

Google Meet with Closed Captioning

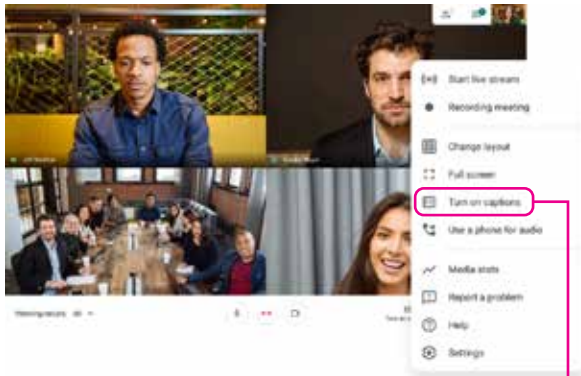
By: Omer Othman



Google Meet

With the rise of the worldwide pandemic (COVID-19), many activities have been transferred to online platforms. Some people have transitioned to working and studying from home, but where does this leave those facing accessibility issues?

There are several platforms that include accessibility for video calls and conferences, such as [Google Meet](#). This program offers many advantages for those with hearing loss because of its distinguishing ability to have live captioning without the need of installing additional software! Google Meet has a simple user interface that makes it easy for anyone use the program.



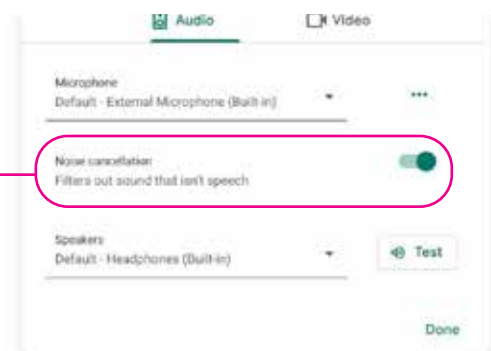
 Turn on captions

As seen on the left, when you join a meeting on a desktop computer, at the bottom of the Meet window, click "Turn on captions" with the 'CC' button. The 'CC' button is found on the top of the Meet window on Android and iPhone devices.

Sometimes live captioning can be hit-or-miss because the transcriber can display words that are not accurate to what the speaker is saying. However, when using Google Meet you will find that the live captioning is reliable and it also identifies who is speaking! So if you are in a bigger group setting, you can easily follow a transcript without having to look back and forth.

To further ease communication during the meeting, there is a noise cancellation feature implemented directly in the audio settings of the program. This allows you to hear and communicate easily with any background noise level.

Noise cancellation



This program can be used with a personal or school/work account. With a personal Google, you are able to set up a meeting through <https://meet.google.com/>, and then share the link to those who you'd like to join your meeting. For those with a school/work account, using G-suite, once the admin has enabled the Google Meet program for the organization, it follows the same steps as the personal account. Since Google connects all their products and tools, you will find Google Meet is easily integrated to other programs such as [Google Drive](#), [Google Calendar](#), etc. Google Meet integrates with your calendar for quick and easy access so that those who have work meetings can easily add a link for a Google Meet which all staff will see instantaneously.

Google has also supported many non-profit organizations. Hear Québec uses the G-suite for its everyday tasks, such as placing events on the calendar or working on documents collaboratively. For this reason, and for the benefits of accessibility, we used Google Meet when the global pandemic hit. Google Meet integrated well with our work programs and allowed for everyone to easily follow with the captioning feature, especially those with hearing loss. Annalise Kluender, the Office and Communications Manager at Hear Québec says:



Annalise Kluender

“Some people lack the proper resources or knowledge about accessibility to integrate these captioning services beforehand which negatively impacts those who rely on captioning as an inherent aspect of their communication. The captioning provided by Google Meet allows each user to turn it on and off as they wish, and actually identifies which meeting attendee is speaking! It's super convenient and in an office of people with hearing loss, myself included, it's a necessary tool which allows us to fully comprehend the content of the meeting.”

Google Meet always secures your information to ensure your privacy during a meeting. All meetings are encrypted and the safety measures are always updated for security so there is no need to worry about the level of confidentiality of the topics in your meetings. So if you are looking for an alternative program to host video calls that allows for accessibility free of charge, Google Meet is worth considering!



Omer is a third year communications student at Concordia University. He is a cochlear implant user since 2001. He worked at Hear Québec as a graphic designer and remains as a volunteer. He is passionate about technology and accessibility, especially for those with hearing loss.

