

Virtual Platform Decision Making										
Vendor	Type	Rating	Pricing	Assessment	Attendee Max	Exhibit/Sponsor Options	China-Compatible	Build Time	Service Description	URL
Zoom Meetings	Streaming only	4.5	\$	Zoom Meetings is a general-purpose solution used by most CS conferences. Many full-service platforms still integrate Zoom Meetings as the primary virtual meeting space. Cost-effective, widely available, and familiar to most users.	Base = 300 attendees / room Upgrades for 500+ for additional fees	N/A Zoom rooms can be used to support Exhibitor/Sponsor meetups, and linked from pages on the conference site. All work requires manual integration.	Yes	1 - 2 weeks recommended Easy provisioning; build out is manual	Zoom is a streaming service based on a flat fee per room. Many platforms included on this list integrate with Zoom for streaming services. All additional development and integration is manual. Supprts direct broadcast to Facebook Live or YouTube Live	https://www.zoom.us
Zoom Webinars	Streaming only	4	\$	Reliable service that provides tighter controls of attendee actions. Many CS conferences use Zoom Webinars for plenary sessions, such as keynotes and panels. Biggest drawback is lack of interactivity for standard attendees, but in larger meetings this can be an asset for crowd control.	Base = 500 attendees / webinar Upgrades for 1k or 3k+ for additional fees	N/A Zoom Webinars can be used to support Exhibitor/Sponsor meetups, and linked from pages on the conference site. All work requires manual integration. Zoom Meetings offers a better options for exhibitors.	Yes	1 - 2 weeks recommended Easy provisioning; build out is manual	Zoom Webinars is designed for one-to-many presentations. Attendees have restricted rights compared to Zoom Meetings. All "Panelists" can show video/audio/share screen at the discretion of the Zoom Host. Includes Q&A and polling for standard attendees. Rates for up to 500, 1k, or 3k attendees. This solution is best used for large sessions, with smaller breakout sessions hosted in Zoom Meetings for better interactivity and cost reduction.	https://www.zoom.us
WebEx	Streaming only	2	\$\$\$	WebEx is similar to Zoom in features and functionality. However, there are some concerns about platform stability, with several reports of connectivity issues unrelated to user broadband access. WebEx is rated and approved for US government employees.	Base = 100	N/A WebEx can be used to support Exhibitor/Sponsor meetups, and linked from pages on the conference site. All work requires manual integration.	Yes	1 - 2 weeks recommended Easy provisioning; build out is manual	WebEx includes standard features for a streaming service, including: Electronic "Hand Raising", Private Chat, Real-Time Chat, Session Recording	https://www.webex.com/
RD Mobile	Platform/DIY	4	\$\$	The AWS-based RD Mobile platform includes a mobile app and a full feature set, including schedule, attendee and speaker directory, threaded discussions for sessions, virtual exhibit booths, role-based access. For poster sessions, it can be useful to link to a third-party such as Gather.Town etc. Otherwise, strong performance for most conferences.	Unlimited	Virtual exhibit booths can include embedded video, links to social sites, description field, links to resources (PDFs, MP4), contact link, and links to meeting scheduling apps (calendly, etc). Also supports banner ads, featured sponsors for homepage, and session sponsorships.	Yes	6-8 weeks recommended	Scheduler, speaker and attendee directories, virtual exhibit hall, notifications. Site is built out manually using .csv files and augmented by features in the backoffice admin dashboard. Role-based access rights can be assigned to sessions, resources, and navigation links. Live sessions link out to Zoom etc. The IEEE CS has an overarching agreement for the RD platform and includes 5 standard Zoom accounts with the service. API integration with registration services available for additional charge.	https://rdmobile.com
Hubb	Platform	3	\$\$\$\$	Hubb has an excellent design and offers full-featured support for virtual conferences. They are currently working on APIs for various third-party apps. The drawbacks are due to the lack of a standard white glove option and higher fees than some other platforms.	Platform can support up to 10k attendees	Sponsor/Exhibitor tools include: -Sponsor Listings by category with filters -Sponsor profiles -Video and chat room functionality for sponsors -Sponsored Sessions -Sponsor Raffle Marketing -3D booth modeling available for a fee	Yes	6-8 weeks recommended, but with extra resources can launch quicker	Hubb is a robust, full-featured platform. The list of features covers almost all conference needs, from role-based session management to exhibitor features to attendee interaction. Hubb uses Zoom for live-streaming, so any limitations that occur in Zoom will also be an issue here. This is not a white glove service and organizers will need to dedicate committee members for building and management. The	www.hubb.me
Whova	Platform	3	\$\$	Some CS-sponsored conferences have used Whova. It has a strong feature set and has provided generally good results. Price quotes have shown substantial variability. Registration services fees include 2% plus \$0.99 per ticket up to \$15 apiece.	Unlimited	Virtual booths support video (can set to autoplay), livestreams, chat, and ability to have exhibitors build out their own booths. Ability to offer "coupons" and to gamify via the passport game.	Yes	6-8 weeks recommended	Whova supports virtual and hybrid events and offers a mobile app as well as a virtual site. Interactions among users are its biggest strength. Can be built out via .csv files, and can live stream from Zoom or other virtual meeting software.	www.whova.com
Underline	Platform + Full Service Support	3	\$\$\$	Underline offers affordable white glove service. Platform and support are impressive. Business model is based on upselling conferences to host videos in their library and sell non-competitive sponsorship, but those are not required services.	Unlimited	Exhibits are HTML pages with links to virtual rooms for meetings. Flexible for what to include on the pages, but no template for ease of creation. Lacking in analytics reporting, so the key details that sponsors / exhibitors want are unavailable. Overall, not recommended for conferences with large exhibitor presence.	Yes	Optimal is 12 weeks, but can be done in 3 weeks for smaller events. Recommend at least 6-9 weeks.	Integrated platform includes virtual sessions, chat, networking, streaming, and Q&A. - Up to 50 separate speakers for smaller sessions, others go to chat tool. - Sponsor pages integrated into platform with virtual meeting rooms. - In-conference customer service team for real-time support. - Working on becoming more ADA compliant. - Available upgrades include 'news anchor desk' style moderator.	www.underline.io
Virbela	Platform	3	\$\$\$\$	Virbela is an entertaining 3D platform that is well-designed, with interesting interaction points for attendees that can capture some of the feel of a live conference. In many ways it feels like playing a video game upon initially installing and entering the environment. Best suited as a multi-conference solution (with a number of conferences being hosted on the platform) to mitigate the initial set-up costs. The system is resource-intensive for attendees, but the experience is robust, including exhibit hall, multiple location types, even including a "music hall" where avatars can dance for social events. They have recently added a more affordable version, a shared campus for one-off events. This does not require an Enterprise license.	1k / session Up to 10k concurrent attendees on the platform	Virbela offers an interactive virtual Expo Hall which includes: - Live chat - Video hosting - Ability to add collateral - Virtual meet-ups	Not guaranteed, although this might be content-related rather than technical issue.	6-8 weeks	Virbela is a 3D virtual environment, where attendees create an avatar and can explore the conference campus, including unique virtual locations such as a soccer field, beach, and patio area for one-on-one discussions via voice chat. The platform does require the user to download a program to access it. Third-party live-streaming is used in sessions. Threaded asynchronous discussions are built in-app. The platform supports live Q&A via voice or chat during sessions. There are no limits on the number of speakers, though the platform initially allows only 2 administrators to actually build the event program (more can be added for a fee).	www.virbela.com/solutions/virtual-events
CadmiumCD	Platform	3	\$\$\$\$\$	CadmiumCD offers a high-quality platform for virtual events, with strong functionality. One concern is that it is designed to work with other CadmiumCD platforms, such as their peer review and registration systems. Given that it's a self-set "white glove", organizers must learn to build out the conference site. A very limited number of conferences will have sufficient budget.	Built to conference specifications	Provides a good feature set for virtual exhibit booths including video, social links, and ability to schedule meetups with attendees. Ability to run reports to gather user traffic and booth activity.	Yes	8+ weeks recommended, depending on schedule complexity. DIY site build requires a learning curve.	CadmiumCD provides a strong feature set and a good platform. Live sessions are linked to third-party conference apps, but attendee experience and support for presenters and session chairs is good. Virtual exhibit booths offer good experience and reporting. The site build requires dedicated effort, and the price is substantial for the licensing.	www.cadmiumcd.com/
Hopin	Platform	2	\$\$\$	Hopin offers a good feature set, but lacks certain tools that would be beneficial in a platform, such as video storage and asynchronous chat. Issues with streaming in China also present a major concern. As improvements are made, the platform should become more viable.	500 / session Up to 100k / event	Hopin supports the following Sponsor/Exhibitor features: -Banner ads (can be ordered by priority) -Lead Capture (opt-in or external survey) -Live sessions with vendor -Recorded presentations -Chat support	Yes	6 weeks	Hopin offers an internal system for live streaming. Video storage is not included and would need to be done via a 3rd party service such as Vimeo or YouTube. Threaded discussions are also outside of the platform. Live chat & Q&A during sessions are supported. The internal live-stream can handle up to 5 speakers on their Main Stage and up to 10 speakers in a session. The license allows for up to 10 administrators with back-end access to build the actual virtual event in the platform. The platform also offers registration services, but the 7% fee is very high compared to other options.	www.hopin.io
Gather Town	Platform	3	\$\$\$	Gather Town is particularly well-suited to social events and poster sessions. The service can technically be used to support a full conference, but the pricing model and interface style make that less appealing than the more focused use case.	500 max	Includes templates for virtual exhibit hall. Supports video, PDFs, 1:1 interactions. Does NOT provide user analytics.	Currently works in China, though VPN users might experience some issues.	4 weeks recommended	Gather Town allows the creation of virtual spaces in which users navigate via avatars in an "8-bit video game-style environment" and can interact with objects such as PDFs, as well as participate in video conference interactions with other users. Spaces can be defined for small group interactions, private conversations, or larger one-to-many talks. Virtual exhibit halls can be created with booths, or rooms can be set for posters, and so on. Pricing is based on number of users, number of objects, and number of hours.	https://gather.town
Conference Catalysts	Platform + Full Service Support	4	\$\$\$	Conference Catalysts understands CS conferences' basic structure and needs from the company's support of several IEEE society-sponsored events. - It provides a clean, straight-forward interface. - Because of the "white glove" support, the company has finite capacity, so it's important to schedule early with them to guarantee availability.	Based on Zoom Maximums	Individual webpage-based	Yes	8 weeks recommended	- Full service setup/support, customizable design, based on Amazon S3 to serve videos and slides. - The company builds the site using metadata provided by the conference. Live sessions linked to Zoom; all speaker and attendee limits are tied to Zoom's capabilities. - Live streaming support available for a fee. - Platform provides threaded Q&A plus ability to send private questions directly to presenters. - Pre-conference customer support has a 24-hr turnaround time. In-conference support is real-time.	http://conferencecatalysts.com/
Crowdcast	Platform/DIY	3	\$	CrowdCast has an intuitive interface and attractive pricing model. There are concerns over the reliability of video streaming and login with larger numbers of attendees since it is a proprietary streaming platform. Currently the platform remains unproven for IEEE Computer Society conference use as none of our conferences have tried it.	Standard maximum = 1k attendees / session	No specific sponsor support. Can use the virtual meetings to support sponsor pages, but this would be a manual process.	Yes	N/A Easy provisioning; build out is manual	CrowdCast is a fairly easy-to-use platform that has its own streaming service. It includes the following features: - Q&A, chat, and polls - Streaming video - Direct broadcast to Facebook Live, Periscope, and YouTube Live	www.crowdcast.io
Talque	Platform	3	\$\$	The Talque platform includes some excellent networking features, with a clean interface and good workflow. It is downgraded due to its inability to support attendees in China, which is a major drawback for international conferences.	Platform provides tiered pricing up to 10k attendees Additional attendees can be added upon request	Sponsors are sorted by categories and include detailed profiles, and branded landing page spots. Sponsors and exhibitors can also be added in sessions as hosts.	No; specifically tailored for Europe	4-6 weeks	The platform includes the following features: - User profiles - Conference agenda bookmarking - Speaker ratings - Sli.do integration - Gamification module - Attendee matchmaking - Talque Roulette / Speed "dating" - Jobs Boards/Ads - Multi-language support - GDPR compliance - Wordpress integration - Javascript integration for Search/Filtering - integration with OAuth2 login and Zapier, Analytics	https://web.talque.com/en/event
Run the World	Platform	2.5	\$\$	Run The World is a promising platform that is not quite ready for academic conferences. The Cocktail Party feature is something that would be great to push engagement during a conference. If possible using this feature in conjunction with a separate solution could be viable. The built-in registration is very expensive (17% of reg fees) and a non-starter for IEEE conferences.	20k attendees	Sponsor features in the platform are mostly tied to logo placement and sponsored rooms. There are not a lot of bells and whistles.	Yes	4+ weeks recommended. Organizers are the ones completing the actual data upload.	Run the World allows for virtual site builds to be completed only through the online interface and cannot be batch uploaded. Includes templates for several different types of sessions such as keynote, panel, and even gamification and social interaction templates, including a Cocktail Party feature that matches attendees for 2-5 minute chats. While the platform has no issues with simultaneous sessions, the maximum speakers at one time in a session is 8.	https://www.runtheworld.today/
10Times	Platform	2	\$	10Times is very cost-effective. Frequent development releases add features, but raise some concerns about platform stability. Pricing is quoted at \$1-\$2/attendee, but additional fees apply for add-ons, such as additional live-streaming time or video storage.	No maximum number of attendees given	Sponors can be added and given dedicated pages.	Yes, though we would request confirmation.	Currently estimated at 4-8 weeks	10Times supports all standard functionality for a virtual academic conference -- chat, scheduling, networking, and third-party integrations with multiple streaming services, including Zoom. The development team is also open to feature requests.	https://10times.com/
Freeman Online Event Pro	Platform + Full Service Support	2	\$\$\$\$\$	Generally very reliable A/V vendor, but there are questions regarding their virtual platform capabilities and scalability, especially given shorter turnaround times. Could not confirm that platform is available in China.	10k (higher if needed for additional fees)	Individual webpage-based	Questionable, using a workaround.	10+ weeks	- Relatively full-featured platform. - Uses Zoom and Walk-me for streaming. - Includes speaker ready rooms. Will need to provide in-writing guarantees to proceed.	

Please Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all the many available platforms. Assessments are based on current experience working with IEEE Computer Society conferences and will be revised as additional details surface. We are evaluating security and GDPR-compliance for each platform/vendor, but we cannot verify strength of security. As always due diligence is needed for your specific conference's needs.