Organising Hybrid Meetings and Events

Hybrid events are when some delegates attend the event at a physical venue and other delegates join the event virtually. This document provides information on feedback from RSC Networks, RSC Events Team and RSC Burlington House Venue Team on organising hybrid events.

Contents	Page
1. Considerations for hybrid events	1
2. BMCS hybrid event – September 2021	3
3. Hybrid events at Burlington House	4
4. Electrochem2022 – costs for hybrid events	5

1. Considerations for running hybrid events & meetings

Resources – hybrid events generally need more resources as it is like running two events at the same time, with an emphasis on needing people to help with technical aspects of the event.

Format – how can you ensure that the physical and virtual delegates have a good experience at your event? Do you want to stream out presentations happening in the physical local to the virtual audience? Will you have separate networking sessions for online and physical delegates? Will you want presentations to be pre-recorded, live or a mix of both? How will poster sessions and networking work?

For your first hybrid event, you might want to keep things simple as possible with limited camera angles and limited interaction with the virtual audience.

For the Q & A session we would suggest you encourage virtual delegates to type questions that the host can then relay to the speakers rather than the virtual delegates asking the questions orally.

If you expect to have attendees from all over the world, you should consider the time zones and whether they can attend live or will view the recorded version.

You might want to survey past attendees to ask for their input on the future format of the event – the Networks Team can create a survey for you.

Venue - check what equipment will be included as part of the venue hire cost. Many venues now work with preferred AV suppliers who are familiar with the venue and will have packages for different events.

Cameras - you need to think carefully about what camera(s) you will need, and if you are happy for the camera to be in a fixed position or do you want camera to be able to move and track speakers. If the camera is in s fixed location, consider if you or the AV contractor will be able to control the camera position. You should think about the layout of the room and what view the camera will show of speakers and attendees.

Microphones – the room will probably have some microphones, but you might need additional microphones for speakers or for them to be placed around the room to pick up the sound. At the venue you will need to ask attendees to mute the speakers & microphones on their device to stop feedback and use the microphones in the room.

AV services – you need to understand what services they will provide eg record presentations in advance, sound mixing, communicating with the virtual chair and virtual speakers. It can be difficult to know what

equipment and services you really need, but the AV provider should be able to explain the reason for each item.

Size of room – check the maximum capacity of the room, and then reduce the delegate number to allow delegates to have space to feel comfortable. If the number of physical delegates is much smaller than the room capacity, will the physical delegates feel lost in a large room? You might need to allow space in the room for the AV technician and desk.

Internet connection - ask the venue about the internet connection and if they can offer hard wired connection rather than relying on wifi. You need to consider the impact on the internet connection when live streaming and having physical delegates joining the wifi.

Physical delegates – consider whether delegates will feel comfortable attending, but also whether their company is willing to let them attend. If you explain the number of physical delegates that will be allowed at the event, it may help companies feel more comfortable that their employees are able to be distance themselves at the event.

Also, will delegates be willing to travel to your event? It is thought that delegates in Europe and UK will travel to events before other countries.

Covid - the venue contract should be reviewed by the RSC legal team so they can ensure adequate Covid clauses are included. Ensure you understand the cancellation terms and charges, as the member network will be liable for any cancellation fees.

Ask the venue what Covid measures they are following to protect delegates. You can view the Covid policy for RSC events which we recommended RSC member networks should also follow.

Networking – it can be difficult to encourage people to network virtually, and some virtual delegates will not want to interact this way. We would recommend that you theme different networking spaces and have a facilitator.

Poster session – you might want to host the poster session on a separate platform, and consider grouping up to ten posters together in a virtual room, so delegates can talk to multiple presenters.

Exhibitors – the feedback from exhibitors is that currently they have found it difficult to engage with delegates at virtual events. It may be that the exhibitor can have a video playing in a virtual space and offer incentives to encourage people to visit the room.

Costs – for hybrid events you are increasing your costs by running both a virtual and physical event and having fewer physical delegates. Virtual attendees will not want to pay the fees as physical delegates.

Speakers – think about whether the speakers will be presenting virtually or physically, and if they are happy to travel to the event. Your physical delegates will not have a good experience if all the speakers are virtual so you need to ensure some of the speakers will be at the venue.

Also, many people attend events so that they have an opportunity to chat to the speaker after the event. You might want to explain in the programme which speakers will be in presenting in the room, virtually or pre-recorded.

Livestreaming and video conferencing

> 1) **For small events eg committee meetings / AGM**

If you having a smaller hybrid meeting you might want to just use a video conferencing platform (eg Zoom, GoToWebinar, Teams) which allows two-way interaction and very little video delay.

There should be a connection from screen to a laptop which you log in to start the meeting so it can use the camera(s) and microphone(s) in the room.

Delegates at the venue will need to mute the speakers & microphones on their devices to stop feedback and use the microphones in the room. When someone at the venue talks, it will show the 'room' so it can be hard to know who is speaking so you might want to ask people to say their name when they talk.

2) For larger events

You will need to consider using a livestreaming platform eg YouTube, Vimeo, Vmix.

Livestreaming enables you to broadcast what is happening at the venue in high quality video, and the content is recorded so can be easily shared. There are some free options such as YouTube (but you need to verify your channel first). There are other paid livestreaming options eg Vimeo, Vmix. The AV company should be able to assist you regarding livestreaming. Livestreaming allows the virtual delegates to post comments and questions.

You can live stream a Zoom meeting on YouTube. There is an approximate 20-second delay between the actual Zoom meeting and the live stream.

2. BMCS Hybrid Event

Feedback from: Gordon Saxty and Chris Swain, BMCS

Event: BMCS/SCI organised the 21st RSC / SCI Medicinal chemistry symposium 13-15 September 2021 at Churchill College, Cambridge. It was attended by 218 virtual attendees of which 41 paid additional for face-to-face premium for dinners/coffees. Eight members of the organising committee also attended (face-to-face).

Delegates and room capacity: By adding in the face-to-face component, it meant 50 people sat in the auditorium that had capacity for 300. The Chair said he would not have attended if it was 100 people in auditorium. Some of the organising committee stated they were only allowed to attend as it was a low-density event. A key aspect for physical delegates is whether the individual wanted to attend and whether their company would let them attend.

Platforms: They used Zoom (RSC Networks license) for networking and posters sessions as suggested by TC Digital (AV company used by Churchill College).

Livestreaming: The live stream was broadcast on a password protected Vimeo channel. BMCS said they should have broadcasted onto a YouTube channel as well as Vimeo as Vimeo was a bit poor.

AV role: The AV team operated cameras in the room, did sound mixing and communicating with the virtual chair and virtual speakers.

Format: Most talks were pre-recorded using TC Digital studio time, but Q & A was live in a Zoom room. They had 4 live speakers and 2 live presentations: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6VY8I1KHZ4 and Presentation of the 2021 Malcom Campbell Memorial Prize to Sir Patrick Vallance

They tried to have virtual delegates asking questions orally, but it did not work so reverted to written questions relayed by the Chair of the session seemed to work well.

Delegate's feedback: Generally had good feedback and people reflected it was a good face-to-face event.

Poster sessions: The Zoom poster computer failed which was a let-down for virtual delegates. The 'top of the list' posters were very busy but hardly anyone visited the later numbers.

No of organisers: Organising the event involved one professional event organiser & 10 people from committee. They emphasised that at the time of organising they had no idea how Covid would change the event.

Networking sessions: One organiser said the virtual networking session was sparsely attended (10-12 people) but those that attended enjoyed it.

Exhibitors: Very few people visited exhibitor area.

3. Hybrid events at Burlington House

Burlington House expects to run hybrid events mainly in the Library as it has three static cameras installed (one camera aimed the audience and two cameras aimed at the stage area). The library has software to enable events to be livestreamed cutting between the three camera angles.

Option 1 - Live stream your event with output formed of cuts between three fixed camera angles with branded screen backgrounds and a selection of other production effects. Stream to your website, dedicated microsite or social spaces (Facebook, LinkedIn etc) Note that stream can be to one or more with no loss of quality or latency. • 3 locked off camera (2 x stage area,1 x audience) • 2x lapel mics, 2x HH mics • Streaming to socials • 1 Streaming engineer Price £350	**Option 2** – Live stream your event to our dedicated hybrid platform with all the features of your in-room event available to audience members unable to attend in person - password protected registration, main stage with live presentations, Q&A, polling, breakout rooms, sponsors' area. Your event mirrored online with event presenters able to deliver their presentations remotely. All fully customisable with layout, branding and comprehensive delegate analytics for post-event follow up. • Branding colours and logo • Speaker Bios • Event Agenda • Q&A • Polling • Moderation Price from £900	**Option 3 -** Two cameras and camera operator to pan between subjects, track moving presenters, zoom to audience members in Q&A etc The more dynamic output offers a more engaging experience to the remote audience and resulting footage is ideal for clients wanting to prepare promotional event clips for social media (editing footage in post-production is an optional extra with prices dependant on total footage and final output length) • 2 cameras (1x manned, 1x locked off) • Streaming encoder • 2x lapel mics, 2x HH mics • 1 Streaming engineer • Recording available after the event • 1 streaming engineer • 1 cameraman Price from £1400

Capacity of the Library: The full capacity of the library is 120 people but for hybrid events it could hold about 80 to 100 comfortably. You need to allow space for the technician's desk of the back of the room.

Platform: Burlington House will use the platform recommended by the AV company. For smaller events this could be Zoom, we are waiting to hear back what platform they would recommend for larger events.

Feedback from: Kate Jones, Toxicology Group

The Toxicology Group ran a hybrid event in the Library at Burlington House on 10 November 2021 and provided the following feedback:

- About 25 people attended in-person and about 60 online
- Overall, it was quite smooth and easy to set up although some people claimed to have registered but did not appear on the Eventsforce delegate list so did not receive the link. This led to the Events team receiving several emails on the day.
- In future they would ask that breaks were not recorded.
- Their advice for other networks organising hybrid events is to let delegates know when the link will be provided otherwise you get multiple emails. For this event they did not need extra resources as it was a small, short meeting. For larger meetings you would need more people to run the different aspects, probably need one person to chair the room and one to run the online aspect.
- They used Zoom and live-streamed the event.
- They used Burlington House's A/V contractors (Torpedo), and the cost was £350 for a half-day meeting.
- Several virtual delegates complained of streaming quality, which the A/V person said was their connection not theirs, but the recording was fine.

4. Electrochem2022 – example of costs for a hybrid event

Electrochem2022 will be at the University of Edinburgh in September 2022. The organisers want to run the event as a face-to-face meeting but did explore the hybrid option with the venue.

They were quoted a fee of £3,395.00 per room (they would have 4 rooms with presentations ongoing at the same time). The fee would cover the following:

- Audio: 2 handheld, 2 lapel microphones and a sound desk to be added to the venue's in-house system, as well as additional speakers.
- Camera, including converters/cabling.
- Streaming Equipment to mix between video inputs and stream to YouTube. Other services instead of YouTube could be used, but at an extra cost.
- Technician.
- Setup, testing and derig after event.

Contact

If you have any questions regarding hybrid events, please contact the Networks team at networks@rsc.org