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## **Digital Events 101**

### **What is it?**

- A digital event is an occurrence of people gathering together where some or all participants are not in the same physical location, but instead connect in the same time and space online. A digital event can include webinars, trainings, lectures, screenings, Q&A's, interviews, virtual protests, and discussions, among many other things!
- A community screening of a film can be a powerful gathering tool, helping audiences and communities find common themes and leverage change. At Peace is Loud, we acknowledge the power of film, but also recognize that at times it may not be possible to physically gather in this way. Virtual screening events can make for compelling experiences that allow us to overcome barriers and synchronize communities and efforts towards transformative change.

### **When do we need it?**

- Many types of barriers exist that impede people from physically assembling:
  - Geographic barriers
  - Lack of access for people with disabilities
  - Times of crisis (such as a health crisis like COVID-19, natural disasters, humanitarian crises, et al) - *community and connection is crucial in times of isolation.*



### **The upside of virtual events**

- We may tend to think that physical events are more powerful than virtual ones, but there are many advantages to hosting digital events:
  - Overcome physical barriers
  - Bring together communities that otherwise would not be able to congregate
  - Increase event audience capacity and reach
  - Offer communal support in times of crisis
  - More affordable than large scale live events
  - More accessible for people with disabilities
  - Very measurable (you are able to easily compile data on engagement)
  - Extend the life of your event
  - Sustainability squared! Online events have a smaller carbon footprint and they can easily be recorded and saved for future use or repurposing

### **What do you need to host or join a digital event?**

- Personal device (computer, phone, tablet, etc. Note - a lot of platforms require the “host” to use a laptop or desktop)
- Webcam (if the event calls for it)
- Access to internet (note: if internet access is not available, you may seek out civic spaces such as public libraries or community centers)
- Patience! Most audiences are not yet used to participating in virtual events, we all need to work together on training our audiences and offering resources, tips, and best practices

### **How to Host A Digital Event or Screening**

#### **Event format notes**

- The most successful events combine different components to promote engagement and sustain attention
- At this time there is no platform that completely successfully combines the ability to stream a film/performance AND host a post-discussion/lecture/Q&A. You will need to use two platforms to achieve the entire combination experience!
  - Format ideas
    - Watch a film or webinar and live chat simultaneously
    - Watch a film separately or collectively, followed by a live Q&A with special guests (such as the filmmaker, film subjects, or issue area experts) or a panel discussion
    - Watch films separately or collectively, and then host a web-based moderated open discussion
    - Host a discussion with breakout groups/sessions for more intimate conversations on specific topics



For a virtual event for *Knock Down the House* we recommend collectively streaming the film with Netflix Party and following it up with a group discussion via Zoom. Netflix has also added [Knock Down the House on YouTube](#) for a limited time!

### Digital event platforms

- For streaming a film
  - Free
    - **KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE:** Use [Netflix Party](#) to collectively watch the doc and group chat simultaneously. All participants must download the Netflix Party Chrome extension (the Chrome extension is free with a Netflix subscription, and Netflix offers 1 month free trials!). Netflix has also added [Knock Down the House to YouTube for a limited time only!](#) **Insider tip:** to begin your Netflix Party event, make sure to click on the red NP button next to your browser's navigation bar.
    - [Kast](#) - The only free platform that can combine streaming, screen sharing, group chat, and video conference all simultaneously. In addition, it can work with all streaming platforms via screen sharing. However, it is not very intuitive and tricky to navigate - you should do a couple of test runs before your event. **Insider tips:** all participants must use the desktop version (downloadable) to video or group chat while collectively watching content. The party creator can only share their screen and is unable to chat and watch at the same time - we recommend the creator use two devices to be able to participate as well. Make sure to enable your camera and mic, especially since the streaming content's sound feed comes via the creator's computer. Creating a party and inviting others takes several steps - sharing url link, people requesting to join, and then finally joining - make sure to follow all the steps to bring your group together. Check out Kast's website for more help and tutorials.
    - [TwoSeven](#) - collectively stream films while hosting live group chat or video conferencing - compatible with Netflix, Amazon Prime, Vimeo, YouTube and HBO Now (paid subscription allows for other platform compatibility - note: TwoSeven is offering discounted subscription rates because of COVID-19 outbreak). All participants must download the TwoSeven Chrome extension.
    - [myCircle](#) - you can collectively stream films from YouTube or Vimeo (or anything you can upload directly) and group chat simultaneously.
    - Facebook Watch Party - Facebook feature that allows live screening of pre-recorded videos that are publicly available on Facebook - group members can watch and comment on videos at the same time. Check out [Techboomer's FB Watch Party How-To guide](#).



- For your Q&A/panel/discussion
  - Free
    - ***KNOCK DOWN THE HOUSE***: use [Zoom](#) to host a virtual moderated discussion! Zoom is user friendly and free for discussions for up to 100 participants and up to 40 minutes in length: Note: there is a paid upgraded version that allows for longer discussions and screen/content sharing - Zoom offers a 30 day free trial. **Insider tip**: at this time, we don't recommend streaming content via Zoom's screen share feature; the video quality isn't great.
    - [Jitsi](#) - offers video conferencing that is fully encrypted without requiring an account (especially useful if you are concerned about surveillance or privacy!)
    - [Facebook Live](#) - the feature allows you to broadcast real-time video on the platform and works well for interviews, Q&A's, or panel discussions. Check out [MoveOn's FB Live guide](#).
    - [8x8](#) - allows for free conference video and audio calls

### **Tips to make your event engaging**

- The goal of virtual events is to capture the power and essence of physical events - make it intimate, engaging, and as true to your individual/organizational self as possible! A note on how the goal for virtual events is to capture the power and essence of physical events
- When announcing and sharing your event, make sure to communicate how the entire event experience will flow - for ex., whether people will co-watch a movie or watch separately, when and how will the group be convening for a discussion or Q&A, etc. A detailed timeline can be helpful!
- Whenever possible share discussion materials (guides/questions/background) ahead of time.
- Let audiences know ahead of time different ways they can submit questions - email, WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook, etc - to offer various ways to engage.
- Check all equipment and platforms ahead of your event (a few times even!)
- When sharing videos, keep in mind that people will have different internet access - at times it may be best to make content downloadable and offer pre-recorded videos instead of livestreams.
- Make sure to follow up - whenever possible, it's a great opportunity to further engage audiences with a call to action and/or to measure the success of your event (with a poll or feedback request form). You can follow up via an e-blast, Whatsapp or text message, or social media.
- Anticipate what can go wrong and plan for it
- Make sure to have a moderator for open discussions or panels



- Determine what you want your audience/participants to know, and what you want them to do after your event
- We recommend keeping live virtual events at around the hour mark. If more time is needed, you can have more than one over a couple of days.
- Consider when you may want group chats/comment features active or not, depending on circumstances/content matter.
- Incorporate diverse expert and community voices into your discussions.

### **Additional Resources**

#### **Digital events resources**

- [Internet providers offering free WiFi during Coronavirus](#)
- [Surveillance Self-Defense](#)
- [Zoom how to](#)
- [Working During Covid-19: How to be good at video meetings](#)
- [StoryCorps App](#)
- [Gallus Events - How to engage an online audience](#)

#### **Platforms with other creative or educational content**

*\*In addition to supporting your organizing or film impact campaign goals, we encourage you to engage with the incredible content that is available to you online - it can help your mental and emotional wellbeing during these times!*

- [Caveat](#)
- [Social Distancing Festival](#)
- [TFI Shorts](#)
- [IDFA Films](#)
- [Educator resources](#) (for distance learning)
- [NYPL Simply-E app](#)

#### **Contact Peace is Loud**

- Please reach out to Peace is Loud directly for questions and guidance on your upcoming virtual screening of *Knock Down the House* or other virtual event - [screenings@peacesisloud.org](mailto:screenings@peacesisloud.org)