

Livestreaming Resource Guide

So you've decided to host a virtual or blended fundraising event this year! We know this is new and that you may have questions around how to do this successfully. Lucky for you, our team is here to help.

We're breaking down everything you need to know about hosting a successful livestream for your event. From tools to use and where to start, to making your experience look professional, and insights on what to do yourself vs. when to call in an external company. After reading this guide, and implementing the ideas included, you'll be ready to take on any virtual event!

And, as always, if you have questions about your livestream experience, or how to increase the fundraising potential for your upcoming virtual event, our team is here to support you.

If you have any other questions, make sure to sign up for our next [live support drop-in session](#) to speak with our team directly.

Meet Nico and Scott

We took this one to the professionals, to get you all the answers about livestreaming. We sat down (*virtually of course!*) with Nico and Scott, from [New Horizon Productions](#), who as a company, have been in the audio / visual industry for over 30 years, and lately more focused on live, charity and community events.

Not only are they a partner of Trellis, and able to support our clients with their virtual events, but a wealth of knowledge for all things livestreaming. Take a look at some of the insights they shared!

What do I need to host a virtual event?

The Basic Livestreaming Checklist:

1. A laptop or phone.
This is the device you'll use to control and run your livestream event.
2. A stable internet connection.
We recommend upload speeds greater than 6 MBPS. You can test your internet speed [here](#).
If you have the option, hardwire your internet. This will ensure you have better quality connection for your event.

3. A platform to run your livestream.

Check out below to see some pros and cons of the leading livestreaming tools!

The Advanced Livestreaming Checklist:

1. External camera.

This could be as simple as a webcam, or try a production style camera (which you can rent from your local production company, and is Scott recommended for high quality pre-recorded footage!) Use this to capture your pre-recorded videos and play them during your event. Don't forget to ask when you pick up your camera what you'll need to transfer your new videos to your computer.

2. Good quality sound.

To start, make sure all background noise is minimized while filming your videos or while speaking during your live event. If looking to get a microphone for your virtual event, try a simple USB microphone. If all your speakers and entertainers are in one place, you'll want to find a wireless or head microphone to pick up their voice without catching too much background noise.

3. Timely screen switches.

The ability to switch easily and seamlessly between your different virtual elements (ex. pre-recorded and live videos, speakers, etc.). Doing this seamlessly will help you create a professional looking experience for your guests.

4. A good backdrop.

Consider where your emcee and speakers will be while they are participating in your event. Encourage them to have a simple and clean background, and good lighting so it's easy for viewers to see them.

Protip: Many streaming services, like Zoom, offer virtual backgrounds that can be an easy way to hide a busy background.

Live virtual event vs. pre-recorded? Can I do a bit of both?

With a live event you are able to interact with and engage your donors in a different and often more effective way. If you plan on adding a live auction or live fund-a-need pledging portion to your event, this is the perfect time to have a live portion with a professional auctioneer.

However, pre-recorded sessions mean you'll know exactly what's going to happen next, and you can guarantee the quality of the broadcast. For emotional or crucial elements (especially those that are used to encourage donors to give!) having a pre-recorded element will guarantee the quality. It's important not to distract your guests with poor audio-visuals while they watch.

For your event, we'd encourage you to do a little bit of both! Have a live emcee, speakers, and/or auctioneer that will engage with donors around how much has been raised and encourage people

to donate or bid. Your host will ultimately control the schedule during the event and can cue up pre-recorded video elements for your guests to watch.

Mixing these elements will also increase your production quality. (Review the above checklist to see what you need to successfully add these elements!)

What platform should I use?

- 1. Zoom Webinar.**

Using the Zoom Webinar platform, you're able to control who is presenting at any moment, host a live chat throughout the event and offer a separate section of the platform for questions to be asked. For event attendees, the platform is user-friendly and easy to install and interact with. Additionally, you are able to password protect your Zoom Webinar, which is especially important if you are hosting a paid event and don't want open access for people to freely enter without registering beforehand. However, the video quality on Zoom is not as strong as some other platforms, this should be taken into account when deciding how professional you'd like your event to look. You can learn more with our resource guide about [getting started with Zoom Webinars](#).
- 2. Zoom Meeting.**

This tool is great for hosting interactive sessions where you'll require lots of audience participation and speaking or screen-sharing from most participants. The Meetings option is great for groups of up to 50 people where the event is more collaborative.
- 3. Livestream.com.**

This platform has been set up to be really user-friendly and intuitive, and they have some great resources to help you get started. With their tools, you'll be able to switch back and forth between pre-recorded or live elements with ease. This platform is more expensive than the others but provides a much more professional looking event.
- 4. Facebook Live.**

When using Facebook, note that they do have a cap on the quality of your video (720p where most videos are streamed in 1080p). You'll also notice a 30 second delay, but that means you'll get a higher quality image and video. But, with Facebook you'll have the benefit of the general public being able to find and attend your event too, increasing the amount of people learning about your cause and participating in your event!
- 5. YouTube Live.**

(Scott approved!) You'll be able to change your privacy settings of your stream, and you can create the link to go live as early as you need it. Don't forget to activate your YouTube Live account a few days before your event.

Who do I need on my team to run this event?

The more people you have to support the technology and livestreaming part of your event, the better! We'd encourage you to delegate roles beforehand, so everybody knows what to do on the day.

Some of the roles you'll want to fill include:

1. **Emcee.**
This person will be the face of your event for the night! Find somebody high energy, who knows your organization and is able to make sound decisions for your event on the fly. They should be able to handle curveballs (ya know, in case those happen during your event!) and keep guests smiling and entertained throughout the night.
2. **Behind the Scenes Wiz.**
This person will be coordinating all of the magic behind the scenes. They'll make sure videos are cued up, the next speakers and entertainers are ready to go live and will be communicating with the emcee to make sure they're staying on track and know what's coming next.
3. **Tech Support.**
This person will be available to handle any technical issues that arise on the fly. If guests have trouble logging in, they can support, or if a speaker loses internet connection, they have a few tricks in their back pocket to get them up and running quickly.
4. **Chat Moderator.**
If your virtual event will include a live chat or Q&A session, have somebody available to moderate the conversation, answer any questions, and keep guests engaged through the chat throughout the night. When the Q&A happens, they'll have the list of questions ready to go, making it easy for the presenter to answer all the questions.

Should I do it myself or hire a production company?

At the end of the day, it comes down to comfort. If you and your team are not comfortable executing on the day of the event, then consult with New Horizon Productions or a local production company. They'll be able to better advise you on the best options for your organization.

We also know that a more professional event experience gives your donors more trust in your organization and that often leads to more donations. You know your audience, and how professional and polished or authentic and relaxed your virtual event should be to get the responses you're looking for.

Other pro tips from Nico and Scott!

- For pre-recorded elements, if you've got a better quality camera, you can often use the audio from the recording as well! Look at your settings beforehand and try it out!
- Customize your event software. Change the names, logos, and branding wherever possible to reflect your event. This will help make the event feel more personal and feel more intentionally planned for event attendees.
- Send the event link at the last minute. Hold onto the event link as long as you can, so guests have fewer opportunities to share the link with those that have not purchased tickets. This will also give you a chance to finalize details about the event software platform leading up to the event if you need to make any changes.
- Do a run through! Practice switching between your videos, testing your audio, and getting comfortable using the different tools for your livestream element.
- The more people in the room (using the Internet network) while you are hosting your event the less bandwidth you'll have for streaming. Limit the number of people using wifi in the room to avoid a bouncy connection.
- As event organizers, make sure you are the only one who has control over who can present and speak during the event. Reduce the access event attendees have to reduce the chance for surprise speakers.
- Have support available. We listed this in our key roles, but can't stress it enough. As everybody has different levels of comfort with technology, make sure to have a team member ready during the event to answer any technical support questions people may have while they are logging into the event and during the broadcast.

What to Take it to the Next Level?

Your virtual event is likely going to be designed to help you raise more money for your organization. To help encourage a sense of urgency to give, and desire to donate to your cause, we'd encourage you to add a giving and donations thermometer to your fundraising page on Trellis. You'll be able to share your screen throughout the live elements of your virtual event and show the progress with your fundraising through the thermometer.

On Trellis your thermometer will live update as donations and sales are made, giving you an accurate total of funds raised. As well, when you use the Trellis live giving and fund-in-need features, those funds will also automatically drive your fundraising thermometer. If you need help setting this feature up, read this [article](#).

We know this may be new to you, but we have confidence you'll do a great job however you choose to approach your virtual event! If you have more questions, [reach out to our team](#), we would be happy to answer them for you. Or if you are curious about learning more about how Trellis can support your fundraiser, [join a live demo call](#).