

NPDL Online Tournament Participation Best Practices

System requirements

- Conduct a speed test <https://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/>. Recommended download speed is at or above 12mbps and upload speed is at or above 8mbps.
- Each laptop/desktop should be using the Chrome browser.
- All mobile devices should download and install the Discord app.
- All devices should be plugged into a power supply. The battery is drained rapidly when using video conferencing software.
- Each device should allow the browser/app to use the microphone and camera.

Recommended Devices

- Laptop
 - Laptop is the best option since most of them have built-in microphone and webcam. Tilting the laptop screen can easily adjust the the position of the webcam. **We highly recommend that all judges use laptop or desktops.**
- Desktop with microphone & webcam
 - Make sure the microphone is working & webcam can be adjusted easily.
- Tablet & Phone
 - Tablets and phones are the least preferred options for a few reasons: positioning the camera can be a little tricky; the connection might be less robust; moving the device creates a lot of movement on the screen.
- Microphones & webcams
 - If the system allows for an external microphone or webcam, please consider using it. Headphones work great, as well.

Improve Connectivity

- Wired Internet connection (best option)
 - Plug the computer into the router (i.e. the network device that provides Internet connection) with a network cable. The computer may need a USB to Ethernet adapter.
- Move closer to the router
 - If wired is not an option, the next best option is to place the computer in the same room as the router. The closer the device is to the router, the better the signal quality. The video/audio could freeze if the device is too far away.
- Reboot the router

- If the device has repeated connection issues, reboot the router to reset all connections
- Minimize interference
- Remove any solid objects between the WiFi antenna and the router. Avoid using microwaves, washing machines, furnaces and other electrical appliances while online.
- Don't crowd the router
- Reduce other Internet usage while online (e.g. don't stream Netflix in the other room).
- Go Dual-band
- Many routers can operate in 2.4GHz and 5GHz. 2.4GHz is more commonly used so more prone for interference. Switch to 5GHz.

Computer Enhanced Video

Participants may not use green screens, virtual backdrops, on-screen text, or similar video alterations or enhancements.

Going to the Room

1. A few moments after pairings are released, the Discord bot will send participants a link to their room. Click on the link, and wait for everyone else to arrive. The judge has discretion for the round to proceed either with or without video, depending on whether video seems to be reducing audio quality.
2. All people in the room should mute their mics unless they need to speak to the room.
3. Spectators may observe any rounds. Spectators should mute their video and microphone, and take extra precaution when entering and leaving the virtual room.

Use of Chat Window During Round

1. All debaters and judges should keep their Discord text chat window open and visible at all times during the round. It may be useful to log into Discord on a second device, and keep the chat window open there.
2. If audio issues arise and persist, and another device (e.g. a smartphone) is available, the speaker should try switching to the second device.
3. Points of Information should be offered by typing "POI" in the chat window. The speaker should acknowledge it immediately, though may defer (e.g., "I'll take your POI in a moment."). Alternatively, a POI may also be made by raising a hand on-camera.

Ballots

Ballots will be submitted through the tournament's MIT-Tab instance. All judges require a ballot code which can be obtained through typing !code in Discord. Please navigate to the MIT-Tab URL (<tournament_name>.nu-tab.com), which will be distributed in the Discord prior to rounds. Click on "Submit e-Ballot" and provide it your ballot code. If you need to enter an irregular ballot (high or low justification, low point win, forfeit, etc, please contact tab and they will assist).

This document was adapted from the Southern California Junior Forensic League Online Tournament Participation Best Practice