

## ABSTRACT

Webinars are a low-cost and effective tool that allow librarians to disseminate information, connect with colleagues, and expand their communities beyond geographic and institutional boundaries. Yet, while many information specialists attend webinars on a regular basis, the task of hosting a webinar series may seem like a daunting and opaque challenge. In this poster session, we will demystify the process of implementing a successful webinar series including content creation, software selection, recruiting guest speakers, promotion, hosting the webinar, and afterlife of the series. This session will include practical advice on how to host a webinar series and lessons learned from the MWDL Webinar Series.

## INTRODUCTION

- From November 2013 – February 2014, the Mountain West Digital Library (MWDL) hosted nine webinars in a Winter Webinar Series.
- Our goals were to fill a training need that we identified among our partners, reach out to potential partners, and facilitate discussion leading up to our March 2014 Hubs Meeting.
- Our experience taught us that anyone can run a successful Webinar Series with careful planning, valuable content, and consistent promotion.

## STEP 1: CONTENT CREATION

- Like any presentation, content is king. But you don't have to create it all yourself!
- MWDL staff first compiled a list of topics that we thought would be valuable to our network.
- Next, we identified which topics were appropriate for MWDL staff to present and which would best be outsourced to experts in our network.

## STEP 2: SOFTWARE SELECTION

- Selecting the appropriate software tool was a crucial step in our webinar series. We created a requirements list (Figure 1) to determine the necessary software criteria for our series. We then evaluated four systems and tested three before we selected Adobe Connect as our long-term software solution.

	Adobe Connect	Microsoft Lync	GoToMeeting	Infinite Conferencing
R1: Allows 50 participants	✓	✓		✓
R2: Accessible to anyone with a web browser	✓		✓	✓
R3: One click access. No initial download.	✓		✓	✓
R4: Is equally supported on Macs and PCs	✓		✓	✓
R5: Captures recordings that work on Macs and PCs	✓	✓		✓
R6: Interactive features like polling and hand raising	✓	✓		✓
R7: Supports multiple presenters and gives adequate control to host	✓			✓
R8: Allows for public and private chat	✓		✓	✓
R9: Can upload content in advance	✓			✓

Figure 1: MWDL's list of requirements

## THE MWDL WINTER WEBINAR SERIES

Month	MWDL Partner Series	Date	Digital Tech Topics	Date
November	Partnering with the Mountain West Digital Library	Thursday, 11/21; 11:00 am	None	N/A
December	MWDL as a Service Hub for the Digital Public Library of America	Thursday, 12/5; 11:00 am	Harvesting Using the Open Archives Initiative Protocol: What can your OAI stream tell you?	Tuesday, 12/17; 11:00 am
January	Hosting Hubs Update: Services, Pricing, and Highlights	Tuesday, 1/7; 11:00 am	Digital Asset Management System Options: Report of the DAM Review Task Force at the University of Utah Libraries	Tuesday, 1/21; 11:00 am
February	Partnering with the Mountain West Digital Library	Thursday, 2/6; 11:00 am	Geospatial Discovery: Initial recommendations from the task force	Thursday, 2/20; 11:00 am
March	Cultural Heritage Initiatives: Arizona Memory Project and Montana Memory Project	Tuesday, 3/4; 11:00 am	Geospatial Interfaces: How to use good metadata once we have it	Tuesday, 3/18; 11:00 am

Figure 2: MWDL Winter Webinar Series

## STEP 3: PROMOTION

- To ensure successful attendance, MWDL staff used a "two weeks, one week, 1 day" rule for listserv announcements. Our webinar announcements went out two weeks ahead of the scheduled date (with links to the archived recording and PowerPoint of the previous webinar), one week ahead, and one day ahead.
- Webinars were also promoted via social media channels – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and the MWDL Blog.
- Lastly, webinars were promoted on the MWDL website on the home page, the events page, and on individual event pages.

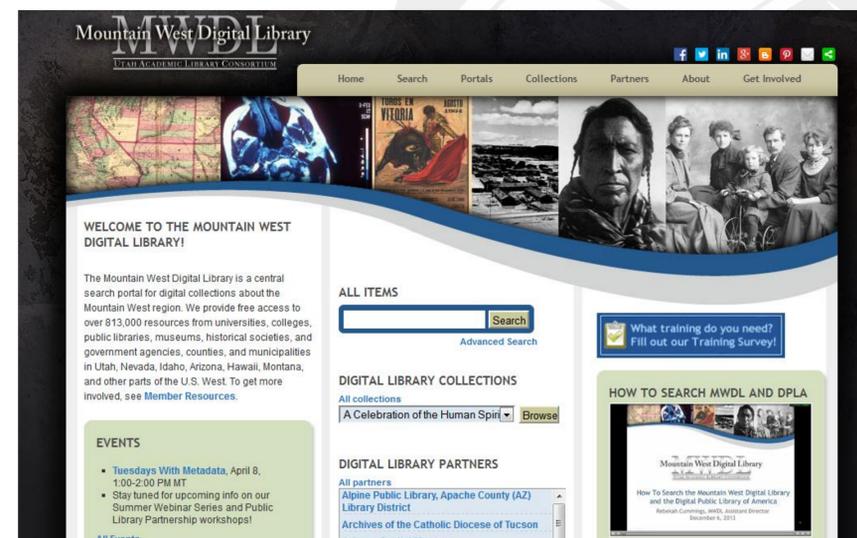


Figure 3: MWDL homepage

## STEP 4: HOSTING THE SERIES

- The MWDL staff selected one staff member, the Outreach Librarian, to host the webinar series to maintain consistency and provide technical support.
- Host tasks included confirming guest speakers, testing the Adobe Connect system with all presenters, collecting and uploading content in advance, logging into the Connect system 30 minutes early to test audio with webinar participants, welcoming the participants, introducing presenters, and moderating the chat window and the Q & A session.
- We discovered the host role was a crucial component of the series and added professionalism and consistency to the webinars.

## STEP 5: AFTERLIFE OF THE SERIES

- A major benefit of webinars is the ability to provide asynchronous training to users who cannot attend the webinar by recording the sessions and making them available online.
- Archiving webinars and providing the links to the webinars is the crucial last step in the process.
- The MWDL staff chose to archive our videos at the University of Utah's MediaSpace rather than YouTube because it allowed our content to be streamed without advertisements in a secure environment.



Figure 4: Screenshot of our video archive at video.utah.edu.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Over five months and nine sessions, the MWDL Webinar Series averaged twenty attendees per session.
- Our network is more informed and connected, and we now have a video library of resources free and available to anyone.
- Due to the success of our Winter Webinar Series, we are going to hold a Summer Webinar Series starting June 2014.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Mountain West Digital Library is funded by the Utah Academic Library Consortium, the Digital Public Library of America, the Institute for Museum and Library Services, the Knight Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the J. Willard Marriott Library at the University of Utah.