Outreach

Let’s start with privacy and security concerns. We have stressed the importance of privacy and security concerns at the different stages of your event. Privacy is key when sharing the event invitation. Keep in mind that:

• You might need consent before contacting potential participants (for example, European General Data Protection Regulation, other relevant privacy laws.)
• Receiving an invitation to an event can contribute to put a person being put on the spot in certain repressive contexts. Check you risk assessment for levels of risk your event may pose for different participants.
• Use encryption in those cases where your invitation may pose risks for your potential participants.
• Allow participants to register and participate using an alias, if possible.

- Communications plan for your event
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- Things to consider (not) including in your registration form
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Communications plan for your event

Start with a plan. Preparing in advance is key. A communications / cover plan for your event will help you decide the information that should be published and prepare the messaging accordingly. Here are the elements we include in our event communications plan:

- **Goal:** What do you want to achieve through this event?
- **Intended audience(s):** Who are you addressing, aiming to reach?
- **Timeline:** A clear timeline of activities will include the different tasks and who is responsible for each of them.
- **Spaces / platforms**
- **Messaging:** What are the key ideas, highlights that you want to convey to your audience(s)?
- **Indicators:** How will we measure the levels of success of the event?

What does messaging entail?

There is a difference between information and messages. Messages are what you want to convey with the information you give, what you want people to remember or think about. Therefore, your messages will determine the communications tools you choose.

Work on a set of messages in advance, but also leave room for improvisation and for adjusting your content to different formats, spaces and audiences.

Be careful with scheduling messages, as the context may have differed once these messages get sent. This is especially important in the current climate, with events changing rapidly, so if you preschedule social media post make sure to regularly monitor them and delete them if context changes. There is also a risk of the tweets appearing less personal, so if prescheduling social media posts make sure to regularly check how people are interacting with those posts.

When should you start sharing and where?

Share early (2-3 weeks before), not so early (1 week before), and right before the event (day countdown). This is generally a good sharing pattern for social media but avoid replicating it via email, which can be overwhelming and have the opposite effect. Share a final schedule with times, so potential participants can plan accordingly. And try to share at different times, keeping in mind different time zones.

In terms of channels, try different channels to reach different audiences:

- Email (don’t abuse it, as most people have a full inbox)

- Different social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, specialised fora, messaging apps...) Choose the ones where you think your audience for this particular event may be, based on demographics, age patterns and online habits. Creating one (or more) hashtag(s) for your event will help you track the conversation around it.
- Press release (journalists tend to pay more attention to press releases, as they are tailored to them).
- When it comes to community based events, some people are strategic in their use of online spaces and might miss out the information on your event that they would otherwise be interested in attending.

How to design your online event invitation

- Make your invitation short and visual. Include the visual identity of your organisation / event + title of the event + date + speaker + hashtag + any other relevant info. Add a link for further context and make sure there is an easy way to contact you for questions or suggestions. Describe the link target.
- Be honest about what you offer. Focus on your content and why it may be relevant or useful, invite people in an honest, not click-baity way.
- Avoid generic and spammy-sounding invitations such as “Are you going to miss this?” that will make you sound unoriginal and needy.
- Be mindful of language. Use simple language that welcomes people with different identities, gender expressions and diverse lived experiences.
- Make sure your invitation is available in higher resolution and size for persons who have vision of focus difficulties. Contrast letters, images and background. Use bold and bigger font types where appropriate.

Example: “APC invitations for Challenge lecture series”

https://www.apc.org/sites/default/files/styles/node_full-size/public/Hate_II.png?itok=a3LJKgeP



Things to consider (not) including in your registration form

Registration is the equivalent of the name tag of an in-person meeting. It serves as a safety practice to know who is coming and who is in the “room” - it sets the tone for your policies and practices of making the environment safer. Registration can also reflect your practice of welcoming all your participants. It helps people to look for each other, meet and share. It helps in preparing plenaries and sessions to ensure the preparation team has the capacity to provide support when tech fails.

In terms of APC practice, the details provided by persons as part of the registration are used only for the purpose of the event and are deleted within 2 weeks after the event, as you can find here in our Participant registration form we used for our Member convening 2020.

Here are some things to consider when drafting registration forms:

- Think about the design and content of your registration form. Is it queer-friendly, diverse needs-friendly and welcoming to your constituency and participants with different lived experiences? We recommend going through How to Make Virtual Conferences Queer-Friendly: A Guide by Queer in AI and Ensuring Virtual Events Are Accessible for All by RespectAbility. Both of these resources also feature practical examples to include in your registration form.
- Rethink with your team which information you need and why. Do you really need your participants’ personal information such as first and last name, date of birth, address, occupation or titles? Make any fields you don’t really need optional. Enable registration for participants using alias, if possible.
- Asses with your organisation if gender is necessary or preferable (and optional) to include in the registration form. Include a short explanation on your choice in the registration form and consider including confidentiality note, anonymisation protocol, as well as who will have access to data and to what purpose.
- Offer optional and multiple choice for pronouns and always include an additional block for people’s own gender self-expression.
- Regardless if the event will be public or closed type, offer multiple options on visibility of pronouns in different spaces of your event.
- Anonymize all data regarding device type, name, address, pronouns, relationship status, gender and region once data is collected.
- Be mindful of readability (contrast, size of letters, explanations of links).

- Enable additional forms of registration via other means, such as by phone. This includes persons with vision difficulties, restricted access to internet and folks who are strategic about their use of online spaces.
- If safety and/or confidentiality is a major concern, inform and remind participants of the risk of sharing open links of the online event on social medias or on large server lists.

List of suggested communications outputs for your online event

- Publish an article announcing your event on your website (depending on the strategic relevance of the event)
- Create an online event using your usual social media platform (depending on the strategic relevance of the event)
- Share it on social media and with your networks (think of a powerful hashtag for your event to help promote it effectively).
- Feature it on your newsletter
- Put together a document with messaging for social media (teasers, core ideas, highlights)
- Work on the event’s visual identity: a banner, an infographic, an online invitation.
- Prepare a press release based on your event to share with journalists
- Live tweet / share highlights from the event in real time
- Work on a summary of the event to be published on your website
- Monitor the outreach of your event