



Re-Envisioning Your Virtual Event Technical Program

Adapting your technical program to reflect how participants learn, present, collaborate, and network in the virtual environment is key to creating engaging experiences. The following guidelines can help your Technical Program Committee (TPC) re-envision your program to develop a stellar virtual event.

Realign and Refocus Your Content

One advantage of virtual events is that your content is not constrained by the original dates of your conference. Consider how you can best prioritize, organize, and sequence your content for your virtual event and beyond.

- What are the most important elements you want to showcase?
- What is the role of the keynote?
- How will you most effectively introduce your tracks?
- Can you make pre-recorded paper presentations available on week #2?
- When and how is it most effective to introduce tutorials?

Showcase High-Impact Content

For large conferences, keep high-impact sessions at the core of your program, with complimentary topics and materials in supporting roles.

- Air keynotes without distractions to get your entire community online together
- Implement “kickoff mornings” followed by technical sessions
- Spread keynotes and other high-impact presentations out over multiple days

Simplify Your Program

Streamline your tracks by combining related topics into larger sessions. For example, combine an Artificial Intelligence track and a Machine Learning track into one unified session. This will amplify your content and reduce the number of sessions that your attendees have to visit.

- Featuring 3-4 tracks per day is a good rule of thumb
- Virtual sessions can accommodate 8 hours of content and 20 video presentations, so use this to your advantage

Keep Sessions Brief

When reimagining your program, it is helpful to adjust your session times to maintain audience engagement.

- Set a goal of 10-12 minutes per session, with a limit of 15 minutes

Employ Live Interactions Strategically

Live content can enhance your program, but it can also add complexity, so use it selectively.

- How can you provide live interaction without incurring costs for production support?
- Chat sessions with designated “office hours” can be an effective option for Q&A that requires no additional production.



Get Creative with Sponsor and Exhibitor Engagement

There are a number of ways to provide value to sponsors and exhibitors at your virtual event.

- Consider offering a track where sponsors and exhibitors can present
- Apply sponsorship to the virtual event platform, on your event website, and on social media (banners, sessions brought to you by, etc.)
- Consider offering sponsors and exhibitors guest blog opportunities prior to your event



Pre-Record Verbal Presentations

Provide authors with an array of solutions and ample time to pre-record their research. This empowers them as real contributors to the virtual event, yields higher quality content, and reduces the possibility for errors during live day.



Provide Alternate Poster Presentation Options

Since poster presentations do not translate well into the online environment; consider offering a verbal presentation option for a better attendee experience.

- Set a goal of 3-5 minutes per poster presentation, with a limit of 7 minutes
- Allow presenters who do not have the means to record presentations the option to submit PDFs or PPTs as a last resort



Learn Copyright / IP Guidelines

Get acquainted with copyright guidelines, because your authors will ask!

- Virtual events can submit their technical papers for inclusion in the [IEEE Xplore® Digital Library](#)
- Authors are still required to transfer copyright of papers via the [IEEE Electronic Copyright Form](#)
- A Consent & Release form that authors can opt-in or opt-out of gives IEEE permission to publish or distribute presentations while preserving author copyright, so they are free to use their presentations elsewhere



Employ the Strength of Your Team

Your session chairs are your greatest asset in the development of your virtual event. MCE trains and educates session and track chairs, so use them to organize technical content, manage authors, and ensure quality work is put forth for your online audience.



We Are Here to Help

The MCE Digital Events Team can provide additional guidance, resources, and support on re-envisioning your virtual event technical program: ieee-mce@ieee.org.