

Blue Jeans Network offers LSBA Members the Videoconferencing Convenience to Meet, Collaborate and Reach Goals

By the Louisiana State Bar Association's
Outreach Committee

The Louisiana State Bar Association (LSBA) strives to identify and develop ways in which technology can assist members' participation in committee meetings, section meetings and other Bar-governance activities. The LSBA has taken a great leap forward in this area by partnering with the Blue Jeans Network — a provider of cloud-based, videoconferencing services. The Blue Jeans service offers LSBA members a convenient way to meet, collaborate and further the association's goals through widely available videoconferencing. The service is available to members in their offices and on-the-go, and without the hassle and expense of installing and maintaining a room-based videoconferencing system.

Following are some details about the service and how it can be used.

What is Blue Jeans?

Blue Jeans is a virtual conferencing system (similar to products like Go-To Meeting) that allows users to host and join video and tele-conferences from a variety of devices. Blue Jeans's belief is that "video collaboration should be as flexible as your favorite pair of jeans."¹ The service achieves this goal by being platform and device "agnostic." This means that users

can connect to Blue Jeans videoconferences in numerous ways — through any number of conference-room videoconferencing systems, web browsers, tablets or mobile devices. So, members can participate in a Blue Jeans meeting not only in the traditional conference-room setting, but also from their offices or while traveling.

How Do I Set Up a Blue Jeans Videoconference?

Setting up a Blue Jeans videoconference can be accomplished in two ways.

Reserve on the Web: LSBA members may reserve a Blue Jeans videoconference online through the LSBA's website, www.lsba.org. On the home page, choose the "For Members" tab and then select "Bar Center Services" under the heading "Members Tools and Services." From there, click on the "Meeting Room Manager" link.² Members also may reach the "Meeting Room Manager" by clicking the "View Event Calendar" link on the LSBA home page.

Once in the "Meeting Room Manager" application, click the "Meeting Request Form" and input the particular details of the meeting — date, time, location and name of host.³ Note that "Location" will always be "LA Bar Center." The dropdown menu below it ("Room Requested") will allow

selection of the venue for the meeting. Videoconferences may be conducted in the Louisiana Bar Center's New Orleans conference rooms, at three local Bar offices in the state⁴ or remotely at any other location chosen.⁵ If reserving a room online, remember to check the "Video Conference" box in the "Equipment Needed" section.

Reserve via phone: Although online scheduling is preferred, members may contact their local Bar Center by phone if they are having trouble using the website or need to set a meeting on short notice.⁶

First-come/first-served; LSBA events take precedence: Blue Jeans videoconferences will be scheduled on a first-come/first-served basis, with LSBA events, such as committee meetings, taking precedence over any other conferences scheduled by members. The Blue Jeans system is capable of hosting up to 10 simultaneous meetings (each with up to 100 participants).

What Happens After I Set Up My Videoconference?

Once the videoconference is scheduled, LSBA staff will send an email invitation to the host that can be forwarded to the other meeting participants (hosts also may create and send participants an electronic calendar invitation that includes the meeting

information).

The invitation contains information that will allow hosts to participate in the meeting as they choose:

▶ A link to a URL that will allow participants in the meeting to use a web browser, such as <https://bluejeans.com/922189459?ll=en>;

▶ Instructions on how to access the meeting using either a traditional, room-based videoconferencing system or other connection options like desktops or mobile devices;⁷ and

▶ A dial-in number and meeting passcode should hosts want phone participation.

On the day of the conference, there are several ways for members to participate:

▶ If the videoconference is at the Louisiana Bar Center or at a local Bar office, arrive a few minutes prior to the appointed time. The Bar staff will have set up the videoconference system.

▶ If there is access to the room-based videoconferencing system, use the information from the invitation email to connect to the meeting.

▶ If meeting participants plan to use a web browser, click on the link in the invitation email. Note: If you choose this option and want the other meeting participants to see you, you'll need a webcam that's either built into your computer or connected to it.

▶ If meeting participants are not in their offices (or don't have a webcam), they can use their iPhone, iPad or Android-based device. Participants should download the Blue Jeans app, enter the Meeting ID (from the invitation email) and their name, and they are ready to go.⁸

▶ Finally, for members who can't videoconference but still want to participate in a meeting, they can dial in as they would for a conference call. Use the phone number and Meeting ID provided in the meeting invitation email.

Blue Jeans Features and Helpful Hints

Once members are connected to a videoconference, Blue Jeans provides a number of ways to share information and make the meeting experience more productive.

Room and computer-based users have the option to share their computer screens with other meeting participants. The Blue Jeans apps for Apple and Android-based devices also have options for sharing photographs, documents and webpages contained

on those devices.

Moderators of a Blue Jeans meeting will have access to additional features designed to streamline the meeting experience. One important feature is the moderator's ability to mute all participants' microphones, requiring speakers to hold the spacebar and unmute themselves whenever they wish to speak. This can be particularly useful in large meetings, where the likelihood of speakers interrupting each other or background-noise interruption is greater. Blue Jeans meeting participants also have the option to mute their microphones and turn off their video stream. In fact, the LSBA technical staff recommends muting your microphone during a conference even when the moderator does not use this setting.⁹

Conclusion

Whether you're just growing interested in participating in Bar governance or have been doing so for some time, the LSBA hopes you'll find the Blue Jeans service makes that participation more convenient and productive. The service is simple to set up and use, and there are helpful instructional videos available both on the Blue Jeans¹⁰ and LSBA¹¹ websites. Members of the LSBA's technical staff, including IT Director Tony LaVerde, are encouraging the use of the service and are ready to answer any questions you may have about it.¹²

The Blue Jeans service enables LSBA members from the four corners of Louisiana (and beyond) to participate actively in leadership of the Bar — and it allows them to do so without leaving their offices, homes or even their vacation destinations. Videoconferencing technology makes interaction more personal and useful than an ordinary telephone conference. And, with Blue Jeans, it's just as simple.

If you have not participated in an LSBA committee or section because of time or travel constraints, Blue Jeans is for you.

FOOTNOTES

1. <http://bluejeans.com/works-with>.

2. If you have any other problems working through the "Meeting Room Manager" application, there is a "How To" guide with helpful information located on the "Bar Center Services" page, www.lsba.org.

3. Note that if you have any problem accessing

one of the dropdown menus on the "Meeting Request Form," the simplest solution is to open the site in Internet Explorer and add it to "Compatibility View." This can be accomplished by going to the "Meeting Request" page, clicking to open the "Tools" menu, then choosing "Compatibility View Settings." Once you are in the "Compatibility View" window, make sure the name of the site is in the box and click "Add." If you have any additional questions, consult the "How To" guide or contact the LSBA's IT Director Tony LaVerde. He can be reached by phone at (800)421-5722, ext. 117, and by email at tonylaverde@lsba.org.

4. You can choose from three rooms at the Louisiana Bar Center in New Orleans (Founders, Lafayette and Presidents), as well as rooms in the Baton Rouge, Lafayette and Shreveport Bar offices. Each room has the capacity to host a videoconference.

5. If you will not be conducting your meeting at the Louisiana Bar Center or another Bar office in the state, choose "Remote Video Meeting."

6. Contact people for Blue Jeans scheduling assistance at the various Bar offices are: (1) New Orleans, Mike Montamat, Operations Coordinator, (800)421-5722, ext.140; (2) Baton Rouge, Ann Gregorie, Executive Director, (225)214-5563; (3) Lafayette, Josette Abshire, Executive Director, (337)237-4700, ext. 105; and (4) Shreveport, Dana Southern, Executive Director, (318) 222-3643, ext. 3.

7. For a list of Blue Jeans-compatible room videoconference programs (as well as web browsers and other compatible devices), visit the Blue Jeans website at: <http://bluejeans.com/works-with>.

8. Some of the Blue Jeans mobile apps have spaces for the entry of a meeting "passcode." Unless a passcode is provided to you in the invitation email, entering one is not necessary.

9. The Blue Jeans default video setting is to emphasize (by enlarging) the video of the person currently speaking. Background noises (such as a ringing phone, typing on a keyboard or someone entering your office) can cause the video perspective to shift, which can sometimes be distracting. You also can address this issue by making the video images on the screen static, which is one of the display options available.

10. Blue Jeans support videos can be found at <http://bluejeans.com/support>. For particular instructions with respect to participating via web browser, try <http://bluejeans.com/support/video/joining-meeting-using-browser-access>. For those wanting to use an iPhone or iPad, try <http://bluejeans.com/support/video/bluejeans-iphone-and-ipad-app>. Blue Jeans also has a toll-free support telephone number: (800)403-9256.

11. www.lsba.org/BarGovernance/vc.aspx.

12. For LaVerde's contact information, see note 3, *supra*.

The Louisiana State Bar Association's (LSBA) Outreach Committee is chaired by Shreveport attorney John M. Frazier and composed of 10 members from across the state, plus two LSBA staff liaisons. The committee's mission is to identify and develop the means to permit more members from across the state to benefit from the programs and activities of the LSBA. The committee's aim is to use rapidly advancing but widely available technology to achieve its mission. The committee meets exclusively via videoconference.