

Webinar: Digital Communications for Live Arts Presenters

March 24, 2020

The following is a record of participants verbatim comments received in the CHAT and Q and A of the webinar. Notes in [] by Inga Petri, the webinar presenter

Note: while the webinar was geared for live arts presenters, we had a wide range of participants spanning from presenters with or without venue, festival to film, literary arts and visual arts as well as some consultants, arts service organizations and government.

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Some things participants have been doing to stay in touch with your audiences and communities

- Promoted streaming like CBC GEM and NFB free streaming
- We support and promote watching Canadian Film and TV right now
- We're digging up archived video to post online.
- We're promoting a lot of orchestral music, as well as our musicians performing in their homes
- Sharing information from local museum and NAC #Canadaperforms, also looking for other artist information to share.
- Paid artist fees for postponed concerts
- Called every ticket holder by telephone to discuss ticketing/rescheduling, etc. and let them know that we are working hard and are available to them to answer their questions.
- I'm a teacher so on spring break for now, but when we "return" from break our staff needs to figure out a distance education model. I personally need to figure out how to instruct an art/printmaking course for my students who are First Nations and have poor access to technology.
- Promote and share partners' actions
- Amplifying national and regional public health messaging. Doing our part/civic duty.
- Compiling on-line events and sharing via twitter, facebook
- I live in a close-together trailer park. During the day I sometimes sing and play music in my garden so my neighbours can hear. My next door neighbour often asks me to play louder! LOL
- I've been jamming with friends online using zoom :) Looking into free professional development courses for music education as I will be completing my teacher education program this summer.
- We have 170 members. I have sent out an update message to our members offering to provide email or phone numbers so they can connect directly with other members, especially the elderly if they have reason to be concerned about isolation or this person needing extra help.

Things you are considering doing / will do shortly

- Music PEI is just about to launch a call out to PEI musicians, professional and emerging, for FB live performances - they will be paid.
- At Culture Creates we want to see how we can help via technology
- I was thinking about posting song lyric quotes along a nearby trail in the woods, but not sure how artists would feel about their lyrics being quoted. Probably need to ask for permission first?
- Eastern Edge is planning to do artists talk on youtube live. Figuring out how to do online exhibitions.

- I also LOVE watching my friends and community share their live stream performances on FB. I will share them on my wall and encourage others to watch and support.
- If I make visual art lessons for youtube I think I'll make them available to the public, not just my students.
- I'm in the artist in education teacher education program at Queen's in Kingston ontario in my final year and will be certified in August as a music teacher grades 7-12 and history as a second teachable. Our class has members in the community who will be meeting on Zoom to conduct masterclasses instead of having them in person on campus. Anything from music, to drama art and ideas around this webinar as well.
- Another thing i've been working on is lesson plans for music other then just playing instruments all the time, however i've made a neat composition lesson plan and hoping to record and upload to youtube soon once i film and edit :)
- Live streams and YouTube are great... But free. Planning to do some streamed performances in the coming weeks but with PWYC (pay what you can) options via e-transfer and PayPal. Anything to start recouping some upcoming losses.
- This is a great time for professional skills development/seminars/workshops for artists, creators, and presenters.
- For my online teaching, I am letting people book now and pay later. Same rates. But I'll accept payments up to the end of 2020.

Digital technical challenges

- Network latency will always be an issue on commercial Internet using consumer apps like Zoom and Skype. Built-in echo cancellation of your device can also be factor.
- My understanding is that equity is working on tweaking their rules to allow for more digital performances
- [RE: getting paid for live streaming] I haven't made my final decision yet, to be honest. I'm assuming I'll use FB live on my FB page. And link to options for sending payments. I could also set up an actual ticketing service. In this case I would likely use Ticket Halifax.
 - if you're looking for a PWYC option, I know that <https://weshowup.io/> is able to do livestream/digital events
- A slogan from CARFAC: has the artist been PAID???
- This is a critical time because artists have been using online content as a loss leader in order to leverage revenue from live performances. That's all disrupted for the time being.
- Yes schedules [regular, reliable things to do/watch/participate in] are important, even if we are stuck at home!!

- Develop standardized paywall _app developers! That allows PWYC for arts expressions that are digitized
- Has anyone here used a Paypal link with their FB live performance? If so, how successful was it to raise revenue?
- How do we get a better sound on Facebook live ?
 - Sound on Facebook live.... Always use headphones or mid/headphones^[P]Get a Good mic at Long&McQuade - 100 - 200\$ is good enough. USB ones work or get an Analog to Digital interface. \$50 to whatever you pay
- Where can we learn more about Search Engine Optimization and structured data, if we're new to those ideas?
 - Caitlin and I [Tammy, Culture Creates] will be doing a webinar on that subject April 7/8

Valuing performing and other arts experiences at this time

- We need to stop using "donate" and "tip" and stick to words like "pay for my experience"
- I think this is a very important topic as we run the risk of devaluing presentation, and creating an expectation of 'free content' - and, those individual asking for donations will come across as desperate. WE need to keep the value proposition high, so communications are critical now. We have an unprecedented captured audience - where we can teach public about the value.
 - It is a great worry. ... still figuring out a way forward.
 - How do we avoid offerers just screaming at each other competing for attention.... we don't as consumers have the skills to keep up with it all.... losing minds and memories... people will just shut it off. They need to give a voice to people....
- Just as quick as the messaging circulated "don't refund your ticket or buy a ticket as a donation the venues need your support now", I think some messaging needs to be developed around remembering to support artists after all of this is over. I feel there is a real risk to offering free online concerts right now that artists are undervaluing and devaluing themselves and the performing arts as a whole. Anyone else feeling that way?
- Can you address monetization of existing social network channels for "one-man bands" artists like myself... can you help with prescriptive help?
- We are doing a live concert tonight but next week will ask for folks to pay for the show
- I think some people are just feeling like they want to do SOMETHING. They want to give. They want to sing, etc. But I do personally believe that we need to consider what we're paying artists.
 - Artists by nature are a very giving people. :)

How to own this disruption

- Not to be cynical, but Facebook is likely looking at this disruption and sees an opportunity to "own it". We need to figure out how to "own" this disruption opportunity.
 - We are thinking the same thing! As we are planning to use this time to create some content, where should ultimately live? YouTube, our website?
- From what I'm seeing, the human need for art and creative expression is largely being met with participatory activities (amateur) which don't engage professional artists in the same way that we as presenters are "programmed" to do. This worrisome to me because finding a way to find a role in meeting these human needs that is less obvious to organizations like mine, whose organizational DNA does not align with participatory work -- (as important as that is).
- For professional theatre companies, we are largely limited by what EQUITY contracts will allow for us to do in a digital space. This is especially challenging when you are a small organization with small budgets. Do you have any suggestions in terms of navigating this?
 - [talk openly and frankly with the unions; those rules were already outdated with the way the internet evolved as it is, so this might be a time for reasonable changes that protect everyone's interests properly]
- And it keeps artists relevant. :)
- What are some good platforms for workshop delivery (literary, visual, musical arts) that can have controlled access/payment options.
- Thought about artwork on food packaging as a way to distribute....royalty payments?
 - Anyone know anyone in the car "skin" production printing industry... artwork on cars....
- Artists also put out CDs and stream music. Seeing things live is always going to be the most exciting way to experience an artist. They are technically different products.
 - Totally true ... but it does keep fans involved
- Is there digital presenters ready to present us? know any?
 - [Come to the webinar on rethinking presenting and touring week of March 30]
- How far away are we from enabling an experience using holograms?
 - [not quite ready, but see what 5G networks will enable next; also will be part of the webinar series week of March 30]

Digital tools

- FYI: Tweetdeck is a free Twitter tool for scheduling.
- Facebook is moving to Creator Studio, and they own Instagram. You can use CS to schedule both FB and Insta posts
- Would also recommend Instagram Live!

- a lot of artists are using paypal.me links
- Another good affordable all-in-one solution is the Zoom Q2n-4K Handy Video Recorder. It has a great mic with integrated HD video.
- The system used for the online 'festival' with multiple artists was on Facebook, using Google Hangouts Meet as the thing the artists connected to. Those feeds were aggregated using OBS - an open source video switching/control thing. Then pushed to Facebook. Doing a weekly Sunday 5 hour session with 10 acts.
- Yes, OBS is very good, as is vMix
- is facebook marketplace still a happening market right now? how can I safely post and sell things (such as artwork) while still maintaining social distancing, and protecting my image copyrights?
 - or if you try Etsy? :)
 - - yeah, I'm thinking Etsy may be a better option for me. Through the mail delivery. Let Canada Post figure out the "no contact delivery" method for me :)
 - Maybe etsy? then there wouldn't be a need for physical meeting :); then only having to mail out

Inspiration for participatory or professional artist experiences

- Italy makes me wish I had a balcony in my apartment, so far I've just been playing through my window occasionally. But yes I agree that it really brings together community so much!
- Outside the March just announced a phone-based theatre experience, it sounds awesome!
<https://www.mundanemysteries.com/>
- We have talked about doing a script reading on a platform such as Zoom and recording it and sharing on Social Media...
- replicate street art process to offer people inside outside performance
- The Nevis Ensemble in Scotland is organizing a living room "ensemble", providing instrument and vocal parts and encouraging people to send it videos of them performing, as well as encouraging people to just dance along to pieces (500 Miles is their first) and send in those videos
- Shakespeare: are there any common phrases that we use today that are from Shakespeare?
- Love the idea of fans staying in cars - great idea.
 - Would like more of a round-robin approach /experience for social interactions....
 - Yes but people look to artists to lift spirits
 - I remember drive-ins
 - maybe the drive-in movie experience will make a comeback! or the "Model" of the drive-in movie can be extrapolated to other performance types

- Venue for Rural areas... light houses....Ferry terminals parking lots and stay in car models
- <https://www.socialdistancingfestival.com>
 - Was just about to type the social distancing festival!
 - Yes, the social distancing festival is fantastic!

Inspirational themes

- More grafitti!
- HOPEFUL content is essential right now.
- Uplifting content :)
- Content delivered with positivity
- Themes of resilience, connection, love, hope, teamwork, community.
- Fun: “Behind the scenes” content – showing your audiences/patrons what “happens” when you’re not on stage. Even if it’s “staged” ie. are your musicians actually pretending to be conductors or is this just for a video?
- Publish your favourite group games that people can play at home, regardless of age.
- Great idea!!! Also applies to visual arts, watching an art piece in progress for example.
 - for visual arts, I find time lapses are well-regarded! Seeing an hours/days/weeks-long job come to fruition in a minute or two are intriguing to audiences
- Health and well-being: a phone call goes a long way!

Ideas to keep honing artistic practices

- I’m a classical singer and concert/opera producer. But in terms of sharing standard classical music, I’m missing my usual go-to which is a collaborative pianist. So I’ve been thinking of hiring pianists to record songs that I can sing to. Then, I could engage with that recording in two ways: by playing it and singing along with it (and recording the performance) or by listening to it with headphones and performing it like Karaoke (Have any of you seen the hashtag #Careoke and #Quarantunes ?)
- Question for musicians using zoom to jam online with others, how are you finding the audio? I’ve played a bit with an accordion friend and I was playing trumpet. We found that my sound was constantly fading out so it wasn’t working well. Have you used external mics? I was only using my built in microphone on my laptop and I feel this may have been the problem. Any suggestions?

- If both parties have Facetime, I have found that Facetime is slightly better for playing at the same time. I have only done this with two people at a time (as in me plus another singer). But we sing at the same time. Sometimes we need to take a second and let a small lag correct, but it's been the best platform by far for me.

Other comments

Regarding the emergency packages:

- Are you aware of any ongoing or upcoming efforts from Canada Council (or other arts org.) to act as an “interpreter” of the emergency packages to clearly explain how artists and arts organizations can access benefits?
- Is there any way for artists to capture lost opportunities in these emergency benefits forms, and if not, is any organization advocating for future subsidies that are more sophisticated to fill these gaps? Ex. - author supposed to teach a literary workshop loses presenting fee - easy to capture on a form - but also loses opportunity to promote new book or future workshops...
 - [Go to I LOST MY GIG Canada on Facebook or ilostmygig.ca new website – there are being resources, spreadsheets shared there]
- Are there National laws regarding Accessibility that we fall under, I.e. not just sing the song but provide the text, not just show pics but describe?
 - VERY grateful for this reminder. Thank you. xo