Webinar Series 101

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This handout focuses on public-facing webinars, but please pick and choose what makes sense for a more internal program.

Webinar Series 101

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Ohio Sea Grant Webinar Series

Global Change, Local Impact

Helped localize climate change by bringing research and resources to Ohio and Great Lakes residents

changingclimate.osu.edu

- 47 webinars
- 6,935 subscribers
- 70,000 reached via iTunes U

Freshwater Science

Brings applied science on issues related to Lake Erie and the Great Lakes to the public

go.osu.edu/FreshwaterScience

- 12 webinars in 2022
- 943 subscribers
- 80-150 attendees/month
- Series is ongoing at OSG

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Why do I get to talk about this? Some successful examples from my last job:

What's your theme?

General enough to be ongoing, specific enough to set you apart

Specific

- "Climate change" vs. "climate change impacts in the Great Lakes"
- "16th century art" vs. "animals and their place in 16th century art"

Relevant to your audience

- "Ohio Sea Grant research" vs. "relevant freshwater science"
- "new funded research" vs. "new ideas in the Arts and Sciences"

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So how do we start?

Remember that the theme has to appeal to your audience, not just guide your own decisions. You'll use touches of the theme as part of your marketing messaging.

Who are your speakers?

Make sure they can talk to your audience

- Personal knowledge
- Internal staff connections
- YouTube videos of previous talks
- For outside speakers, check in with their communications staff

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We're assuming you want the public to attend your webinars, so make sure your speakers know that.

But also, make sure they're ok with that. You don't want to invite a speaker and then realize they basically only give academic presentations to their peers and aren't interested in engaging with the public.

What's your schedule?

Regular, but not too often

- Monthly is usually good
- Lunchtime mid-week often works well
- ½ hour vs. 1 hour
- Balance workload and audience presence
- Try to schedule a few months out

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Most people will make monthly webinars, but more than that tends to interfere with work, both yours and theirs

Timing-wise, look at the majority of your expected audience and find something that works for them – remember timezones exist, so if you expect a national or international audience, try to plan accordingly.

Schedule your next webinar before the current one happens – people will sign up at the end of the current one if you give them the chance to

Where does your series live?

Easy to find, easy to navigate

- Consistent overall URL
- Includes both archived and upcoming webinars
- Static page vs. event series vs. tags
- Registration link to Zoom, Qualtrics, etc.

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This short URL is where people go for everything, from archives to upcoming webinars. Go.osu.edu links are great for this.

It doesn't really matter how you create it, you just need a good landing page with an easy to remember link.

This is also a good place for your registration links so you can keep track of your audience and start building that email list we'll get to in a minute.

Ready. Set. Go!

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How do you advertise?

So many channels, so many options

- Event promotion toolkit: ascintranet.osu.edu/marcomm/event-support
- Social media
- Newsletters, listservs
- Calendars
- Speakers' affiliations
- Build a dedicated email list over time

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Toolkit – includes other ideas, updated as needed
Social media – tag your speakers and their organizations
Newsletters – yours and others – organizations, campus opportunities, listservs, etc
Calendars – campus, organizations, local papers, etc
Speaker – they have a department, talk to them about helping you promote the event
Email list – we'll get to that

Build a dedicated email list

Who do you have access to?

- Relevant existing lists
  - Internal lists
  - Professional organizations
  - Alumni lists
- Emphasis on "relevant"
  - Don't spam people

Who's signing up?

- Include email sign-up in your registration form
- Include sign-up option in your newsletter subscription form

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Prep your speaker

Set up a check-in session a few days before the webinar

- Check for platform issues, especially with external speakers
- Walk them through the agenda, including approximate time stamps
- Explain any post-event follow-up or responsibilities
- Answer questions
- Share registration list and any questions asked as part of registration

This is a great chance to re-emphasize audience and talk length.

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- Zoom etc. changes all the time, make sure you know what's going on.
- Let them know how long to speak for, how long questions will last
- Are they willing to answer questions in writing if you don't get through all of them?
- Let them know who will be tuning in, and if there are questions they can address as part of last-minute presentation edits

It's happening!

Day-of tasks

- Email reminder with log-in information
- Sign in early
- **Adjust chat settings**
- Automated closed captions
- Don't forget to record!
- Intro, including instructions

- Speaker presentation
- **Moderated Q&A**
- Chat reminders
  - Recording, archive
  - Survey
  - Next webinar, registration

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Reminder: both registrants and panelists – this should be a true reminder, not the first time people see the webinar info

Sign-in: check-in sessions are nice to make sure everyone can be online about 15 minutes early

Chat settings: you probably don't want attendees talking to each other, check this each time because settings change (and sometimes attendees can't send messages at all)

Intro: generic webinar intro, speaker intro, Zoom instructions on how to ask questions etc.

Q&A: again, you probably don't want to just let people ask questions live, so this is a good filter.

All done! … Or are you?

Follow-up tasks

- Thank-you email with survey, archive link, next webinar
- Additional written Q&A
- Archive recording
- Captions
- Email list update
- Reporting

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Spoiler alert: you're not.
Thank you: all registrants, not just attendees (Science Sundays example)
Written Q&A: ask this in your practice session
Reporting: does your speaker need any info?

Congratulations!

Now you get to do it all again next time ☺

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Now you're done! For this month.

Questions?

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https://ascintranet.osu.edu/marcomm/event-support