

## Accessing digital content through analogue means - April/May 2020

### Aim:

To test and give guidance on connecting with audiences/participants/customers when for whatever reason digital content cannot be accessed directly.

### Context:

#### Aberdeen

- **Access to the internet:** In 2016, 84% of households in Aberdeen City reported having access to the internet
- In 2016 the most common reasons for using the internet were; to send and receive emails (85%), search for information (77%), buy goods or services (74%), use social media (70%) and internet banking (70%).
- **Access to devices:** The 42<sup>nd</sup> City Voice questionnaire (January 2018) 90.2% of respondents owned or had access to at least one of the devices.
- **Digital skills:** Based on City Voice responses to a series of questions relating to use of digital technology for a number of different tasks.
- 70.6% of respondents identified as having Basic Digital Skills. The proportion of those with Basic Digital Skills was highest in those aged 35-54 years (85.8%) and lowest in those aged 65+ years (57.9%).<sup>1</sup>

#### UK

- 80% >75s in the UK do not use a smartphone.
- People in lower income/less educated households (that make up 66%+ of the population) are less likely to own a connected device
- More than 50% of >75s do not have broadband in their homes
- 50% of disabled people do not own connected devices
- 22% say they don't use the internet because it's too complicated while 15% don't use it because of the cost of access.<sup>2</sup>

While the majority of people in Aberdeen have access to internet, devices and skills that enable them to access digital content online there is still a considerable number of people in the city who are not able to access the growing, rich and diverse range of cultural offer available digitally locally and nationally. Poverty, disability and older age are the main factors of individuals who do not have access.

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<sup>1</sup> [Population Needs assessment 2018, Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Adults' Media Use and Attitudes Report 2019 – 30 May 2019, Ofcom](#)

## **Covid-19 and changes to working practices**

*Margaret Stewart, Creative Learning, Aberdeen City Council*

As the news and implications of Covid-19 in the UK started to become a reality, much of our Creative Learning project activity came to an abrupt stop. At the same time across Aberdeen City Council there was an immediate need to provide resources to vital services and support to our most vulnerable residents. At this point I became involved in work to support staff and tenants in the City's Very Sheltered Housing. Tenants who would usually have socialised and had lunch together were now isolated to their flats. Meals were now served to tenants in their flats, this requires additional staff to provide this service, which I have continued to coordinate. This insight to another working and community context highlighted the impact this change of circumstance has had on tenants, and the need to support their mental health and wellbeing at this time.

Having exhausted a range of ideas to connect tenants digitally via WI-FI and devices the suggestion during a Culture Aberdeen meeting from Pete Stollery that Zoom meeting could be accessed over a phone line piqued my interest as a possible way forward in connecting with tenants.

*Pete Stollery, Chair of **sound***

Although the major part of **sound**'s activity has been around its festival in October/November each year, in recent times, year-round activity has grown, including composition workshops, rehearsals and performances with the new music ensemble Any Enemy, as well as supporting other performances of new music through *surround**sound***. As **sound** already has a strong online presence, it was decided to move as much of our activity as possible online as well as adding more activity, in order to continue providing new music for audiences. We were keen to investigate accessibility to this activity in as much detail as possible and to provide listening experiences to those who didn't have access to the internet.

From this initial exchange and the immediate sense of so much of our cultural offering moving online for the foreseeable future there was value in exploring and testing ways in which non-digital audiences could connect with cultural and creative content over the phone.

**Intention:**

To trial connecting audiences to video conference digital space where cultural audio material can be shared over analogue phone landline and/or digitally via a number of devices.

### ***Case study 1a: Zoom - ACC***

This first test with [Zoom](#) was joined by Aberdeen City Council staff who are connecting with clients, tenants and participants and looking to explore how these interactions could be enhanced by sharing cultural and creative content over the phone for those who do not have access to Wi-Fi or digital devices.

An invite went out via email with the Zoom meeting URL, ID and password

In attendance:

Linda Clark, CL&D (landline from Very Sheltered Housing)

Gerry Dawson, CL&D (mobile phone from Very Sheltered Housing)

Frieda Strachan, Creative Learning (mobile wifi A/V call)

Alison Black, Creative Learning (A/V connection from home/work device)

Fiona Clark, Libraries (A/V connection from home/work device)

Margaret Stewart, Creative Learning (A/V connection from home/work device) - meeting co-host

Pete Stollery, sound (A/V connection from home/work device) - meeting host

Once all in the Zoom space it became apparent the need for facilitation especially for those who were audio only, as they couldn't pick up on any of the visual cues. It was also noticed that those who had called in by phone had their phone number as username. Pete shared some audio clips, a woodpecker and a soundscape from Banff High Street which everyone picked up well. This also flagged up the need to do some health and safety housekeeping regarding volume levels and Pete tested volume levels with everyone and everyone could give feedback easily.

Interactivity with using a landline analogue device was felt to be extremely limited and really only allows the user to listen. Any changes to how their presence is viewed by other participants can only be changed by the host or co-host prior to or during the meeting.

Following this meeting, a short evaluation questionnaire was sent to participants for their feedback. Responses were as follows:

Ease of use:

- I was on mobile with video; it was easy to connect, but audio was coming through the receiver rather through the speaker. It would have been better to dial in and have video

to have the full experience of the sound. I had turned my receiver volume to full in order to hear and see the video at the same time).

- Really easy via computer.
- Very easy.
- While staff found it straightforward to connect with phone number and ID they reflected that some tenants may have difficulty doing this without support.

Quality of audio:

- Good; clear; really clear.

Etiquette/facilitation:

- There is the option to 'raise your hand' when using video? Not sure if there is a way for the host to see when someone dialing in wishes to speak (maybe push a certain number?)
- It was fine, may work differently when people don't know each other. If there are scheduled times and dates perhaps the person chairing starts with housekeeping and an etiquette guide e.g Put your mic on mute if using computer/ smart device.
- Possibly understanding the mute and how this would work for phones (is it easier for the host to operate/)

How it can be used with intended audience:

- The only thing I would use this for is FibreKnot (fibre art making group), but I think seeing smiling faces is as important as the connection for that group!
- I think it has loads of possibilities, we have to be clear as to licencing and trialling with groups. Happy to trial something with UFO's (Unfinished Object, older people group).
- Possible giving access to music or spoken word.

How else could it be used?

- Would be good for people to dial in and talk to more than one person at a time – a family call for people at sheltered housing. I think of my Granny who lived in VSH and she adored having EVERYONE round at once, so if everyone dialled in and reminisced together and gave that person an opportunity to talk to a captive audience rather than one person, where possible, I think that would be amazing.
- Difficult with landlines to do anything visual (audio described would be difficult for those who can watch) great for bookclubs, fanclubs, shared interest groups.
- Could daily news be read out for example or guidance on health etc? What about poetry readings?

Any challenges we foresee.

- The audio issue for people dialing in using a mobile phone with the intention of using video. Data Protection sharing names and numbers.
- If there are any charges for whether to set up or to utilise, data protection and security, anonymity.
- Challenges involve support to use phone as even that will require some level of technical ability. My mother in law keeps accidentally pushing buttons on her phone.

How do people know about it?

- Newspapers, local radio, local magazines, post offices.
- I guess that there may be different access needs, eg. Organisation (ACC) , group (UFO), home (VSH)?
- Set up a regular time slot is always easiest unless you are having an extra special event.

### ***Case study 1b: Zoom - sound***

During lockdown, **sound** has been hosting regular Zoom meetings with composers, musicians as well as hosting public performances using the platform.

For the first of our **soundcast** LIVE curated shows of new music, information was put on the **sound** website, with social media also pointing there; users would click on a link and then receive info back from **sound** about joining the meeting. At this time, we had not thought about how we might inform people who did not have internet access, but this needs to be taken into consideration, obviously.

It was decided to have one person host the meeting (Pete Stollery) and another to co-host (Kadri Sõerunurk). They joined the meeting 15 minutes before the scheduled start of the show. The host has to designate the co-host (Participants/More(hover over name)/Make Co-Host) and various other settings were put in place at this point:

- Participants/More(bottom of column)...  
Tick: Mute Participants on Entry, Allow Participants to Unmute Themselves, Allow Participants to Rename Themselves, Enable Waiting Room.
- Security/Allow Participants to...  
Untick: Share Screen  
Tick: Chat, Rename Themselves

Having a Waiting Room means that users can gather in there and change their names, set their video and audio to un/mute as they wish prior to being let into the meeting at the designated start time.

Tip, always good to have some music playing as you let people in, so that they know they are in the meeting if everyone else is coming into the meeting muted. To do this, the Host needs to have Share Computer Sound ticked at the bottom left in the Share Screen window.

### ***Case study 2: Microsoft Teams***

Following on from the initial Zoom test with phones it became apparent that [Microsoft Teams](#) had a phone in option. At this point Creative Learning ACC, were looking at ways to connect isolated tenants of Very Sheltered Housing with ACC staff for conversation, stimulation and wellbeing support.

Teams was tested as a way of connecting individuals and or small groups to a facilitated conversation with the potential to share audio content, have conversation, discussions and fun.

In attendance:

Lorraine Haynes, Bon Accord Care (landline from Kingswood Court)

Alison Black, Creative Learning (landline, mobile and work laptop)

Margaret Stewart, Creative Learning (work laptop) - meeting host

Teams meeting phone number and ID shared via email.

Lorraine and Alison took on the role of tenants while Margaret facilitated the conversation; welcoming the two individuals to the call, getting them used to chatting in what may have been an unusual communication format for them. External audio was tested which didn't work but this has since been resolved, space was also created for the two tenants to catch up privately. From this successful test the Teams approach has been agreed by Bon Accord Care for trial at Kingswood Court with the view to extending to other sites. This approach is also part of an Action Plan to Support Very Sheltered Housing Tenant's emotional wellbeing for now and beyond Covid-19 restrictions.

How – Tenants can connect to a group call by dialing the Teams meeting number, saying their name when prompted and inputting the call ID via the phone keypad. Through testing it was decided that initially a member of BAC staff would support tenants to connect as some may find it tricky and then leave them to the conversation.

A member of ACC staff would then facilitate the call and conversation to a point where the tenants would like to continue the conversation on their own, at which point the ACC staff member would mute their mic and also their speaker allowing the tenants to continue their conversation in private. The staff member would check in regularly if required, Teams allows you to see that a conversation is taking place with glowing circles indicating activity back and forth.

#### Further considerations

- Having had calls facilitated initially tenants may choose to call each other independently.
- Once tenants get used to this format the opportunities to connect are endless and programs of over the phone activities could include; listening to concerts, connect small groups to audio from YouTube or Facebook live, have quizzes, poetry readings, book groups, TV post watch parties or VSH Goggle Box...
- Once tenants are more familiar with this format a printed menu of options can be shared with events taking place at a regular day/time.
- As tenant's phone numbers may be visible on Teams a GDPR privacy notice has been created for this work, also we would hold tenants' phone numbers, should we lose connection, we can check back with them. Staff facilitating calls have PVG for vulnerable adults and have training on Adult Protection.

#### Resources:

Examples of other projects connecting audience through analogue means

- APA: [Here For You - Telephone Club](#)

Don't be lonely in these challenging times! If you find yourself isolated, out of touch or at a loss, then we're here for you. We'd love to chat and share a poem or story or memory with you.

- Alzheimers Society ["Singing for the Brain"](#)

Singing for the Brain brings people affected by dementia together to sing a variety of songs they know and love. Coronavirus pandemic – Singing for the Brain online or by phone

- Pitlochry Festival Theatre: [Telephone Club](#)

Have a chat with us in Telephone Club!

- John Giorno [Dial-A-Poem](#)
- Ray Johnson - [Mail art](#)
- David Hockney - [Some Fax Prints](#)

## Keeping everyone safe<sup>3</sup>

Following reports of inappropriate activity and concerns over user safety when accessing online video/audio conferencing platforms, here are some considerations to take when using such platforms with your audience.

- Understand the intended audience and the risks of sharing event URL/phone numbers and ID publicly. You may wish to know ahead of time who is accessing, in which case distribute this information directly to your audience or advertise and ask your audience to register with you in advance and then get the access information to them. If your audience is to register with you in advance it may be an opportunity to capture any information that is important to the event, for example understanding audience specific needs, understanding and agreeing to any risk assessments or check-lists before the event commences and this also gives an idea of how many people to expect.
- Where possible have a moderator/host for each event. This enables the main facilitator/performer to focus on their role, allowing the moderator to manage the audience, chat function and if anyone tries to join who is unexpected.
- Everyone who logs in initially has to wait until the moderator approves them to join. The moderator also takes control of muting all participants (as appropriate) except the facilitator when the event starts, and responds to any queries put into the chat function, as some of those new to Zoom may be unclear about how to go to Speaker view for example. You can allow the microphones all on for the 10 minutes before the class starts, so that everyone can have a chat and ask any queries up front, and do the same at the end, so that participants can give feedback to the facilitator.

### Considerations around conducting an audio/visual event

- Some video conferencing platforms have a waiting room function, a holding space for the audience ahead of the event starting, this is a space where displayed usernames can be edited and registers taken.
- Welcome and introductions as appropriate, letting all know if there is a mix of people accessing visually/audibly
- Testing that everyone can see/hear and asking for confirmation of this, checking volume levels from the host as well as individuals devices, agreeing use and control of muting mics, bearing in mind that those accessing over the phone will have limited controls. Agree use of chat function for examples for questions, technical issues...

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<sup>3</sup> Thank you to Carol Benzie, Citymoves for sharing their approach



- Make the audience aware if any aspect will be recorded and ensure the appropriate permissions are in place for this. Unless previously agreed, suggest that no one else record or photograph any aspect of the event.
- Once an event has started you may wish to close the event to anyone new joining for both safety and to avoid interruption.
- At the end of the event you may wish to facilitate the goodbyes and perhaps if microphones have been muted then open that up for conversation, feedback or well wishing.
- Share an email address or other means of communication for further questions or feedback.

### **Guidance on those connecting via phone**

- Dial in on a landline or mobile using the phone number and meeting/event ID
- In MS Teams the phone number and ID are generated when a meeting is created in MS Teams calendar, copy this and share it with your intended audience.
- In Zoom schedule the meeting and share the link/phone number and ID.
- Make your caller ID anonymous by typing 141 at the beginning of the number, this works for all UK numbers and is free. It will display as 'Private Number' or 'No Call ID'. Depending on the platform the moderator may be able to edit the user name.
- You may be asked to record your name and then entering # key (Teams) as you enter and leave the call everyone will hear your name.
- If there is a mix of audience accessing via phone (audio only) or of connected device (both audio and visually) it may be difficult for those accessing by phone to gauge when to contribute, it is advised that the host should help with the facilitation of 2 way communication with those accessing audio only.

### **Further questions that have arisen while pulling this together:**

- Is there a way to have digital web content that you can phone into, access when you want rather than it always needing to be scheduled/facilitated in real time?
- Do Teams/Zoom have an option to call out to landlines?
- Can the host mute participants in Teams?
- Can we capture/share the work we are doing to enable audiences to access digital through analogue means?

