



COVID-19 Online Seminars

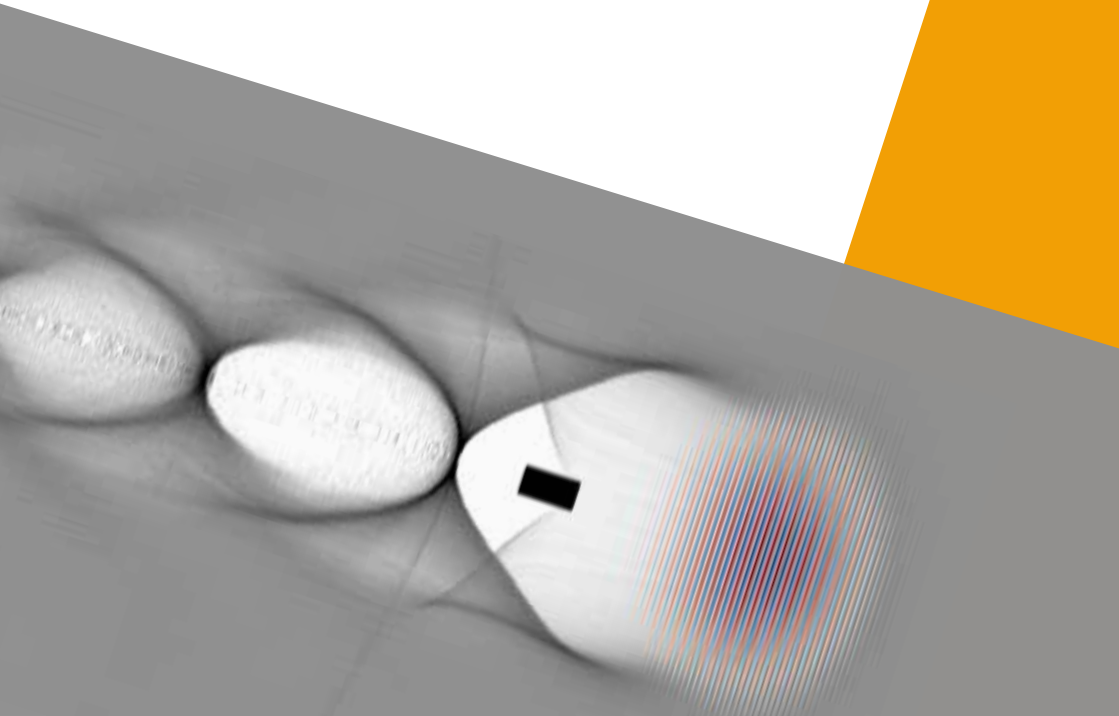
on **L**asers, **P**lasmas and **A**ccelerators



WHAT are LPA Seminars ?

LPA Seminars is an initiative to provide timely, high-quality **online content** on the subjects of **lasers, plasmas and accelerators**. The aim is to facilitate scientific discourse, sharing contributions **from the community for the community**. As such, LPA seminars are **decentrally organized**, with the main organizers providing overall support, as well as a platform to share these events. We also maintain a newsletter to announce upcoming talks.

At the same time, the initiative is an **experiment to probe the opportunities of online video content** for research dissemination and teaching. This document summarizes the concept and provides some tips how to host an event yourself.

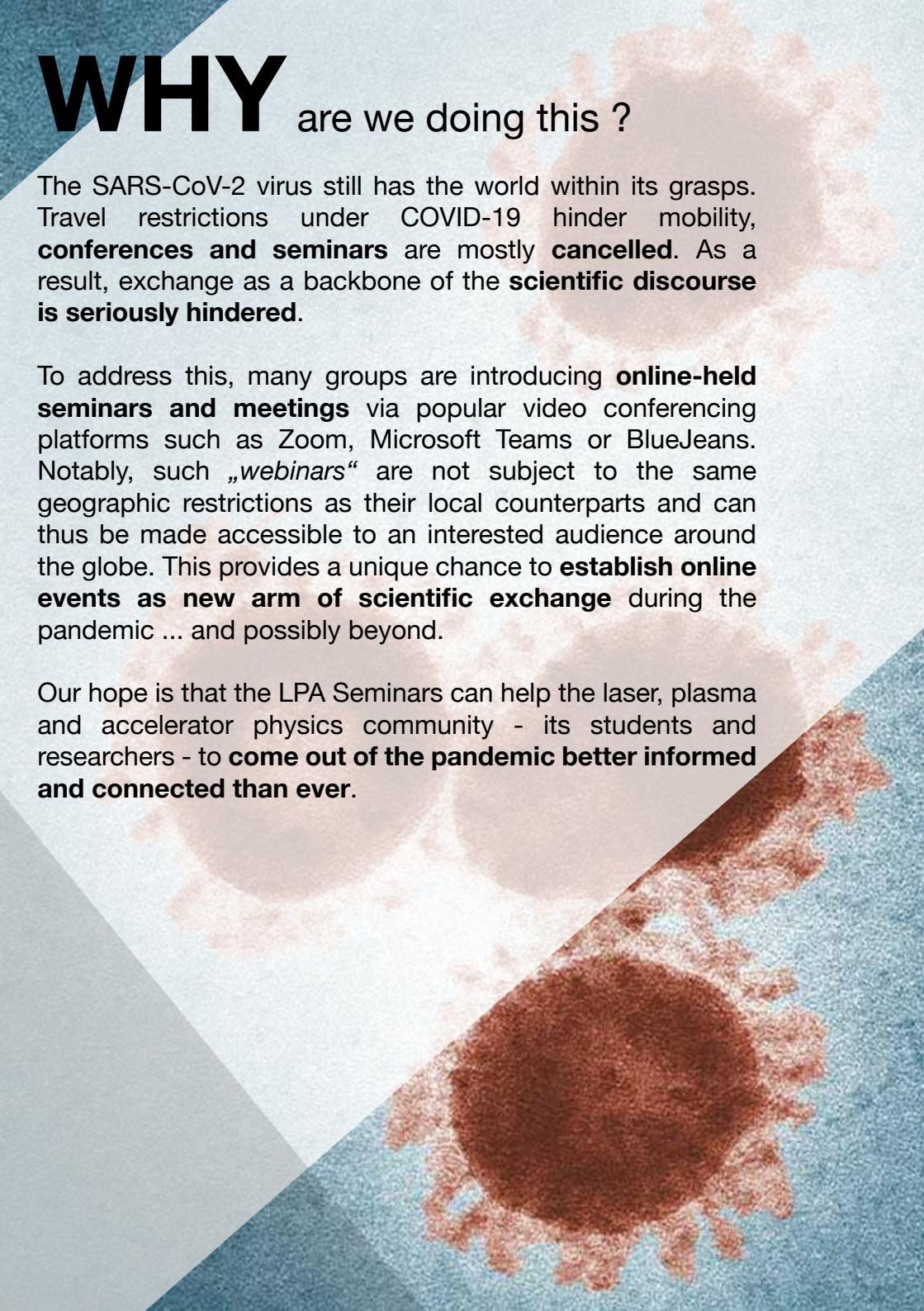


WHY are we doing this ?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus still has the world within its grasps. Travel restrictions under COVID-19 hinder mobility, **conferences and seminars** are mostly **cancelled**. As a result, exchange as a backbone of the **scientific discourse** is **seriously hindered**.

To address this, many groups are introducing **online-held seminars and meetings** via popular video conferencing platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams or BlueJeans. Notably, such „*webinars*“ are not subject to the same geographic restrictions as their local counterparts and can thus be made accessible to an interested audience around the globe. This provides a unique chance to **establish online events as new arm of scientific exchange** during the pandemic ... and possibly beyond.

Our hope is that the LPA Seminars can help the laser, plasma and accelerator physics community - its students and researchers - to **come out of the pandemic better informed and connected than ever**.



WHY should you participate ?

There are several reasons why you should consider contributing to LPA seminars. Arguably the most important is that you can **support the community**, in particular graduate students, by providing access to high-quality online content on LPA topics. As an attendee, the events are an opportunity to **get first-hand information on recent research topics** and to give feedback to others.

We have done our best to conceive a **low-overhead concept**, making it as simple as possible to participate. At the same time, the open format allows for high flexibility and gives you the opportunity to **create your own type of content** beyond the classical seminar format. For instance, you can offer tutorials or promote your research by hosting talks on recently published papers.



How can you participate ?

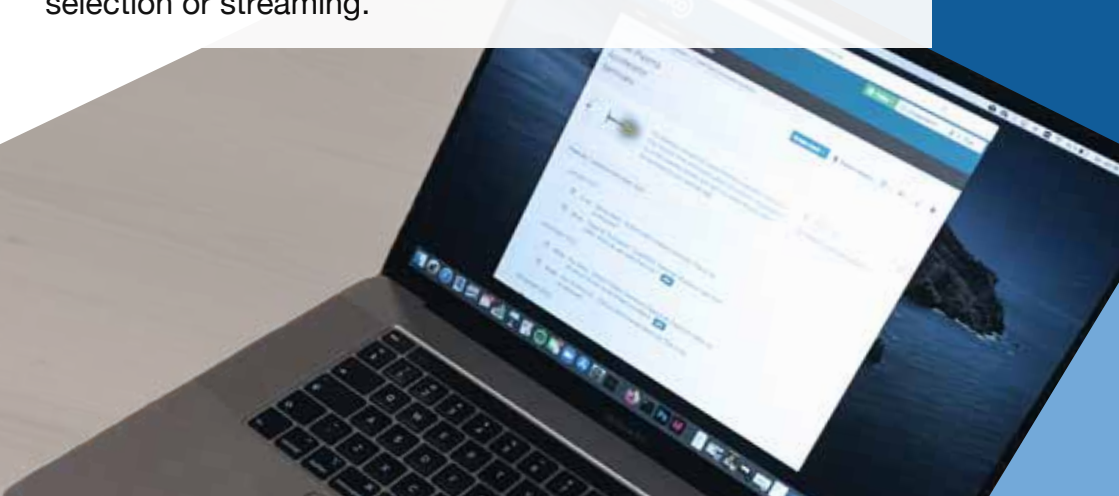
The main platform for LPA Seminars is hosted on the LMU Munich indico page, accessible via indico.lpa-seminars.com.

To take part in any events, you need to register on the indico page in order to get access to meeting links. If you intend on hosting your own event, we have created a short presentation with instructions [how to set up an event on indico](#). If you have any trouble, please get in touch with the organizers, who will assist you getting started.

WHAT are your responsibilities ?

As stated before, we want to make it as effortless as possible to take part in LPA seminars; participation in events is entirely voluntary. But we **count on your support**, especially during the launching phase. Hence, we ask all partners to **host at least two events** per semester and to **encourage participation** among your students and colleagues.

Furthermore, as local partner you are the official host of an event. While we are happy to assist you, it will be your responsibility to take care of the organization, e.g. speaker selection or streaming.



Which types

of events are there? What is their duration?

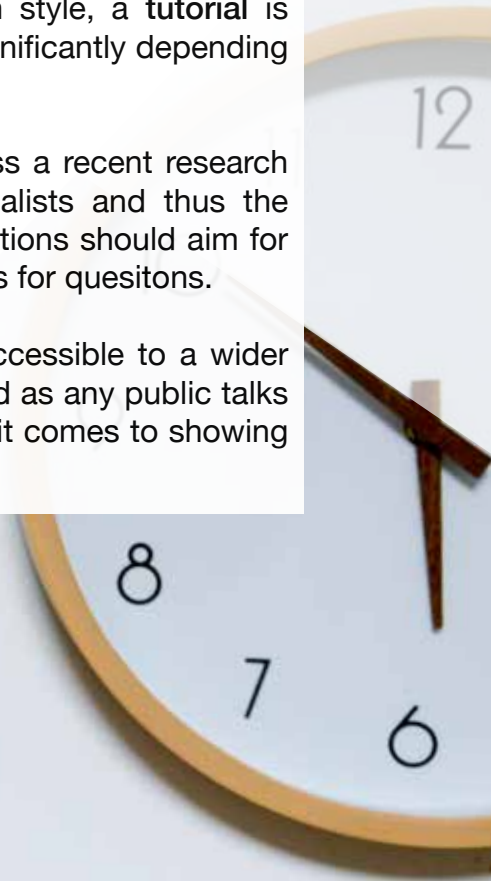
As mentioned before, we are open to any type of contribution format. Based on previous discussions, we have identified the following event types:

The **classical seminar talk** should cover results on a well-defined topic and includes an introduction for non-specialists. It typically lasts **30 to 45 minutes**. Additionally, about 15 minutes should be reserved for discussion after the talk.

A **lecture** is more educational and can last **60 to 90 minutes**. While a lecture is mostly presenting in style, a **tutorial** is interactive and its **duration can vary** significantly depending on the topic and audience.

A **presentation** should concisely discuss a recent research result. These talks are aimed at specialists and thus the introduction can be shortened. Presentations should aim for a duration of 20 minutes, with 10 minutes for questions.

Please be aware that these talks are accessible to a wider audience and should therefore be treated as any public talks (e.g. at conferences), for instance when it comes to showing unpublished results.

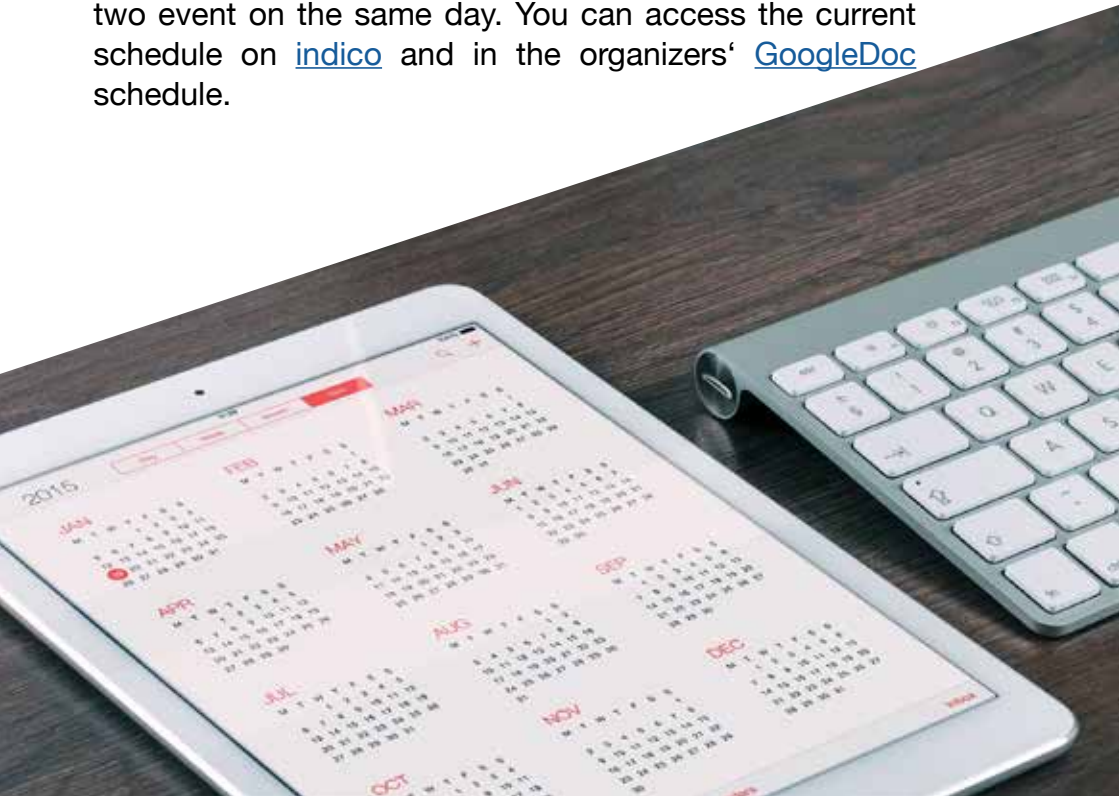


Scheduling

recommendations

You are free to schedule an event as you wish; **on any day of the week, at any time!** That said, we have a few recommendations though:

- Establish a regular event time. While we will send weekly reminders, people are less likely to miss an event if it takes place regularly at the **same day and hour within the week**.
- If you hope to reach an audience on another continent, beware of their time zone and choose the time slot accordingly. **We recommend to hold seminars between 11:00 - 16:00 CET.**
- Avoid scheduling collisions with other LPA talks, e.g two event on the same day. You can access the current schedule on [indico](#) and in the organizers' [GoogleDoc](#) schedule.



Video conferencing

When hosting the seminars, there are essentially two different ways to make them accessible: video conferencing or streaming. In the following we will briefly discuss both solutions.

The arguably easiest and most interactive way is to use a video conferencing software. Many universities and laboratories have experimented with such solutions in the response to the pandemic. Popular commercial products are **Microsoft Teams, BlueJeans or Zoom**. These offer similar functionality and partners are thus **welcome to use any of them for hosting events**. If you intend to use another software, please make sure that it offers features like screen-sharing, access links, web-clients and chat rooms. Furthermore, test if the software is capable of hosting meetings with more than 20 participants.

Video conferencing is very suitable for discussions, allowing for participants to directly pose their questions to the presenter. However, if you intend on recording a talk, e.g. using the built-in recording tools of the apps, you need to make sure you act in compliance with data protection regulations. *This might necessitate written agreements for the recording by all conference call participants.* Please consult the person in charge of data protection at your institution.



zoom

or Video streaming ?

Video streaming is a popular alternative when it comes to sharing content with larger audiences. Here only the speaker and the master of ceremonies (MC) are in direct contact (either in the same room or via video call). As they are the only ones getting recorded, they are also the only ones that need to give their consent regarding data protection. The audience sees a video stream which - for technical reasons - is usually delayed by 15 to 30 seconds. Audience questions are typically posted in a chat board adjacent to the stream and collected by the MC.

There exist various solutions for streaming. The most known is arguably YouTube, where we have set up a channel named *LPA Seminars* that can be used to host streams by partners held via Zoom. We suggest to post these streams as „unlisted“ videos, which means that they will not appear in search results but are visible for any user with the video link. Each partner may decide if they want to keep the video online after streaming or not.

Other streaming services are for instance Microsoft Stream or Facebook Live (supported by Zoom and BlueJeans). German partners may also use pexip streaming as part of DFNconf (note that you need to install the pexip client for screen sharing). Again, we have no real preference as long as it works.



Microsoft Stream



Video

hardware

It has been a frequent question which type of hardware one should use as a host. We generally recommend to use screen sharing instead of filming to share slides. Hence, modern webcams should be largely sufficient as they only need to show the speaker. Note that the use of physical pointers is to be avoided and virtual pointers (e.g. cursor) should be used instead for highlighting.

However, it should be considered to **use external microphones for audio** (e.g. lavalier or condenser microphones). In general, we recommend to hold the talks in front of a small audience (if possible), as this leads to more natural speech than sitting in front of the computer. You can use wireless microphone systems for consumers such as the *Røde WIRELESS GO* for audio transmission.

Please check your hardware and video software before an event starts!



Before the talk

Make sure the speaker can login to the video conference session and can share their slides. **Test this before the event.** It can be helpful to connect with an additional computer or phone to the video conference so that you can see how the audio and video quality is.

During the talk

In the interest of the audience, please make sure to **start on time**. We recommend to begin with a short introduction of the speaker by the MC. The host keep an eye the chat during the talk to see if there are connection problems or urgent questions.

After the talk

If the speaker agrees, please upload the seminar slides to the indico page. Depending on the presentation mode and the speaker's authorization, you may consider uploading a recording to our YouTube channel.



DESIGN

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