

SAVOY

LONDON

PLACE

CASE STUDY



DEBUNKING VIRTUAL EVENTS

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS, IET LONDON: SAVOY PLACE

8 OCTOBER 2020

The IET and IET London: Savoy Place hosted the first ever virtual President's Address to welcome in the new term of presidency for the institution. Conducted to an audience of more than 25,000 viewers tuning in from around the world via YouTube, the event far surpassed its original anticipated guest list and has since been watched a further 12,500 times.

Offering a 360-degree understanding of the commitments of the event organiser, venue and technical production team, we aim to demystify the approach to successfully pivot an event from all perspectives.

ORGANISER

Planning commenced for the annual event back in March 2020 during a turbulent time for the events industry, and seven months later, after many changes to the planned live presentation and dinner, it was conducted virtually via YouTube.

The event went through several variations due to changing external conditions. Planning followed the usual process of booking the venue, followed by a series of suppliers, before marketing the event. Once a decision was eventually reached to lose the entire live audience, talks were held with the IET's internal filming production team, IET.tv, and a content plan was established for the running order

of the event. Changing to a virtual event meant a number of challenges had to be overcome, and catering and suppliers were cancelled, while different rooms at Savoy Place were rebooked for new requirements. Risk assessments were extensive, but entirely necessary.

The delivery of the President's Address went without any hitches thanks to incredibly thorough planning from all parties, including accounting for a full day of setting up and an additional day of rehearsals. Though networking over dinner was not possible, the overall reach of the streamed event was higher than ever would have been possible at a live event.

Poppy Seamarks, the event's organiser commented that:

"The staging looked like an actual event and looked very professional being on the same main stage of the venue that the annual event is traditionally held in."



THE VENUE

From the venue's perspective, a team of around 10 staff were required to pull off an event of this magnitude, working in partnership with the client and production team. A suitable room, the Kelvin Lecture Theatre was allocated, due to its impressive stage building capabilities and reputation as the heart of the IET, along with an additional production and catering space in the Blumlein Room.

The space was held for the event day itself, as well as surrounding dates for stage build and deconstruction allowing for social

distancing and rehearsals. This required removing two rows of seating to fit the bespoke staging, along with the removal of two unrequired side screens.

The venue coordinator had the very important responsibility of ensuring that all the teams involved in the production of the event were aware of health and safety procedures and detailed risk assessments were conducted. The venue coordinator also attended multiple zoom calls to discuss requirements and offer advice on how to best use the venue spaces.

Stefano Maggi, the venue coordinator at Savoy Place explained:

"The complexity of such quickly changing COVID regulations on an ongoing basis certainly made it a challenge from the venue's perspective, but the comprehensive knowledge and professionalism of our in-house filming and production company made it significantly easier to pivot, and ultimately to produce a really high-quality event."

TESTIMONIALS:

"I enjoyed the Address and found it a great reminder of why I love Engineering and how important it is for all our futures. Also great insights to get across to the population at large, so the messages (at least) need to be shown across mainstream media. Danielle George you and the IET, as a whole, are indeed "Difference Makers"."

HENRY

"Amazing presentation! Well done to all the team which made this inspirational address possible under such difficult conditions"

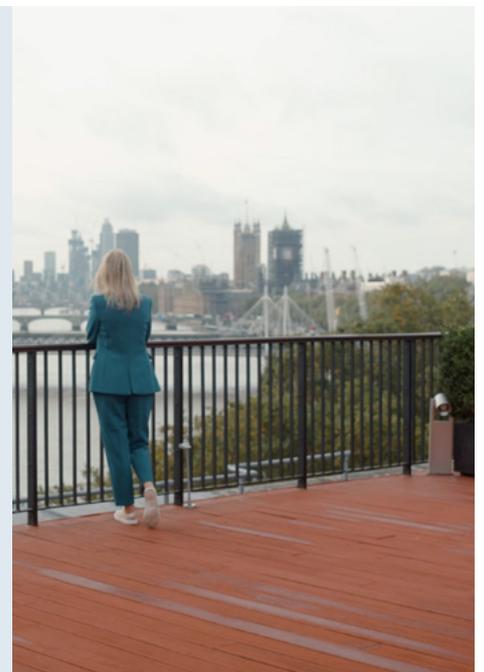
SHEKHAR

"1.17K Viewers - OMG Fabulous! Well Done!! My dad is a Physicist and wanted me to be a difference makers - keep asking questions and solving problems. :)."

MAMTA

"Looking forward to hearing the address.. Great to reach out in this way to such a wide global audience."

CLIVE



THE PRODUCTION TEAM

The success of the event being professionally streamed to so many viewers relied on the integration of teams and collaborative approach involving IET's own IET.tv broadcast staff and technicians. Despite only involving one speaker on stage, extensive equipment technologies were required for the slick delivery, including Sony FX9 cameras, audio microphones and recording equipment, Adobe editing software and a YouTube Studio for live streaming. In addition, two mixing solutions ensured a backup stream ran simultaneously, should there have been any technical issues during the primary stream.

Moving light design, scenery provision and projection, graphics and audio delivery were all managed – one of many advantages to running a virtual event professionally through a venue. Some elements of filming took place on location

around the UK over a two-day period, while filming in the lecture theatre itself took one day. All content was then meticulously edited and finalised in the studio over seven days in time to be streamed and integrated into a live chat function. The brief taking and storyboarding are effectively the most important aspects for the production team as the entire workflow and production staff all work to the brief. This stage took place over many weeks to get it right. Based on collaboration with the organiser and venue, a specific shoots and production brief and breakdown was then created and adhered to.

Mark Reynard, Head of IET.tv said:

"The most important part of producing a broadcast of this complexity whilst dealing with the added difficulties that social distancing and the

pandemic created was having a very detailed storyboard, shot list and edit list from the original content list. The IET.tv team held many production meetings over the project duration to ensure every aspect of the shoot, both in the venue and on location, were thought through down to the tiniest detail giving everyone the knowledge of what was required at every stage. Having an in-house broadcast production team allows for a deep understanding of the business need but also knowledge of how the venue works and what can be delivered safely. Working closely with all other departments involved, our broadcast staff delivered one of the most memorable President's addresses ever."

TOP TIPS FOR PIVOTING TO A VIRTUAL EVENT

Organiser:

- Complete a risk assessment as soon as possible
- Allow for additional time for set up
- Ensure the film production team are involved in every logistical meeting

Venue:

- Find an impactful space to film the event with good AV capability
- Decide upon your streaming platform early on
- Find the best technical supplier(s) to help you deliver the event

Production:

- Give yourself more time than you think to create and more importantly to review and approve content prior to being delivered
- Content is King – people have shorter attention spans when viewing remotely so keep content at the highest quality possible, snappy and where possible break up the session into small chunks
- Event Broadcast video needs to be as well made and produced as a viewer would see on mainstream TV and online so the quality matches what viewers are used to seeing



Watch the President's Address [here](#)

Contact us to find out how IET London: Savoy Place can help you with your next virtual, hybrid or physical event.

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