

SICB 2021

Presenter Guidelines for Live Talks for SICB 2021

The following guidelines will be updated as new information becomes relevant. If something is unclear, please contact Program Officer Jake Socha (programofficer@sicb.org).

[Last update: December 18, 2020; updates also noted here]

Note: these guidelines only apply to presenters in live sessions: symposia, plenary and award lectures, Best Student Paper (BSP) talk sessions, and special sessions (Gilchrist and Funk)

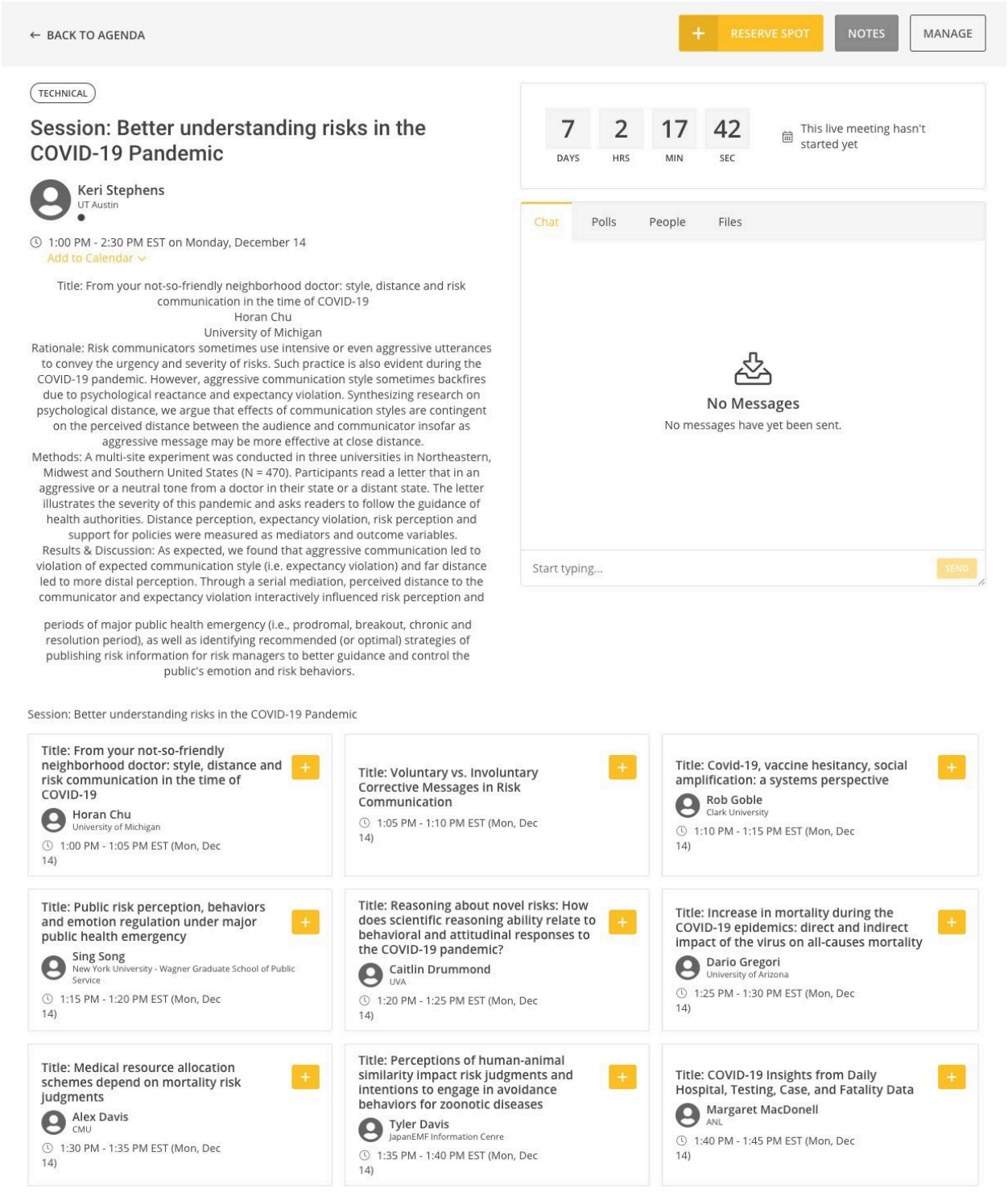
Overview

The meeting will be 100% virtual, with all sessions conducted through a web browser or device app, hosted by a company called Pathable. Through the Pathable platform, all contributed talks and posters will be available on-demand from January 3rd through the end of February 2021 for registered attendees. Speakers in live sessions will also present their talks using pre-recorded videos. Thus, all presenters must provide prepared files for their presentation and upload these files in advance of the conference.

Presenters in live sessions must upload their presentation files (the talk video and any accompanying files) by December 21, 23:59 Hawaii Standard Time (HST). After submission, SICB staff and session chairs will evaluate the material for completeness. *If files are not uploaded by this deadline, it becomes increasingly difficult for organizers to manage the sessions; we need to prepare to ensure that the sessions run as smoothly as possible.* Details on file format, recording, and uploading are below. For those presenters who wish to revise or update their files, a second upload window will be provided from December 28-30, 23:59 HST. Presenters should make sure that their files perform as intended (for example, by keeping the same format as the original submission, and checking the content after upload).

How the live sessions works

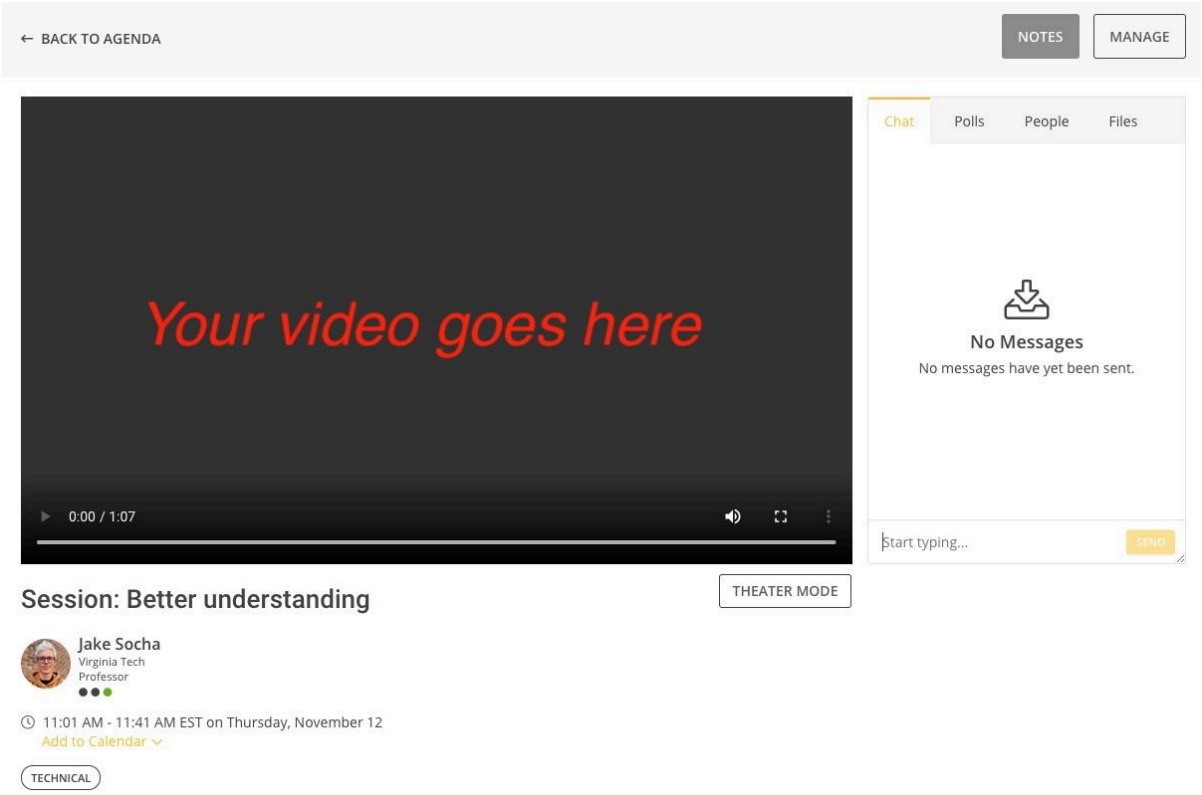
Talks are organized in Pathable by session. Here's how things will look before the session starts:



When the session starts, the abstract text on the left will be replaced with a video window. The video will be run through Zoom, which is embedded in the browser.

Notice that the individual talks are listed at the bottom. Your talk will be there. If you click on your talk title before the session starts, you'll be brought to a similar-looking page, with its own Chat/Polls/People/Files window. Your supplementary files will be there, but your talk video will NOT be on this page, because it will be released live on schedule, in the main session Zoom window. Sometime after the session is over [we're working on this detail now], your talk video will also show up in your individual page.

This is how your talk video will look in the web browser, AFTER the session:



To summarize: before the session occurs, no video will be on your page; during the session, your talk will play in the main session window, and after the talk, the video will be placed on your page. In addition, afterward a recording of the full session will also appear in the main session window, replacing the live Zoom window. (Confused yet? Hopefully not!)

Protocol for the actual 'simulive' event

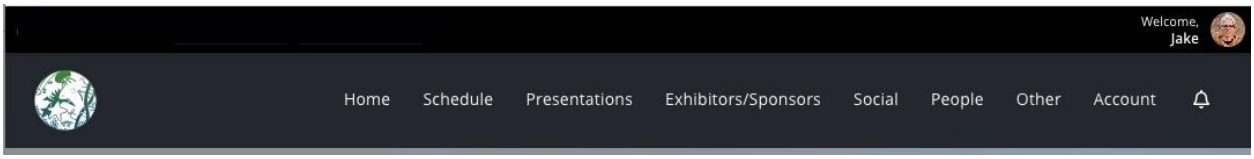
We are running 'live' events in the 'simulive' format. What that jargon means is that your talk is pre-recorded, but it will be played on schedule as if it were live. We are using this style to avoid

problems that some conferences have been having with truly live events (screen sharing, microphone, camera issues, for instance). Here's how the proceedings will happen:

Your session chair will run the Zoom event. They will introduce the session and your talk, live, with them on video. They will then play your recorded video. To the audience, it will look live, but obviously it's recorded. We are not trying to fool the audience into thinking it's live. The advantage of this format is that you can actually interact with the presentation like all other audience members, and you are free to use the chat function. That means that you could answer questions in real time as you are talking, if you so choose. *You do not have to answer questions during your talk — it's up to you.* After your talk is finished, we'll return to live, and the video will be on you. The session chair will take selected questions from the chat and read them, and you'll answer. The whole event will be recorded, so attendees can view the Q&A later as well.

How to start: Set up your profile

In order to upload your presentation files, you must first create your profile. You will receive an email from Pathable to create your meeting profile on Monday, December 14. **[Note: we have had a delay in the programming and the emails have not been released yet, as of Dec 15—please check the Updates page; we'll announce it there.]** In the email, click the link *Edit*



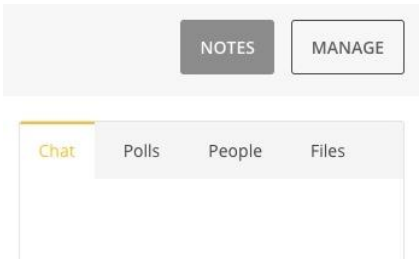
Your Speaker Profile, which will bring you to the Pathable web portal for SICB. Here you will set up your profile; watch this brief video for details on how to do it properly.

Be sure to upload a profile picture so that other attendees can more easily connect you with your work. As the pandemic has made clear, most of us highly value human interaction, and it's easier to have a more typical interaction in a virtual environment if we can connect names to faces!

Pathable tips

- The virtual conference platform from Pathable can be used in Chrome, Edge, and FireFox browsers. It does not work well in Safari or Internet Explorer.
- Updates can take a few minutes (*e.g.*, adding agenda items to your "My Agenda"), so give the system a few minutes and check back and refresh the page if needed.

How to upload files (but not your talk)



Once in the platform, click on the *Schedule* tab in the top bar, and then *My Schedule* in the drop-down. Here, you will see any sessions with which you are affiliated as a presenter, co-author, or session chair. If you click on your session as a presenter, and click the *Manage* button, you can add files that you want to share with all attendees (e.g., a copy of a paper, a PDF of your presentation, etc) who view your profile. There is also a feature here to set up a live poll that can be displayed during your presentation. (Why might you make a poll? You might want to get feedback from viewers on specific questions related to your presentation.) Uploading documents or using the polls are simply optional features that you are welcome to use.

Pre-recording your talk presentation

All talk presenters must pre-record their talk as a video. Presenters may also include additional files that they would like to share (*e.g.*, data files, supplementary scientific video, PDFs of journal papers), uploaded to the tab called *Files* within each *Manage Presentation* page. *Please note that shared files in the Files tab are downloadable for all meeting participants.* However, the main talk video is not downloadable. If you wish for attendees to be able to download your talk, simply upload an additional copy to the *Files* tab.

Composing your talk

Presenters can compose their talks using any presentation software (e.g., Powerpoint, Keynote). Any aspect ratio can be used, but we recommend using a modern widescreen mode (16:9), because the video viewing window in Pathable is optimized for that size. If you choose to use a standard mode (4:3), there will simply be black space to the sides of your video (and there's no problem with that; you're just taking advantage of less screen space).

Recording your video

Presenters can record themselves giving the talk using free Zoom software or any other software of choice (e.g., Loom or Prezi). The general recording process is the same as many people are familiar with, particularly for those who have been recording lectures for online courses. If you're not familiar with recording a presentation on your computer, the easiest thing to do is to ask a colleague how it works. There are also many resources online; here are some instructive websites with many video examples:

- UC Davis put out comprehensive instructions (August 2020) on "Creating a Video Presentation for a Virtual Conference." Here you will find everything from vocal warm-ups to Zoom tutorials, and also short video examples (look at page bottom).
- Botany's society put out detailed guidelines for their virtual conference (July 2020) with "Tips for Pre-recorded Presentations at Botany." They included recommendations for video, audio, background styles, and examples of Do's and Don'ts to virtual lectures. You'll find many example videos for recording in Zoom or other services like Prezi at the page bottom.
- Here is a step-by-step written guide for recording a pre-recorded video in Zoom from Harvard's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Here's a really nice step-by-step video guide for recording a pre-recorded video (9 min). It was made for a non-scientific event, but his advice on the process is perfect and ***provides all the specific details you need to make your talk video***.

Dr. Mary Salcedo also has a few tips on working with your face on Loom or Zoom. Enjoy. (Also note: it's possible to change the size of your face box in Zoom as well.) If you record by Zoom to the cloud, it seems to have trouble with the placement of your face. We recommend recording directly to your computer instead.

Generally, we encourage (but do not require) that you record your face while you are giving your talk—many people like to see faces rather than just hearing a disembodied voice. If you choose to record your face, our suggestion is to position the window in the right corner of your slides. When you're composing your slides, make sure to leave space for that "face" window and also captions. We encourage recording a practice video (only 30 sec) to test out your slides, caption services, and other design elements.

If you use a program like Zoom, you can choose to record the file to your computer or to the cloud. If you record to the cloud, Zoom will transcribe the audio of your talk. You can retrieve the audio transcript when you log in to your Zoom account and also download the video. From there, you can edit the transcription where needed. If you want to use this transcript to put captions on your talk (which we encourage but do not require), you'll need to go a step further; we will provide instruction in an update. If you are going to add captions, make sure to leave a small row of space on the bottom of your slides for caption text.

As of 12/16/20, we have added a section at the end of this document with detailed instructions on how to make captions.

Video file format

The file format of the recorded video presentation can be .mp4, .m4v, .mov, .webm, .ogg, and .his. (Note that Zoom's native output format is .mp4, so if you use Zoom, you can upload the file without a change in format). The maximum video file size is 10 GB, so there is plenty of bandwidth for high-quality files.

Streaming your video to Pathable instead of uploading

If you prefer to work with a video streaming service (like YouTube), you can simply input a link instead of uploading a file. The full list of compatible sites for providing a link is: YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo, Wistia, Videopress, Livestream, IBM, Twitch, DailyMotion, and VidYard. Some of these streaming services offer captioning options. If you need privacy, you do not need to make the link "live", but can download your Youtube (or other) video, along with the captions. If you choose one of these, be sure to check the transcript that any science jargon has been properly transcribed.

Video duration

Plenary and award lectures:

Plenary talks fit within a 60-minute slot. So, we encourage plenary speakers to aim for 45 minutes or less to provide plenty of time for questions.

The Gans Award talk is in a 30-minute slot, so we encourage a talk in the range of 20-25 minutes.

Symposia:

Symposium talks fit within 30-minute slots. Because we would like for there to be plenty of time for presenters to be able to answer questions, talks should be in the range of 20-25 minutes, with a maximum of 25 min. For speakers in a 15-minute slot, we recommend a 9-12 minute recording. Keep in mind that if there is extra time between talks, we can simply offer attendees a short break!

BSP sessions:

Best Student Paper sessions are competitions for students. As such, the rules are more strict, to provide fairness across presentations and sufficient time (though short) for answering questions. *BSP talks must be no longer than 12 minutes.* Because talks are recorded in advance, any submitted talk longer than 12 minutes will be disqualified from competition.

Special sessions:

For speakers in the sessions in honor of George Gilchrist and Vicki Funk, talks are in 15-minute slots. We recommend a 9-12 minute recording. Keep in mind that if there is extra time between talks, we can simply offer attendees a short break!

Upload instructions for your talk

Please note that the instructions for uploading your video talk file are different than those for contributed talks and posters (which make up the vast majority of presenters at the conference).

The video talk file:

We will be collecting your talk videos using Google Drive. Specific instructions will be coming soon.

Update 12-16-2020: We will be providing a Google Form for each session. It will be simple to fill out, and allow each presenter to upload their talk video. We should have these forms out to everyone by 12-17.

Update 12-18-2020: Obviously we had some delay in getting these out. Our apologies. They should be coming soon from your session chair. Do not despair — we're not going to remove you from the conference if there is some problem with uploading the file! We hope that it goes smoothly.

Please note that you must be logged in to a Google account to be able to access the form. The reason is that you'll be attaching a file, and Google requires an account login for that action. If you don't have a Google account, please contact Jake Socha (programofficer@sicb.org) and cc me, and he will provide an alternative means for uploading.

Supplementary files:

Upload these to the tab called *Files* within each *Manage Presentation* page.

Presentation tips and best practices

- **Set your camera at eye level**: Often, this means propping up a laptop.
- **Position your self-preview window near your webcam:** Use your mouse to move your video preview of yourself close to your webcam. This will encourage your eyes to look near the webcam, rather than off to the side, giving your viewers the impression that you are looking at them.
- **Check your light:** The best lighting is diffused, from both sides and not overly bright. Two small lamps on either side of your computer, placed slightly behind the camera, is a simple way to achieve attractive lighting. **Avoid having a window or bright light behind you**, as this may cause your face to be under-exposed.
- **Charge up or better yet, plug in:** Ensure that your computer and audio equipment are fully charged.
- **Green screen:** Zoom has the ability to create "virtual backgrounds" behind you. These are not required, but can be handy to obscure a cluttered background. These work best if you have a true "green screen" behind you, but it is not strictly required if your computer has sufficient hardware. Click the up-arrow next to the "Start Video" button on your Zoom toolbar to access the virtual background feature. Choose from the images provided or upload your own. We recommend nature photos from unsplash.com, but remember, keep it simple! You are the star, not your background.
- **Silence the interruptions:** Turn off your phone and exit any programs that might pop up notifications during your presentation (e.g., Slack, Outlook, Skype, etc.) *Note that an iPhone, particularly, will ring on a Mac that's attached to a phone, even when muted*. If you have pets, children or other minions, take precautions to ensure that they do not disturb your presentation.
- **Practice a short video:** Before you record the whole talk, and with your set up ready-to-go, record a short video of several slides. This will help you figure out which recording platform might be best for your talk. If you are showing videos of your system, practice these slides and check for lag. Listen to your voice and check for sound quality. In Zoom, you can set audio preferences to avoid using your headphone microphone, which may not be as good as your computer.
- **Use a video editor:** You don't need to make the perfect video recording. Viewers are ok with natural speaking, which includes the occasional 'um' and 'uh'. If you need to trim your video (particularly for the beginning and end bits), use a free video editor. There are many available; here's one list. Quicktime Player 10 (native to Macs) or Quicktime Player 7 (Macs or PCs) are both actually very easy to use. In 10, select *Trim* in the *Edit* menu; in 7 you simply select the sequence of interest using the small triangles, and then cut and save the movie.

Adding captions to videos

[This section was added on 12/16/20. Thanks to Dr. Mary Salcedo for putting it together.]

There are many services to caption your videos, I am providing one method that I will use myself to make sure my SICB 2021 videos are accessible. Feel free to request "edit-access" if you have a method that you would like to share, or email me at Mary Salcedo (msalcedo@vt.edu).

The general process is:
-Record your video
-Autogenerate or write a transcript file
-Upload your video and transcript file into a video processing software
-Burn or permanently embed transcription

Plan ahead: this is not going to be a fast process the first time you do it. You can add captions after the first SICB submission date.

First, I recommend doing several test videos of 30 seconds. Decide on your presentation software and make sure the design works. If you show animals moving or dynamic movement, select those slides as tests. You can see a short video of me using a service called Loom in a short video (2 min), "Loom: When recording, consider your face!"

If you have time before the first submission, **go through the whole process (record, transcribe, burn captions to video) on the 30 second test video** and be sure the captions are not covering key figures or text. Otherwise, be mindful for your first version, and then do captions for the second upload window.

Autogenerate a transcript and edit

Zoom: Record to the cloud and receive an auto-generated audio transcript
This resource document, made by the University of Houston, talks you through "Adding Captioning to Zoom Recordings", and it is comprehensive, with screenshots and instructions.

When you're ready to record in Zoom, you can "record to the cloud" instead of your computer, and it will automatically caption your video. Use a test video to make sure you've set your layout correctly. *(Note: I personally am having difficulty recording only a thumbnail-view on Zoom cloud recording, even though it seems possible)*. The auto-generation of your video

transcript may take time (minutes to hours, some delays expected), but be patient -- Zoom will email you once your video file is ready, and also once your transcript file is prepared. You can then click on the recording, and edit the transcript directly. You can even trim your Zoom video here. Editing the auto-generated transcript is very important as names and scientific jargon are likely not correct (e.g. ecdysis was transcribed to "act ISIS").

The document linked in this section goes through how to take the transcription .vtt file and apply it to your video. Common techniques include using freely downloadable video processing softwares like VLC or Handbrake.

Write it yourself

Add captions yourself using Youtube -- apply captions with Handbrake
After experimenting with the Zoom transcript and also writing out the script myself, I found that I prefer captioning my video, phrase-by-phrase. Why? The timing seemed more accurate, while Zoom tends to give you phrasing per larger blocks of time. This is a matter of preference!

My process goes like this:
-Record video using Zoom/Loom/Prezi. However, I personally like using Loom because of its added features (like trimming a video), commenting, and linking abilities. The free version of Loom only allows 5 min video maximums - so I may use Zoom (recorded on my computer, not the cloud for the thumbnail version) for SICB.
-Download said video to your computer
-Set up a Youtube account (if you don't have one already)
-Upload your video to Youtube (you can keep this, and all your videos private)
-Click "Manage videos"
-Watch my brief (4 min) tutorial on "Transcribing a Zoom video yourself (using Youtube) #1"
    -Note: you can preview your subtitles (they appear on the video as you do them). You do not need to publish the video (if you are worried about that) to see the subtitles (but it does help). Click "Save draft" when finished -- and then you can download the transcription file (.srt) by clicking on the "^" button.
-Transcription may take awhile - be patient, press "save" and relish in the fact that you're going to have great captions. I personally found it fun!
-Download the Youtube transcription -- a .srt file
-Download and start up Handbrake
    -I was completely unfamiliar with Handbrake, and this step-by-step of "How to Add Caption Files to Videos in Handbrake (Subtitles and Captions)" has clear pictures and text.

These are simplified steps from the above link:

-Click “Open Source” and select your video

-Go to the Subtitles tab, click “Tracks” and “Add external track” then select your .srt file

-Select “Burned In”

-Go back to “Summary” tab

-Click “Add to queue” and “Start” if everything is in order

Your video will now have captions!