IUPUI
SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS
Spirit & Place

Spirit & Place Virtual Event Tips

Designing virtual events requires the same care and attention as planning in-person events . . . and then some. Get started by watching this short video on leading meaningful virtual gatherings by Priya Parker, author of *The Art of Gathering.* After watch the video, check out some additional tips from Spirit & Place.

- **Design with intention.**
  What do you want to accomplish with your virtual event and what kind of experience do you want to create? Consider the following.
  - **Platform Options.** What does a Zoom Meeting vs. Webinar allow? Is livestreaming an option? Which platform best serves your audience and the creates the experience you want?
  - **Pre-Event Engagement.** Can you build community by providing a video, poem, artwork, or other material for attendees to engage with prior to your event? Can they share their reactions on social media or during the event via chat features?
  - **Welcome.** Use a PPT slide deck, with music if possible, for people to look at as they wait for the event to begin. Have clear opening remarks that signal the start of the event, establish the event flow and structure, provide tech and/or accessibility tips for attendees, and invite participation.
    - **Accessibility!** Use clear language, large fonts, and high color contrast in your PPT.
  - **Interaction.** What sort of interactive tools does your virtual platform have? (Chat, Q&A, Shared Screens, etc.) How might you use these tools to engage attendees?

- **Communication**.
  All events begin with the invitation. Keep it simple and easy for attendees to participate.
  - **Event Description.** Your event description should clearly state the event is virtual and provide insights on what attendees can expect. For example, will the event be live, on-demand, or both?
  - **Confirmation Message.** After registering, attendees should receive a message explaining how and when they can login.
  - **Reminders.** Send at least two reminders with the login link. We recommend 48 hours and again 2-6 hours prior to the event. Reiterate what attendees should expect.
  - **Follow-up.** Within a day of the event, send attendees a link to its recording (if applicable) and a survey. If the recording will only be available for a limited time, share when it will come down.

  Examples are included on pages 2 & 3.

- **Prep Work.**
  Engage your planning team, speakers, and other talent early in the process.
  - **Shared Vision & Understanding.** Make sure everyone understands why this event is happening and what its goals are. Solicit feedback on the event flow and how to make the event as engaging as possible. If your speakers have been doing this a lot, they will likely have some great tips!

- **Build Rapport.** If hosting a panel or moderated discussion, get everyone together a week or two in advance for a conversation to build rapport. (This is advice stand for in-person events too!)
- **Test the Tech.** Speakers should login 30-60 minutes early to re-acquaint, check their internet connections, and adjust light and sound.
- **Prep Attendees.** Use your confirmation email(s) and opening remarks to reiterate to attendees what they should expect during the event and how they may participate.

- **Hosting Tips.**
  As the event creator, it is your job to ensure your speakers and attendees are made to feel welcome and have the tools they need to have a successful gathering.
  - **Names.** Use people's first names as much as possible and encourage others to do so.
  - **Welcome Exercise.** Create an ice-breaker (respond live or via chat) and/or centering exercises at the beginning of your event.
  - **Tech Tips.** Remind attendees of basic virtual functions like how to control their view, pin a speaker or ASL interpreter, adjust sound, etc.
  - **Community Agreement.** If using breakout rooms, consider sharing with attendees a set of community agreements to help guide small group conversations.

Communication Examples

DESCRIPTION

Civic Saturday
Saturday, February 27
11am-12pm
Via Zoom

Civic Saturday is a civic ritual that welcomes all who believe in the power of showing up for each other in civic life. Join in on this virtual gathering us as we explore "Making Meaning."

After a year of radical change that has upended old habits and created suffering, it is time to grapple with what it means to put our civic values into practice to make meaning together as citizens.
Civic Saturday is a civic ritual – an analogue to a faith gathering. It does not aim to replace faith traditions, instead, these gatherings serve as a time for us to nurture a spirit of shared purpose, wrestle with moral questions, and develop a sense of civic character. Using poetry, song, civic readings, and a civic "sermon," all who believe in the power of showing up for each other in civic life are welcome!

Presented by Spirit Place, part of the IU School of Liberal Arts at IUPUI. Learn more at spiritandplace.org or contact us at festival@iupui.edu.

CONFIRMATION

Greetings and thank you for registering for Spirit & Place's upcoming Civic Saturday gathering on Saturday, February 27 from 11am-12pm.

You will receive a Zoom link within 48hrs of the event. Please do not share this link. Rather, ask friends and family to register via Eventbrite to receive their own link. Registration will remain open until 9am on February 27.

The event will be recorded and will appear on Spirit & Place's YouTube channel by the following week, but we hope you will make every effort to participate live! Part of the gathering will involve splitting into breakout rooms so that participants can share thoughts with each other. (Break out discussions are not recorded.)

**If you had any pre-event engagement activities such as watching a video or reading a poem, include that also.*

Thank you and stay safe!

Questions? Contact us at festival@iupui.edu or leave a message at (317) 274-2462.

REMINDER

Greetings!

Thank you for registering for Spirit & Place's Civic Saturday on February 27, 2021 at 11am.

The login info is: [insert Zoom link here]
Meeting ID: XXX XX XXXX
Password: XXXXXX

Here are a few things to keep in mind:

1.) The event will begin at 11a.m. Please try to login a few minutes early.
2.) The format will be a Zoom Meeting. Please keep yourself muted to reduce background noise, but we'd love for your camera to be ON! Yes, we want to see your beautiful face!!
3.) The main portion of the event will be recorded and uploaded to the Spirit & Place YouTube channel.
4.) We will spend some time in breakout rooms so that you can connect with each other, share thoughts, and build civic bonds. Breakout sessions will not be recorded.

Questions? Feel free to reach out to festival@iu.edu or leave a message at (317) 274-2462.

FOLLOW-UP

Thank you for attending Spirit & Place's Civic Saturday gathering!

The gathering was recorded and can viewed on Spirit & Place's YouTube channel by clicking [here].

We hope you will also take the next few minutes to take this [quick survey] so that we might use your feedback to guide our future Civic Saturday gatherings.

Thank you and stay safe!

Speaker Tips for Virtual Events

Share these tips with your invited guest speaker, presenter, or facilitator for a virtual event so that everyone is clear on expectations and responsibilities.

- **Location.**
  While virtual events can feel less formal than in-person events, they are still public events where attendees want to feel a part of something special. To make their experience the best possible, plan to speak from a quiet space with minimal distractions. Presenting from a moving vehicle or noisy space pulls attention away from the event's content.

- **Background Distractions.**
  Background movement and/or noises (people passing in a hallway, off-screen voices, traffic, elevators, HVAC vents, etc.) can be distracting. It's not always possible, but do your best to minimize these distractions.

  If you're connecting through a personal device, put it in Airplane Mode to avoid call and sound notifications. If you're on a desktop or laptop, shut down your email if it receives new mail notifications.

- **Camera Position.**
  Keep the camera height at eye-level to avoid a view up your nose! As a rule of thumb: Frame yourself between the chest or waist and the head to avoid views of (fidgeting) feet & legs. Too wide of a shot and you'll look too small; too tight and it's often unflattering. Experiment with what works for you so that you feel comfortable onscreen.

- **Login Time.**
  The event organizer will often want you to login early. Verify what time they need you in the virtual space and plan to be there! This is the last chance to make any technical adjustments and receive event updates.

- **Screen Sharing, Breakout Rooms, Private Chats, etc.**
  Do you need to run a PowerPoint or otherwise share the screen? Will there be breakout rooms? What chat features will been enabled? Share with the event organizer your preferences and ask about their expectations. Event organizers should not expect you to run your own PowerPoint or set-up breakout rooms unless they've previously communicated that information – and vice versa. Talk through the details!

- **Welcoming Message/Kick-Off.** Who speaks first and officially kicks-off the event? How will this person be cued to know when to speak? Have a plan to avoid that awkward, "Uh, have we started yet moment."