Virtual Author Chat

Scotland County Memorial Library

Children

|

Tweens (10-12)

|

Teens

|

Intergenerational

Virtual Author Chat

Aug 4, 2020

$1-50

$
Byline
Jenna Knight, Youth Services Librarian, Scotland County (N.C.) Memorial Library

The Virtual Author Chat is a weekly Zoom meeting showcasing local authors and their newest publications.

All chats are recorded and added to our playlist on Facebook.

Advanced Planning

The Virtual Author Chat was developed as an alternative to a book signing event that was scheduled prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to remain engaged with the community, so we shifted this event online.

All authors participating in the chat needed to be past or current residents of Scotland County. We researched various virtual meeting tools, with Zoom being the final choice due its popularity and ease of use.

One unexpected challenge was discovering that Zoom had different subscription tiers, therefore we had to purchase a license for a Zoom subscription that would allow recording to cloud storage.

Marketing

Effective marketing through community partners made this event successful. Our local newspaper and radio station were onboard with promoting the event through their daily community spotlights.

Community organizations such as the chamber of commerce also promoted the event on social media.

We utilized the library Facebook page to promote the event and created a private group called #ReadTogether at Scotland County Memorial Library to facilitate conversation among residents.

Budgeting

We purchased a monthly Zoom subscription to allow meetings to be recorded into cloud storage. This was necessary because I chose to use a smartphone for recording as it produced better sound and video quality than my desktop. This fee can be avoided by using a desktop/laptop and saving the recording to the local

drive.

Day-of-event Activity

Set-up for the author chats involved scheduling each chat via Zoom, which sends an invitation to each author-participant. After the invitation is sent, I emailed each author a list of questions that I was going to ask.

Authors appreciate knowing the progression of the chat in advance. I also followed up with each author a day in advance to confirm the meeting. I used my smartphone, wired earbuds with built-in microphone, and a smartphone tripod for recording. I used Microsoft's Video Editor, a basic program pre-installed on my desktop computer. I also use Canva to create thumbnail images for each video.

I did keep my coworkers in the loop by sharing the authors' contact information with them in the event of unforeseen circumstances that would prevent me from participating and the event needed to be reschedule, but other than that, I was able to record and edit the recordings myself.

So far, technology issues have been minimal, which speaks well for the Zoom platform. I have used Wi-Fi and mobile data for recording with good quality results. One challenge I can anticipate, although have not experienced, is working with authors who are not familiar with Zoom to help them set up an account and equipment.

Program Execution

The program has exceeded my expectations and has been one of the most popular online programs we have hosted. Average views for each chat are 400 per video, and Facebook posts reach an average of 800 users. I have seen an increase in our Facebook traffic due to the popularity of the author chats.

Our social media presence has increased with more traffic to our Facebook page, more post shares, more followers, and more comments and engagement. Increasing our online presence is especially important now that we cannot hold in-person events due to the pandemic. As a result of the popularity of this program, the library

has remained relevant to its users.

Advice

Keep your focus on your community and be prepared to be amazed at the outpouring of interest and support for this program.

Did you try this program at your library? Share your experience using this form.

Supporting Materials

Document
suggested_author_interview_qs.doc
Download this Program as a PDF

- Programming Librarian Facebook Group

More Programs

May 7, 2020
Adults (21 and up)+ | $
Image



Virtual Beer Tasting

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
May 28, 2020
Adults (21 and up)+ | □□
Image



Virtual Language Conversation Hour

Audiences:

Adults (21 and up)
Intergenerational
Jul 9, 2020
Children (9 and under)+ |
Image



Virtual Comic Mini-Con

Audiences:

Children (9 and under)
Tweens (10-12)
Teens (13-16)
Adults (21 and up)