UKNOF48
Behind the Scenes

How we ran our first hybrid physical/virtual event

Marek Isalski, UKNOF Programme Committee

UKNOF in 2022

Where we are now…

- This talk is not about "pandemic vs endemic"!
- Current UK situation is "very relaxed" as all restrictions, including self-isolation if tested positive for COVID, were lifted in February 2022.
    - UK media reported this with their usual balance and sangfroid.
- In spite of this, the "UKNOF crew consensus" is that caution is prudent.
    - Inclusivity: not everyone's (or employers') risk calculus is equal.
- "COVID led our digital transformation" — we already had some online participation at all events, but can we do better?

UKNOF in 2020 and 2021

Virtual Events in Response to COVID19

- **2020-01-15 UKNOF45 (London) — 8 hours, 14 talks, lunch, Pints'n'Packets**
- 2020-05-11 virtualUKNOF — 6x ≤15min talks, no breaks
- 2020-07-20 virtualUKNOF — 6x ≤15min talks, break, BYO Pints'n'Packets
- 2020-09-07 virtualUKNOF — 7x ≤15min talks, break, BYO Pints'n'Packets
- 2020-11-02 virtualUKNOF — 6x ≤15min talks, 2 breaks, BYO PnP
- 2021-01-19 UKNOF46 (virtual) — 9x ~15-30min talks, break + lunch, BYO PnP
- 2021-04-15 UKNOF47 (virtual) — 7x ≤30min talks, 2 breaks + lunch, BYO PnP
- 2021-08-03 virtualUKNOF — 5x ≤15min talks, break, BYO Pints'n'Packets
- **2021-11-18+19 UKNOF48 (Manchester) — pm+am, 10x ≤30min talks, PnP**

NetMcr and NetLdn

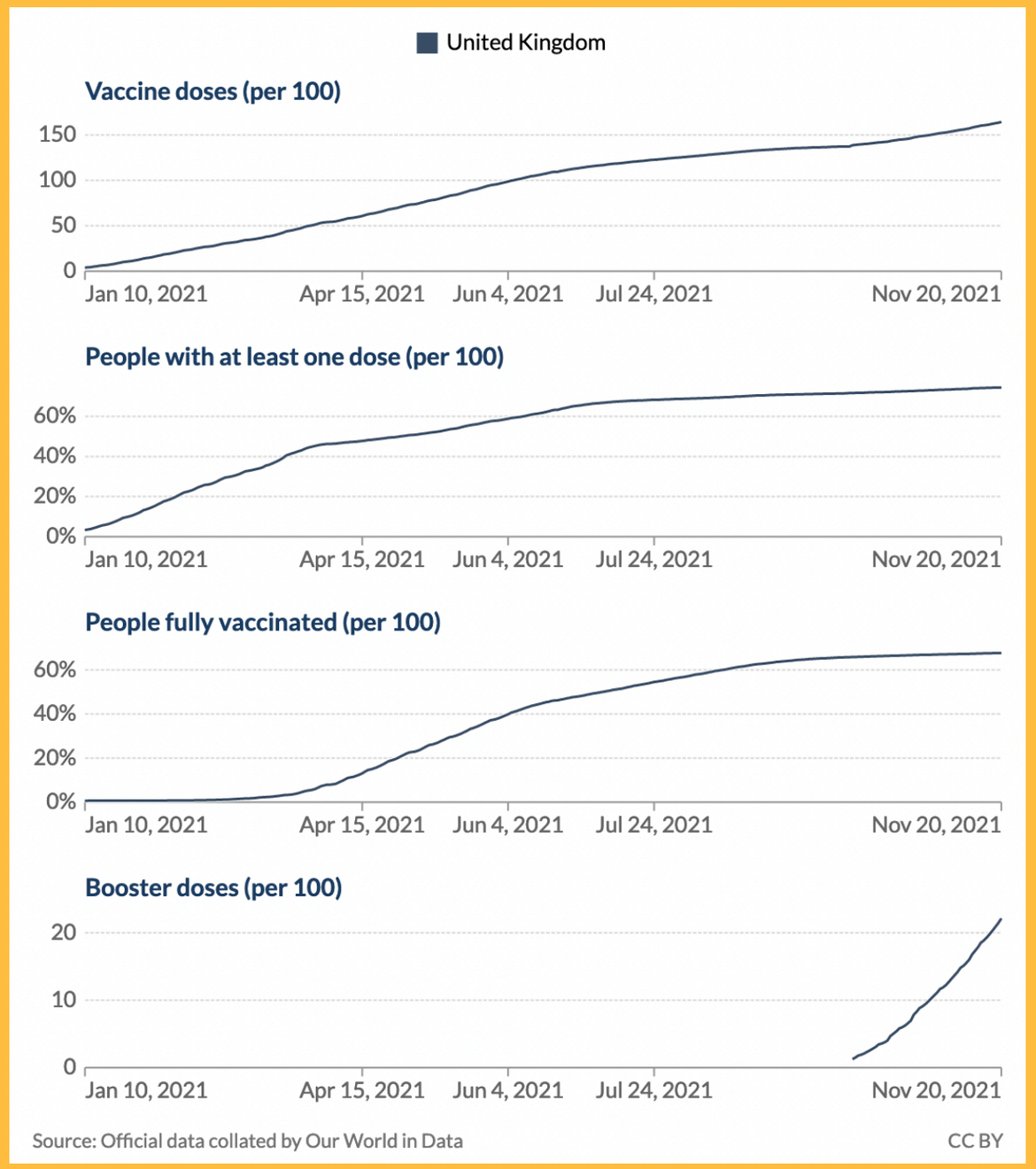
Monthly "Networking for Networkers"

- UK also blessed with two smaller, less formal, grassroots events
  - Typically 2x ~15 minute talks, with drinks and chat
- NetMcr+NetLdn moved from monthly pub to monthly Zoom
  - Some UKNOF PC members also organise NetMcr/NetLdn
- vUKNOFs were putting on many more lightning talks
  - Consideration given to how vUKNOFs can co-exist, while keeping spirit of each of these events distinct but also thriving
  - Similar total number of talks per year vs in-person UKNOFs

UKNOF48

Format Decision

- Venue had already been committed to prior to pandemic (and no longer NHS Nightingale Hospital)
- Vaccination statistics were encouraging
- UKIF Board decided (with support of committees) to hold virtual+physical event
- And manage airborne risk



Hybrid Challenges

Two Years of Virtual Muscles

- UKNOF Programme Committee solicits and reviews talks; supports speakers; shepherds content; produces programme
  - Switch to virtual events wasn't too onerous
- On the day "Event Crew" made of some UKIF Board (legals/etc), some Partners (Bogons and Portfast), PC, CC, and volunteers
  - Switch to virtual changed everything about putting on events
  - A "just-in-time learning experience" (cf. "None of us knew what we were doing, we made it up as we went along")
  - Rehearsals with tech crew, speakers, and session chairs

Two Years of Virtual Muscles

- After 7 virtual events our "virtual muscles" had grown
  - …but our "in-person muscles" had atrophied
  - …and now we want to combine the two
  - …what could possibly go wrong?!
- Who else had experience of running fully hybrid?
  - Could we apply their learning points to our event?
  - Were they doing hybrid pre-pandemic? or now?
  - What challenges might COVID add for us?

The Programme

UKNOF48 Programme (2 Days)

7am Load-in
Network &
A/V Setup

Rehearsal
Soundcheck

- Lunch
- Intro
- Remote Talk
- Venue Talk
- Break
- Remote Talk
- Pre-Rec Talk
- Break
- Remote++ Talk
- Venue Talk
- PnP

- Coffee
- Venue Talk
- Remote Talk
- Break
- Venue Talk
- Break
- Remote Talk
- Close

UKIF AGM
and other
board
business

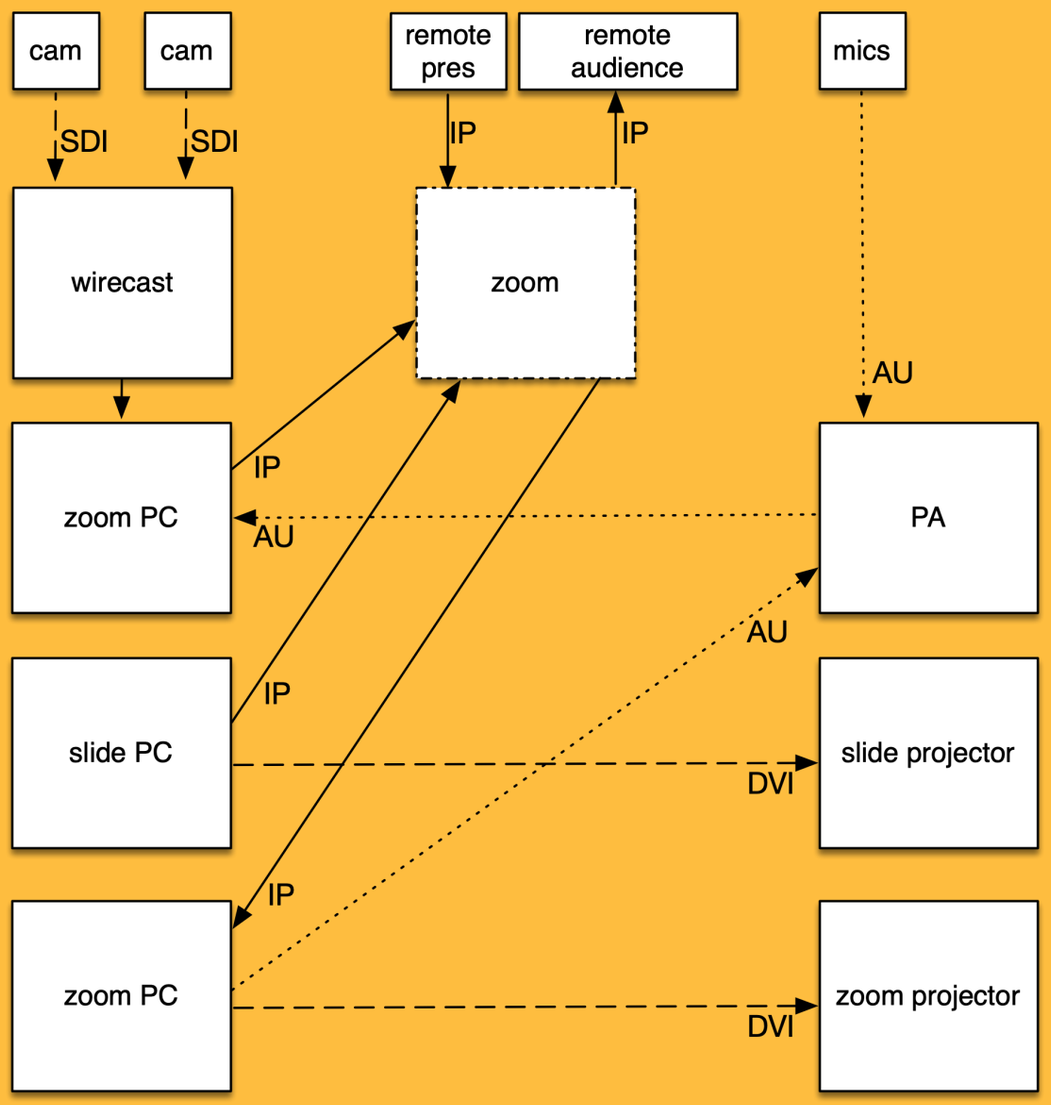
Tear-down
Load-out

Timeline

- Venue was booked for two days
  - We only had morning of first day for on-site setup
- **Local volunteers** arrived early to build the conference
  - Established networking with venue IT staff and **Portfast**
  - Worked with **venue crew** (seating, power, screens, sound)
- **Bogons** arrived with A/V streaming rig
  - Links in to network, venue screens, venue sound
- Last-chance for rehearsals… soundcheck… showtime!

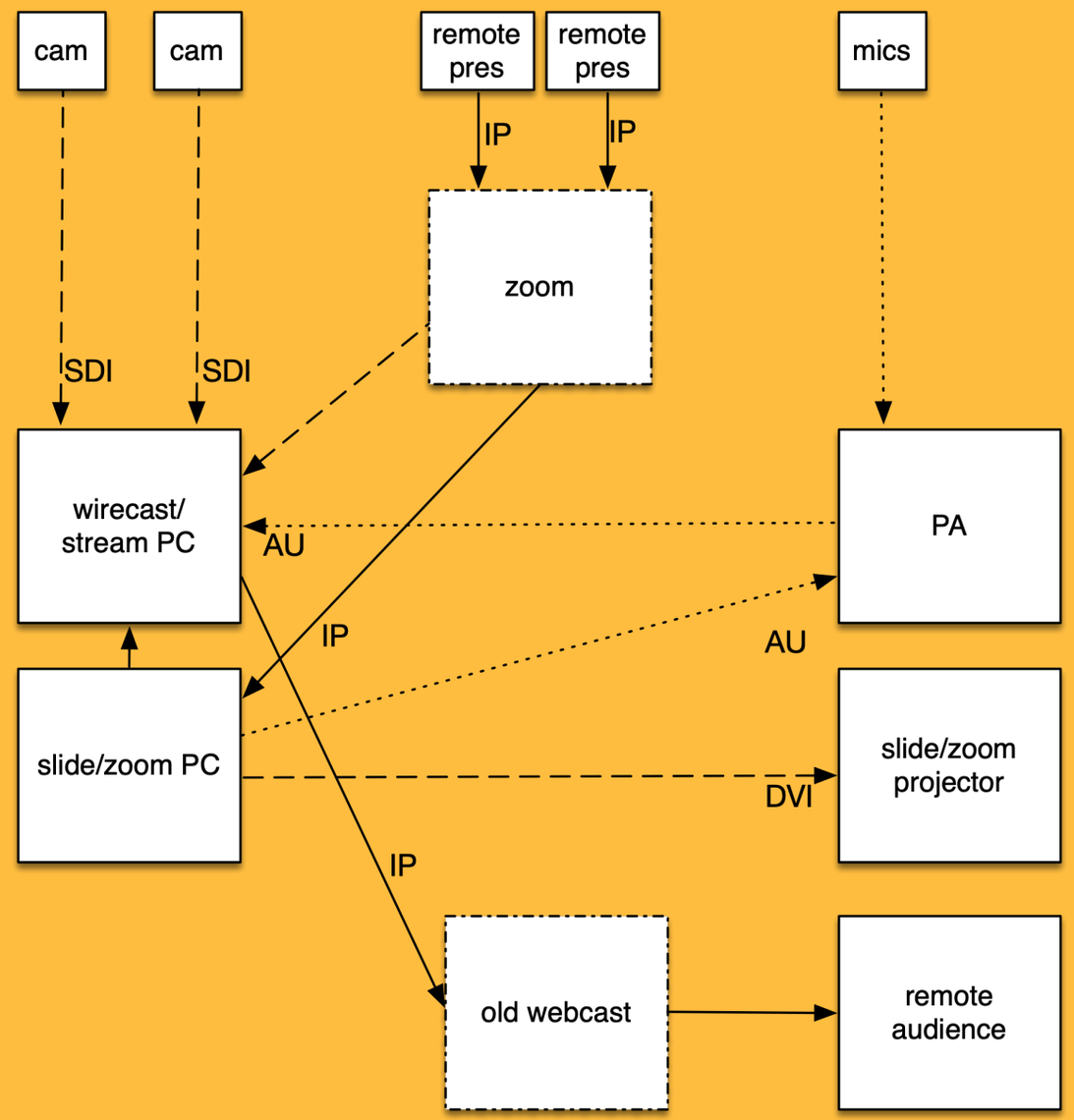
Pre-Event Communications

Zoom centric
audience and remote presenters on zoom
local presenters fed into zoom

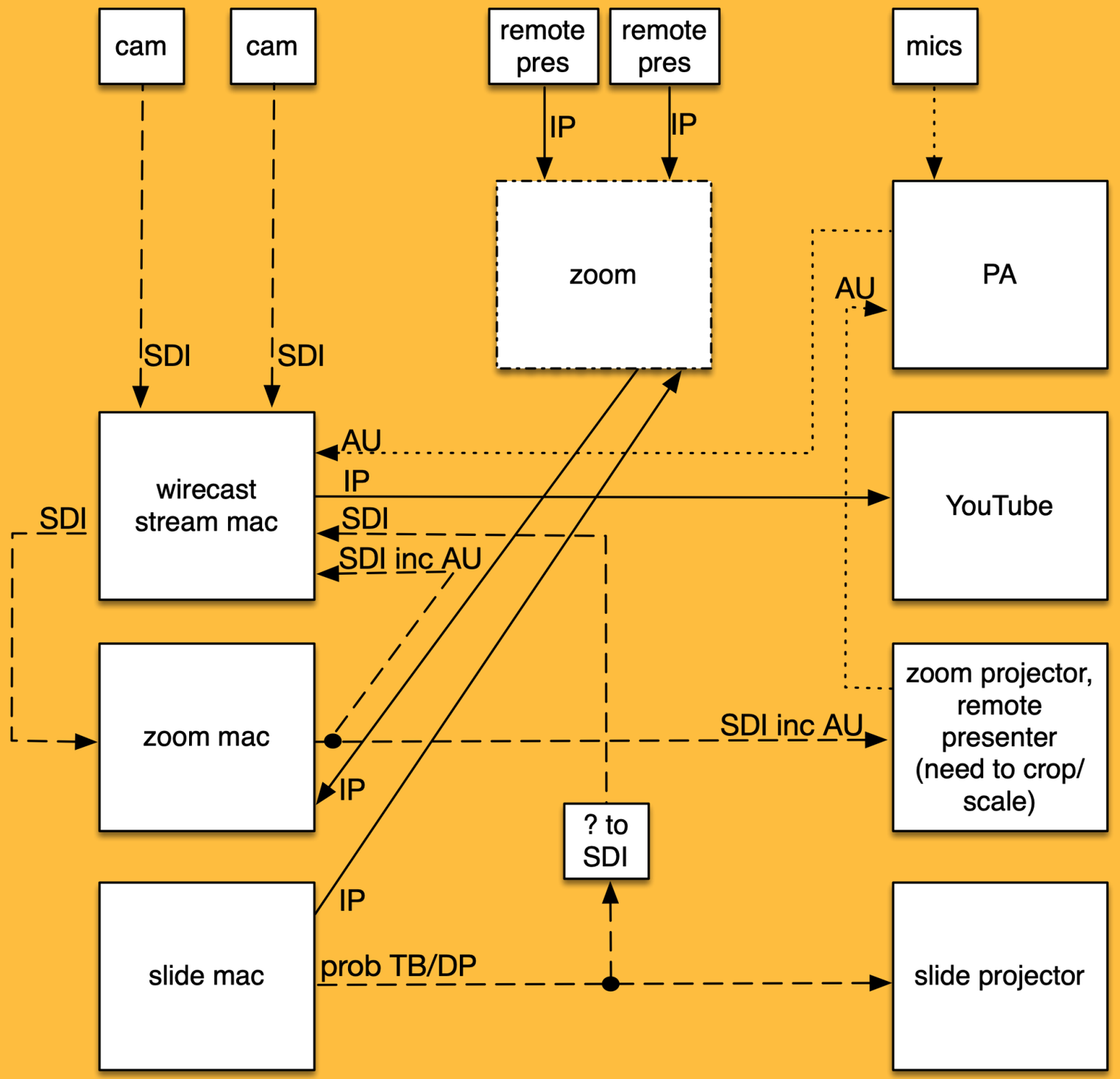


VS

webcast with zoom presenters
remote presenters shown by playing zoom on slide PC



Final A/V Routing

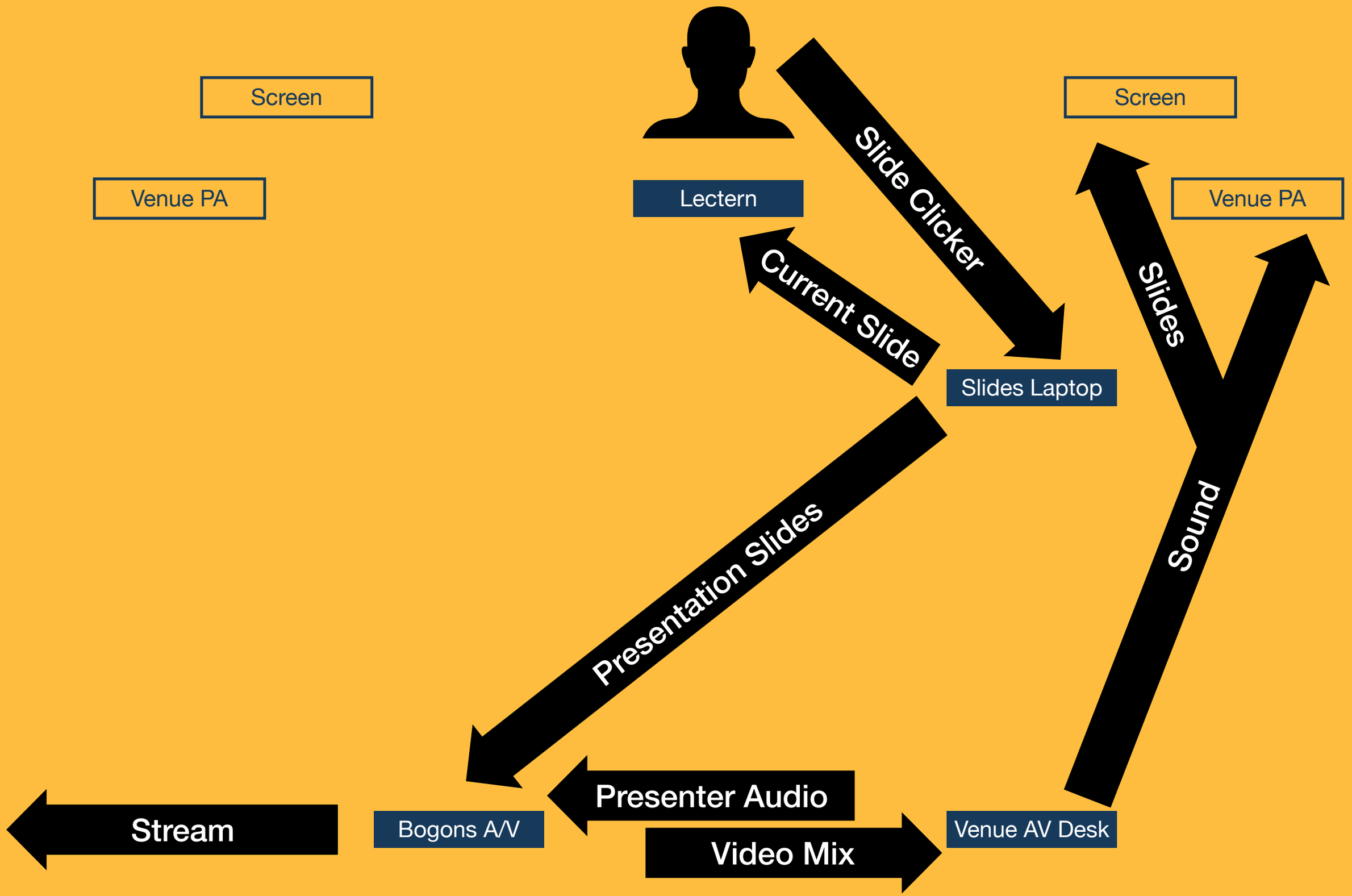


What It Looked Like

Image: Mike Hughes

pandemic safety
Image: Tom Hill

Live Presentation at Venue



Changes for mobile devices

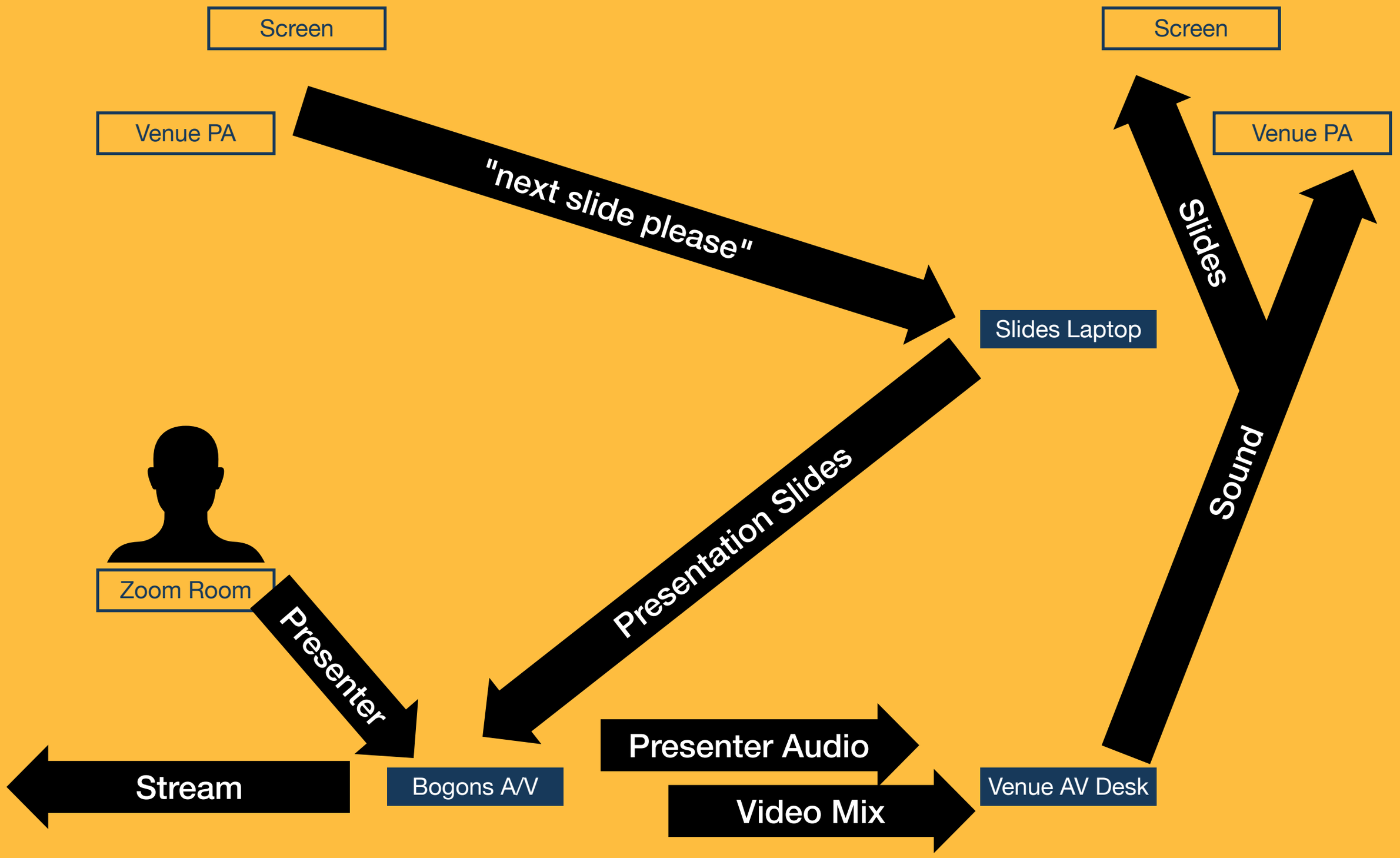
- We removed the whole section!

- We now only consider their WiFi interfaces
  - Which makes them normal hosts

- 3GPP related standards are out of scope
  - We don't have the expertise to track this
  - There are better documents for these requirements

Live Presentation at Venue

Remote Presenter, Local Slides



Ideas to bridge the gaps

Making automation a core part of the role (as much as possible)

Getting familiar with unit and integration testing (to deploy reliable code)

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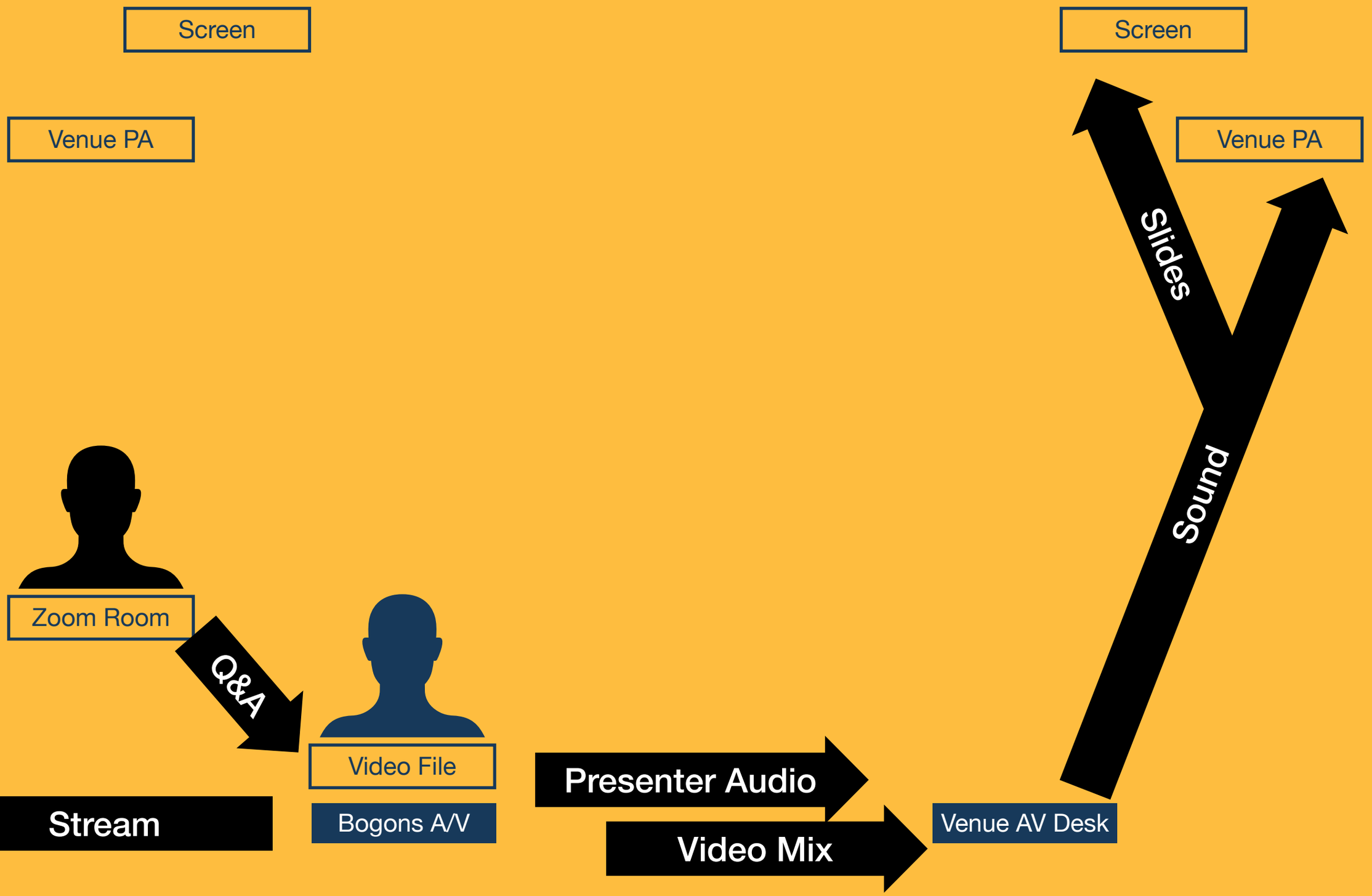
Remote Presenter, Local Slides

Pre-Recorded Talk, Live Q&A



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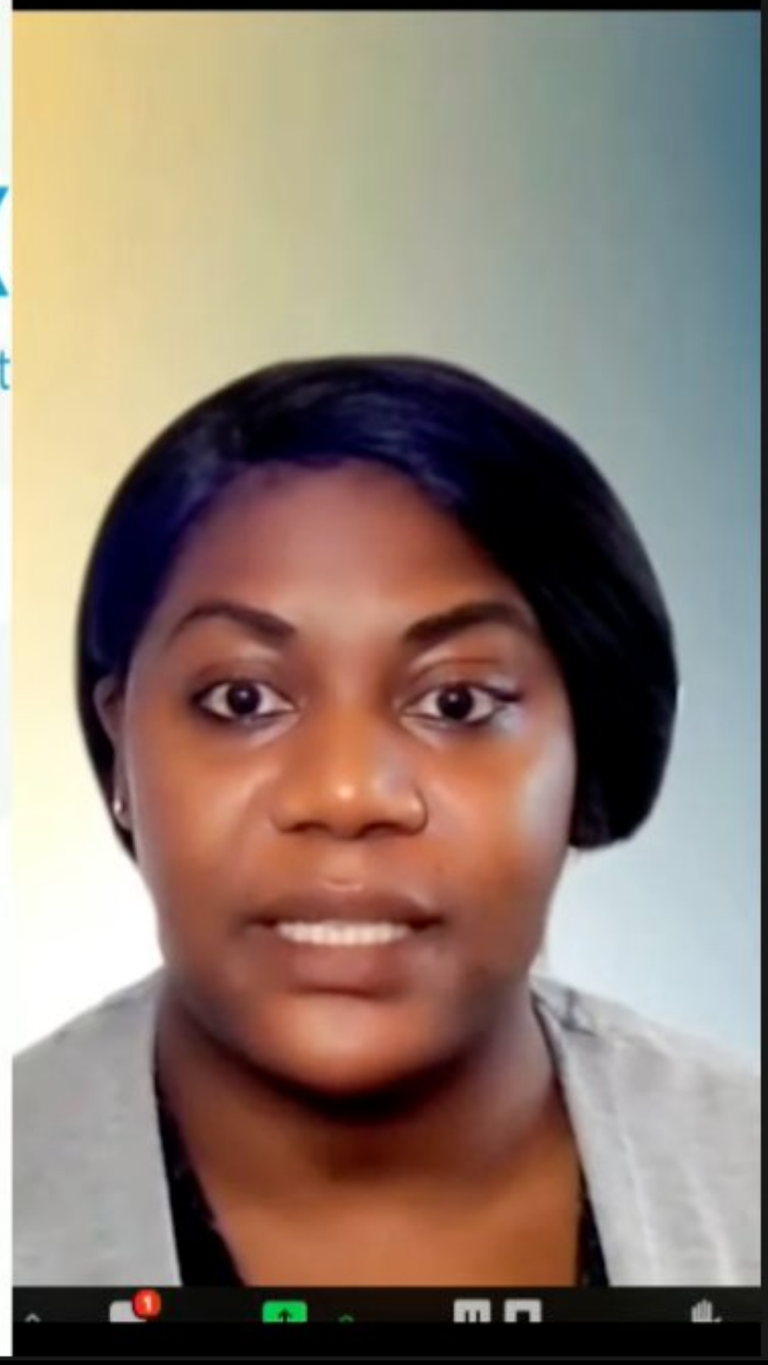
Peering Toolbox

New Service for the Community

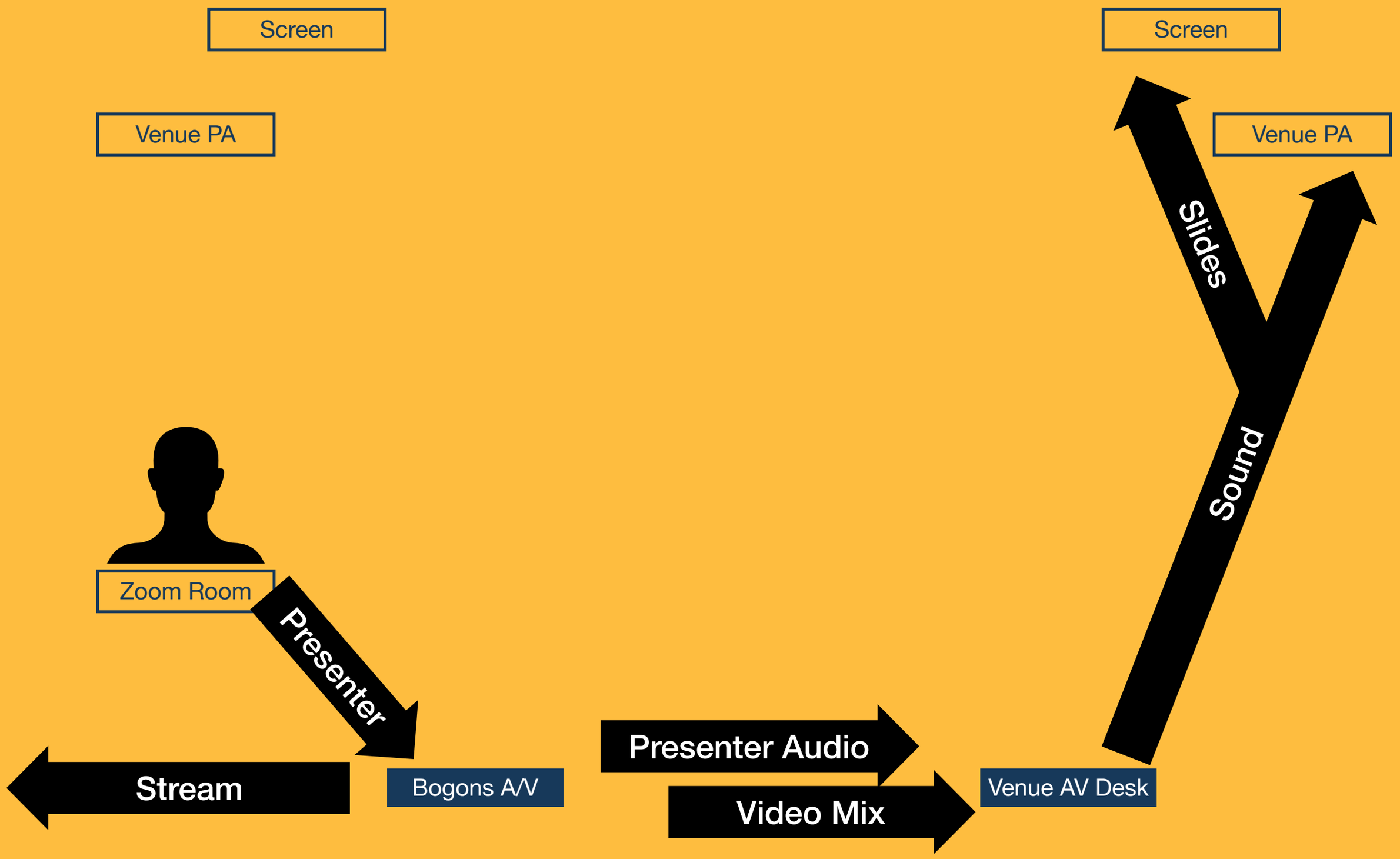
peering :toolbox

peeringtoolbox.euro-ix.net



Pre-Recorded Talk, Live Q&A

Remote Presenter and Slides



References

Unicast2Multicast Translator

- https://github.com/JNPRAutomate/unicast2multicast-translator
- Demo from IETF112

Lauren's Multicast Menu

- https://multicastmenu.herokuapp.com
- Source code: https://github.com/Laur04/multicast-menu

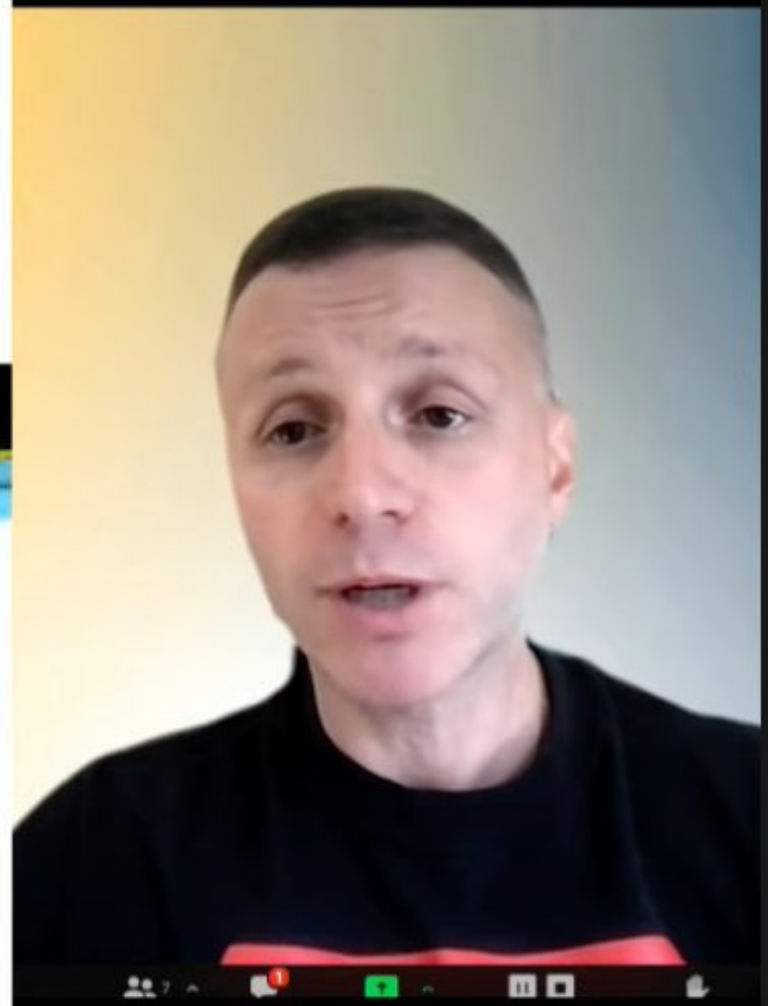
Natalie/Wayne's VLC with AMT GW build (and usage notes)

- https://github.com/Juniper/amt-vlc

William's AMT Relay Deployment docs

- https://github.com/willzhang05/senior-research

MTTG Slack group- send email to lenny@juniper.net to join



Remote Presenter and Slides

The Numbers

UKNOF48 vs UKNOF45

- In-person registrations: **122** (vs 155 for UKNOF45 London)
  - In-person attendance: **88** (vs 127 for UKNOF45 London)
    - **~28%** no-show (similar to previous free-to-register events)
- Remote participants: **over 200** (vs peak 45 streams of UKNOF45)
- No reported COVID transmission as a result of the event

With Huge Thanks To:

Manchester Central and Venue Staff
Portfast and Bogons
The UKNOF48 Volunteer Crew