processing, which facilitates the creation of personalized meaning. Ally suggests that asking learners to apply the information in a practical situation is an active process and facilitates personal interpretation and relevance (Ally, 2004, p. 18).

Part 2: Tools for Digital Activism (a step-by-step guide)

4. Webinar technologies

The chapter on webinar technologies will provide prospective users with guidance on how to use the basic and some of the more advanced functionalities of webinar technologies, conceptually presented in the chapter Webinar technologies. In the frame of this chapter, how-to instructions are going to be provided for the webinar platforms **Zoom** and **Webex**, platforms which have millions of subscribers. In our extensive experience in using webinar platforms, the selection of a webinar platform is mainly a matter of personal preference than it reflects conceptual or functional differences between the features of different webinar platforms.

In the frame of this chapter, you will have the opportunity to learn how to:

1. Schedule a webinar meeting (one-off and recurring meetings),
2. Share your screen during an active meeting,
3. Use the digital whiteboard during a meeting,
4. Use polling during a meeting,
5. Set up and use breakout sessions.

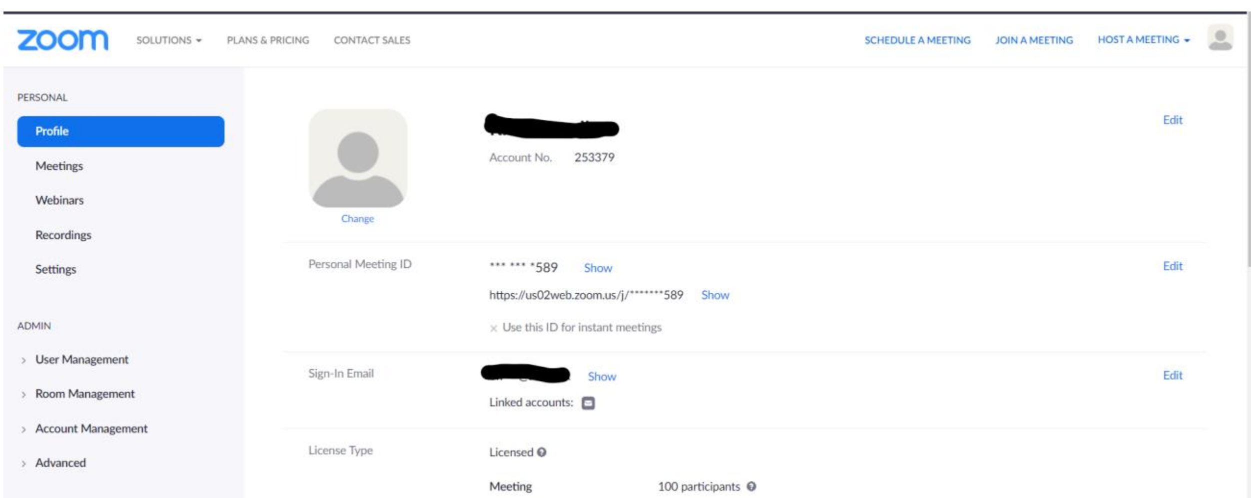
4.1. Setting up a webinar meeting in Zoom

Setting up a meeting requires having a registered account (paid or free) to the Zoom webinar platform. Once you have logged in to your account, select the “My Account” option on the top right part of your screen.

Step 1: Log in to the Zoom platform.

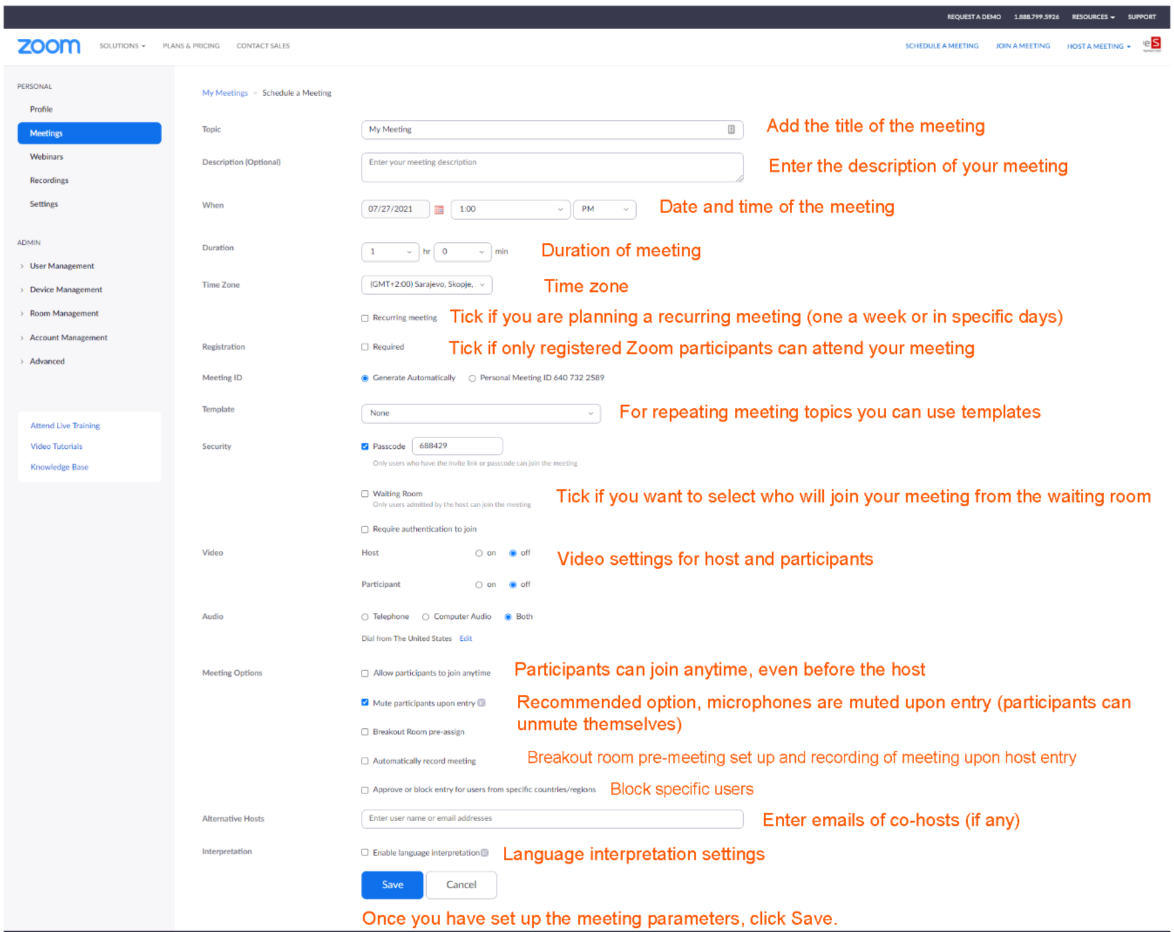
Step 2: Select the Schedule a meeting option (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Scheduling an online meeting in Zoom.



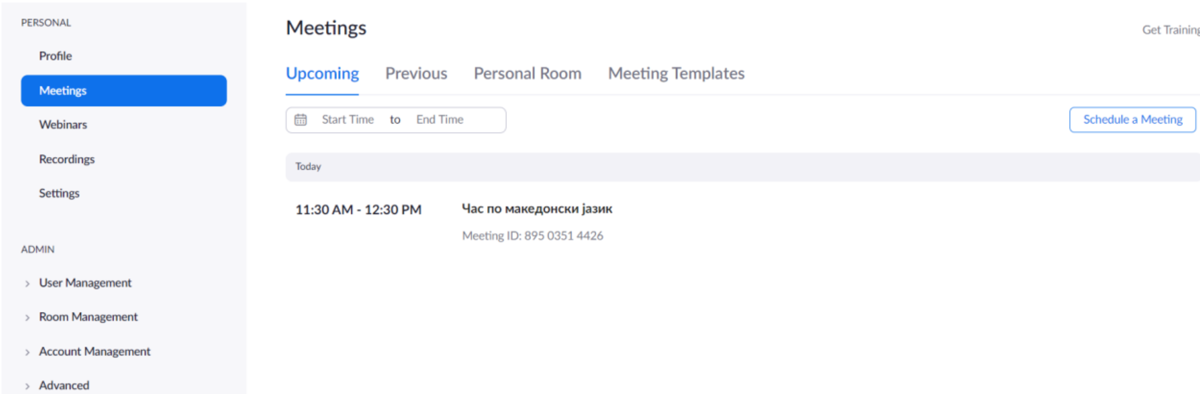
Step 3: Enter the required information for the meeting. The fields with the necessary information and possibilities for class settings are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Scheduling and meeting parameters in Zoom.



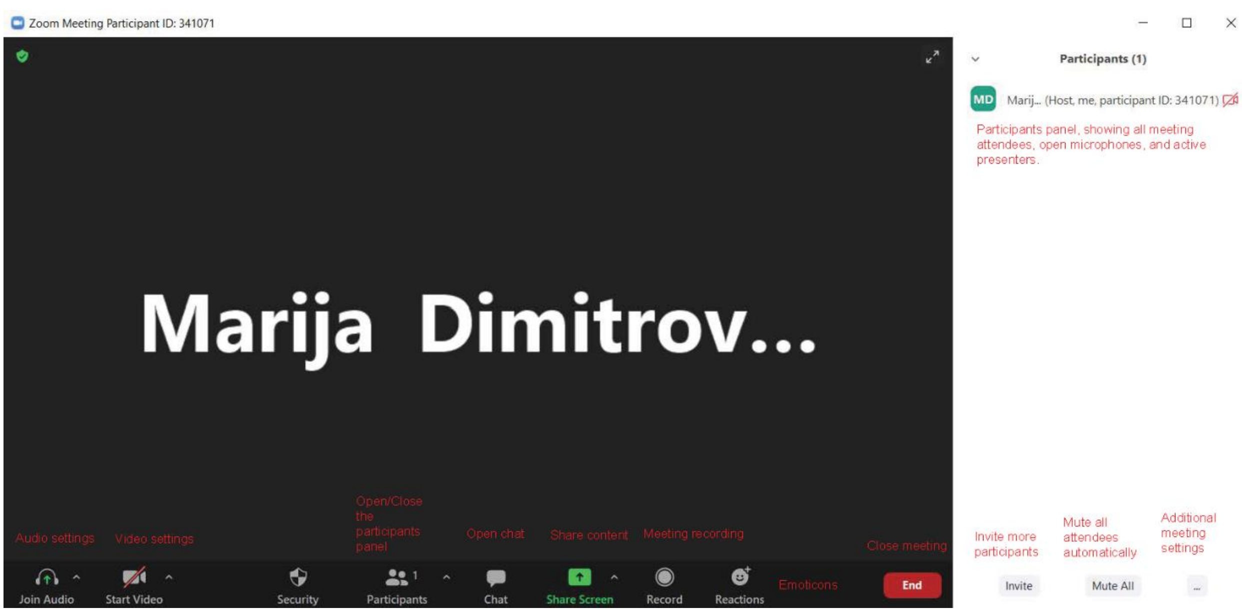
The event is already scheduled and can be previewed by clicking on the Meetings box on the left side of the Zoom page (view of Figure 3).

Figure 3. Scheduled meeting in Zoom.



If you want to change any of the meeting parameters, click the title of the meeting, go to the bottom of the page, and click Edit, and enter the new parameters according to Figure 2. The fields for changing the clock settings are identical to those for scheduling of the meeting (Figure 2). After making the desired changes, click Save.

The basic functionalities in a Zoom online meeting are presented below:



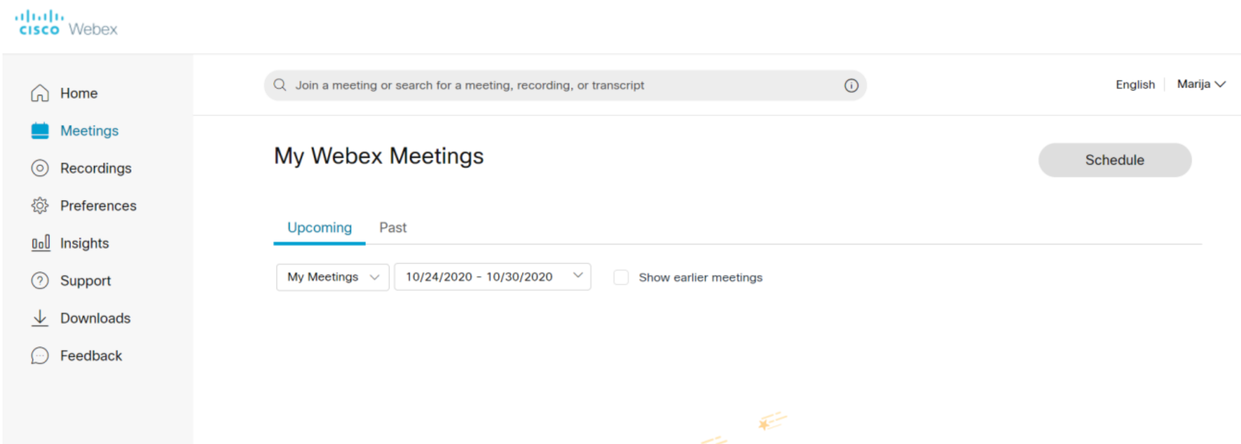
4.2. Setting up a meeting on Webex

To be able to schedule meeting and organize events via Webex, you will need to register and log into your Webex account (free or paid subscription). Follow the presented steps to schedule your meeting in Webex:

Step 1: Log in to the WebEx platform.

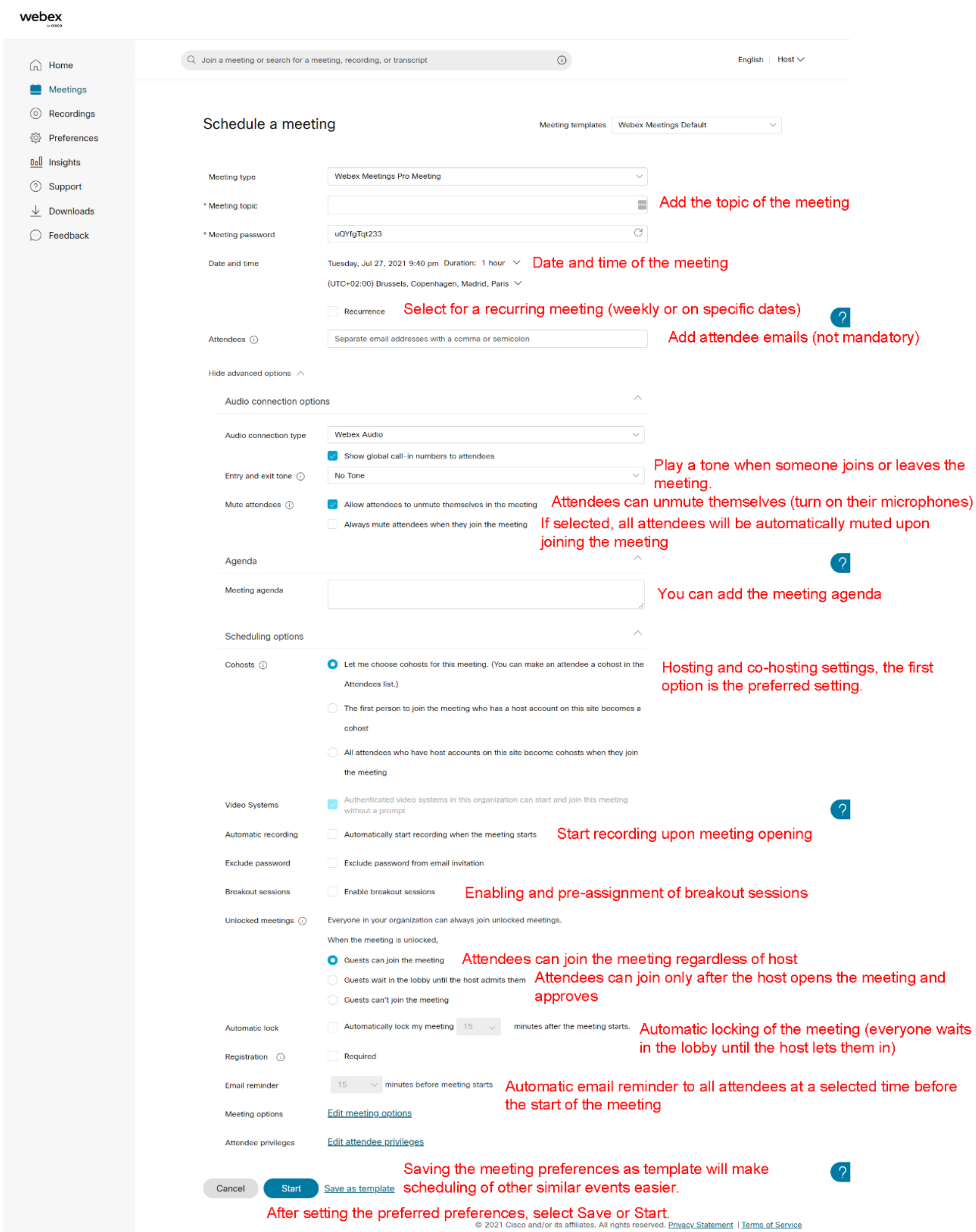
Step 2: On the left side of the window, select the "Meetings" menu. On the right side, click on the Schedule a meeting option (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Scheduling a meeting in Webex.

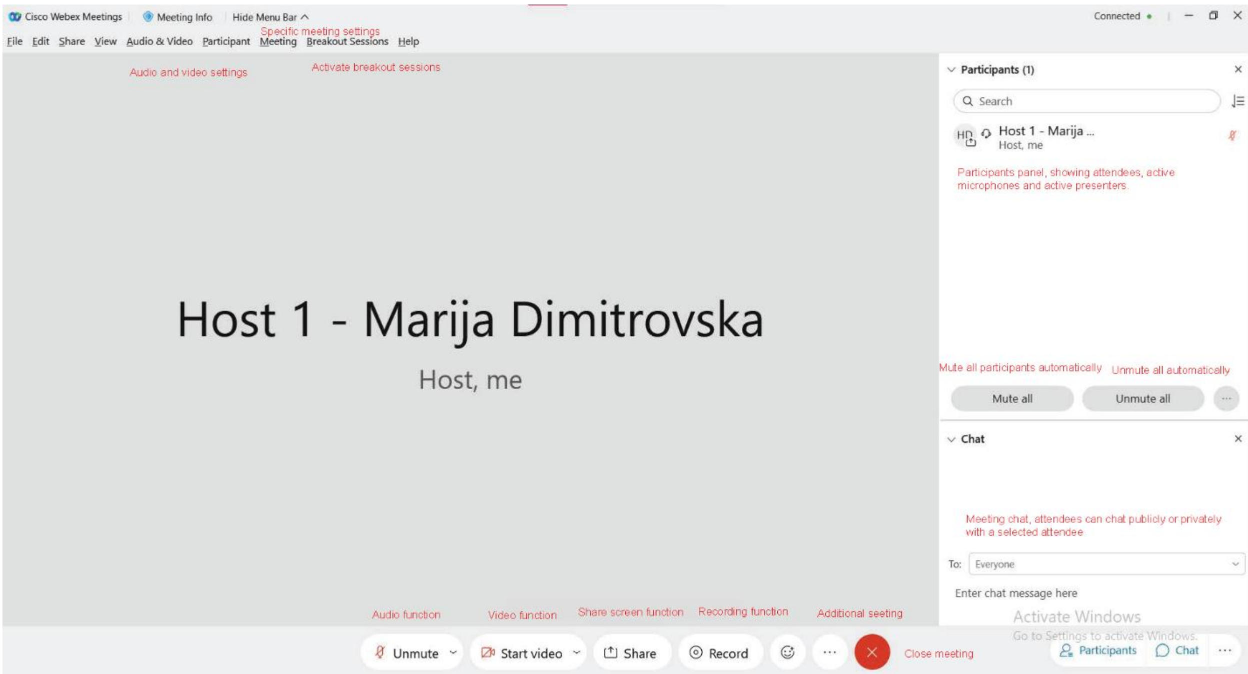


Step 3: Enter the required meeting information in the meeting scheduling fields, according to the specific functionalities and preferences presented in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Scheduling meeting settings in Webex.



Once your meeting has been scheduled it will appear on your main Webex page. When the time for the meeting approaches, simply click *Start* to open the meeting.



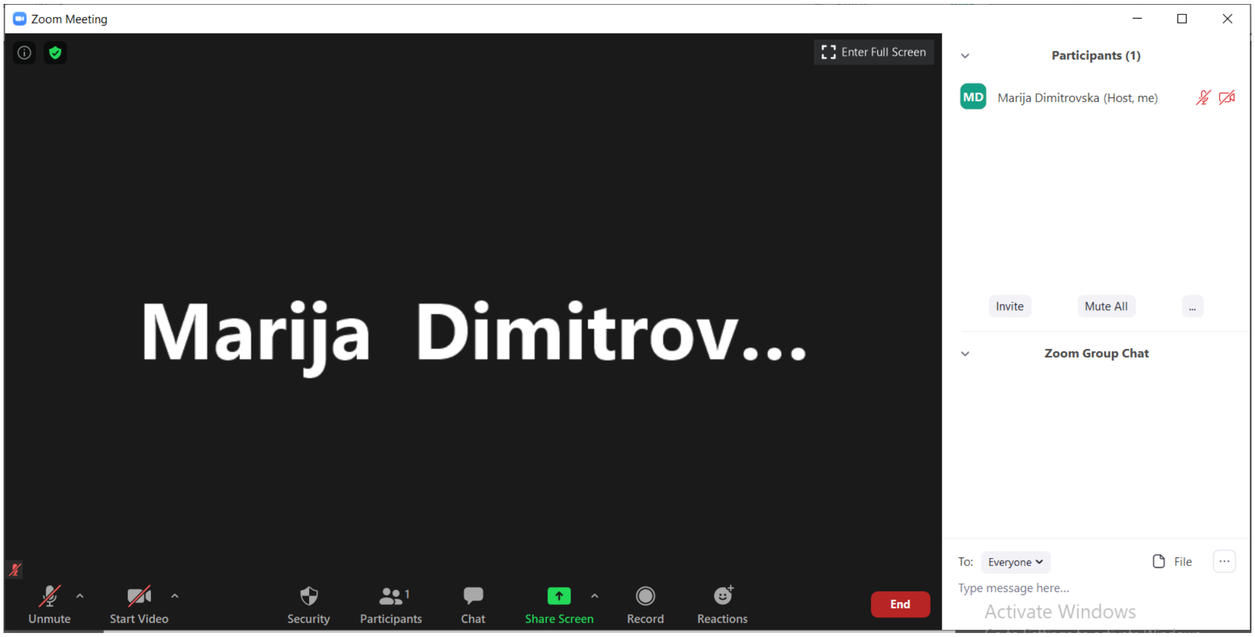
4.3. Screen sharing in Zoom

Screen sharing is one of the standard features on webinar platforms. Through screen sharing you can share a presentation (PowerPoint slides, pdf files or other types of presentation software), any type of file that can be opened on your computer, applications, browser, and multimedia files. Screen sharing can be performed by the host of the meeting, an active presenter, or any attendee of the webinar session. The following steps will guide you through the screen sharing process in Zoom.

Step 1: Start the scheduled Zoom meeting (Setting up a webinar meeting in Zoom).

Step 2: Click the Share Screen icon (marked in green) in the bottom middle part of your Zoom meeting window (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Screen sharing in Zoom.

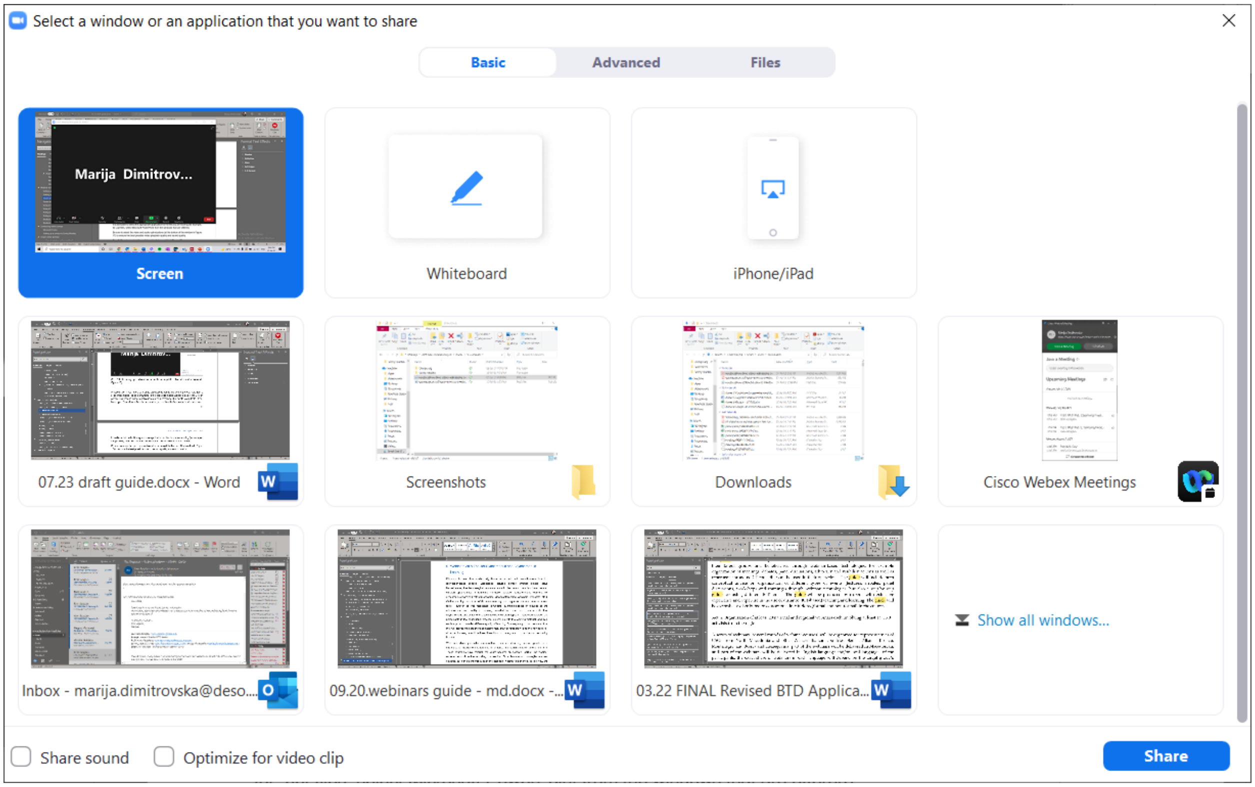


Step 3: In the newly opened window, select the desired file/application (Figure 7).

Practical tips: If you intend to switch between applications during the meeting (for example from a slide presentation, open a browser), in this case it is most practical to select the Screen option. This means that all applications opened on your computer will be visible to the attendees (if you have open files with confidential information, close them beforehand). In all other cases, it is advisable to select the appropriate application for the file you are sharing (for example, for .ppt files, select Microsoft PowerPoint from the windows that are offered).

Be sure to select the video and audio optimizations (at the bottom of the window in Figure 7) to ensure the best possible video playback quality and sound quality.

Figure 7. Basic sharing options in Zoom.



Zoom also offers advanced sharing options. You can have a PowerPoint slide using a virtual background (convenient when you do not have a blank or neutral background). You can also share a portion of your screen and perform other operations on the other side of the screen. The Advanced menu also provides opportunities for optimized sharing of video (the motion sequences will be seamless, unlike basic sharing), or simply sharing audio (convenient for sharing background music before the start of a meeting). These features are available in the Advanced menu, depicted in Figure 8.

You can also share designated files from your computer or available on cloud storage. These are available in the Files menu, depicted in Figure 9.

Figure 8. Advanced sharing options in Zoom.

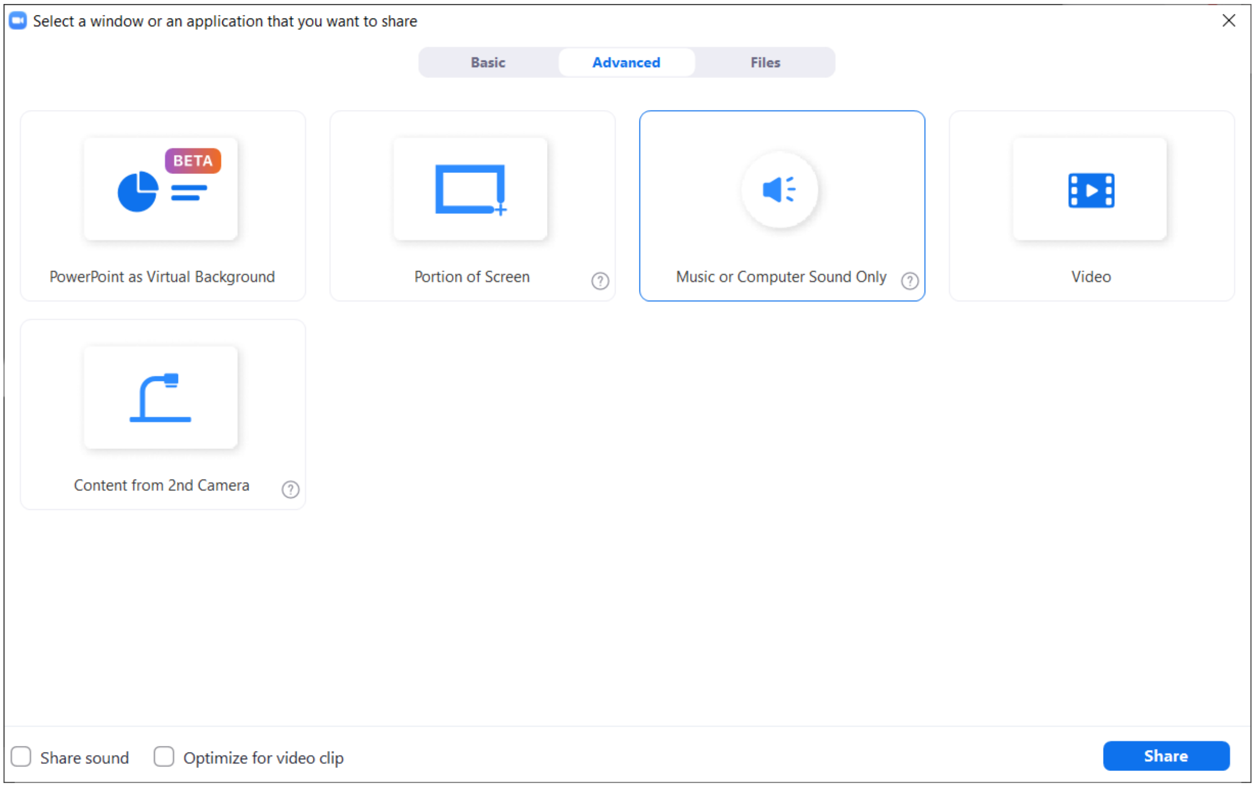
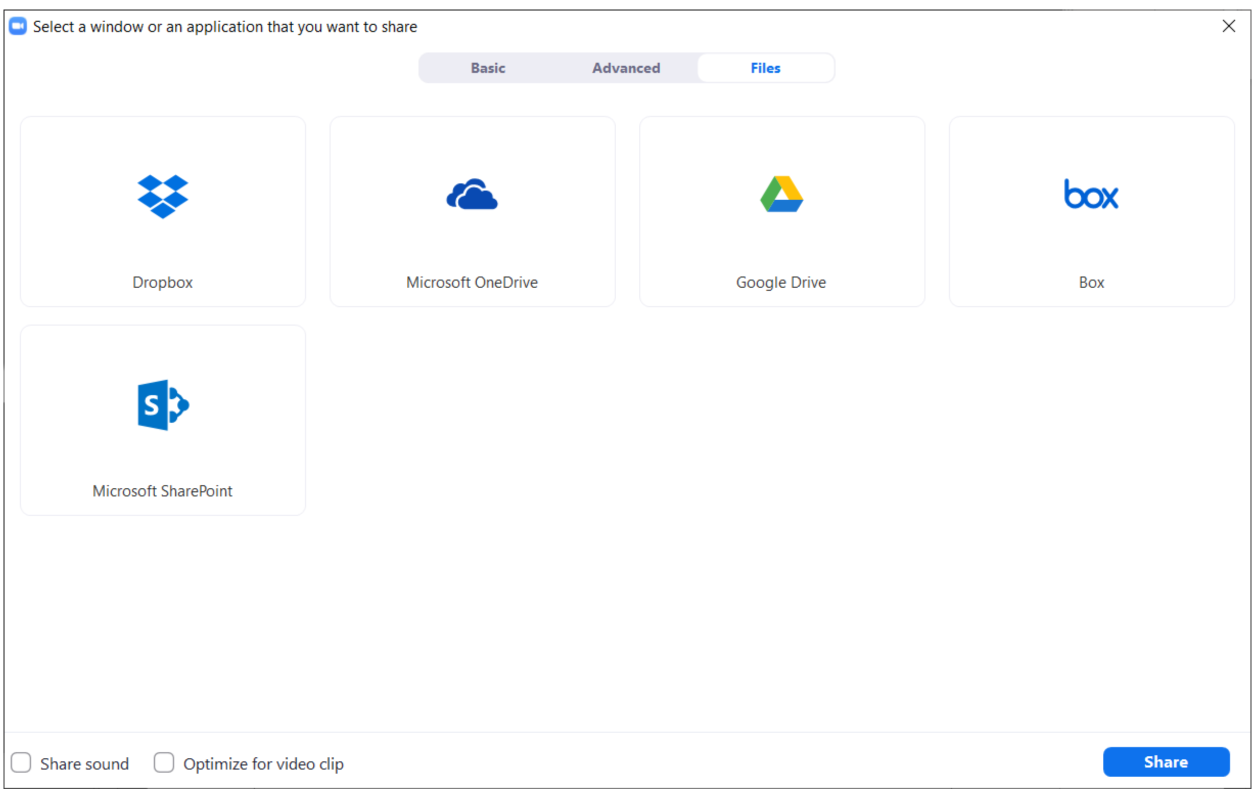


Figure 9. Sharing files in Zoom.

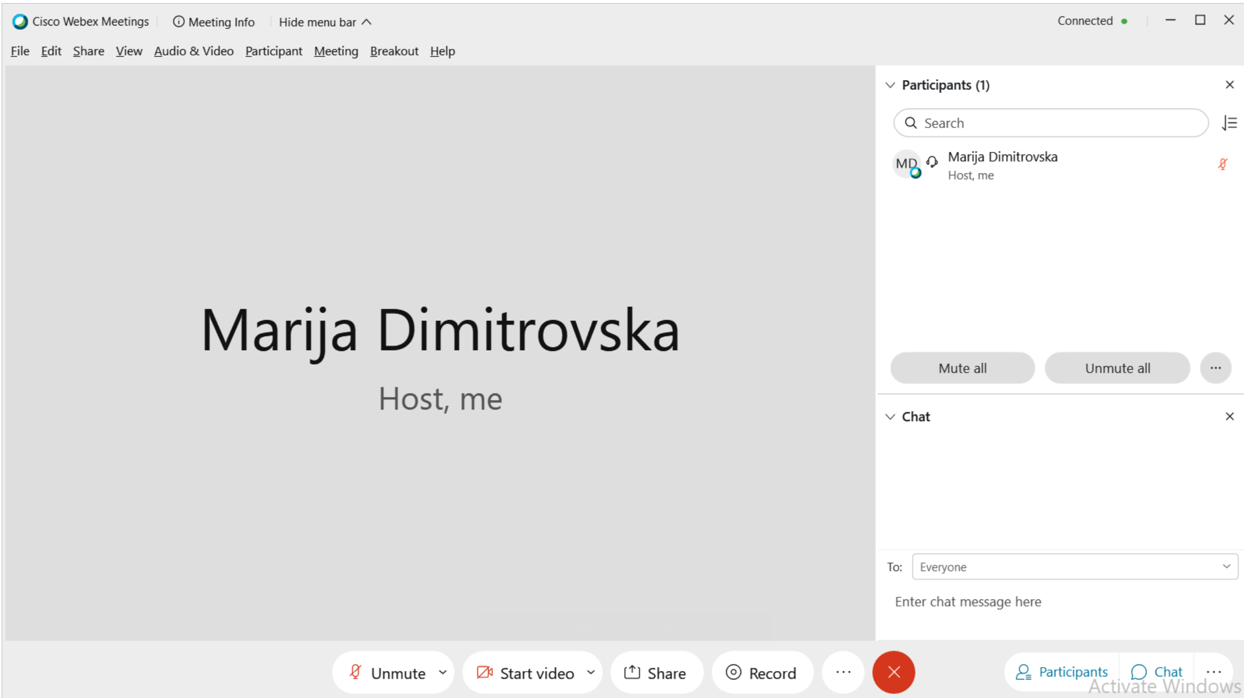


4.4. Screen sharing in Webex

Step 1: Start your scheduled Webex meeting.

Step 2: Click the Share icon in the bottom middle part of your Webex meeting window (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Screen sharing in Webex.



Step 3: In the newly opened window, select the appropriate option (description is given in Figure 11).

If you want to switch between applications and files during sharing, select *Screen sharing*. If you want to share a single file (for example .ppt presentation), select the appropriate application from the menu provided. It should be noted that it is recommended that you have the file open on your computer to find it more easily in the suggested menu.

If the content you want to share with the attendees contains a video or audio file, before selecting the appropriate application, select the *Optimize for motion and video* option and *Share your computer audio* in the sharing window (shown in Figure 12).

Figure 11. Screen sharing menu in Webex.

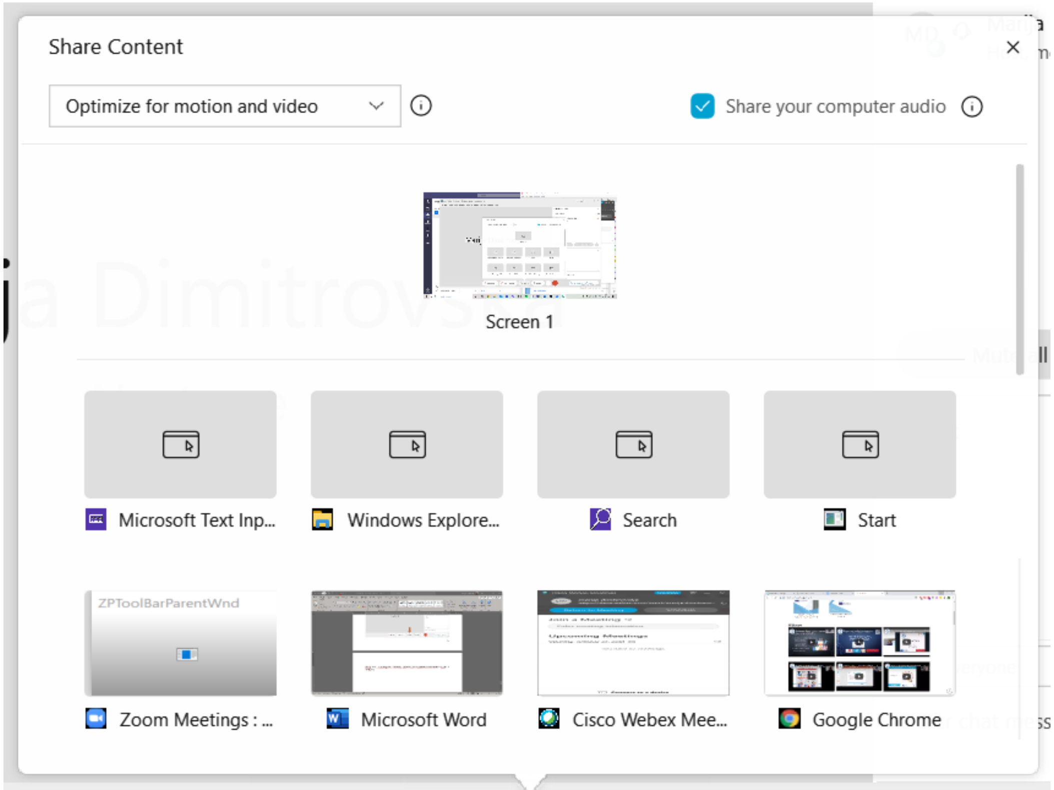
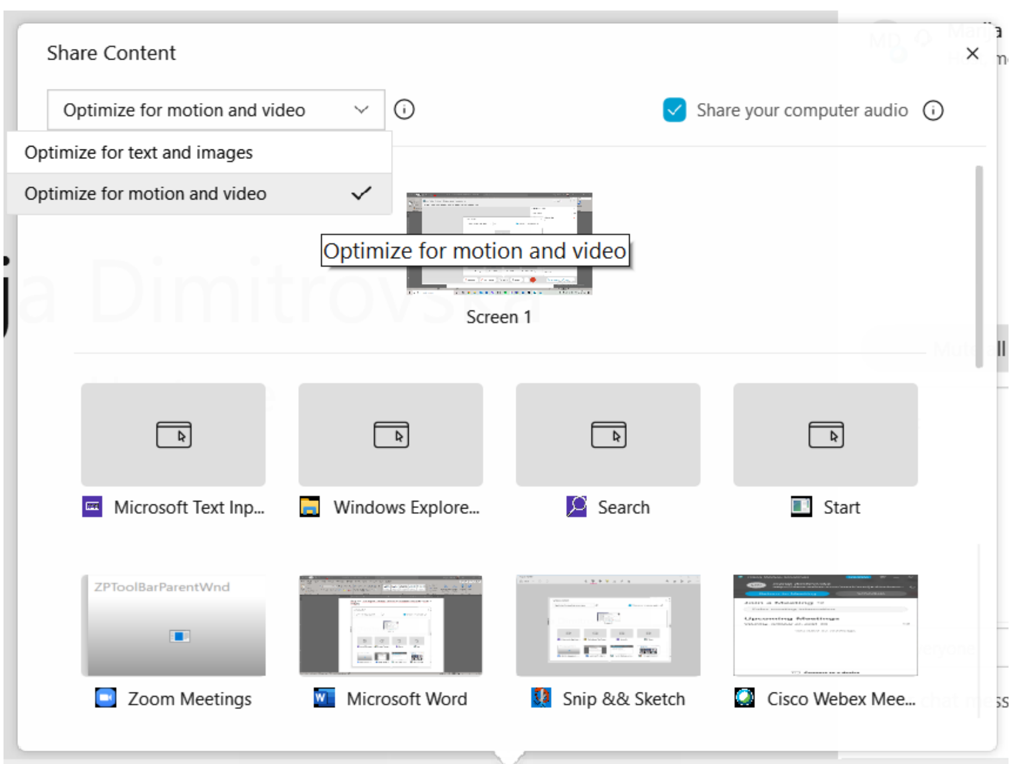
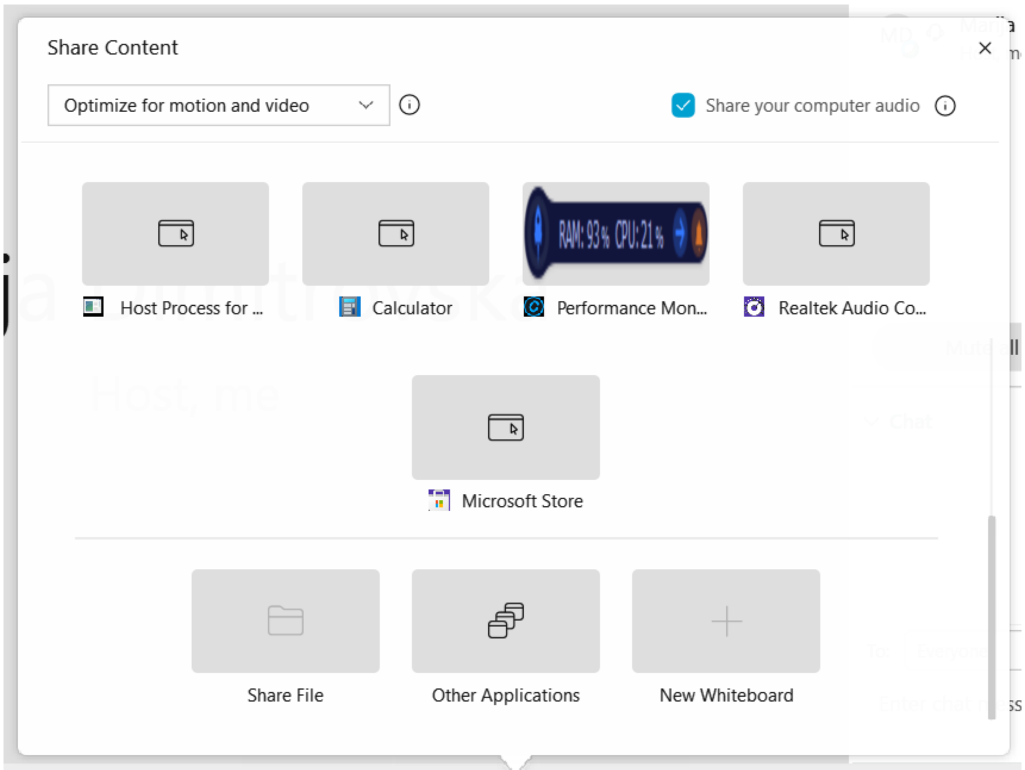


Figure 12. Optimization features in sharing menu in Webex.



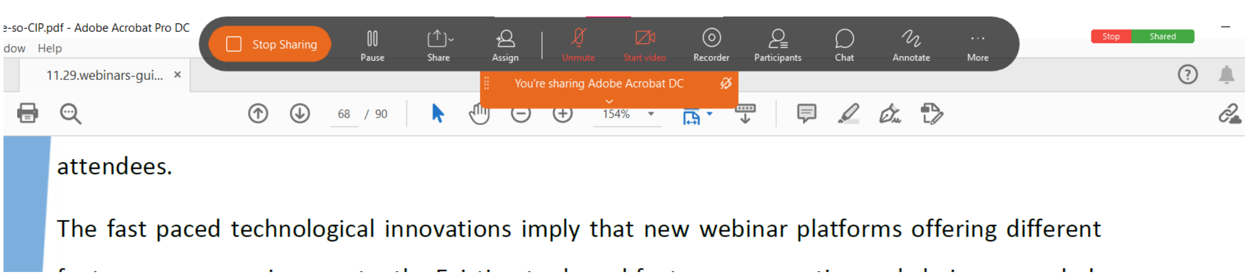
If you want to open a file directly through this window, scroll down to the bottom of the window and select *Share File* or *Other Applications*. If you want to open the digital whiteboard tool, select the *New Whiteboard* option (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Sharing files and whiteboard in Webex.



During screen sharing, you will not have all the functionalities visible in the standard Webex meeting window. To activate some of them, move the cursor to the top of the screen and manage the meeting settings. The basic functionalities are shown in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Meeting functionalities while sharing content in Webex.



Legend of functionalities:

Stop Sharing - stops the screen sharing process

Pause - pauses the screen sharing process. Attendees will continue to watch the content that was shared before pausing, while the presenter can continue using other files and applications. This is a useful tool if the presenter wants to open applications that should not be visible to the attendees.

Share - starts a new screen sharing process

Assign - giving authorizations to other participants in the meeting. The assignments can be Cohost and Presenter (once you select another attendee as presenter, screen sharing will be automatically stopped on your end).

Unmute / Mute - turn off / on your microphone

Start / Stop Video - start / stop your video

Recorder - enable and manage meeting recording (recording can be made locally on your device or in the cloud and be available for download sometime after the meeting).

Participants - opens the Participants panel

Chat - includes the Chat panel

Annotate - activates the annotation panel

More - includes additional settings (breakout rooms, attendees microphone settings, etc.).

4.5. Using a Digital Whiteboard in Zoom

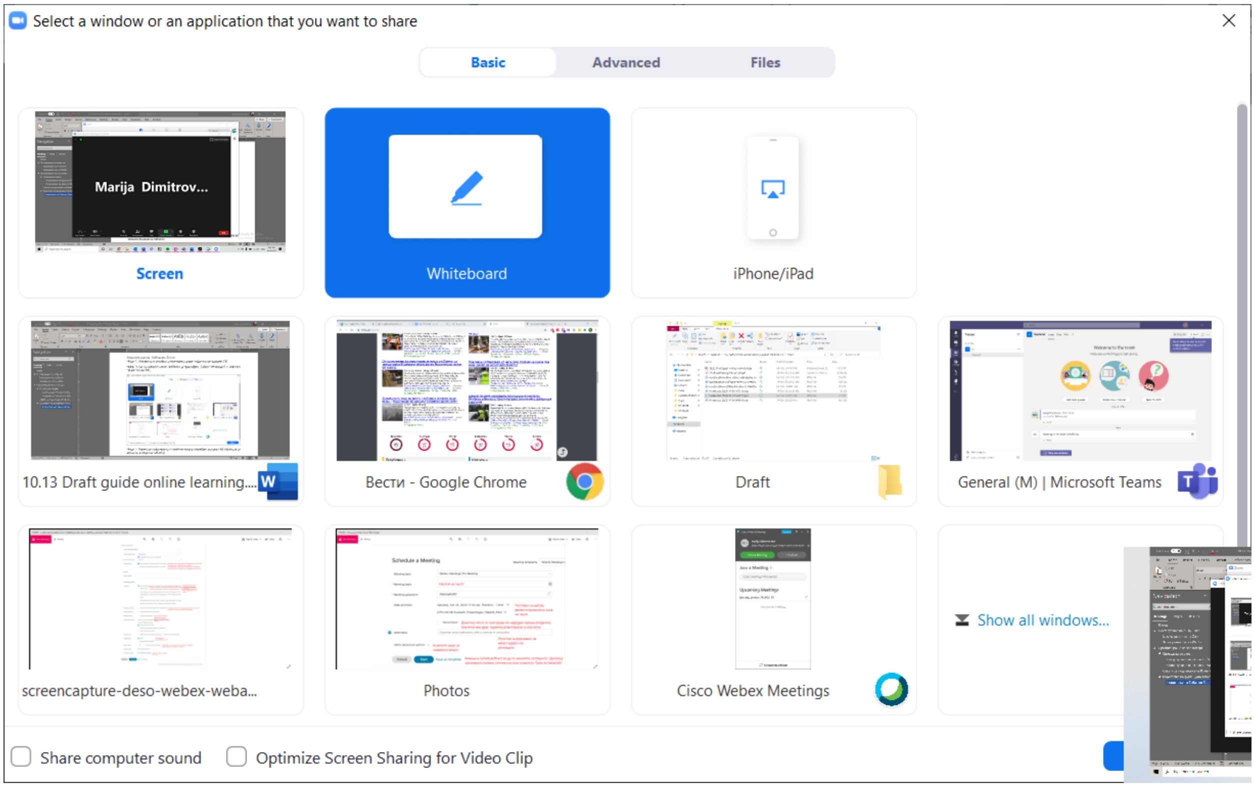
The whiteboard is a tool that facilitates interaction with meeting attendees and encourages participation and interaction. It is an excellent tool to use when you want to engage the audience in some part of the webinar event. Like the standard whiteboard, the webinar whiteboard has similar basic functions - to write notes and illustrate key points of the event, during brainstorming meetings or when explaining complex points in sequential steps.

Note: You can use the webinar whiteboard with your computer mouse or with additional writing/drawing device. If you want to use the board for more complex operations, it is advisable to use an additional device for precise writing / drawing.

Step 1. Initiate the "Screen Sharing" option (explained in the Screen sharing in Zoom chapter).

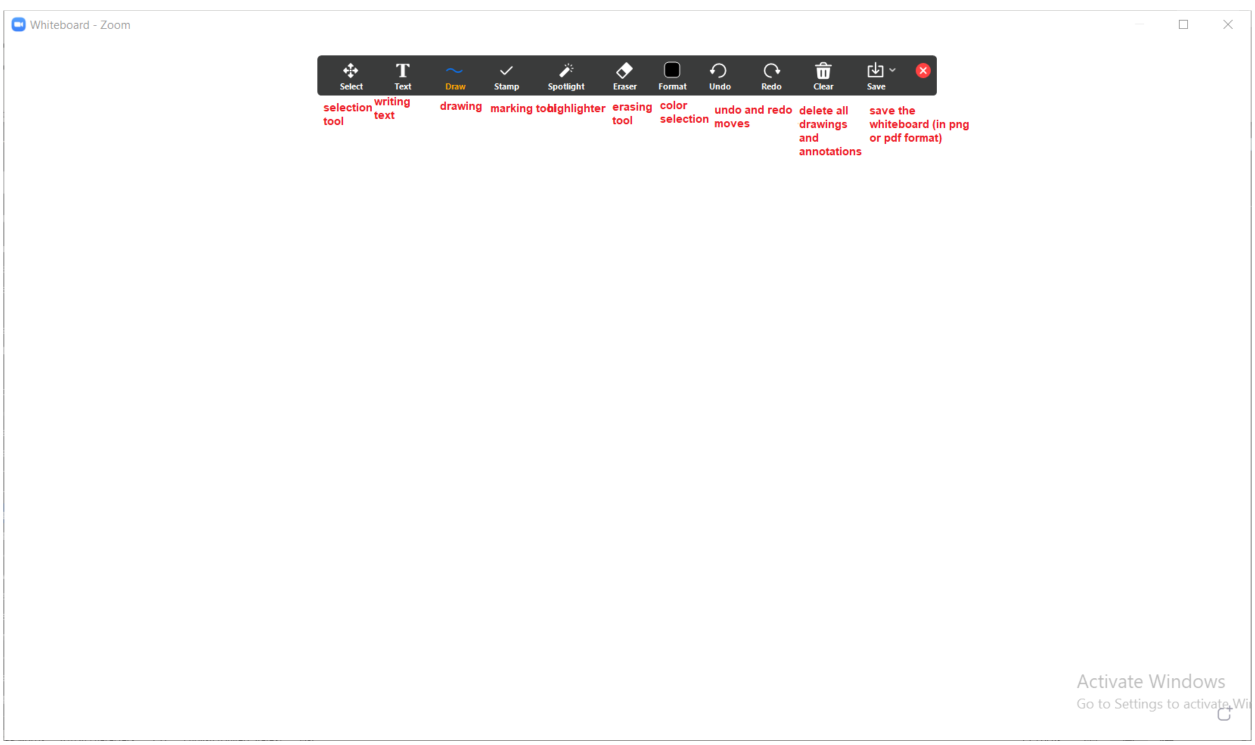
Step 2. From the offered options, select the *Whiteboard* function and click *Share* (Figure 15).

Figure 15. Whiteboard sharing in Zoom.



Step 3. Use the board functions as needed (Figure 16).

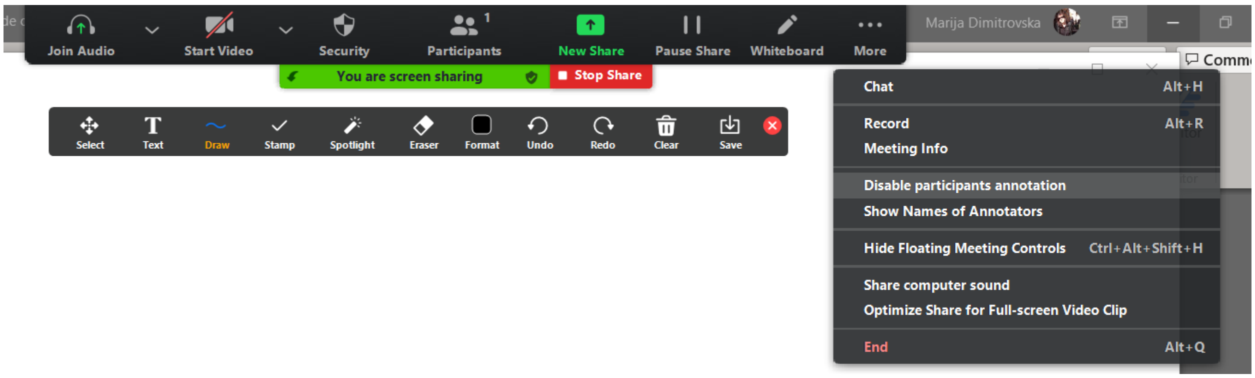
Figure 16. Whiteboard functionalities in Zoom.



The delete option offers the possibility to delete only parts or the entire content on the whiteboard.

If you want the be the only person to have control over the whiteboard, you prevent attendees from making annotations by selecting the *Disable participants annotation option* from the menu (Figure 17.

Figure 17. Disabling annotations by attendees in Zoom whiteboard.



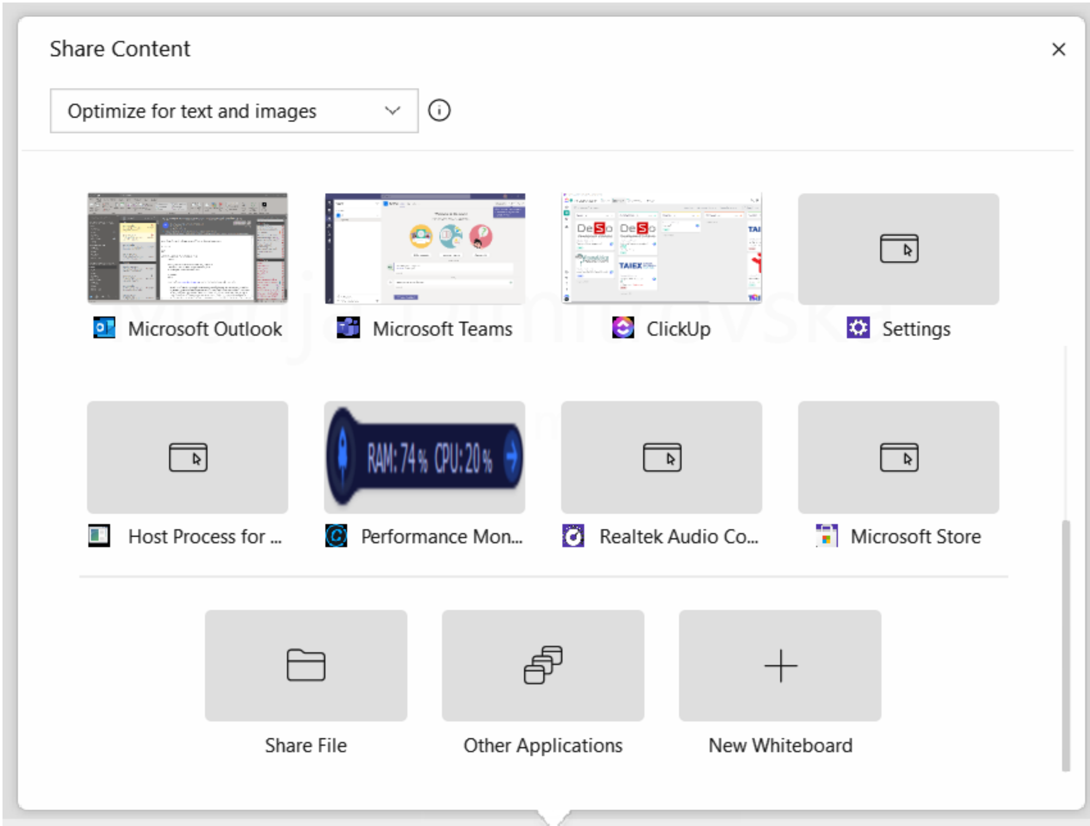
Select *Stop Share* when you want to close the whiteboard. Make sure that you have saved all the content you will need later before closing the whiteboard.

4.6. Using a Digital Whiteboard in Webex

Step 1. Select the Screen Sharing option (explained in the Screen sharing in Webex chapter).

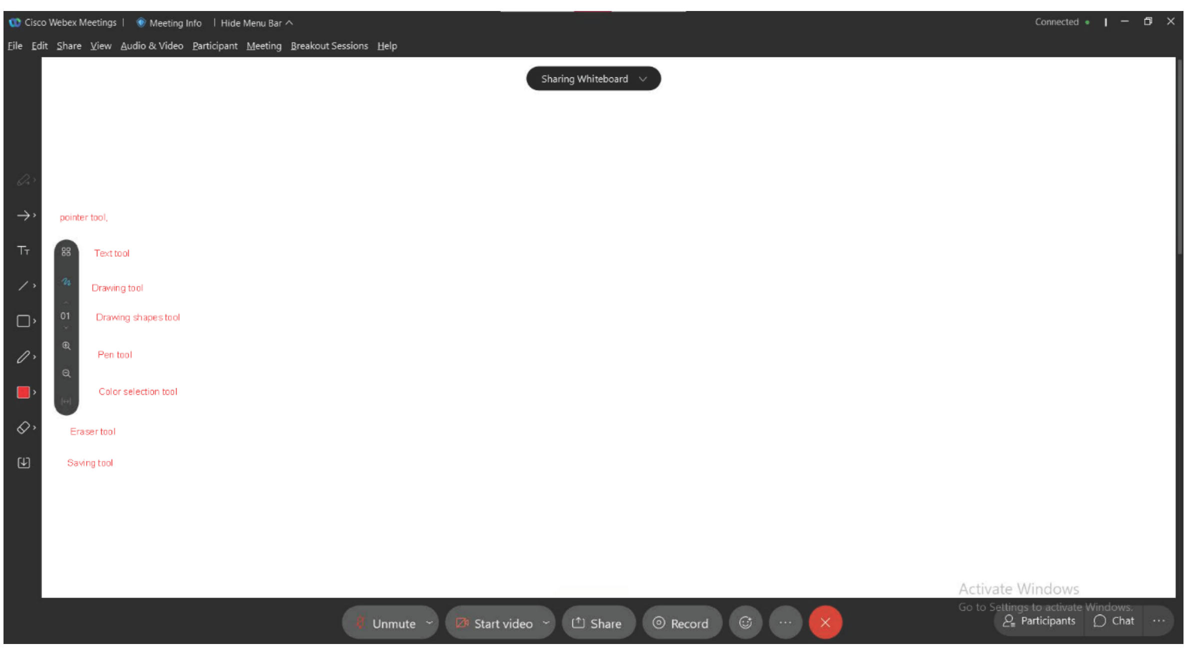
Step 2. From the Screen Sharing menu, select *New Whiteboard*.

Figure 18. Sharing whiteboard in Webex meeting.



Step 3. Use the whiteboard functions as needed (Figure 19 explains the possible whiteboard functions).

Figure 19. Whiteboard functionalities in Webex.



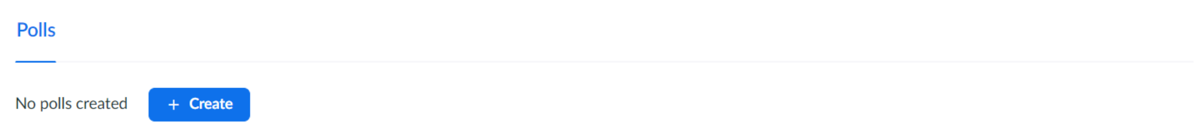
To stop using the whiteboard, select *Stop Sharing* from the drop-down menu (please you mouse cursor to the top middle part of the Screen and the drop-down menu will appear).

4.7. Polling in Zoom

Using the built-in polling tool in Zoom requires the preparation of the polling questions in advance (you can add polling questions during a meeting, but that requires leaving the meeting window and setting up the poll in the meeting settings on your main Zoom page). To set up polls for a Webex meeting/event follow the steps presented below:

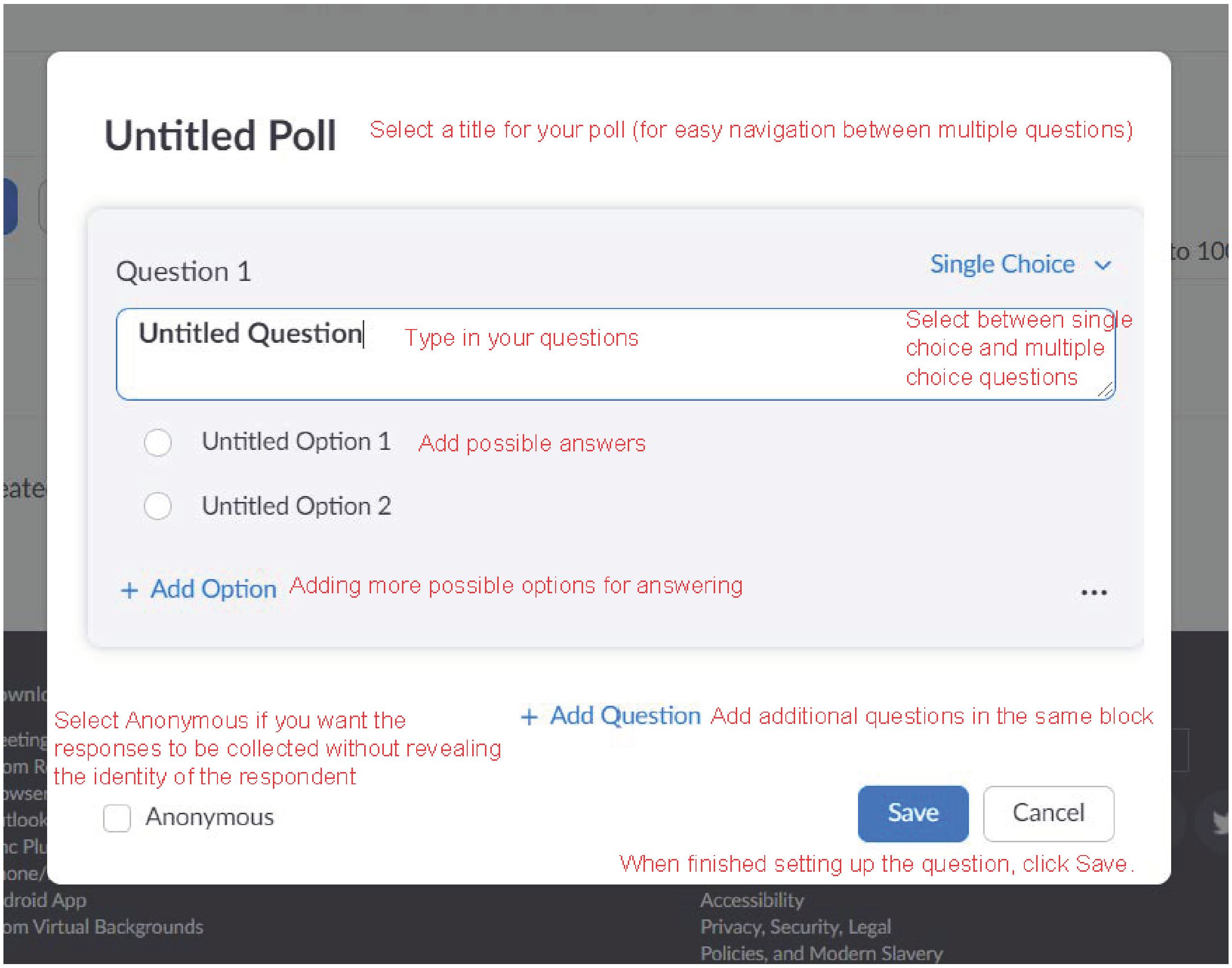
Step 1: Enter the settings of the scheduled meeting (presented in the chapter Setting up a webinar meeting in Zoom), and scroll to the bottom of the page. Select the *Create* option (shown in Figure 200).

Figure 20. Creating polls in Zoom.

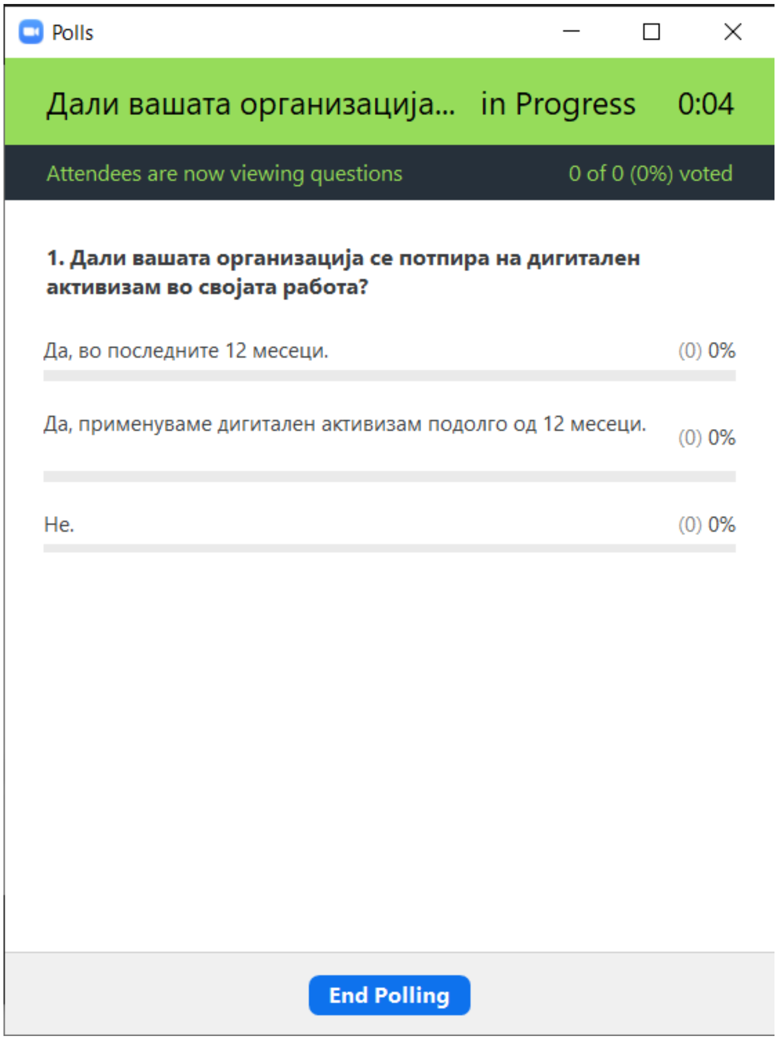


Step 3. Fill in the fields in the window and click Save (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Setting up a polling question in Zoom.



Step 4. During the meeting/event, when you want to start a poll of attendees activate the *Polls* function located in the bottom middle part of the main meeting menu. An active poll is presented in Figure 22. The poll is active and includes a timer that show how much time has elapsed since the start of the poll. Click *End Polling* to stop the collection of results. Once you stop polling three options appear, to share the results and to re-launch the polling. Click *Share Results* for all attendees to be able to see the results (basic distribution of answers, not individual responses). Click *Re-Launch* poll to initiate the same poll. Once polling has ended, click the *X* icon or *Stop Sharing Results* to return to the meeting.



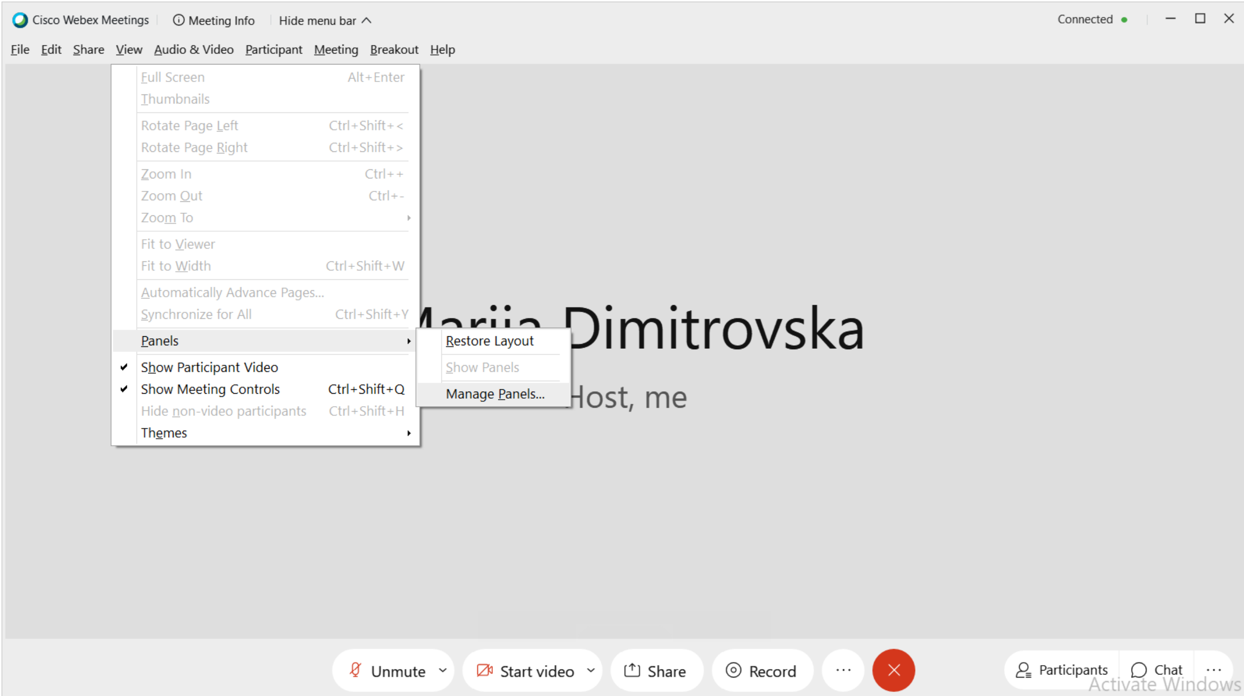
4.8. Polling in Webex

Unlike Zoom, polling in Webex is organized somewhat differently. Namely, the survey questions cannot be prepared in advance, before the start of the meeting/event, unless special software is installed for that purpose. Therefore, preparing the polling questions implies moderator/host having sufficient time to set up survey questions in the frame of the meeting, so this task may be delegated to another team member. On the other hand, the process of preparing the poll questions is partially facilitated, as it does not require exiting the Webex window. To set up Webex-based poll questions, follow these steps:

Step 1. Start the Webex meeting.

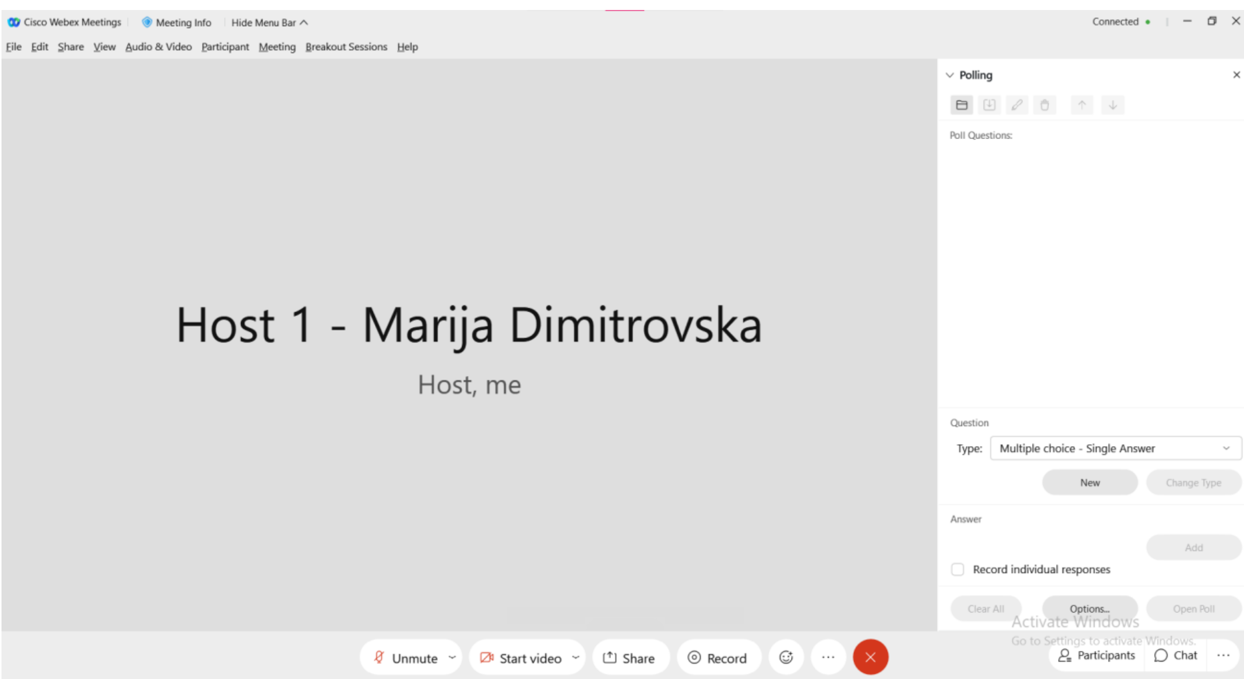
Step 2. On the toolbar, select the *View* menu ➔ *Panels* ➔ *Manage Panels* (Figure 22). Polling should be located in the *Current panels* section.

Figure 22. Panels menu for enabling polls in Webex.



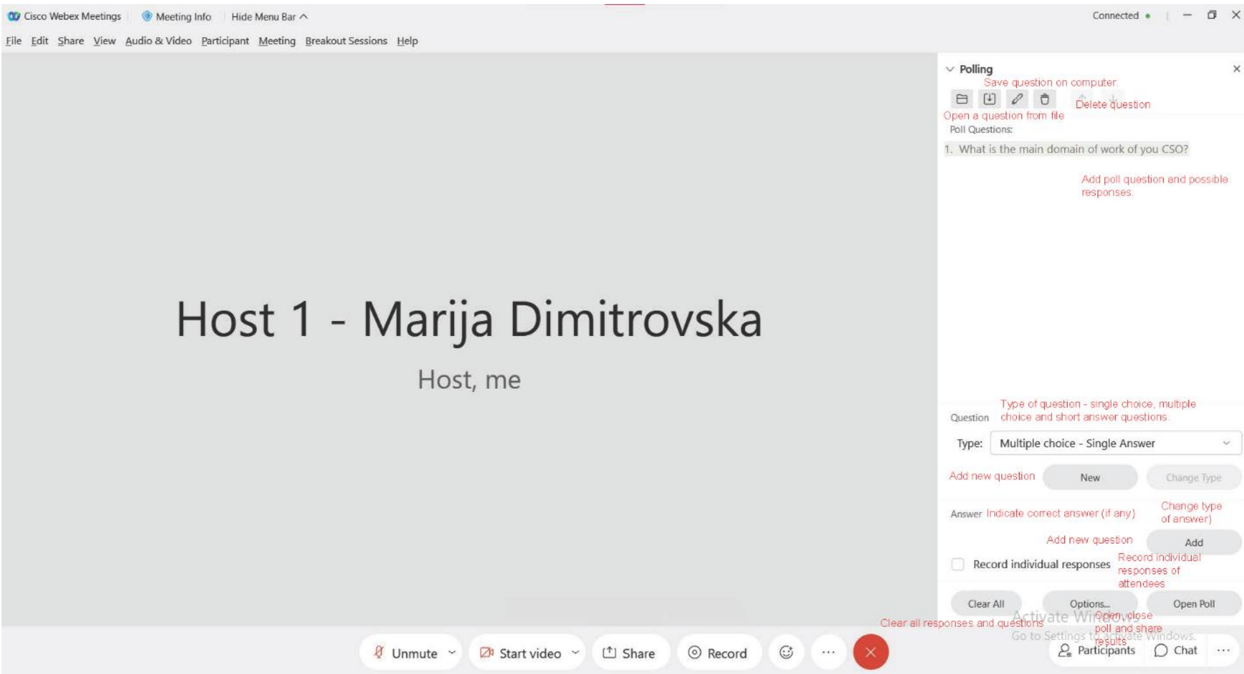
Step 3. Click the three dots on the bottom right corner on your Webex window (Figure 22) and select *Polling*. Click *New* in the polling panel (Figure 23).

Figure 23. New poll question in Webex.



Step 4. Set up your poll question using the desired parameters (set up explained in Figure 24).

Figure 24. Polling setup in Webex.



Once you click Open Poll the questions will be visible to all participants. *Close Poll* will stop the collection of responses allowing you to share the responses with the attendees.

4.9. Breakout sessions in Zoom

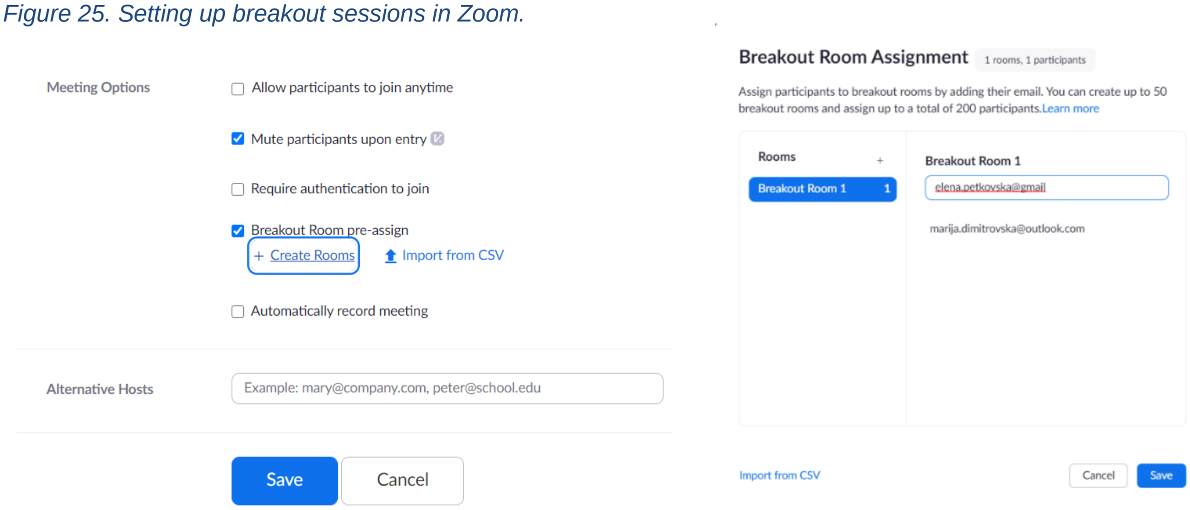
Breakout sessions are an excellent method to support attendee interaction and involvement by organizing group work in separate sessions. Breakout sessions are tied to the main webinar meeting and can be initiated only by the host of the meeting. You can choose random (automatic) or manual set up of breakout sessions. The host can move between the sessions and facilitate the group work. At indication of the host, breakout sessions are closed, and all attendees are returned in the main session.

Breakout sessions in Zoom can be prepared before and during the online meeting/event. To start setting up breakout groups in Zoom before the start of the meeting, follow these steps:

Step 1. Log in to your Zoom account and start scheduling an online meeting (explained in detail in chapter Setting up a webinar meeting in Zoom).

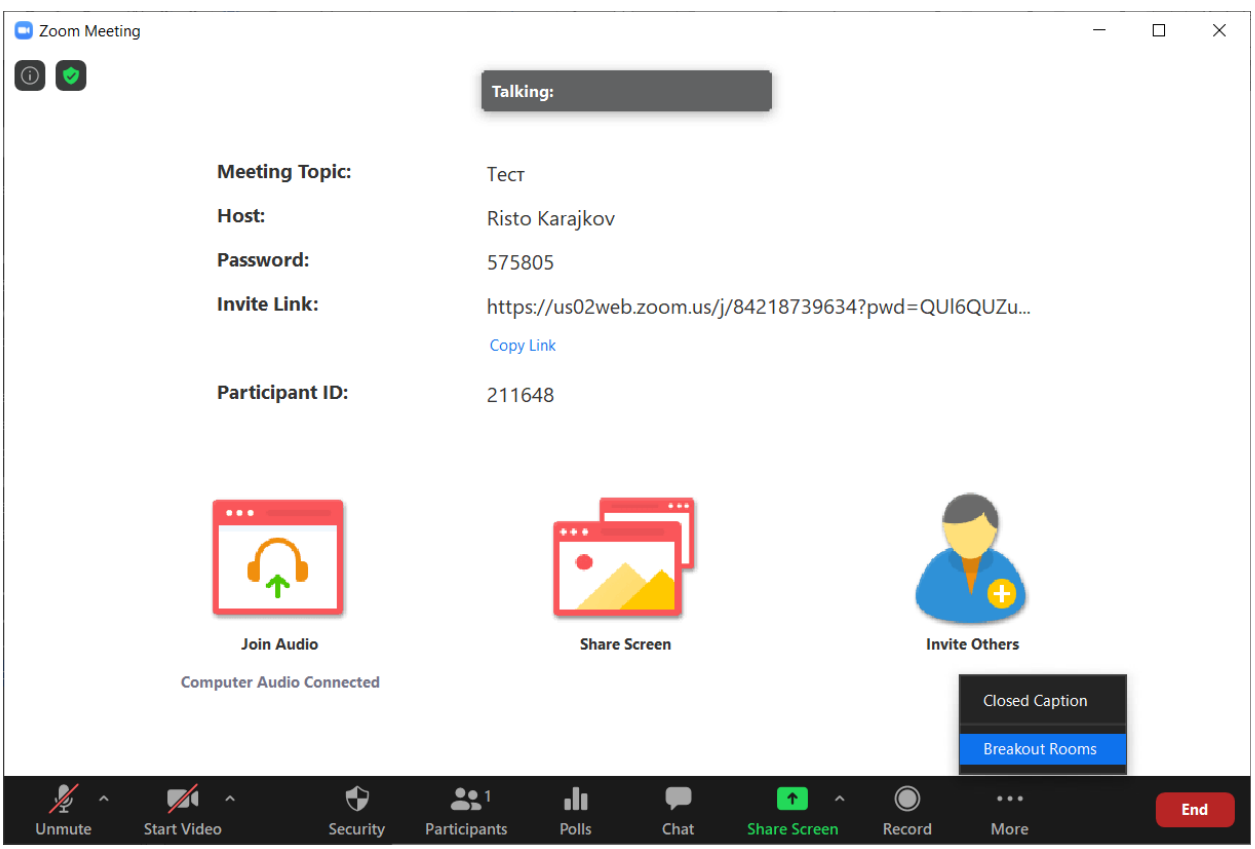
Step 2. In the Meeting options section, select the *Breakout Room pre-assign* option. Then select the *Create Rooms* option. In the new menu, add as many groups to the "+" sign as you deem necessary. Enter the attendees' email addresses within each group. Save the entered data by clicking Save. Continue scheduling the meeting (Figure 25).

Figure 25. Setting up breakout sessions in Zoom.



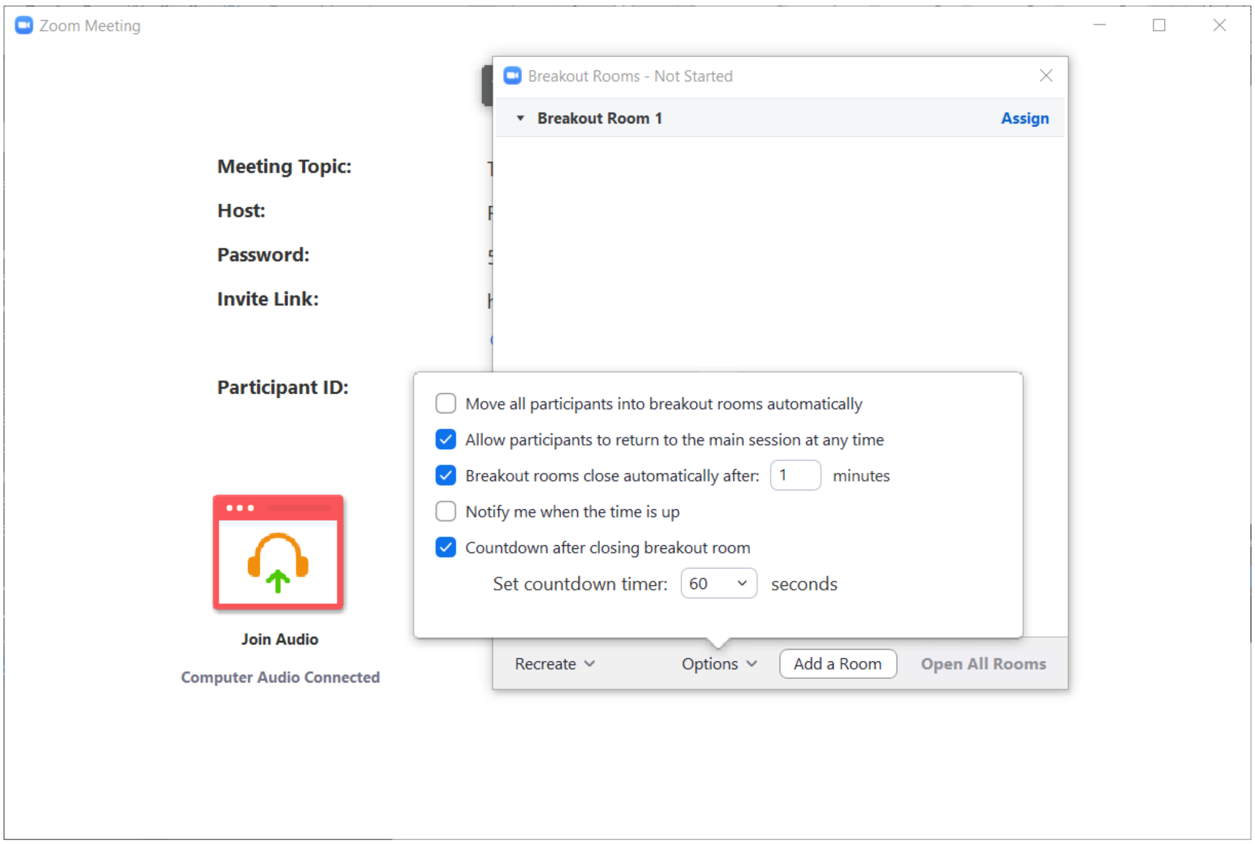
Step 3. To activate breakout groups during the meeting, in the *More* menu, in the lower right corner of the Zoom window, select the *Breakout Rooms* option (Figure 26).

Figure 26. Activating breakout sessions in Zoom.



Step 4. If in the process of scheduling the meeting you have defined the number of breakout groups and you have divided the attendees into groups, it is sufficient to select the *Open All Rooms* option. If you want to make changes, by moving attendees between groups, adding new groups and attendees you do so by clicking the *Add a Room* option and *Assign* (to add group members). Additionally, in the *Options* menu you can additionally edit the settings for the breakout groups (listed in order from top to bottom: automatically move all participants in breakout groups (not at the host's choice); possibility for participants to return to the main session at any time; time automatic closing of breakout groups; notification of completed time for group work; countdown time until closing of groups). To close the groups, select the *Close All Rooms* option (Figure 27).

Figure 27. Breakout sessions menu setup in Zoom.



4.10. Breakout sessions in WebEx

As in the case of Zoom, in Webex breakout sessions can be prepared both in the process of scheduling the meeting or during the online meeting. If you want to prepare breakout sessions before start of the meeting, you can edit it in the scheduling meeting section (detailed guidance provided in the Setting up a meeting on Webex chapter).

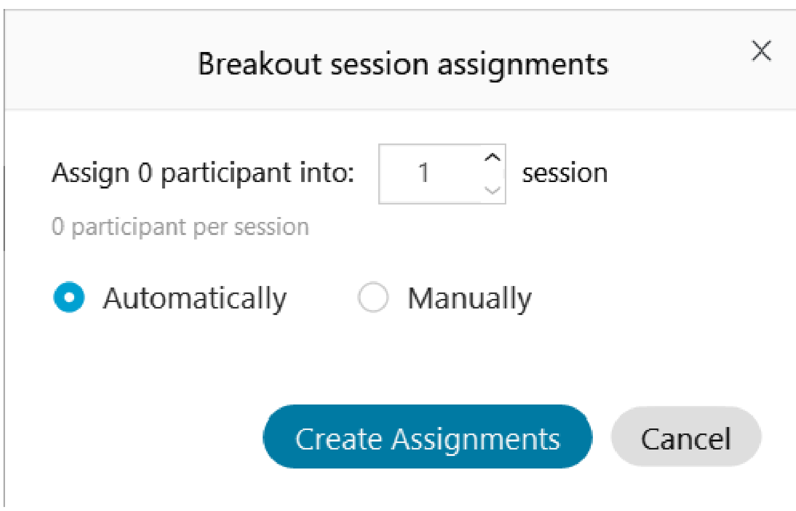
To activate and arrange the groups before the beginning of the meeting, it is necessary to have the email addresses of all attendees prior to the event, which for some can be an impractical solution. Another strategy to use breakout sessions is to set them up during the meeting (this has its own disadvantage, if a participant leaves the meeting and returns you will have to reassign them to their designated breakout session). Webex, like most other webinar platforms, offers the ability to automatically (randomize) attendees into breakout sessions, or to manually assign them by the host.

Step 1: Start the online meeting on the Webex platform.

Step 2: On the toolbar at the top of the Webex window, select the *Breakout menu*, then the *Enable breakout session* option.

Step 3: Edit the settings in the window shown in the image below. In this window you set the number of sessions, you select whether the sessions will be formed automatically or manually. When you have edited the basic settings, click on *Create Assignments* (Figure 28).

Figure 28. Setting up breakout sessions in Webex.



Step 4: (For manual arrangement of breakout sessions) A new window will appear on your screen. On the left side of the window in the frame of the panel *Not Assigned* you have an overview of all attendees who are not organized in a session. Select the names of the attendees you want to place in a specific session and in the *Move to* session menu, select the session (once an attendee is assigned to a session, you will no longer see their name in the *Not Assigned* panel). The names of all attendees assigned to a specific session will be visible in the *Breakout session* panel. If you move the cursor to one of the groups, you will see options for renaming, deleting, and editing groups. If you move the

cursor to the names of students in a specific group, you will see the options to move to another group or return the user to the *Not Assigned* panel.

Additionally, within this window you can edit additional settings for breakout sessions (shown in Figure 29). The available selection options are:

- Allow attendees to return to the main session - allows attendees to return to the main session on their own, regardless of the host.

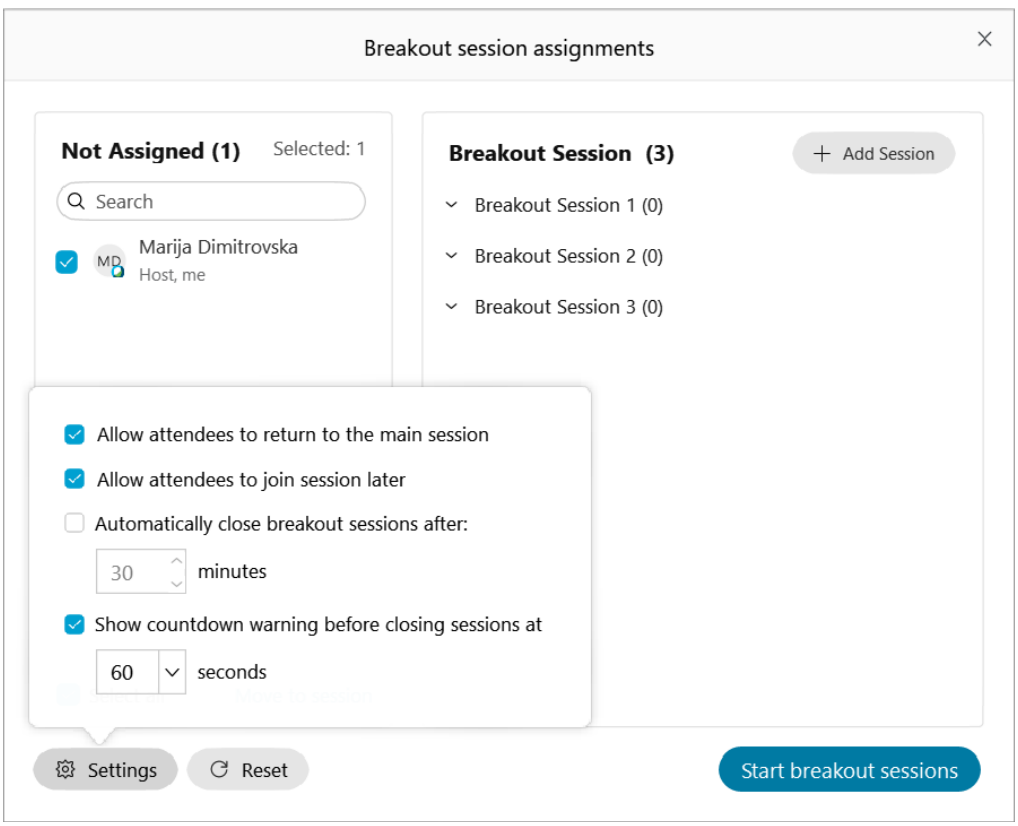
- Allow attendees to join later - allows students to join their group later, regardless of when the breakout sessions have been opened.

- Automatically close breakout sessions after… - a certain time after which groups close automatically (it is set to 30 minutes automatically, if not selected, the host closes all sessions manually (recommended approach)).

- Show countdown warning before closing sessions at… - certain time for closing of sessions (even with manuals closing of sessions, the selected amount of time will pass before all sessions are closed and attendees return to the main session).

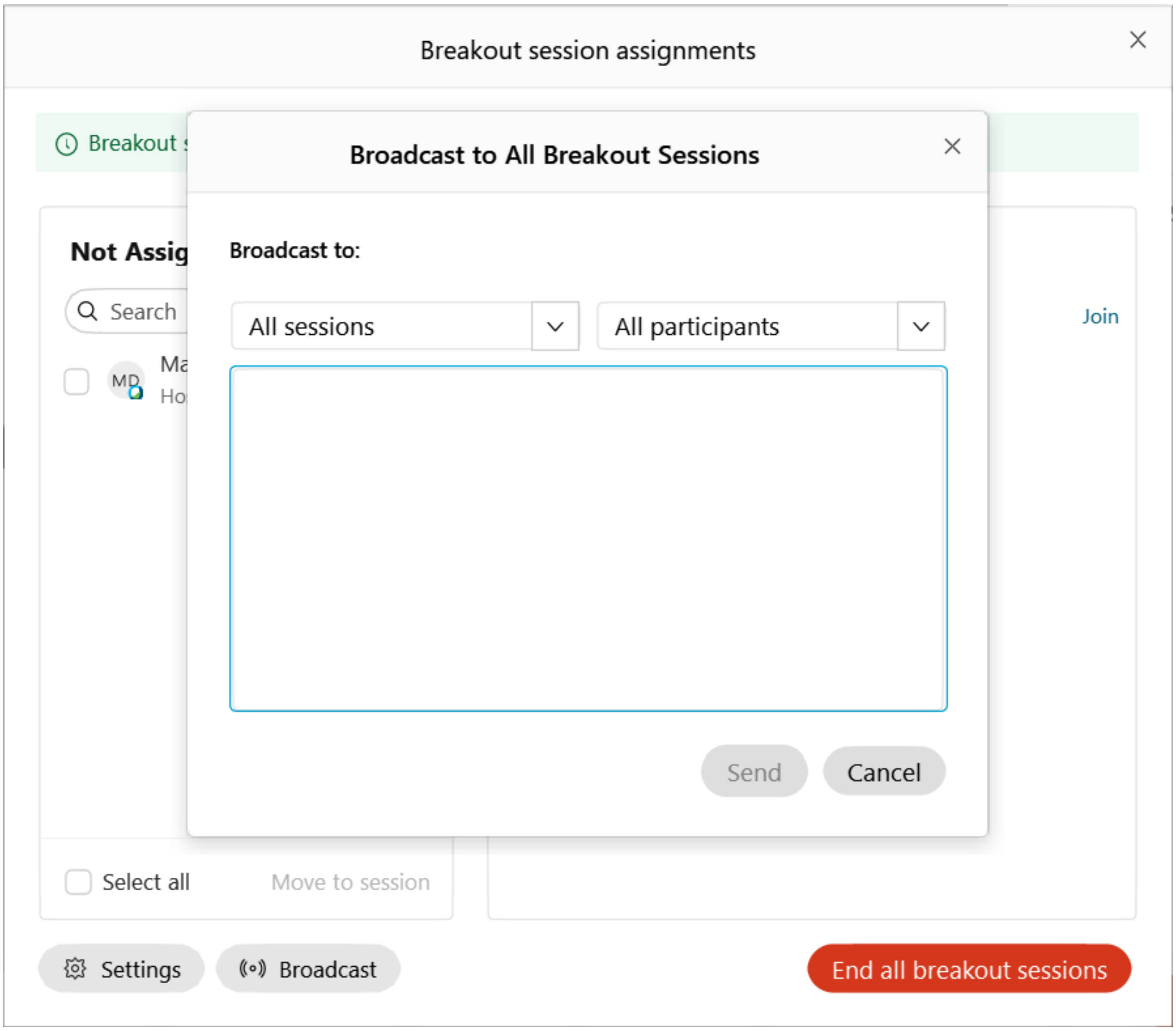
To activate the groups, click on *Start breakout sessions*.

Figure 29. Breakout session menu setup.



Step 5: After activating the sessions in the *Breakout sessions* field that appears at the bottom of the Webex window, you can use the *Broadcast* option to send messages to attendees in the groups (announcing additional time, or wrap up time before groups are closed, providing additional instructions, etc.). This tool is useful for sending assignments and communicating other information to all or selected groups and students (shown in Figure 30).

Figure 30. Broadcasting messages in breakout sessions in Webex.



The attendees can return to the main session at any time or ask the host for help by clicking the *Ask for help* button in the upper right corner of their window in the breakout session. The host and co-hosts of the meeting are free to move between groups, to support group work and to communicate with attendees.

Step 6: To close the breakout groups, click *End all breakout sessions* in the *Breakout* menu (Figure 30).

5. Conducting online surveys

Online surveys can be a great tool for conducting research when not in a position to finance or organize an in-person survey. The online market offers a variety of tools to conduct quantitative research online. The following chapter presents two immensely popular tools for online surveys.

5.1. Setting up a survey in Microsoft Forms

Conducting surveys with Microsoft Forms is very convenient, particularly for Microsoft Office 365 subscribers. Microsoft Forms is a tool for setting up and carrying out surveys and real time monitoring of data collection. This tool can be integrated with other ICT tools (such as webinars) but is also an excellent standalone tool because its use does not entail additional costs other than the standard Office 365 subscription. To use Microsoft Forms as a survey tool, follow these steps:

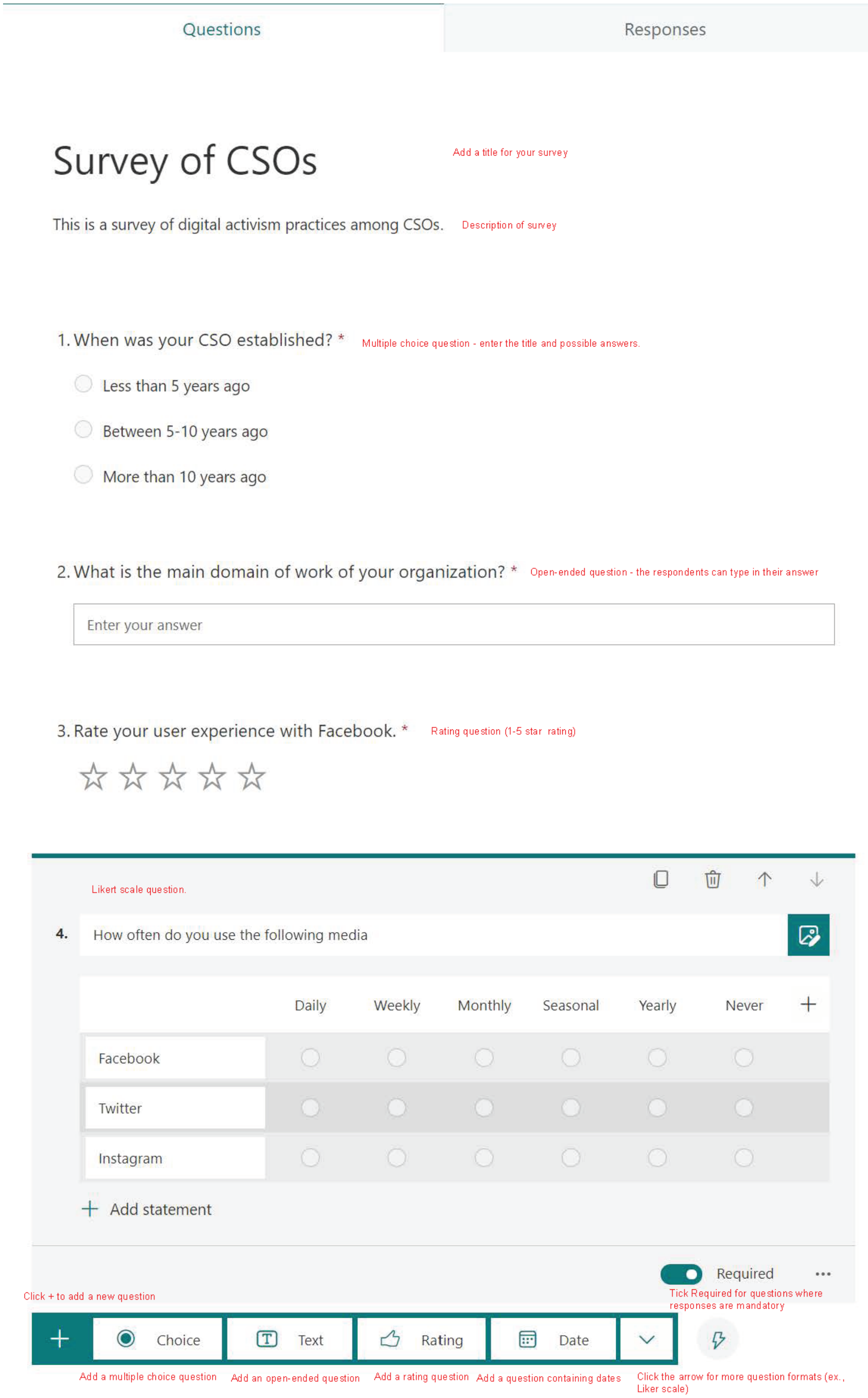
Step 1: Log in to your Office 365 account.

Step 2: Choose Microsoft Forms from the offered applications (the logo of the application is shown below).

Step 3: To create a new survey, select the *New Form* option (the *New Quiz* option is for creating tests and quizzes).

Step 4: Enter the required information in the fields (instructions are presented in Figure 31).

Figure 31. Setting up a survey in Microsoft Forms.



Legend:

- Choice - closed questions with a choice between one or more answers;

- Text – open-ended questions with the possibility of short and long (up to 360 words) answers.

- Rating - evaluation questions (more often used for public opinion polls and marketing purposes).

- Date - questions where the answer should be given in the form of a date.

- Ranking - questions where students should use ranking opportunities.

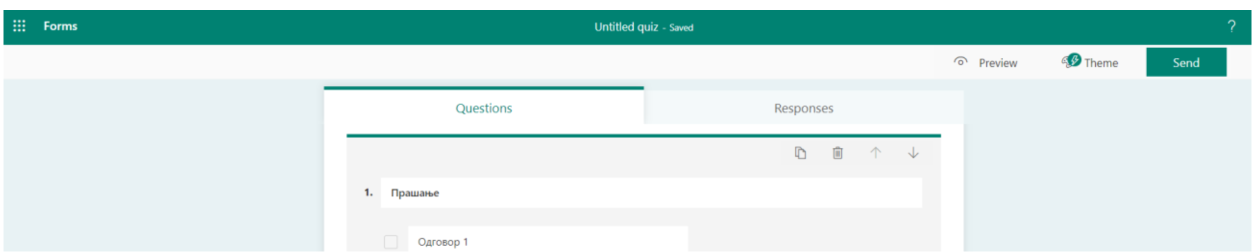
- Likert - questions where students give their answers on a Likert scale for measuring attitudes.

- Net Promoter Score - product evaluation questions (more commonly used for surveys for marketing purposes)

- Section - add separate sections of the questionnaire.

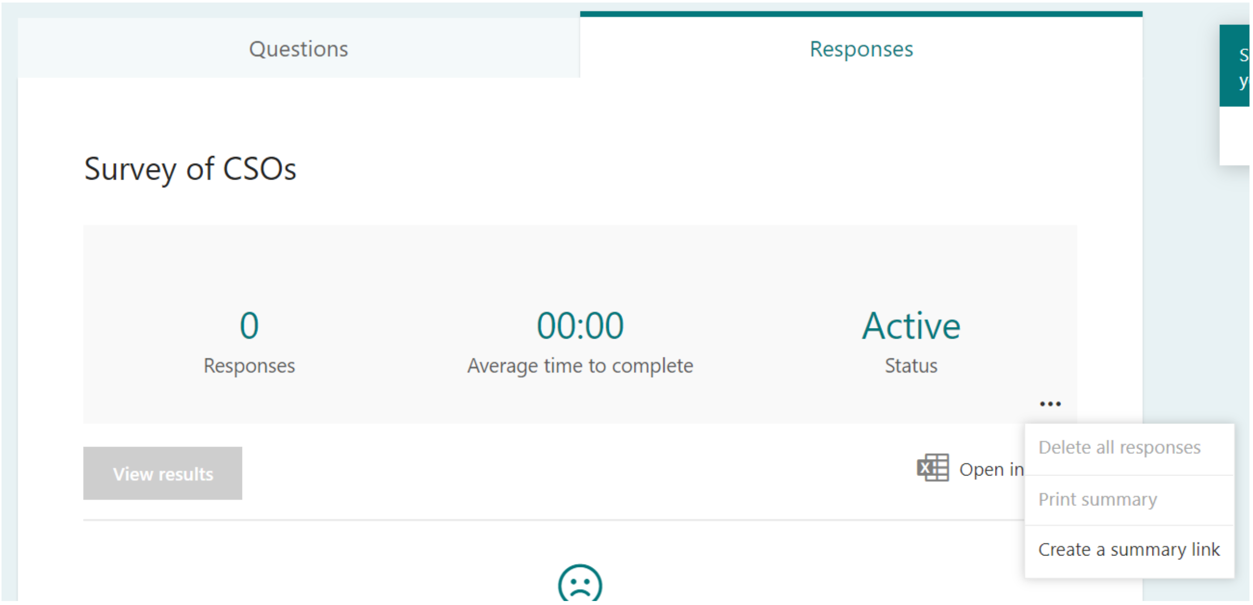
Step 5: When you have finished defining the questions, to share the questionnaire with your students, select the Send option on the right side of the Microsoft Forms application (Figure 32).

Figure 32. Sharing a Microsoft Forms survey.



Copy the link and send it to your respondents. You can share the link via webinar platform, via email, or through the social media pages of your organization. The monitoring of the data collection process is available in the in the *Responses* panel. An example of the data available to you is shown in Figure 33.

Figure 33. Monitoring responses collection in Microsoft Forms.



When a number of responses have been collected, a basic distribution of answers will be provided on the page. To view the analytical report of all attendees' responses, select the *Open in Excel* option. You will receive a Microsoft Excel file containing information about the people who completed the test, their individual answers to each question.

Note: Open-ended questions can be subject to qualitative analysis, or additionally coded and quantitatively analyzed after the data collection process has been completed.

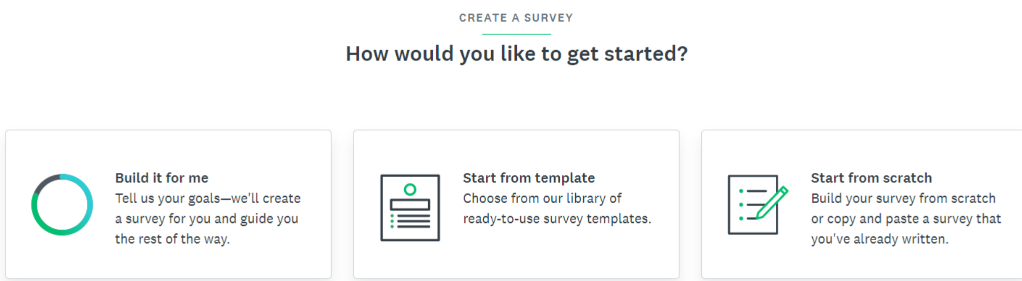
5.2. Setting up a survey via Survey Monkey

Survey Monkey is one of the most popular tools for online surveys. It provides hugely impressive features for data collection and analysis, adapting even to the most particular needs of researchers. Survey monkey offers some limited features for free but using the more advanced surveying methods and dissemination tools requires a paid subscription. To create a survey in Survey Monkey, follow the steps presented below:

Step 1: Register and/or log in to your Survey Monkey account.

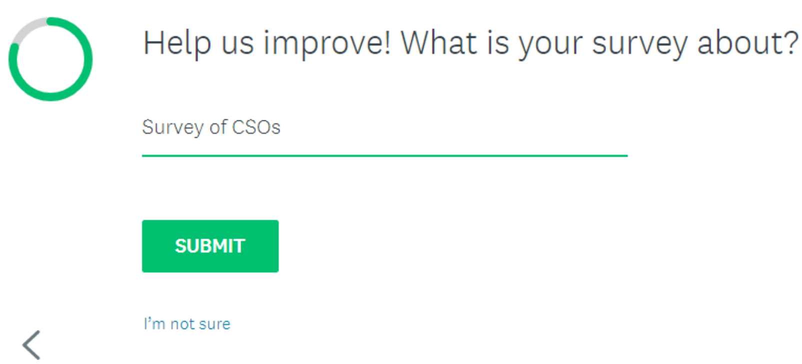
Step 2: on the main page, select the type of survey you want to create (Figure 34).

Figure 34. Selecting a survey type in Survey Monkey.



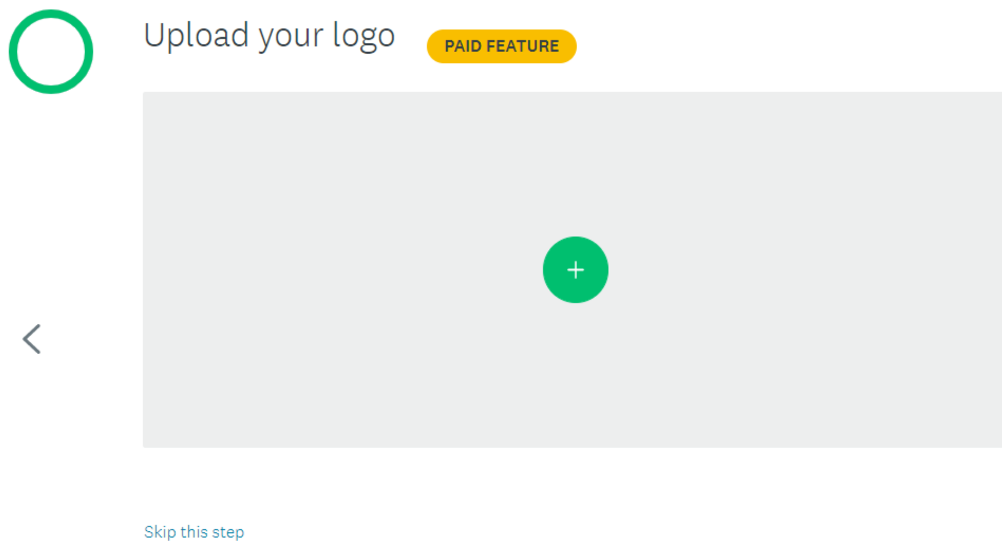
Step 3. Provide the general topic of your survey and click *Submit* (Figure 35).

Figure 35. Indicating survey topic in Survey Monkey.



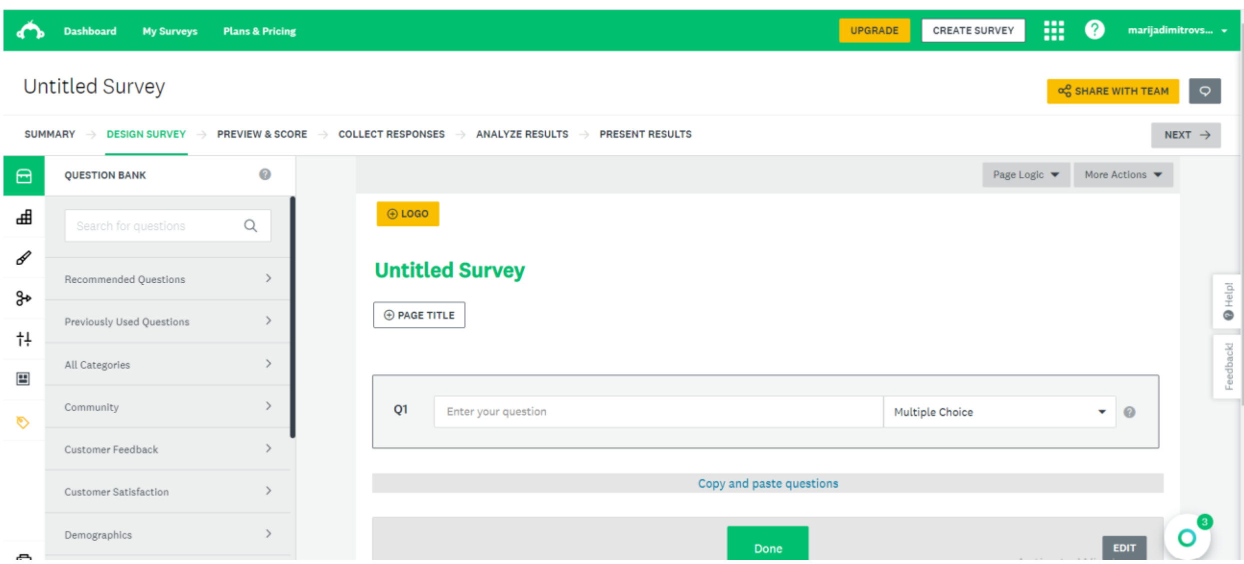
Step 4: if you want you can upload the logo of your organization – click the "+" icon and select the file. This is not a mandatory step, and you can skip it by clicking *Skip this step* in the bottom left corner of the window. This is also a paid feature, so if you are using a free account, you will not be able to continue further without skipping this step.

Figure 36. Adding logo to a survey in Survey Monkey.



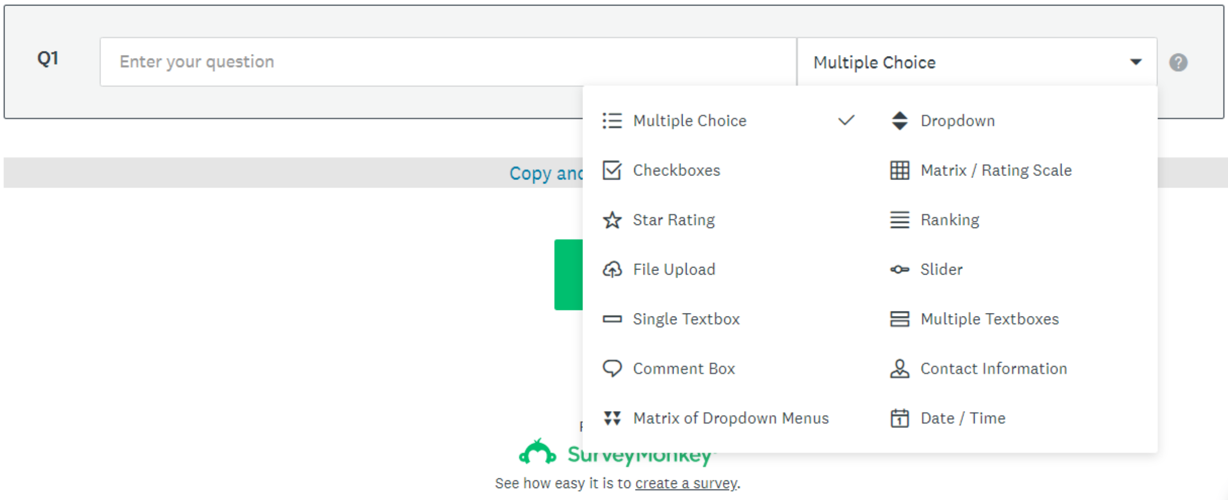
Step 5: Start setting up your survey. In the field *Untitled Survey* add the title of the survey. Start adding your questions (Figure 37).

Figure 37. Setting up survey questions in Survey Monkey.



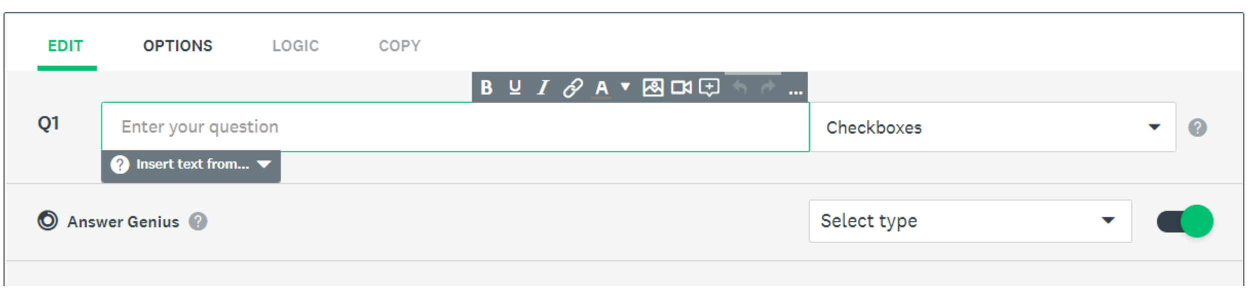
When setting up the survey questions you have the following options (Figure 38): creating multiple choice questions, questions with checkboxes, questions with star ratings, open-ended questions (Single Textbox), Likert scale type of questions (Matrix/Rating Scale), ranking questions, questions where responses are given on a slider, Open-ended questions with multiple textboxes, administrative questions (contact information, date, and time). You can select the type of question you want to add by clicking on the drop-down arrow next to the title of question box.

Figure 38. Types of questions in Survey Monkey.



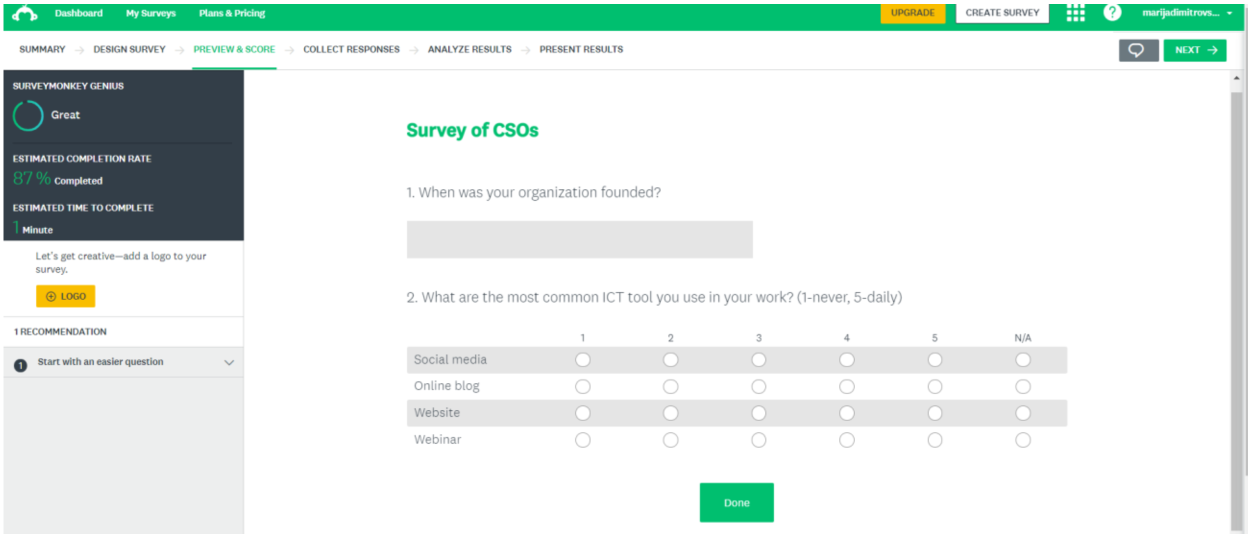
An example of text question editing options is presented in Figure 39. You can use the basic text editing features, such as **bold text**, underline, and *italic*. You can change the font, sizes, and colors. Additionally, you can add photos or videos that will accompany the question.

Figure 39. Text editing options in Survey Monkey.

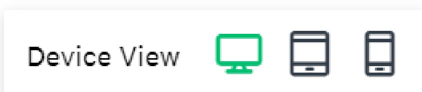


Examples of open-ended and Likert scale questions are presented in Figure 40.

Figure 40. Open ended and Likert scale-type questions in Survey Monkey.

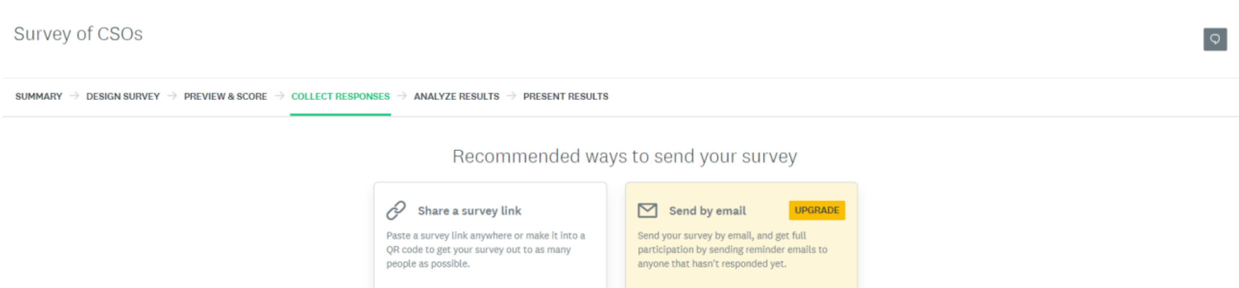


When you are finished adding questions, click *Done*, and move to the preview of the questionnaire following the layout of the icons below.



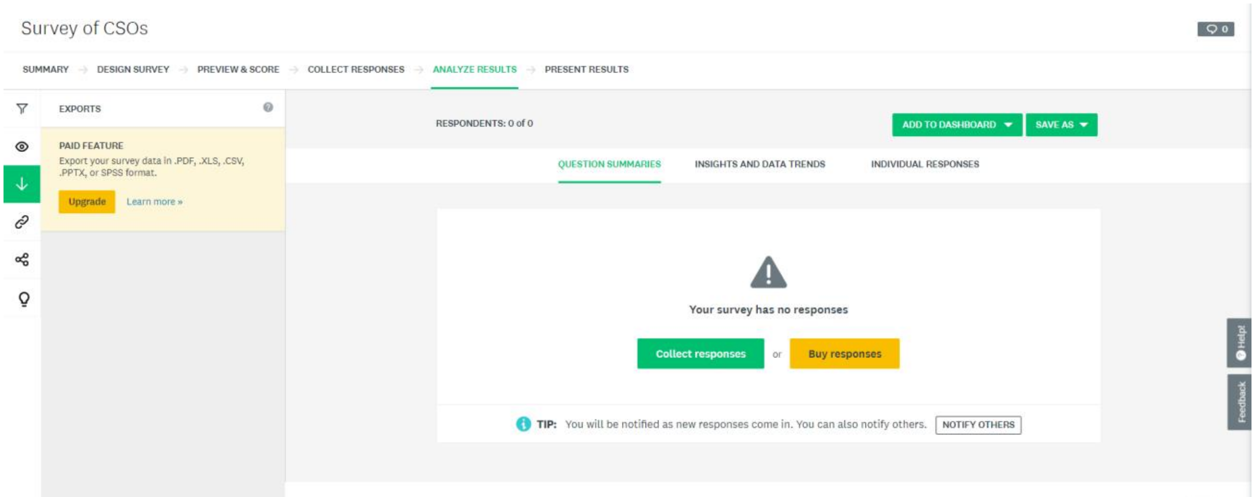
Step 6: once you have finished setting up your survey, click the *Next* option in the top right corner of your Survey Monkey page and move to the sending options. You can create a link for sharing your survey, and subsequently share it via email, during a webinar meeting or via the social media pages of your organization. Survey Monkey offers the opportunity to send it via email for you, but this feature is reserved only for paid subscriptions.

Figure 41. Sharing a survey on Survey Monkey.



Step 7: monitor the collection of data and get an analytical preview of the responses by clicking the *Analyze results*. You can preview data trends and view individual responses.

Figure 42. Data collection insights in Survey Monkey.



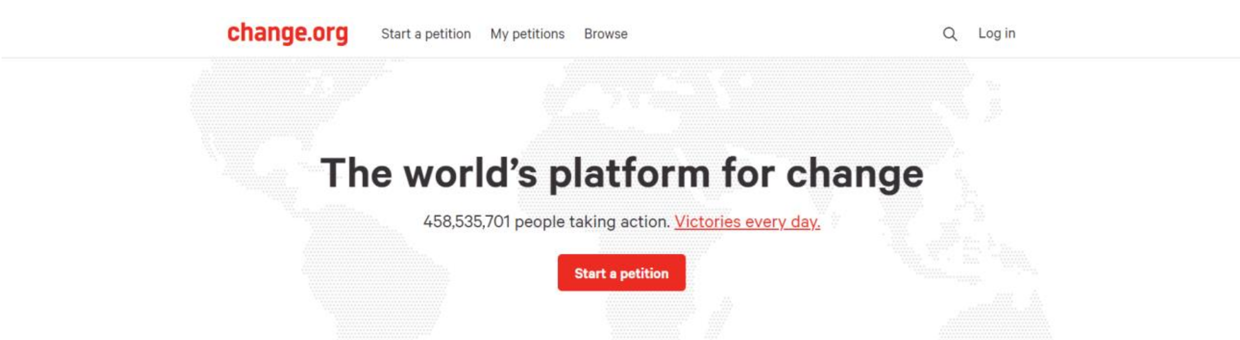
6. Creating an online petition

There are many websites that allow you to create online petitions, with the most notable being Change.org. It is an online platform used by over 200 million users fostering positive social changes worldwide, and its petitions originate from just a few simple steps. Here is how to start your own Change.org petition.

Step 1: Go to Change.org in a web browser.

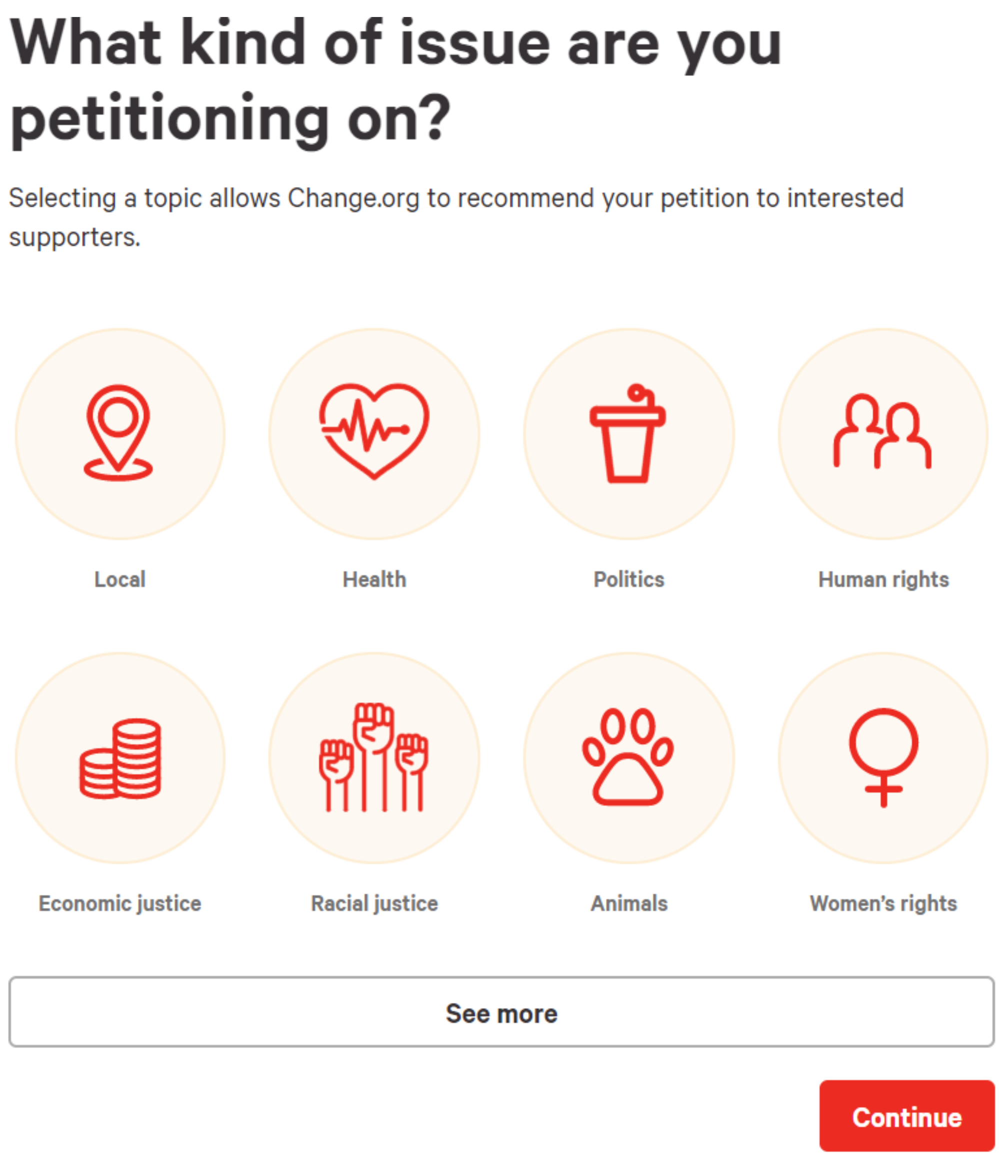
Step 2: Click on Start a petition.

Figure 43. Starting a petition on Change.org website.



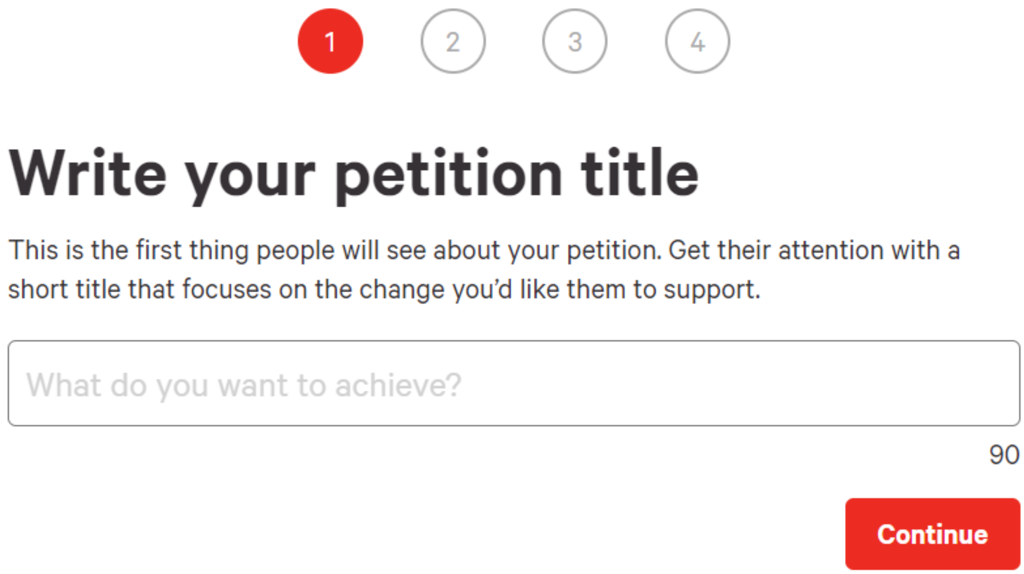
Step 3: Click on the category that best represents your petition's issue, such as health, racial justice, or women's rights. If you do not see your issue represented by any of the categories, click *See more* to view other categories.

Figure 44. Categories of petitions in Change.org.



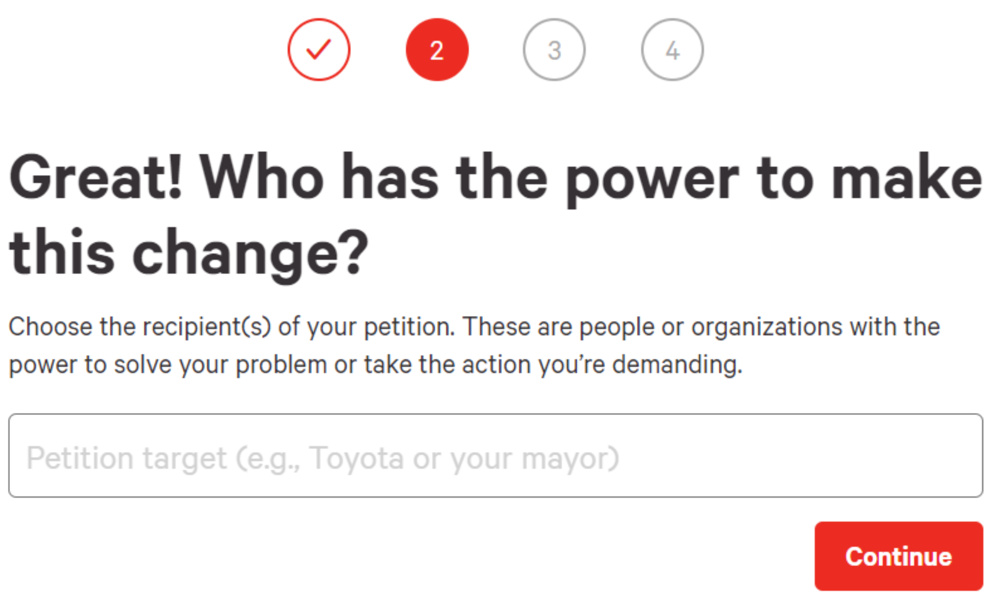
Step 4: Type a title for your petition. If you are having trouble coming up with a title, consult some of Change.org's tips for help. When you are finished, click Continue.

Figure 45. Setting up an online petition in Change.org.



Step 5: Type in some targets for your petition. The targets might be organizations, companies, or political figures, among other things. Essentially, the targets of your petition will be the people or groups whose influence is most likely to impact the success of your petition.

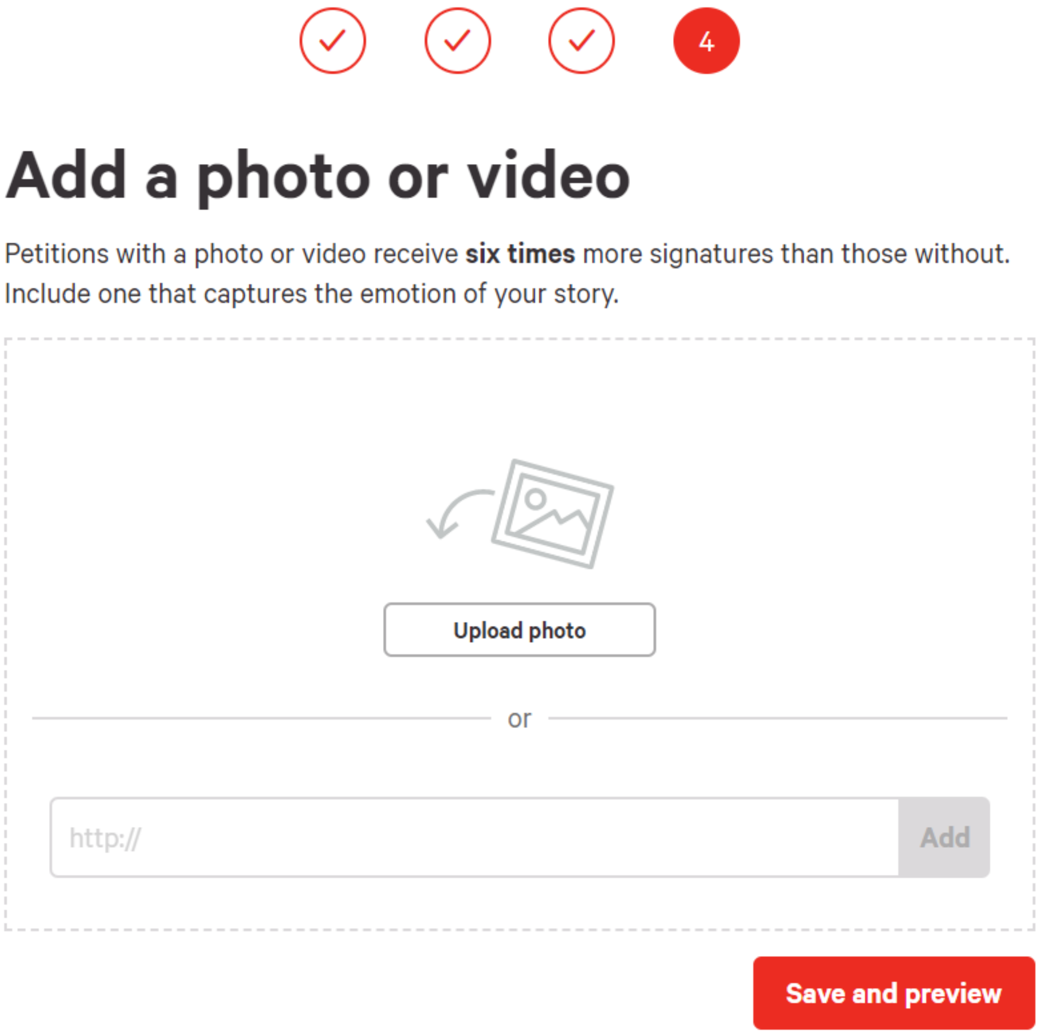
Figure 46. Selecting target groups for an online petition on Change.org.



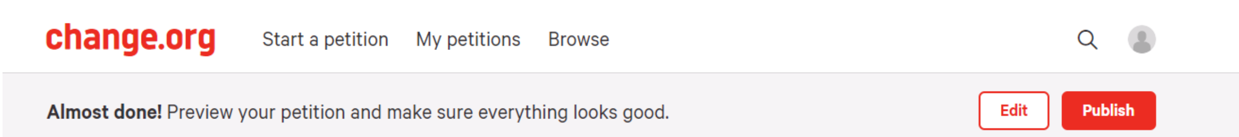
Step 6: Type a description for your petition that explains the issue, what kind of impact you want your petition to have, and why people should sign the petition. Click *Continue* once you are finished.

Step 7: If appropriate, you can add a photo or video to your petition, increasing your potential for outreach and signatures. Click the *Upload photo* option and then click Save and preview once you are finished.

Figure 47.Uploading a photo or video in Change.org petition.

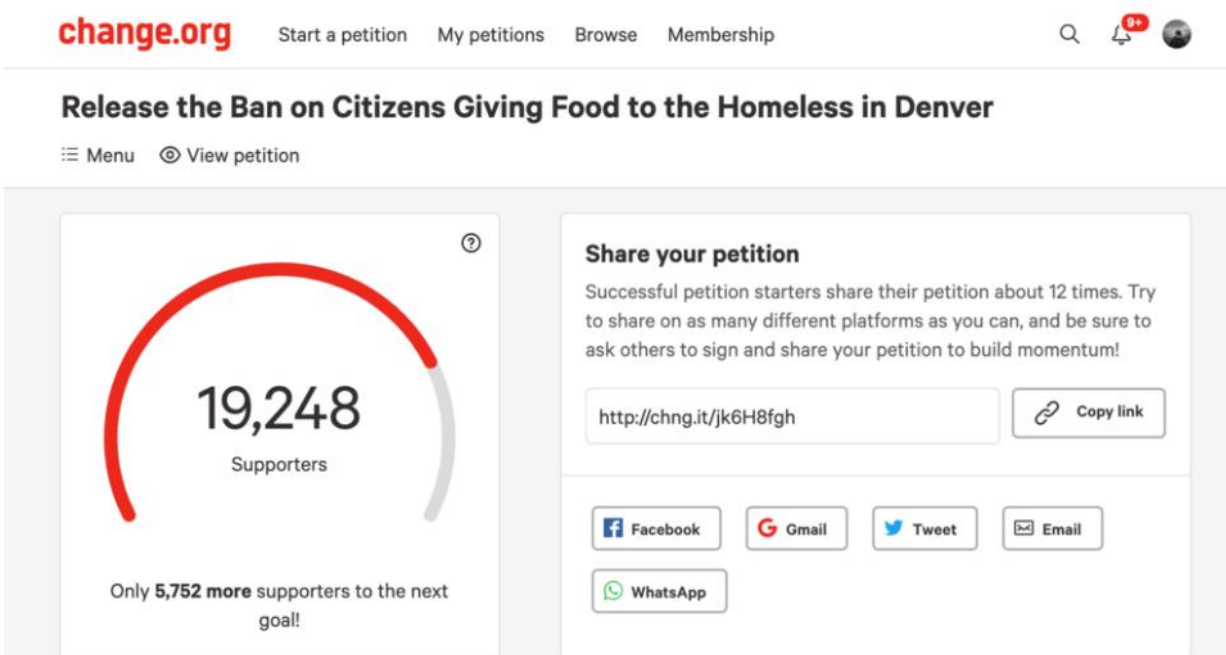


Once you are ready to share your petition, click *Publish*. The petition is now available online, and you can share the link through emails, on social media, and other online communication tools.



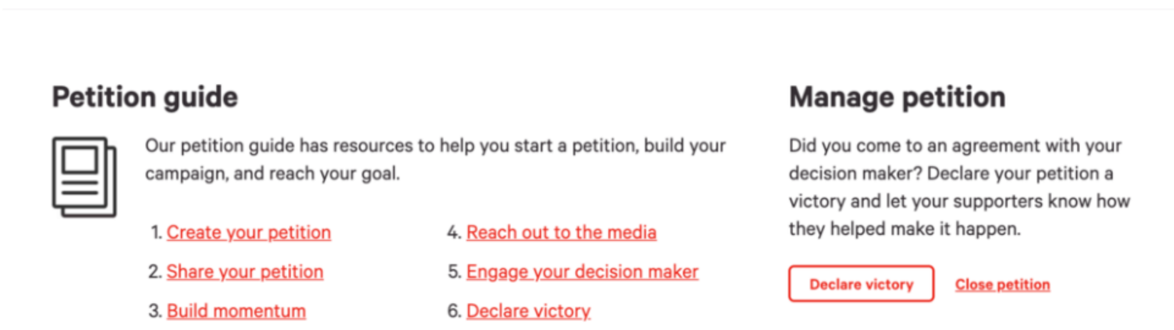
Step 8: To view the progress of your petition, click *My petitions* menu in your Change.org page. You can see the number of collected signatures in the left panel, and petitions sharing options in the frame of the right panel.

Figure 48. Monitoring petition progress in Change.org.



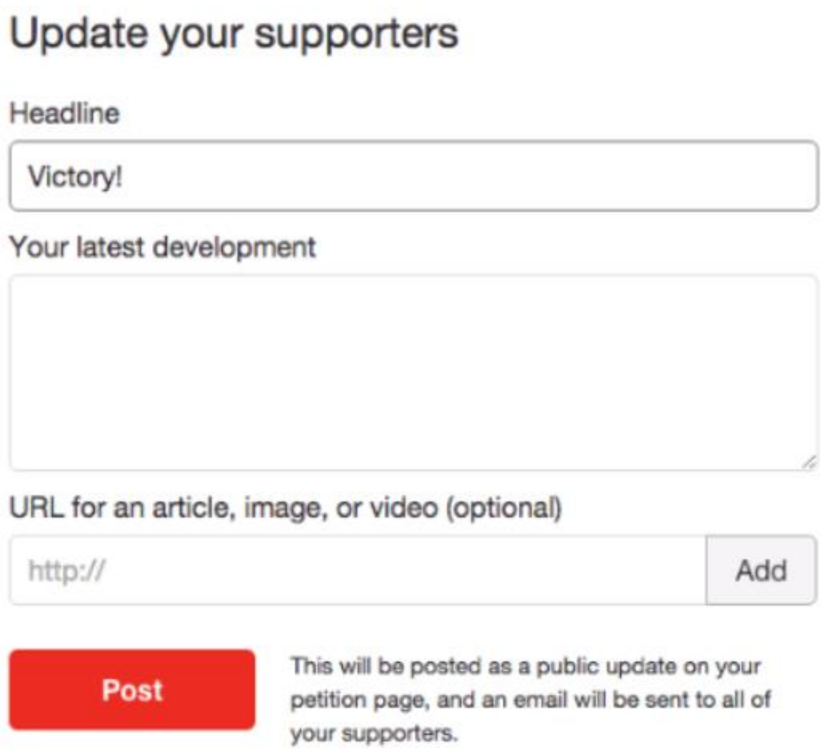
When sufficient number of signatures have been collected, scroll to the bottom of the My petitions page and click *Declare victory*.

Figure 49. Closing signature collection in Change. org.



You can send a thank you message to all the signatories of the petition. Insert relevant information in the boxes, and an automatic email will be sent to all signatories.

Figure 50. Sending a follow-up message to petition signatories in Change.org.



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Annex: List of figures