

Sam Hindle's Tech Tips for Live Streaming

To prepare for the best overall show:

#1: Do not be overwhelmed by this list. I believe in you! Reach out at sghindle@gmail.com if you have further questions!

#2: Please don't leave this list to the last minute. Try to do your personal prep as far in advance as possible.

You may need to get some additional help from me (I am happy to do practice calls or answer questions in advance), your internet service provider may need to get involved, or you may want to upgrade or acquire equipment. To reduce stress for all involved, and to have the best broadcast possible, please leave yourself some time to make your way through this.

It will help your whole online life also so it's worth the time investment!

#3: KISS! Don't try to do too many things during your performance. Be cool, instead of flustered by trying to do pull off too much at once. Get comfortable and add sprinkles and cherries to your performance sundae as you gain experience and confidence in this new realm.

#4: Try to do your own little stream test or Zoom call and watch/ listen back before our sound check. More details on this at the end of the document.

You will feel way more comfortable if you do this. You can think of it as your own tech rehearsal with a chance to go back and make it better as many times as you leave time for. Usually there is a tech person around to think about and operate all the tech stuff. Now, you are going to be taking on some of that responsibility so I know it can be stressful, and more to think about than usual! Practicing all this will help put you at ease and keep the show professional.

Our sound check can be thought of as a dress rehearsal under “show state” conditions. Think of how prepared you would be for a real life dress rehearsal and strive for that.

#5: Things will happen that are out of our control despite how prepared we all are. The joys of live performance also translate to online shows. All we can do is roll with whatever happens.

Here we go!

Choose a great location in your house or venue. Consider this list for your location.

The level of priorities:

- 1) internet connection. If you drop out or are super glitchy, nothing else matters.
- 2) good sound
- 3) good lighting
- 4) camera considerations
- 5) the look of your setting

Internet connection

Please make sure you are close to your router and on the highest G option of your wifi. Direct line of sight to it is best for wifi. My shaw account gave us two wifis: 5G is best, but we also have 2.4G (for far distances but I find it just overall worse). Best yet - plug your computer straight into your router with an ethernet cable!

- Put your cell phone on the network (turn off wifi).
- Turn off all other devices using wifi or your network (your TV, Apple TV or cable box, and tablet.)

Do an internet speed test on your broadcast device to check your connection is good enough to handle the demands of going live.

- It is very easy and takes less than a minute to do.
- Ideally you do this today, and on different days at least a couple days ahead of your broadcast date, at the same time as the show will be. Gathering data here is kind of fun, and will be very informative. For additional info, try it at different times to compare.
- Maybe in your area everyone watches netflix in the evening so your results will be

different in the daytime. Or maybe everyone is home schooling or in meetings on zoom in the day and goes to bed early? Really depends on your area! If you find your wifis are really bad at a certain time, take this info into account for your show. Let me know!

-Just google "speed test" and there is one built right into google that will give you an easy to understand result. Click RUN SPEED TEST from the result that comes up. You are both uploading and downloading during a broadcast.

Try to get your speeds as fast as you can by using a wired connection, using a better modem/router, or maybe you have to call your internet service provider to help out.

Sound

-Please turn off all sound and vibrate notifications on your computer, and all near by devices like your phone or tablet. Random pings and dings from your email or messages are distracting, and are very obnoxious when live streaming as they are very sharp and loud.

-For a mac laptop, go to System Preferences > Notifications. Here is where you will make selections. Go into every app that is on the left hand side and uncheck "Play sound for notification" for each one to silence it. It sounds like a lot but it can be done pretty quickly.

Critically contemplate the sound:

Please wear headphones

Check your voice for talking.

-Is it loud enough?

-Is it clear? No reverb for talking please.

-For talking, your basic headphones with the little mic on it is better than the onboard laptop mic and will reduce the chance of feedback or echo sounds.

-Just watch for rubbing sounds from clothing, collars, beards or long hair.

Check your instruments. Listen for volume and the sound quality.

- Is it clipping or distorting during the loud parts?
- Try your mic(s) in different places to get the best sound.
- Try angling away from the mic a bit or a lot.
- Can you turn down your amp?
- Maybe you have to play your brass instrument into some kind of sound dampening material that's off camera?
- Try making a sound absorption box out of an empty, open foamy, pelican case and some blankets on a chair. Google "practice box trumpet" for an official one and for other DIY ideas. Your housemates will be also be very happy with this invention.
- Try deadening the sound in your room by softening up walls or other hard, reflective surfaces.

Check your voice for singing. Is it loud enough? Is it clear?

Please compare the volumes between your talking voice and instruments, and from instrument to instrument.

All sound sources should be clear and of a relatively similar volume. Of course your trombone is louder than your voice, but the goal is that the listener doesn't have to adjust their own volume drastically to enjoy the whole show from person to person or talking to instrument. You should do the mixing by coming nearer to the mic for talking or being farther away for loud playing.

- Test every instrument you will play and listen to each one critically.
- Test each mic, effect or auxiliary device you may have like loopers, reverb or delays. Know what settings are best and have it written down near by for your on-the-spot reference. Even a post-it note works!
- Know how to navigate between all components smoothly.
- Listen carefully for any weird noises, distortion or clipping of your instruments or overall glitches and try to eliminate them.

Lighting

-Check that your face and instruments are well lit. In my office, there is one ceiling light in the centre of the room. I have to add a lamp to my desk, so my face is brighter than my wall. If you add a lamp, try to make it not shine directly on your face so you aren't washed out. Try to avoid being in the direct sunlight for the same reason.

-That being said, put the light source IN FRONT OF YOU, not behind. I'm looking at you, windows. Your basic camera isn't as smart as your eye and if your window is bright, you will be a black blob moving around in front of it. I'm sure you have a lovely view, but we are here to see you.

-Try to “lock” the camera's lighting if using an external camera. The camera on your device is always trying to optimize the picture, but again, it's not that smart. I'm sure you've seen the videos where a person has a bright window behind or beside them and they move and the light state is switching between black blob person and lit person. Try to keep your face and instruments as the brightest thing in the shot to avoid this switching.

-Consider the time of day you are doing your lighting check, vs the show time. In the afternoon there is likely daylight or direct sun in your room or on your face. Try to do your lighting check at the same time as the show will be. If you can't to your check at the same time of day, try to pay attention to how bright/dark it is at your future broadcast time and try to re-create that lighting state during your check. (Close the curtains?)

Camera considerations

-We want to broadcast in landscape mode. Please put your phone or iPad on its side if you aren't on a computer.

-Is your camera at a pleasing angle? How many chins do you have?? answer- lots!
Board games work as a good stackers if you are on a laptop since the boxes are big and your laptop can fit on them nicely.

-Consider your background. Is your office as messy as mine is, and does it look even

worse than you thought it was now that the world is seeing it? I totally understand that we are all still somehow super busy, so try relocating clutter to a corner or room off camera if you have time before the real broadcast.

-What's the vibe you are going for? Maybe adding or removing a couple items to your shot will help you achieve it. A little can go a long way here!

-Don't forget that a solid internet connection and good sound is more important than your visual background.

Technology Skills

-Get acquainted with the programs and device you are using.

For example: How to mute and unmute yourself and how to navigate the different views.

Figure out which view is best for you to see during your performance.

On zoom, I like Gallery view.

Testing 1, 2 hey hey

In your test, do a song and some speaking.

-Do a test broadcast. Record it and watch it back to review. You can make as many adjustments and improvements without someone waiting for you to figure it out.

Or

-Do a test zoom call with a friend or family member. I'm sure they already love your playing, so ask them to be constructively critical of the tech qualities instead of them just saying how talented you are.

-You can do private Facebook Live videos by changing your settings to Only Me instead of Public or Friends Only. It should save it to your wall a minute after the broadcast stops (and will still be private if your settings were right).

-Watch and listen back to it from your computer, on a phone, and with headphones if possible so you can experience it how your audience would. You can pick up a lot more detail from your headphones of course, but the average user is likely just using

the onboard laptop or phone speakers.

I recommend using headphones if you are doing any advanced sound things as you can discover quickly if anything is in mono instead of stereo.

(This section is for your future reference, as it is not directly applicable to your show with OJF:

- learn how the top of broadcast connection works (On facebook, there are usually a couple drop outs within the first 15 seconds as it makes the connection handshake)
- learn how to tell when you are live or not (so you can avoid 5 awkward minutes of AM I ON??!! HELLO??? CAN YOU HEAR ME????))

Congrats. You have done all the tests and prep!

For the actual show, our sound check (and for as many checks and rehearsals as possible that you do on your own,)

Go to "show state". Let's recreate show conditions as much as possible

- cell phone on silent, and wifi off
- other wifi devices off
- ask others in your house to please refrain from making noise, and from using any of the wifis
- close all unused tabs or programs on your computer like your Facebook, Email, Calendar, Drop box and Messages.
- turn off the house phone ring
- my house heater is sooo loud so I turn off the heat when doing a recording.
- my fridge is also super loud but you aren't in the kitchen so that is not a problem. Or are you?
- laptop plugged in
- laptop has good airflow (prop up on some books to leave a gap for air to circulate underneath
- put on your show clothes and jewelry. Maybe your shirt material, collar or necklace is whooshier than expected. Maybe the colour will look weird under your lamp light and camera.
- camera check (angle and framing)

-mic check (all of them)

-instrument check (all of them and all aux devices or effects)

For companies:

-Think about a 1-Click-Destination. Perhaps embed your youtube stream to the landing page on your website. This helps you reach an audience that may be less tech savvy (and who are afraid of facebook).

-Figure out where you want to host your show: Zoom, Youtube, Facebook. There are pros and cons to each platform.

Please beware: if streaming copyrighted music (a cover OR playback), your stream may be flagged and muted. The Shazam robots are listening in on facebook.

Have a great online performance!!! It's going to be fun!!