

Transition a Poster Hall into an Engaging Virtual Event

Conference

Attendees:	6,587
ePosters	1,872
Abstracts	2,527
Webinars	101

Challenge

How do you translate a physical poster hall with thousands of posters into an engaging online event?

Solution

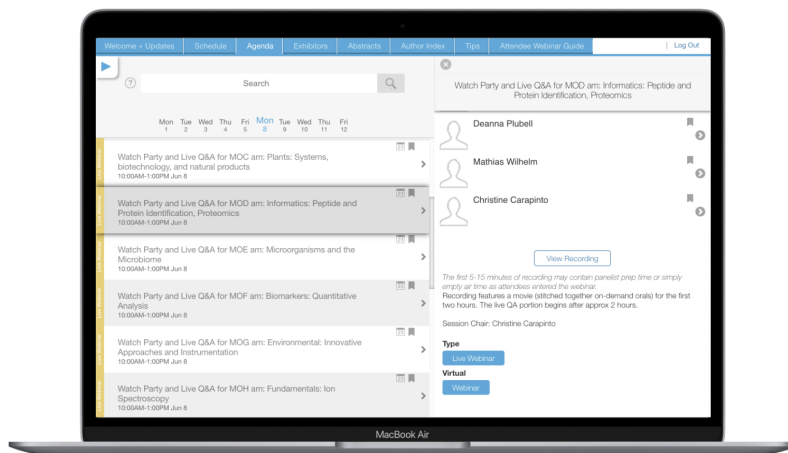
Mix live webinars, pre-recordings, ePosters, and PosterBridge® Connection via the [EventPilot® conference platform for scientific meetings.](#)

Reimagining how to share and discuss science

The American Society for Mass Spectrometry (ASMS) hosts a large annual conference that brings together a community of over 6,500 attendees. About 3,000 poster presentations and over 350 talks are expertly coordinated by the meeting planners so researchers can learn, connect, and spark innovation.

With the event scheduled at the beginning of June 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planners did not cancel. Instead, they took on the challenge to “reboot” the meeting. As Richard A. Yost, ASMS President, framed it, “Although the program will be delivered in a new and different manner, we remain committed to hosting and sharing brilliant science for a re-imagined ASMS 2020.”

‘ASMS 2020 Reboot’ was born.



Presenting Thousands of Posters Virtually

“We normally have over 3,000 posters (800-900 each day) with 3,500 people in the room engaging with presenters,” explained Jennifer Watson, Conference Planner, “One of our concerns was how to convert this experience into an engaging virtual one.” One benefit of virtual events is they are freed from the time constraints of an onsite event and open the door to re-envision how scientific information is shared effectively.

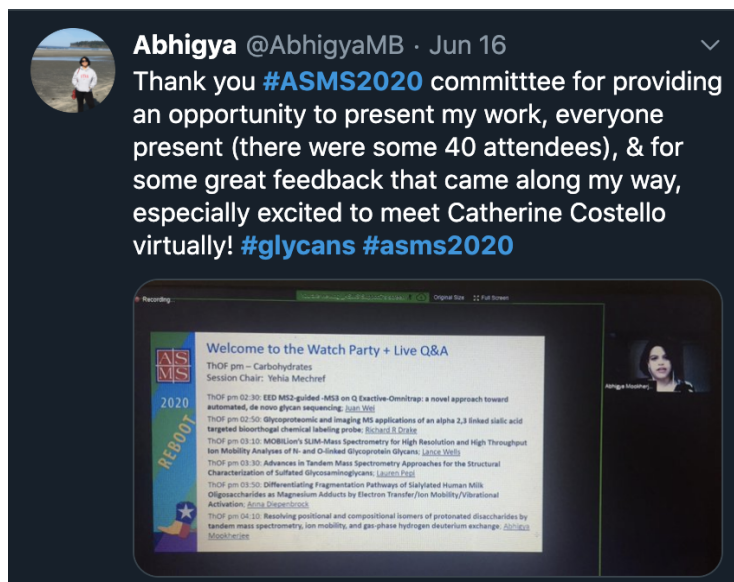
On-Demand: Pre-Recordings and ePoster Collection

A scientific poster can display the results of potentially multiple years of research. Therefore, attendees prefer a brief summary from the presenter on what the scientific research was about before diving into the complex details outlined on the poster. At virtual scientific events, presenters don't need to repeat their research summary, rather, they can simply upload a video recording or an audio explanation with the poster PDF. The content is then available on-demand for attendees via the EventPilot platform. Attendees can review ePosters and recordings in advance of the live session and prepare their questions for the live Q&A with the poster presenter.

Watch Parties: Simulive Webinars with Live Q&A

ASMS offered live eight concurrent “Watch Parties” in the morning and in the afternoon. In each watch party, up to six pre-recorded presentation videos were played back by the webinar host. After all the recordings were played, the live Q&A session with the attending presenters began. This simulive approach has a variety of benefits for virtual events:

- Eliminates any technical roadblocks or risks for presenters - their presentations are already recorded ready to be streamed during the live session.
- Meeting planners can respect the presenter's time if they live in different time zones so they don't have to be there in person at 2am at night.
- Attending presenters can relax and start answering questions via chat while their recorded presentation video is playing back.
- The live aspect of the webinar keeps the excitement of a live event.



Connecting Attendees with Poster Presenters at a Virtual Event

Although no one realized it at the time, the success for the ASMS 2020 Reboot was based on new features built for ASMS 2019 in order to help poster presenters connect with attendees onsite. At the onsite events, poster presenters may not always be at their poster in person. Therefore, a fishbowl is provided near each poster where attendees can drop their business cards.

ASMS was looking for a more efficient way to connect. ATIV Software worked with ASMS to roll out PosterBridge® connection, a digital version of the fishbowl. Every year ASMS finds new value in their relationship with ATIV Software because as Jennifer explained, “Working with ATIV over the years has allowed us to explore new and improved ways to share the science at our conferences and this year was no different.”

“The team at ATIV Software has been great. They went over everything we needed to get our virtual sessions and on-demand videos up and running with lots of great recommendations.”

Charging Registration for a Virtual Event

ASMS normally charges only a nominal fee for their annual conference as their goal is to share the science. With the same educational value provided as an onsite meeting, they felt their virtual conference was equally worth a nominal fee. While the fee was a little lower than onsite events, the virtual event attracted the same number of attendees.

To limit content access only to registered attendees, the following was implemented:

- Password protected platform (including mobile app version) to ensure only paid participants were able to view the presentations, thereby reassuring presenters of their intellectual protection concerns.
- Pre-recorded short oral presentations with authenticated on-demand access.
- Live webinars and webinar recordings can only be accessed by authenticated users.

Conducting a Virtual Meeting

While the ASMS board only expected 30-40% participation in a virtual conference, everyone was pleased to see the same attendance rate as an in-person event even with charging a nominal fee.

ASMS also leveraged its existing experience from past events. For the past 10 years, the ASMS team regularly captures the video and audio of their in-person sessions. The media is converted into about 20 recordings which are hosted on the organization website for three months after the conference. This year was no different with the recorded simu-live webinars being available to ASMS members after the event.

Success for Virtual Scientific Meetings

ASMS recommends:

- Decide what you can or cannot deliver based on the timing and tools you have. Then stick to your decisions and share them with your stakeholders.
- Sticking to your decisions helps managing expectations with your sponsor, exhibitors, and presenters.
- Charge for your event. Virtual events have value with content that only paying registered attendees can engage with. In some ways, it may require even more effort to plan and conduct a successful virtual event. Don't short-change the value by not charging.

Exhibitor Self-Service Improvements

Exhibitors were provided with the tools to upload content to their listing within the app including:

- URL to a product page or video on the exhibitor's website
- PDF of a product's performance in the field
- URL to a virtual workshop on the exhibitor's website

The 116 exhibitors took advantage of this feature and uploaded between 4-5 items each.

As a value ad, exhibitors were integrated into the conference program via exhibitor sessions. Attendees could add these sessions to their personal schedule and meet exhibitors live.



Work with vendors you can rely on. Jennifer noted "The team at ATIV Software has been great. They sat with us and went over everything we needed to get our virtual sessions and on-demand videos up and running with lots of great recommendations."

About ATIV Software

ATIV Software supplies the leading mobile conference app and integrated virtual events platform for scientific and medical meetings. Solutions include EventPilot® conference technologies with both an app and desktop platform for onsite, hybrid or virtual meetings; ScanHunt® game, a scavenger hunt for attendee engagement; and RouteInside® wayfinder for indoor and outdoor navigation. ATIV Software develops solutions specifically for scientific conferences from as small as 200 people to over 40,000 attendees. Learn more at <https://www.ativsoftware.com>.

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