

Online Event Stewards Guide

Companion Vivien NicUldoon
shawnajob@gmail.com

A.S. 53
2020 of the Gregorian calendar

Start Here

Greetings good Event Steward. What follows is a guide to put together online events. This is meant to be a living document updated regularly as new technologies and strategies are tested out by all of us. Please think of this as a collaborative effort with YOU. When you figure something new out, share it with the community. When a technology changes and we need to change the way we use it, let me know. I'll update it here and credit you.

While we're all figuring this out right now because of Coronavirus, these skills and resources will be a wonderful benefit to our society long term. There will be times when an online event is more feasible than an in-person event - particularly for learning events. There will be times when combining a physical event with online event tools will make events more accessible to people who could not otherwise attend. Have no fear, these will never replace our in person events. We would all rather hug our friends at an event than just wave hello on an online chat.

And As Always:

Don't Panic

Start Here	2
What can we do online?!	4
Meetings	4
Classes	4
Consultations	4
Social Time	4
Do something new	4
Technologies	5
Discord	5
YouTube Live	6
Facebook	6
Facebook Messenger	7
Facebook Live	7
Google Hangouts	7
Zoom	8
Instagram	8
Event Staffing	8
Other considerations	8
Internet Access	8
Body Issues	9
Security	9
Required Accounts	9
Online Kingdom Resources	9
Kingdom Online Event Calendar	9
AnTir Media Accounts	9
Thank You	9

What can we do online?!

Meetings

The easy set up is meetings. Using chat, voice or video, all your meetings can move online.

Classes

Demonstrations and classes can both happen online from people's homes. Demonstrations by the teachers can happen real time on live streaming and people can ask questions with text or voice depending on the technology.

Full classes can also happen entirely online. If the supplies are easy to get, the teacher can publish them ahead of time for people gather their own supplies before the arranged class time. People can ask questions, and share pictures with the teacher if they need feedback. The class size can be limited to what the teacher is comfortable with using signups before hand just like we do for physical events.

Consultations

Heraldic consultations, stuck on sewing projects, improving your form, and lots of other consultations can happen online at a virtual event. A willing herald can have virtual consultations with the people who want to get their names and devices submitted. A local expert can open up conversation for project questions and people can talk about or send pictures of the piece they want help with. Fighters can be part of this as well - conversations and short videos can be shared to help improve forms, show exercises etc.

Social Time

Craft nights and their general relatives can all go online in front of people's computers with their webcams. Because people are doing this from home, these can be expanded further to activities where the tools aren't easily transported. Instead of just the fiber artists, the woodworkers and metal workers can get in on the fun as well.

Do something new

You're not limited to things that have happened before. Try something new! Summits had a virtual tournament online that was run like a D&D game complete with dice rolls and narration by the participants. They had a great time and the kids could enter the same tournament as the adults.

Technologies

There are a plethora of technologies we have access to. Here's a quick guide to what the most common technologies are, how to access them and what they're best used for.

Quick Technology Comparison					
	Text	Video	Voice	Recording	Recommended for Events*
Discord	Yes	Yes - limited	Yes	No	Yes
YouTube	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
FaceBook	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
Google Hangouts	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Zoom	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Instagram	Yes	Yes - limited	No	Yes	No

**Recommended for events indicates that the technology has advantages that generally outweigh its disadvantages for use at virtual events for the SCA.*

Discord

Discord's best use is for facilitating lots of topical chat conversations and organizing an online event real time. It has voice and video, but the way they're set up isn't great for organizing events. It's really the chat room features that make Discord most useful.

Everyone using it will need to have a discord account. They're free and easy to set up. The person running the event will need to set up or have access to a Discord server. Discord servers are entirely virtual - it's not complicated and it's all straightforward. This is a very straightforward app with lots of user friendly instructions as you set things up.

Once a server has been created, you create channels on the server. Each channel can be named for a different conversation. Think of them as virtual rooms where people can wander in and out of conversations on a particular topic.

The [usage limits](#) on Discord are very high - a local event won't max out it's capabilities (Each server can have 250,000 simultaneous members).

Discord channels to consider for an event:

General Announcements	Ranged Weapons	A&S Fashion Show
Heavy Combat	Arts & Sciences	Museum Tours

Rapier Combat	Merchants Row	Heraldic Consults
---------------	---------------	-------------------

[Getting started with Discord](#)

[Create a free Discord account here](#)

Advantages

Allows organization of large numbers of people

All conversations are visible to all participants - people can't be accidentally left out of participation

Disadvantages

All users need a discord account

YouTube Live

YouTube has a live streaming functionality that can be used to stream classes and conversations. Before someone can stream, they'll need a Google account and have a verified YouTube channel set up.

The person streaming will need to be working from their desktop/laptop - they can't stream from their phone unless they have 1,000 followers on their YouTube channel.

When they're ready to stream, a link is created on YouTube that they can share out to people to click on and join them. This is where something like Discord is handy. You can add the YouTube live streaming link to the Discord announcements channel you created.

[Getting Started with YouTube](#)

Advantages

Viewers don't need any account or login to watch the live stream

Disadvantages

The presenter will need a verified YouTube account

Facebook

AnTir has fully adopted FaceBook as its social media platform. This is problematic for a few reasons as an event platform. Facebook has an invisible algorithm that changes/updates unpredictably. That algorithm chooses what people see in their feeds. Right now, FaceBook is promoting items that get the most likes and comments - News items, and celebrity feeds will be much more visible on peoples individual feeds. Which means notifications of events may never even be seen by people who would like to go to the event.

Which all leads back to: Facebook changes the way things are ordered based on their company goals, not our needs and we have no knowledge of or control over its effects. This is a 'use at your own risk' technology and I recommend using one or more other media as your back up for notifications and conversations.

Advantages

Most people have Facebook accounts

Disadvantages

Unpredictable visibility of postings to users

More people are abandoning Facebook because they can't control what they see on the media

Facebook Messenger

FB messenger is great for smaller conversations but has the limitation that you must invite people into a messenger chat - the existence of the chat group isn't visible to people who aren't invited to the chat.

If text alone is what you need, a Discord channel is a better option as part of an organized event. People can see all the discord channels associated with the event and choose to join or leave the conversation. It's an opt-in model instead of a closed group who need to reach out to invite people.

Given the choice, use the technology that has the greatest transparency to the people participating in the event. It makes it a more inclusive experience for everyone. If that's not possible, be transparent about why it was necessary to do it otherwise. Sometimes it is necessary, that's fine, be transparent about why it was necessary.

Advantages

Most people have Facebook accounts

Disadvantages

Groups created in Messenger aren't visible to people not already invited to the group

Facebook Live

Facebook has a solid live video feature accessible to anyone who has a Facebook account, however, viewers must have a Facebook account and be given the link to the live event after it's started.

The chat feature in FB live does allow an easy interface for people to ask questions via text and allow the presenter to answer.

These are the current rules for [live streaming](#) on Facebook

Advantages

Most people have Facebook accounts

Disadvantages

Groups created in Messenger aren't visible to people not already invited to the group

Google Hangouts

Like Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts is easy to use and has a solid voice, video and text capacity and like FB Messenger, the created groups aren't visible to people not invited to the group. Use this technology with discretion when it's associated with an event.

[Getting Started with Google Hangouts](#)

Advantages

Simple to use

Disadvantages

All users must have a Google Account

Groups created in Hangouts aren't visible to people not already invited to the group

Zoom

Zoom is built to be a virtual conference space - complete with separate virtual conference rooms. It's possible for people to have voice or video for all the attendees, not just the presenter. It's a genuine collaborative virtual workspace.

The free version is limited to 100 participants and no meeting can be longer than 40 minutes. This will work fine for shorter classes. There are several options for the [paid versions](#) that will scale up to 100+ people and 24 hour meetings that start at \$15/month. It's not particularly expensive and certainly less expensive than physical event sites.

[Getting Started with Zoom](#)

Advantages

Simple to use

Users don't require an account

Disadvantages

The host will require an account

The host will need to be able to set up the online meeting spaces

Instagram

[Instagram](#) is primarily for sharing pictures and short videos. Its primary use for events is as a promotion space for an event. AnTir has an Instagram account and many, although not all, baronies do as well. It's not great for event spaces to support conversations or video sharing.

Event Staffing

Do not try to run a multi-topic online event alone. You won't need as much staff as you do for a physical event, but you will need a few people. Try to designate a person for each topic to monitor the groups for any hiccoughs. It's likely they'll spend most of their time getting people connected to various online activities.

Other considerations

Internet Access

All of this depends on people having reliable internet access. If people have limited bandwidth or no internet access, these will not be accessible to them. It doesn't mean we shouldn't use them, it means we should take that into account. Consider finding local free internet access resources that you can list when you advertise the event. Local libraries often have free access to computers and the internet.

Body Issues

This is a rough one. We live in a culture that aggressively advertises youth and slenderness as the only 'acceptable' way to be seen on a screen. This is not up for debate. This is a reality of western culture. You may encounter people who do not want to participate visibly with online media - amazing teachers who will refuse to do an online class. They may not be able to tell you why - and you won't know for sure that this is the reason. Just be aware this is a real and difficult thing. Do not push people to be online if they aren't ready to be. Be supportive. Make space for them to change their mind later. You probably have body-positivity advocates in your local group. Make space for them as well. It will have long term benefits for all of us.

Security

This is another rough one. If someone tells you flatly that they don't want to be on video, let it go. Give them a space to change their mind at any point in the future, but let it go. They may have security concerns about having their image on the internet. It could be because of their job or because they are a victim of stalking or domestic violence. Trust that they are making the best decision for themselves in that moment. That could change, but you won't know when their circumstances change.

Required Accounts

Most of the technologies here require people to have or create an account. Maintaining and accessing multiple accounts on multiple technologies to participate in a single event can become frustrating or overwhelming for participants. Wherever possible, minimize the number of different technologies you're asking your participants to access. Designate a couple of people on your staff to be basic tech support for people who get stuck trying to get into sessions or chats. They don't need to be deep technology experts, they just need to be familiar enough with the technology to help people navigate around.

Online Kingdom Resources

Kingdom Online Event Calendar

AnTir has an online calendar for virtual events [here](#). To add your online event to the kingdom calendar, fill out this [online form](#) (You'll need to log in to the kingdom site first).

AnTir Media Accounts

[YouTube](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

Thank You

Thank you to all of you who are running ahead and trying things out in our current weird circumstances.
Maeve Cunningham - Thank you for sharing all your experience with running online events