Online Program Planning

Library programming is changing as we look for ways to adapt to a new socially distanced lifestyle. Online programing through software like Zoom and recorded programs posted to our social media accounts have become our primary means for sharing valuable programs with customers.

What is the first step to going virtual with a program idea? We will explore the process Metro librarians go through to plan an effective online program.

Virtual Programing Trends
Considering how your program will best reach its intended audience is an essential part of planning an effective virtual program.

We have seen popular system-wide programs like Neighborhood Arts, Science Museum Oklahoma and Oklahoma City Museum of Art programs go virtual with take-home kits, live videos, pre-recorded videos and Zoom meetings. Meanwhile, we have had many librarians find new ways to engage customers and continue regularly scheduled programs in a virtual setting as well.

The Library's annual literary festival, LitFest, is a one-day in-person event set up much like a conference with breakout sessions and vendor tables. The 2020 event became LitFest Online, a virtual program with much of the content available all month long from anywhere at any time.

Downtown Librarian Sarah Brown said she began the program planning process by reaching out to Kellie Del-

aney to work out scheduling and technology capabilities. She decided to combine recorded videos, resource lists, live sessions on social media and blogs to keep customers engaged all month long. "After that, the process was pretty similar to the normal event planning process," she said.

Troubleshooting & Tech Assistance
Having a colleague designated to help with the technology portion of a virtual program may be helpful. Customers may be unfamiliar with using Zoom, so it's important to anticipate helping those customers along or having a second staff person working the program to help ease them along.

"Depending on the program, you may want them to use chat, raise hands, be able to mute/unmute or respond to polls. I always have everyone muted to start and then have patrons unmute to speak because there is less noise and feedback that way. It also keeps the camera on the speaker," Community Libraries Librarian, Beth Loecke said.

It can be difficult to manage the technical aspect while presenting in front of a camera or interacting with customers, so a designated technology person also helps avoid unnecessary hiccups.

"One of my virtual storytimes was planned outdoors and due to the weather, my iPhone got overheated and disabled, which cut off the storytime streaming. I didn't notice due to not having the camera close enough to me and having my iPhone on do not disturb. I couldn't see any of the alerts," Almonte Youth Engagement Specialist II, Melannie Chavez said.

Testing a program ahead of time with colleagues can also be helpful to avoid snags during the live event. Animal Crossing Hangouts have become a popular teen program, taking a medium that's already virtual and adapting it to a library program entertaining teens and keeping them connected with their local library. However, Community Libraries Librarian Mary West said it also requires some testing ahead of time.

Looking for COVID Related Marketing Materials?

We can help! Email marketing@metrolibrary.org with your marketing needs.

Online Program Planning cont'd

"Before our first Animal Crossing program, we gathered several staff members who played the game but were not involved in the planning process to test out the different events we had planned to ensure everything went smoothly," Community Libraries Librarian Mary West said.

Staying Organized

Del City Librarian Joshua Jordan suggests a focus on organization. He submits a hyperlinked list of needed materials for each program to his engagement manager in advance so she can work with the business office to get those items ordered.

Other organizational resources that may come in handy include the list of best practices, (*https://spotic.us/engagementbestpractices*) for virtual events created by the EPS department and working with EPS can be beneficial in working with community partners.

"EPS does not need to vet or approve virtual programs, but we will work with libraries in collaboration about virtual programs with large reach, ones that involve systemwide community partners, and those that are provided through social media," Teen Services Manager Emily Williams said.

Downtown Librarian Sarah Brown says she makes a list of presenters she has contacts and presenters she needs to follow up with. She also said she keeps a schedule of when videos are set to go live.

Testing New Programs

One reoccurring sentiment from Metro librarians was to, "just go for it" and try new ideas fearlessly.

"Now is the time to try big ideas. We need to maintain a relationship with our communities and although virtual programming is not anyone's first choice, it's an opportunity to innovate in order to preserve and hopefully grow those relationships," Del City Children's Librarian, Joshua Jordan said.

While we can continue offering our most popular pro-grams virtually, one librarian also suggested creating new programs while considering what each community needs right now, in the time of COVID-19.

"During this time, I've personally made it a focus to not only consider practical needs such as JobNow Tour and Foreclosure prevention, but also social and self-care needs like Board Game Night and others," Del City Librarian, Megan Autaubo said.

Reaching Customers

One obstacle in planning online programs is marketing those programs. Posts on social media and flyers in curbside bags may not reach the intended audience if that audience does not interact with the library on social media or through curbside.

"I made a point of reaching out to patrons that had registered for the in-person programs or who had attended similar programs in the past to let them know we were offering these online programs," Community Libraries Librarian, Beth Loecke said.

How can you best reach your customers to tell them about virtual programs? Consider reaching out to the marketing department (marketing@metrolibrary.org) to see how they can work with you on ways to reach the intended audience.

"Ensuring the public is aware of our programs even though the building is closed can be a challenge—we aren't necessarily netting the same crowd online that we are with in-person programs. But that's an opportunity to engage new customers and let them know what we're up to," Del City Engagement Manager, Meaghan Hunt said.


Some programming examples include LitFest Online, a Foreclosure Prevention Workshop, and an Animal Crossing Hangout.

Online Program Planning cont'd

Tips and tricks for planning your online program:

- Ask first whether you'd log onto the program yourself. Even post-quarantine, a lot of us are living our social lives online—so try to appeal to all ages in some way, and a variety of interests. -MH, DC
- Be flexible. -MA, DC
- Consider what the community needs right now. -MA, DC
- Team up with other librarians. -MC, AL
- Create a script and practice timing. -MC, AL
- Check the guidelines and best practices to get started. -MC, AL
- Let consistency be your biggest indicator of success. In other words, if you're doing a program and no one shows up the first time, don't give up! Run it again, consistently, every day/week/month/etc. and tweak your advertising to get the word out. -JJ, DC
- Stuff your curbside bags with flyers for programs. -JJ, DC
- If you think you have a good idea, you probably do! Look for all the reasons to say "yes" and ask yourself if the reasons to say "no" really make sense. Run your idea by a trusted colleague and see what they think. -JJ, DC
- Don't be afraid to try something new and fail at it! Things are still so uncertain that I think it's a good time to try out a new idea just to see how it goes, as our customers' expectations of us aren't the same as they were for our regular program lineup. Fail fast and fail hard, then work up from there! -MW, CL
- Do a test run of the program if possible. –MW, CL
- Don't be afraid to cold call/email presenters or organizations. The worst that they can do is say "No." - SB, DN
- Give as much lead time as possible. -- Start planning and reaching out EARLY. - SB, DN
- Offer different ways for your presenters to engage. Lives on social media, blog posts, recorded videos, digital resources, etc. - SB, DN
- Stay organized! Make a list of who you contacted, who to follow up with, etc. Keep a schedule of when different parts of the program will go live, when you need to have all presenter videos turned back in etc. - SB, DN
- Think about how your intended audience uses social media and the internet so you know the format that will get you the most interaction. - SB, DN
- Make sure to involve any necessary parties from other departments early. Do you want a resource list of books? Contact Collection Development. Do you need graphics or a press release? Contact Marketing. Do you want to stream a presentation on the Library's website? Contact Kellie or EPS. Etc. - SB, DN
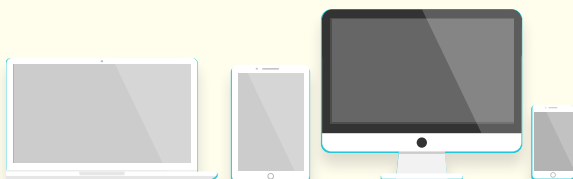
New eReosource Training Opportunities

Looking to learn more about the eResources we offer? Join Kristine Magers from Collection Development for an eResource Mini Series!

The first installment will cover Job & Career Accelerator, available through Learning Express. Job & Career Accelerator is a tool to help people learn about careers, search for jobs and more.

With supervisor approval, enroll and watch the first video of the series in EduBrite here *https://spotic.us/eresource*.

If there's a specific resource or topic you'd like to learn more about in future videos, email Kristine Magers in Collection Development at kristine.magers@metrolibrary.org with suggestions.
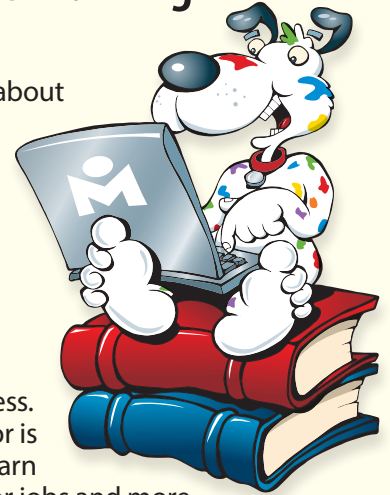
Masked Mascots & Safe Statuary

Fross T, Capitol Hill's resident evil snowman who normally spends most of the year hibernating in the basement, has reappeared to remind staff and customers of the importance of wearing masks.

The memorial "Bookworm" statue in The Village library children's area is masked up too!

HELLO!

Danielle Wright
AL Adult Engagement Specialist II HT

Michelle Merriman
DN Engagement Manager FT (rehire)

Irene Cui
ED Access Specialist I PT

Elizabeth Carter
BI Access Specialist I PT

Kresta Jayne
VI Access Specialist I PT

Nick Manuel-Carroll
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Jessica Roark
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Alicia Schenk
VI Access Specialist I HT

Tracy Stone
VI Access Specialist I HT

Miriam Villanueva
ED Access Specialist I PT

GOODBYE

Darin Smith
12 years, DN Access Specialist I

Wanda Black
2 yrs, ED Adult Engagement Specialist II

Qadira Muhammad
1 yr, SO Access Specialist I

Rhonda Magruder
4 yrs, WA Access Specialist I

Emmanuel Calfe
2 yrs, CH Access Specialist I

Rachel Nedrow
1 yr, SO Access Specialist I

Katherine Brooks Etzkorn
8 yrs, DN Youth Engagement Specialist II

Athraa Abdullah
1 yr, VI Access Specialist I

CONGRATULATIONS

Scott Garrison
Adult Librarian I to Engagement Manager at the Community Libraries

David Morand
Access Specialist I PT to Access Specialist II FT at the Bethany Library

RETIREMENTS

Julie Ballou
MLS Executive Director, 27 yrs service

Rick George
Interim Marketing Manager, 13 yrs service

COMING UP

August 27
Commission Meeting via Zoom

September 6-7
Library closed for Labor Day

September 17
Commission Meeting via Zoom

DIY Development
Managing Your Anxiety While Presenting 25(m)

25(m) - Whether presenting, pitching, delivering a toast, or contributing in a meeting, most people experience some degree of anxiety about speaking in public. In this course, author Matt Abrahams explores what causes people to feel nervous and shares some common anxiety management pitfalls. He then offers anxiety management techniques to help you become more comfortable and confident when speaking in front of others. Matt also discusses specific things you can do to manage sources and symptoms of anxiety which can enable you to feel and appear more confident for any audience.

Enjoy Your Retirement, Julie!

Thank you for 27 wonderful years of service.