

Summary



We Are Still Here! / How the Coronavirus Pandemic Transformed the Idea of LIVE and How We Will (Also) Experience Conventions and Events in the Future (Kerstin Mordhorst)

(pp. 310 – 312)

For many decades physical presence was the nearly exclusive characteristic of public events. In keeping with the motto »only live is live«, conventions, exhibitions, meetings and events were conceived solely as something to be experienced in person; they were planned well in advance and conducted at fixed times in select venues. The credo could even be found as late as 2019 in large letters on advertisements for a major German trade fair venue, yet it would soon become fundamentally disputable in light of the events of this past year. What had happened? Due to the coronavirus pandemic large-scale events could no longer be held after March 2020. The events industry, the 6th largest business sector in Germany, was especially hard hit by this development; its otherwise so minutely planned world was turned upside down from one day to the next.

The extent to which the pandemic – which has been a determining factor for more than a year now – has affected the events industry, becomes clear when viewing the events calendar of the K.I.T. Group, an international professional congress organiser (PCO), which, among other things, is involved in the organisation of the *Deutscher Bibliothekartag* (German Library Congress). For the first time in the 35-year history of this PCO around 93 percent of the events scheduled to be held in 2020 could not be carried out as originally planned because in-person attendance was no longer feasible. The events had to be postponed or cancelled entirely; or, alternatively, in the case of nearly 45 percent of them, re-organised as online events in the form of a series of webinars or virtual conferences.

Forms of Digital Professional Development and their Challenges / An Overview and Guide for the Transformation Process (Ursula Georgy)

(pp. 313 – 315)

Within the confines of the COVID-19 pandemic many providers of professional development and also libraries were – and still are – forced to transfer their courses of further education and training to digital platforms. In 2020 these organisations and institutions were faced with the question of whether to cancel events and offer them at a later date after systematic planning and restructuring; or to move them online as fast as possible – by employing a quick-and-dirty solution, similar to the method that colleges and universities had to use. There were and are arguments for both choices.

For digital formats, whether synchronous or asynchronous, the relevant parameters are different from those of in-person events. Thus, events which would last for hours, all day or for several days cannot be transferred on a one-to-one basis into a digital space. Hence the choice of which path to follow must be well-considered. The article by Ursula Georgy sheds light, in particular, on the challenges of planning and conducting online events and provides an overview and guide for the changeover to digital events.

Her conclusion: the combination of in-person and online learning environments is given the term hybridity; it refers to the combination of two formerly separate systems or formats. And the future belongs to hybridity.

The Makerspace in Wittlich / Unlimited Possibilities for Those Who Are or Want to Become Makers (Elke Scheid)

(pp. 346 – 348)

For several years the City Library of Wittlich, like many other public libraries, has been developing itself into a social space, a so-called »third (non-commercial) place,« alongside of the spaces for work and education and residential spaces. People no longer came in exclusively to choose and borrow books and media, but rather to learn – alone or in groups, to work, and to relax. For this they needed free wireless, (nearly) free desktop PCs with Internet access, professional software, a scanner and a printer. For the (predominantly) male visitors of teenage and young adult ages from less privileged homes, this meant a chance – but also a temptation – to »waste away« the afternoons and early evening hours with friends, watching YouTube films, chatting online, and, in some cases, to ignore rules of good conduct and annoy other library patrons with their arrogance.

To better serve these teenagers and young adults, the City Library of Wittlich, sought to offer them a means that would re-channel their inappropriate activities. In the fall 2019 school holidays a free-of-charge programme was developed that included both gaming afternoons and courses in software such as »Word«, »Excel«, and much more. All the courses were fully booked up and waiting lists created. The participants in these programmes, however, were exclusively the children and teenagers whose parents would have been able to pay for similar educational opportunities – but not adolescents from the intended target group. The original goal was only achieved by setting up a special makerspace: a storefront in the old part of town with lots of PCs and other fascinating devices, such as a 3D-printer, a CNC milling machine, a laser cutter, a plotter, a sewing machine, smaller and larger robots, and a wealth of electronics and professional software for editing films.

Translated by Martha Baker