Using Doodle – The Web-Based Meeting Scheduler

What is Doodle?
Doodle is a web-based scheduling service. It allows you easily to set up a web page where potential attendees of a meeting can go and declare their availability (or not) at a series of proposed times and dates by filling in a simple online form. You can then revisit the web site and easily see which is the most convenient time to schedule the meeting based on people’s responses.

Why use Doodle?
This tool is useful for helping you schedule meetings with people who are not members of staff at the University of Stirling and who thus do not have access to the Microsoft Outlook Calendar tool. If you are wishing to schedule a meeting only with University of Stirling staff, it would be best practice to use the Outlook Calendar tool as this places the appointment directly into people’s Outlook calendar and allows you to set a reminder for them as well. Doodle allows you to arrange meetings more easily with people with whom you do have a shared calendar facility.

Creating an Event and Inviting People to It
To create an event and invite potential attendees to it follow these steps:

2. Click the Schedule an event button (Figure 1).

![Schedule an event button](image)

Figure 1 - The Schedule an event button

3. The Schedule an even form is displayed (Figure 2).
4. In the **Title** field insert the event title.
5. In the **Location** field insert the event location. This is optional but recommended, otherwise people won’t know where to go.
6. In the **Description** field insert the event description. This is optional.
7. In the **Your name** field insert your name.
8. In the **E-mail address** field insert your email address.
9. Click **Next**.
10. A calendar is displayed, showing the current month. Click the dates on which the meeting could possibly be held. Use the **Forward** and **Back** buttons either side of the current month title to move to the next or previous month. Any selected dates are shown to the right of the calendar under the **Selected dates:** heading. Figure 3 shows an example with several dates selected.
11. When all the possible dates have been selected click **Next**.
12. The **Times** page of the scheduling form is displayed. Enter the proposed possible times on each day for the meeting. If you require more than three time slots per day then click the **Add further time slots** link. This adds a further three time slots (you do not have to use them all). Use the **Copy and paste first row** to replicate the time slots on the first day into other rows and save typing them out again. Figure 4 shows an example of the completed form.
13. Once all the time slots are set up, click **Next**.
14. The **Basic Poll** page appears. Click the **Settings** link to expand this part of the form where extra settings are available. Figure 5 shows this part of the form.

15. Once the required settings are selected click **Next**.
16. Under the **You send the invitation** heading (Figure 6) click **Finish** to send the invitation.
17. Doodle creates your ‘poll’ and emails you with details of it. Figure 7 shows an example of what this email looks like in Microsoft Outlook.

18. The email contains a link to your poll’s web page. Forward this email or copy and paste the link into an email to be sent to all the potential attendees of the meeting.

19. Recipients of your email invitation then click the link to visit the Doodle web site. There they enter their name and fill in their availability for the various time slots by ticking check boxes alongside the times they can then make. Figure 8 shows an example of how this looks to users completing the form. In Figure 8 two users, Joe Bloggs and Billy Nomates, have already completed the form and a third user, Jan Smith has entered her name, selected the times she can make and is about to click on **Save** to add her availability to the list.
20. This **Table View** can also be changed to a **Calendar View**. Figure 9 shows the calendar view.

![Calendar View](image)

**Figure 9 - The Calendar View**

21. After an agreed time you can close the poll. To close the poll use the link in the email called **Doodle: Admin Link** which sent to you by Doodle at the time you created the poll. Figure 10 shows an example of this email.
22. Click the first link in this email to visit the Doodle web site as the administrator of the poll. A range of options will be available to you including Close. Click Close to view the latest state of the poll in Table View format. An example of this is shown in Figure 11. The most popular date and time in this example is 14:00 on Wednesday, 26th October, as shown in green.
23. Click Save to save and close the poll.
24. Now merely notify the attendees by email of the time and date of the meeting.

**Further Services via Doodle**

Doodle offers other services to enhance meeting scheduling. To access these services it is necessary to create a Doodle account. More details about the services can be found by clicking the More about the advantages link on this web site: https://www.doodle.com/mydoodle/open.html.