HERE TO HELP

Touch

BROADCAST TV MAKES VIRTUAL EVENTS BETTER

Five months into the Coronavirus pandemic and like most creative services agencies we have done our share of re-focusing and tuning the work we do for our clients to meet the needs of the day. We are grateful for their courage and their vision to see the opportunities that this critical moment presents for engaging audiences.

Now more than ever, people crave human connection. Audiences need inspiration, reassurance, engagement, activity, insights, and just plain fun. Clients who embrace not just the technology that the pandemic has imposed on us, but also the engagement opportunities it has revealed, are seeing tremendous results.

Touch was thrilled to produce the Microsoft 2020 Global Hackathon – the world's largest virtual hackathon. The seven-year-old event ran for three days and for the first time, was 100% virtual. The Hackathon included a 65-hour live broadcast connecting each of the Microsoft global development center locations where the Hackathon was running, including Beijing, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Israel, Dublin, New England, New York City, Silicon Valley, Vancouver, and Redmond.

Virtual events are interactive broadcast television

Looking beyond a simple live or pre-recorded stream, the team knew that the Hackathon would best be served by the immediacy and energy of a live broadcast. With more than 130 live segments produced over three days, the show included live anchors from each region introducing live hosts from each site, who in turn conducted dozens of live interviews with hacking teams participating in the event from 17 countries across 19 time zones.

To achieve a more dramatic broadcast quality look, participants joined individual Microsoft Teams meetings that allowed us to manage participants as individual feeds into a broadcast switch. Our Chyron operator revealed a dynamic, energetic broadcast graphics package, with colorful backgrounds, lower third nameplates, event logos, and other information animating
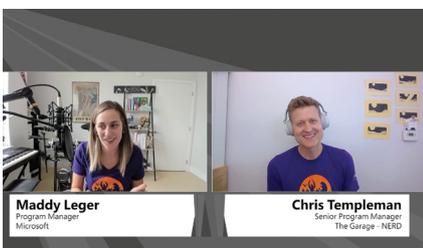
on, providing a visually rich and compelling experience for viewers and elevating the experience well beyond a traditional Teams or Zoom meeting.

Virtual events, webinars, and digital conferences may take place in Zoom, Teams, or within a third-party virtual event environment – the digital equivalent to the venues where we're used to producing in-person events – bring audiences to our events from their remote safe locations. But what they're consuming, what they're engaging with, what they're viewing, is interactive television that inspires and connects people, and in our opinion, it needs to be treated as such.

Thinking beyond the frame

We may be stuck at home, or occasionally at our offices, but that doesn't mean we need to be stuck at our desks or dining room tables. Laptops, cameras, mics, are portable. To deliver pre-recorded content for our events we like to get our subjects out of their usual locations. Moving them around to the back yard, a local park, the street in front of their house or office, or any other safe location can provide badly needed variations for the tired eyes on the other end of your production.

Creative uses of platforms such as OpenReel also provide dynamic remote multi-camera production control, which combined with motion graphics and unique settings, and some creative producing, will give you a much bigger bang for your buck than where the industry has been thus far.

It might be a long road back to normal, and guaranteed, things will never be the same as they once were. But thanks to the accessibility of decades of broadcast television experience, virtual events will only keep improving.

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Live from
Ireland