

Guidelines for the Use of Technology During BOT Meetings

(The following guidelines were reviewed by the Coordinating Committee following the April 2009 BOT meeting at which written feedback was solicited from all trustees. Those responding felt they could live with the stated guidelines. This is a living document and will be revised as needed to clarify questions, incorporate new learning and address emerging needs.)

The UUA Board has recently moved toward greater use of available technology to increase our efficiency and to be more environmentally responsible. At the same time, the use of personal electronic devices for personal business has also increased. While we respect the fact that individuals have different learning and working styles, we also recognize the need for guidelines for the use of all electronic devices during our meetings.

Standard “business etiquette” for meetings does not necessarily fit our situation. It might be reasonable to ban or limit all personal electronic devices for a 2 or 3 hour meeting. However, trustees are engaged in meetings which last up to 8 hours over a period of several days. It is understandable that trustees cannot simply drop out of their personal lives for that period of time, and that being able to touch base with family and colleagues may actually help trustees to be more present for the long meetings.

As the technology changes these guidelines will need to be adjusted, but here are suggestions for our current situation:

Cell Phones and/or PDAs

- All devices should be turned off or put on vibrate mode. In general, you should not take calls during meetings unless it is urgent. When responding to an urgent call you should step out of the room.
- Reading personal messages and text messaging should be limited to break times. This means that we need to provide adequate breaks during meetings that are not just “working” breaks, but allow for personal business.

Computers

- Remember that those around you can see your screen. Avoid surfing to sites that are not relevant to the current discussion; it is distracting and discourteous to the other participants and/or presenter(s).
- Lower the screen during discussion and presentations to maintain eye contact and keep a clear view for those around you.
- Accessing social networking sites or personal email should be limited to break times.

These guidelines were drafted by a subcommittee of CoCo:
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We welcome your feedback!