

Virtualize Your Live Event: Using Social Media to Extend Reach and Community

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Event Virtualization/Amplification

- Create a backchannel for events using a #hashtag, live tweeting, live streaming, and posting slides, photos, videos and tweet streams for reference.
- Concerns: cannibalization of in person attendees, giving away paid value for free, recouping equipment costs.
- Learning and benefits: hybrid events using social media can extend reach of message, content and conversation, increase community, and increase ROI for remote audiences. In IABC/Seattle's experience, it extends awareness and reach of IABC beyond our traditional audience, builds an online archive of content, does not cannibalize face-to-face revenue, and may help convert fence sitters to become in person attendees. Using social media, you can amplify: audience voice, speaker voice, speaker materials/presentation, community, and value of the archived and curated experience.

Quick Tips for Live Tweeting

Live tweeting allows you to share a concise version of what is happening at your event, along with brief nuggets of content from speakers. Take care not to overwhelm your followers with too much live tweeting.

- Use a consistent hashtag (e.g. #iabcseattle), and leave it off when answering one-off or personal tweets.
- Be judicious in sharing quotes, and cite or attribute the source (use #quote for exceptional quotes).
- Designate a dedicated community manager to live tweet.
- Engage with followers (answer q's, comments, detractors) and acknowledge remote participants.
- Be generous, ReTweet (RT) others and thank top engagers after event.
- Use social media tools to manage stream (e.g. Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, CoTweet).
- Option: consider Twitter accounts exclusively used for tweeting from live events (e.g. iabcseattlelive).
- Advance prep by community manager – know speaker Twitter handles, review decks for third party resources and links to have ready for easy tweeting during event to enrich stream with resources.
- For comprehensive coverage, consider live blogging (e.g. ScribbleLive, CoverItLive or your own blog).
- Community manager should determine ahead of time how the backchannel conversations will be archived and made available to the audience (in a timely manner, while interest in hashtag exists).
- Publish a lightweight policy in advance so participants know how the conversation will be recorded and used.
- Archive hashtagged tweets via Twapper Keeper (twapperkeeper.com) or Archivist (archivist.visitmix.com).

Quick Tips for Live Streaming

- Equipment: digital video camera(s), tripod, venue with internet access, interface hardware for digital camera to computer, laptop, online streaming provider, permission from speakers/panelists to livestream, hashtag for the backchannel, optional: external microphone
- Bandwidth: you will need good upload bandwidth for best video quality results (e.g. 384Kbps acceptable, but 500Kbps + is better). Test upload speed via <http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/> or <http://www.speedtest.net/>. Where possible, use a direct wired internet cable rather than wireless.
- Use a video streaming service that offers:
 - Easy embed onto sites and redistribution of video to multiple sites and social media
 - Integrated chat (e.g. users to comment back, rate, chat during live transmission)
 - Advanced features: automatic recording, auto distribution to video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube), multiple cameras, and co-hosting (option to host other video streams in your show)
- Online video streaming providers: Ustream.tv, Livestream.com (formerly Mogulus), Yahoo Live, and others include BlogTV, Justin.tv, Stickam, Kyte and Operator 11.
- Be prepared: Check venue logistics and test bandwidth prior to the event. Eliminate back lighting. Ensure your event signage is in prime positioning on the livestream cameras. During the event, ensure your audio is not peaking or creating a buzz for remote participants, ask them for real time feedback.