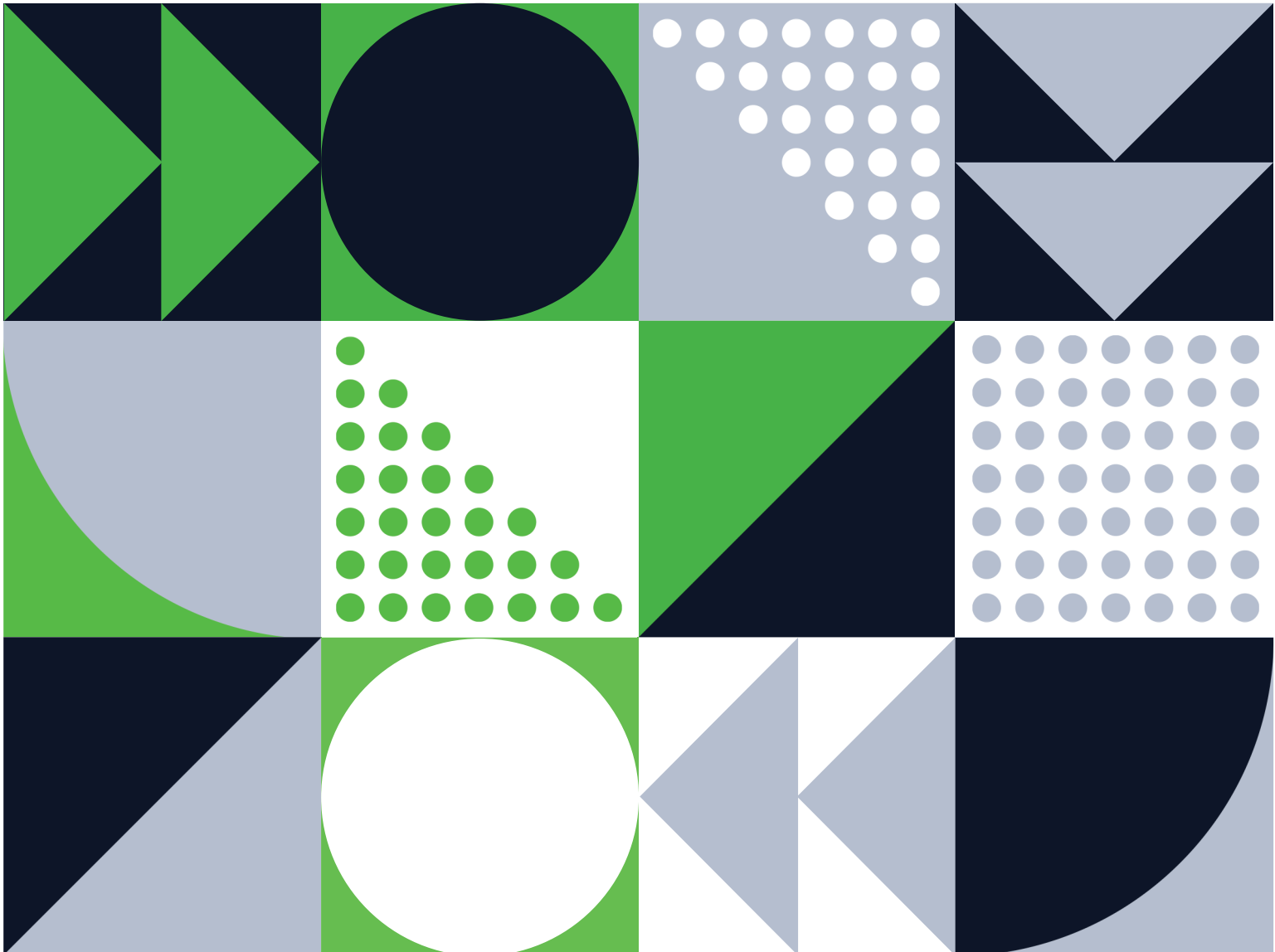# State of Online Events

February 2021

ClickMeeting

Hello and welcome!

2020 was a year of video conferencing and webinars

Amongst the vast array of economic and social disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak, remote work and online education have become the new normal.

With this significant "stay-at-home" shift, companies, schools, and other organizations worldwide faced an urgent need to implement a 100% online communication model. And this is where online meetings, video conferencing, and webinars came to the rescue.

That's why we decided to create our new report with a broader perspective. Hence, we changed its name to State of Online Events 2021 and took digital gatherings of all shapes and sizes under the microscope.

Let's drill in!

Highlights

Overnight, we found ourselves in a reality where educators had to teach their pupils and students in virtual classrooms. The same goes for professional courses and training sessions. Moreover, traditional conferences have reinvented their latest editions as digital ones, and online meetups replaced regular office meetings for businesses on the entire globe.

These pivotal shifts explain the **266% increase in the number of events** organized globally on the ClickMeeting platform in 2020, comparing to 2019.

When it comes to **North America** specifics, we can pinpoint that the **average time spent on webinars** is as much as **59 minutes**, which is the highest result compared to other countries we analyzed.
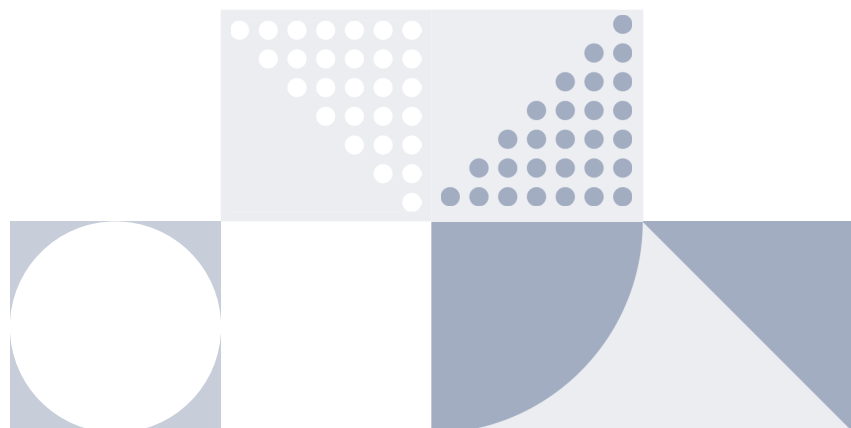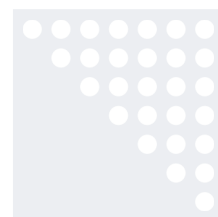
Key takeaways

In 2020, **2,316,074 online events** were held on the ClickMeeting platform, which gathered a total audience of **30,779,244 attendees.**

The most popular types of online events were **live webinars** with a result of **1,541,925, online meetings** with a score of **649,367**, and **automated webinars – 106,478**.

The average **webinar duration was 99 minutes**, whereas the average **online meeting** lasted for **65 minutes.**

The average **time people spent** on **attending a webinar is 40 minutes**, while **online meetings** kept their attendees in the event room for an averagely of **35 minutes.**

Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays have been the most favorite days for organizing online events.

Online events' hosts favored the **Presentation tool** (which stands for a PowerPoint presentation, spreadsheets, PDFs, doc files, and other content formats) – this feature was in use for **53%** of online events in 2020. The second place on the podium goes to the **Screen sharing**, which was put to action during **18%** of web conferences.

$ 2,034,124.62 – is the total amount of money earned worldwide through organizing paid webinars.

![ClickMeeting]
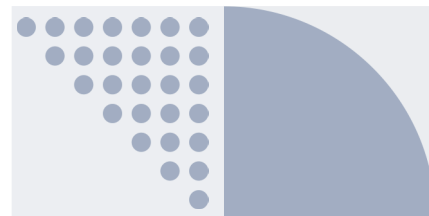
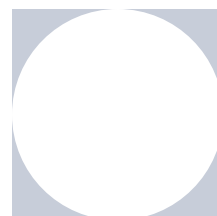# The world rushed to online events

There is no doubt that the pandemic triggered accelerated digitalization processes in business and education.
The "stay-at-home" situation forced millions of people worldwide to transfer activities conducted onsite to the online reality.

From lectures and classes, through business meetings, all the way to industrial conferences – they all had to transform into virtual events.

That major shift is backed up by numbers – in **2020**, there were **2,316,074 online events** organized on the ClickMeeting platform, which gathered as many as **30,779,244 attendees.**

To put that into perspective, back in 2019, we've counted 627,033 events with a broad audience of 8,504,770 attendees.

Events

2019	627,033
2020	2,316,074

Attendees

2019	8,504,770
2020	30,779,244

Types of online events in 2020

Webinars

It's impossible to paint a landscape of online events without putting a mountain of webinars in the middle. For the last decade, webinars have proven their worth and gained the respect of business owners, managers, marketers, salespeople, trainers, and educators.

As we outlined at the beginning, online events go beyond webinars. Even within webinars as a category, there are several different types of events. That said, let's define these web conferences and put them into a structure.

The widespread usage of webinars comes from the fact that hosts can gather up to one thousand attendees in one virtual event room and stream their content with the use of audio-video, share their presentation and other file formats, showcase their products and offerings by sharing their screens and create a two-way communication through chat, surveys and polls, and Q&A mode.

Online meetings

On one side of the spectrum, we distinguish online meetings as a way to get and work together in a group of up to 25 people. It's a solution that comes in line with a need to meet with team members, board members, managers, associates, customers, trainees, or students.

The whole point is seeing, hearing, and talking to everyone in the event room and yet – use the tools initially created for a webinar – screen sharing, presentation, whiteboard, or surveys.

So, how many times online meetings have been conducted during 2020? Precisely **649,367**, all over the world.

Throughout the years, technology has evolved and allowed us to create new types of webinars, apart from a regular, live webinar. But before we look into them, let's say it out loud:

There were 1,666,584 webinars hosted on ClickMeeting in 2020.

Live webinars

As the name suggests, live webinars happen in real-time, allowing hosts to interact with a broad audience on the go. Live webinars are an ideal match for onboarding and training purposes, sales and marketing events, and product demos.

This classic version of webinars is still the most popular – in 2020, on ClickMeeting, there were **1,541,925 live webinars**.

On-demand webinars

With this type of webinar, organizers pre-record their webinars to release it to their contacts, leads, or students so they can watch it anytime and anywhere they want.

On-demand webinars are a way to go when it comes to generating leads or running online courses. It depends on whether an on-demand is free or gated with a paid access, but we'll go back to that.

Here, we are looking at a number of **8,759 free on-demand webinars in 2020**. It is worth noting that this option is still relatively new and in the early adoption stage.

Automated webinars

Unlike on-demand events, automated webinars (also with two variations – free or paid) occur on a specific day and hour. However, just like above, organizers need to have a recorded material first and then enrich it with a Call-To-Action, a video clip, or a survey.

This kind of event broadcasts totally on autopilot, which lets organizers reinvest their saved time. However, there's also a hybrid model – automated webinars, which a host can hop in to moderate the chat and answer questions in real-time.

If you look again at our data, we can see that as many as **106,478 free automated webinars** took place in 2020.
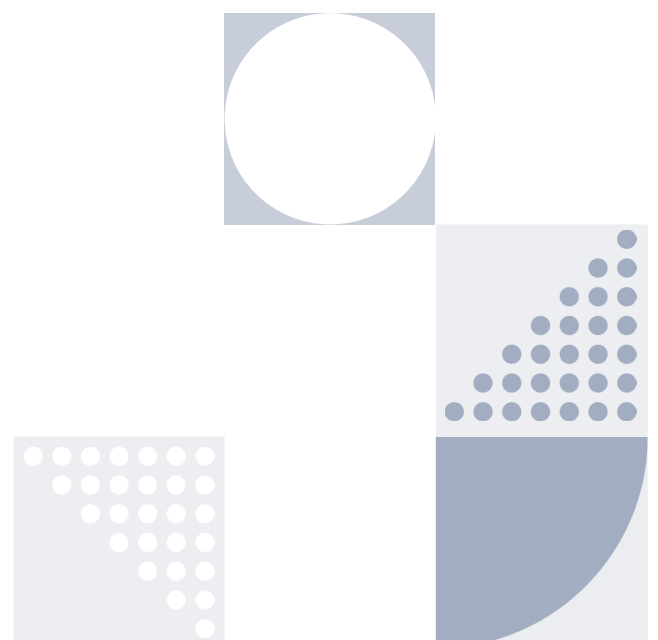
Paid webinars

One of these solutions is the paid webinars, which, long before the pandemic, proved their value as a direct way to organize commercial training sessions or online courses.

In a very simple way, teachers, trainers, or private schools could earn money on their educational offer, regardless of the geographical location of their customers – students or trainees. The new reality has reinforced this type of webinars as a tool for monetizing knowledge and skills.

Let the numbers do the talking again:

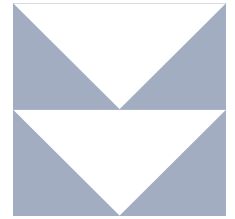The number of paid live webinars in 2020 – **6,201**
The number of paid automated webinars in 2020 – **1,431**
The number of paid on-demand webinars in 2020 – **948**

Although live webinars take the lead again, the analysis clearly shows that many entrepreneurs employed automation (on-demand and automated webinars go on autopilot) to earn money in those challenging times.
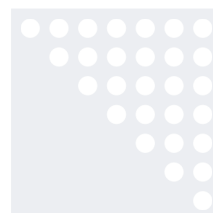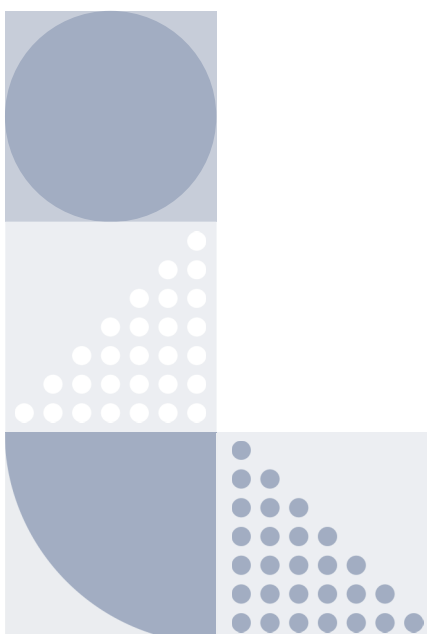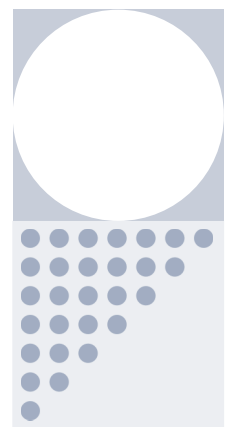
Huge virtual events AKA webcasts

Looking at online meetings for 25 people as a microscale, it's time to jump to a macroscale and highlight the webcast technology which allows broadcasting content to a staggering 10 thousand viewers!

Huge virtual events were an answer for the event industry which was strongly hit by the lockdown. While canceling or postponing onsite events was an ad-hoc option at the beginning of the Coronavirus outbreak, businesses needed to figure out a way to stay in the game.

Moving traditional conferences to a digital sphere was an only – and turned out to be – successful solution.

> *Our primary goal was to move our event online successfully and, by doing so, deliver a great experience to our attendees. We also wanted to expand our database. I'm glad to say we were able to achieve all our goals and the online event turned out to be a big success, with over 1400 attendees joining in from 51 countries. This is a 2x jump from 2019 when we hosted events for about 600-700 attendees from 21 countries.*

Maciej Saganowski,
founder of the ProductCamp conference held entirely on ClickMeeting this year

How many huge virtual events powered by webcasting technology took place in 2020? We're looking at a number of 842 summits, and while the germophobic reality stays so far, we'll be seeing the event industry continue to go digital or hybrid this year.
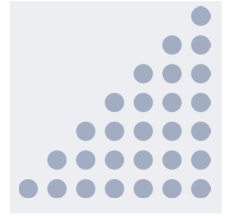
Purposes for running online events in 2020

Now it's time to scrutinize online events when it comes to their goals. Remote work and online education have been certainly dominating on traditional and social media since March 2020, but let's have a look at our data concerning business purposes hiding behind video conferences.

Online courses and training sessions

One of the leading aspects of the COVID-19 times is that schools and universities had to close their premises and continue their educational programs in virtual classrooms.

Overnight, e-learning had to replace traditional learning, and that necessity also referred to the training industry and private academies providing professional courses.

This reality finds confirmation in our data. As much as **44,2%** of online events organized on ClickMeeting in 2020, were **online courses (15,1%)** and **training sessions (29,1%)**. Please note that within a training category, we also include internal training events and onboarding training sessions.

29,1%

15,1%

online courses

training sessions
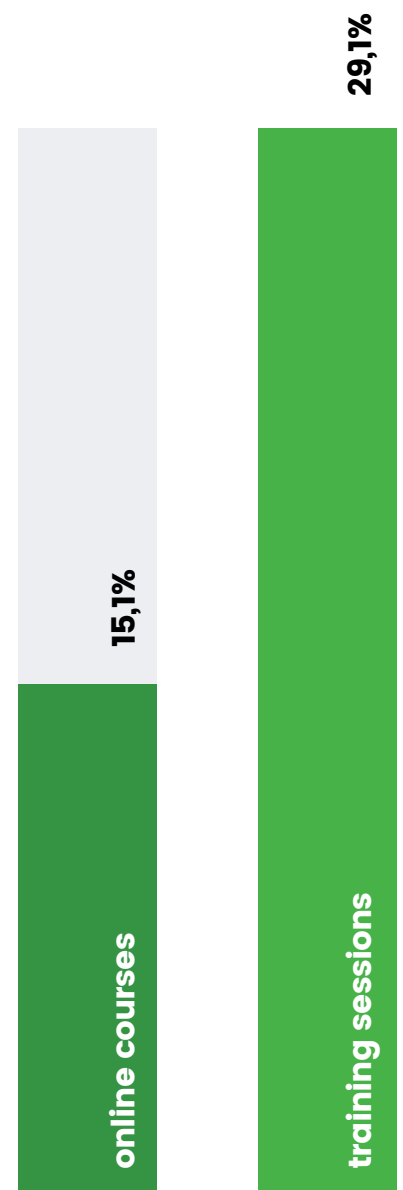
44,2% of online events organized on ClickMeeting in 2020

Product demos and marketing events

The second major category is the last decade's heritage of using webinars for **sales and marketing purposes**. Reaching leads and customers regardless of their location is the heartbeat of running online events in the first place, and social distancing only enhanced a previously established trend.

That said, we've recognized that **36,5%** of online events in 2020 were related to **sales and marketing**. This category breaks down into **product demos (22,5%)** – which are an excellent solution to showcase and sell both virtual and tangible products, and **marketing events (14%)** – which are about sharing valuable knowledge to generate and nurture leads.

product demos	22,5%
marketing events	14%

36,5% of online events in 2020 were related to sales and marketing

Online business meetings

In 2020 we entered an era where online communication and online collaboration are inevitable to keep companies going – from solopreneurs, through start-ups, small and medium companies, up to large enterprises.

Video conferencing apps and platforms have become primary tools for daily activities, such as daily or weekly team meetups, recruitment video calls, board meetings, or small web conferences organized to run workshops, close sales deals, or pitch angel investors. Among all online events that went on air in 2020, we classified **19%** as **online business meetings**.
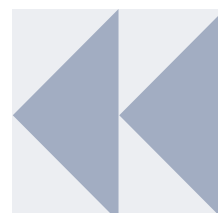
Online events in 2020 – how often, how long, and when?

How many events weekly?

As we highlighted earlier in this report, organizing online meetings and webinars was on an upward trajectory in 2020, and this growth strikes if we compare statistics with the ones from 2019.

From a weekly perspective, **2019** left us with an average of **12,172 events.** In **2020**, on the other hand, we had a weekly average of **44,540 events.**

That's 266% more!

How does it look like on the **North American market**? We're looking at an increase of **83% of online events weekly** comparing to the pre-pandemic year.

What's the average time of an online event?

In real life, we can come across online meetups that last for about 10 minutes, but there are also conferences scheduled to go live for several hours.

Here's how the average time of online events looked like in 2020:

Online meetings

6 5 min

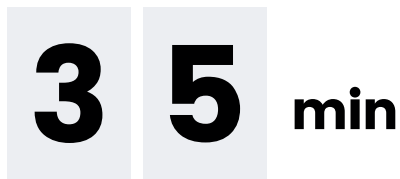which reflects the standard 1-hour-meetings we remember from the office days.

How long did people stay during online events?

Back in the regular days, webinars have stand firm as a type of long-form video content that inspires attendees to stay till the end of the event. The average dwell-time in 2019 was 53 minutes, which is an impressive result, considering how hard it has been (and still is) to get people's attention for such a long time.

In this year's report, we will analyze it aspect for both – online meetings and webinars. And here's how it looks like globally:

Online meetings

3 5 min

Webinars

4 0 min

The reason why dwell-time for webinars went down 13 minutes compared to the previous year can come down to several aspects:

First, with the entire education sector going virtual with their classes and lectures, 40 minutes may be closer to a regular class duration.

Second, online events have become a mass product in 2020; hence many newbies have been joining those web conferences and have not necessarily being used to stay until the end of an event.

Third, the remote work and video conferencing reality at such a scale and continuity have driven some psychological and social side-effects, named as "zoom fatigue syndrome" – which refers to people being tired meeting only online.

Here's how the online event dwell-time looks liked in particular countries:

Online meetings		Webinars		
3 5 min		**4 0** min		**All**
2 9 min		**5 9** min		**USA & Canada**
4 2 min		**2 7** min		**Great Britain**
3 9 min		**4 3** min		**DACH**
2 1 min		**4 3** min		**France**
3 1 min		**2 8** min		**Spain**
3 9 min		**4 4** min		**Russia**
3 3 min		**3 8** min		**Poland**

The first place of the webinar podium goes to the US and Canada. We can interpret it as proof of a greater maturity these countries have in organizing and attending webinars.

# The most popular days for running online events

What's the best day to organize a web conference? We've looked into our data, and we must say that every day of the week had some results, but there are three distinctive leaders (in that order, regarding the average number of events on air):

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
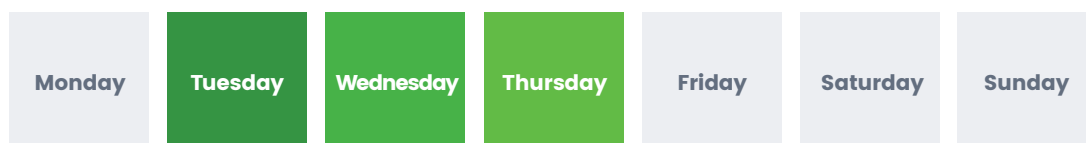
The weekend is obviously at the very end of the list, but with no null results. Mondays and Fridays have been quite busy but not as much as the above three musketeers.

The most popular hours for running online events

OK, since we know what days have come victorious from this comparison, it's time to look at the time of the day.Here are the top 10 hours with the most significant results:

1.	3 PM	6.	1 PM
2.	8 AM	7.	12 PM
3.	7 AM	8.	4 PM
4.	2 PM	9.	11 AM
5.	9 AM	10.	10 AM
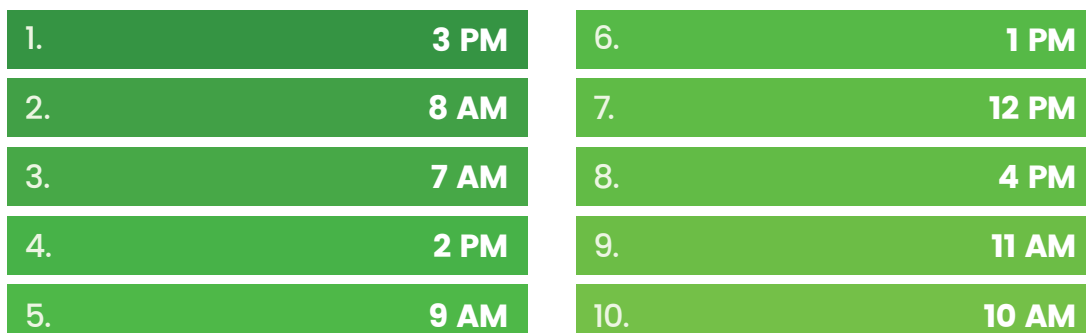
So, the conclusion – the office hours and early morning is the best time to throw a virtual get-together.
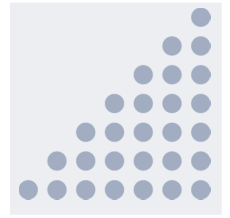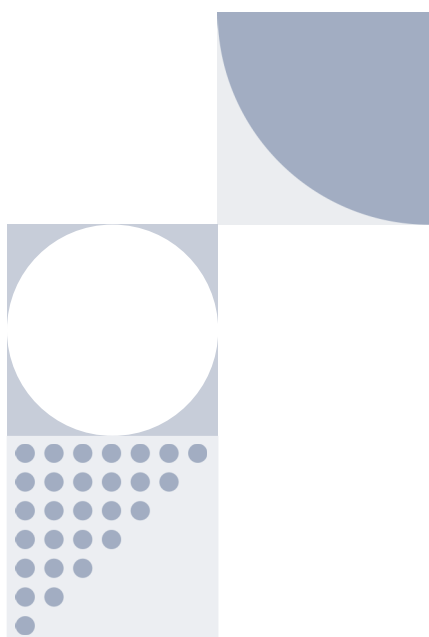
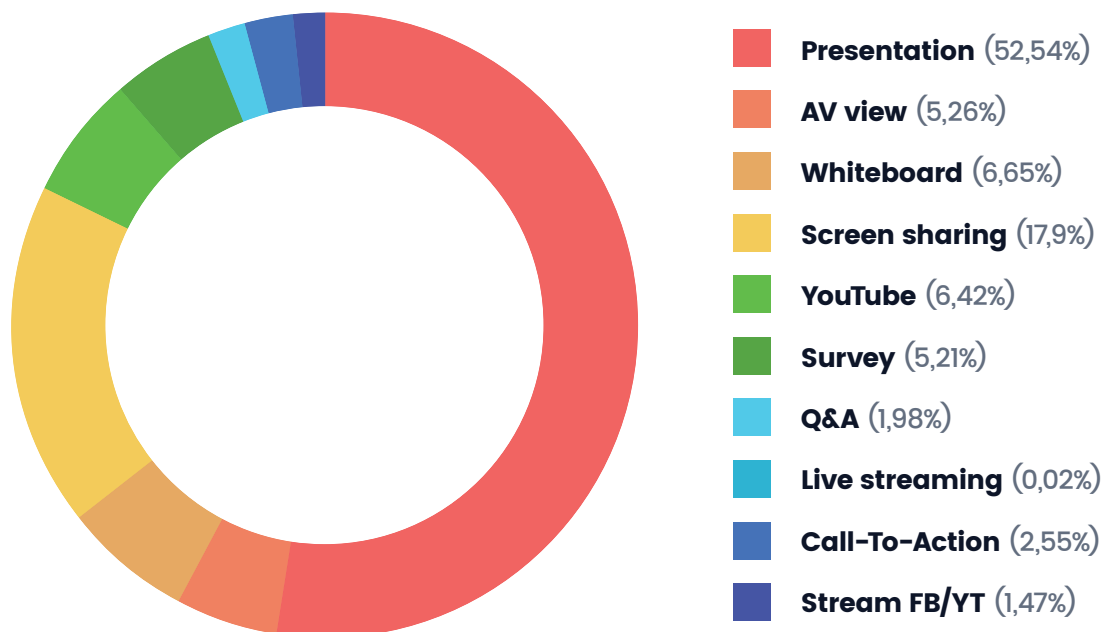# The most favored features used during online events

The tremendous demand for online meeting and webinar platforms in 2020 didn't come from anywhere. For educators to teach and train, for marketers to share insightful content, and the team members and managers to collaborate efficiently – video calls are not enough.

The variety of multimedia and interactive features that all teachers and professionals can capitalize on during video conferences is the aspect that moves the needle.

In this section, we're giving an overview of the ClickMeeting's features over 2020, dividing them by the below categories.

Engagement and interaction

Legend:
- **Presentation** (52,54%)
- **AV view** (5,26%)
- **Whiteboard** (6,65%)
- **Screen sharing** (17,9%)
- **YouTube** (6,42%)
- **Survey** (5,21%)
- **Q&A** (1,98%)
- **Live streaming** (0,02%)
- **Call-To-Action** (2,55%)
- **Stream FB/YT** (1,47%)

Looking at this chart, it's crystal clear that the **Presentation** feature is the most favorite tool used by hosts and presenters during **53%** of events. The name suggests that it's all about the PowerPoint (or Keynote) presentation, but other file formats fall into this category – doc files, images, spreadsheets, or PDF files.

The second place goes to the **Screen sharing** feature **(18%)** with a universal appliance for online collaboration, education, or sales and marketing.

Next, we have the **Whiteboard (6,7%)**, which is perfect for educators to put down notes, draw visuals to explain complex topics, and the **YouTube (6,4%)** feature, which allows playing a chosen video clip directly from YouTube but within the event room.

Survey (5%) and **Call-To-Action (2,6%)** tools still seem to be underestimated on their way to be discovered as practical functions to gather invaluable feedback from attendees (Surveys) and drive more sales results (CTA button).

E-mail communication

Organizing webinars and virtual summits doesn't boil down to only preparing the content for the event. There are other pillars of successful online events, and that's about both – spreading the word out and following-up attendees after the event.

That said, we took the usage of email communication available in ClickMeeting under our microscope.

We distinguish three types of messages events' organizers can send to their attendees, before and after an event:

- **Invitations** – in 2020, there were as many as **18,076,014 email invitations** that landed in recipients' inboxes.

- **Invitations reminders** – we are talking about a mind-blowing total of **44,435,097 emails** reminding recipients about upcoming events.

- **Thank-you emails** – as many as **17,423,043** emails have been sent to events' attendees after the final whistle. Thank-you emails on ClickMeeting include a customized text, uploaded files, and a link to the event's recording (provided the recorder was turned on).
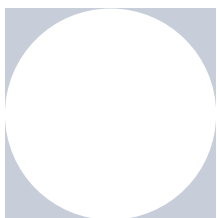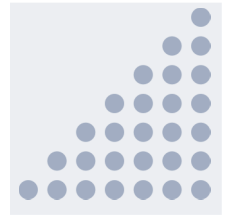
Paid online events - money-making machine

As with every crisis, the pandemic forced people to look for alternative ways to back up (or replace) their revenue sources. Technology, which has already been there on the market, was ready to be picked up and capitalized on.

Selling knowledge and practical how-to's through **paid webinars, online courses**, and **training sessions** emerge from our analysis as a big winner.

In our last year's State of Webinars, we highlighted that all paid webinars hosted in **2019** on the ClickMeeting webinar platform had generated a total of **$ 366,000**.

That's already impressive, but let's now compare it with all the paid events organized in 2020. We are talking about a staggering total of **$ 2,034,124.62** earned worldwide, which is an increase of **455%**!

$ 2,034,124.62

$ 366,000

2019

2020
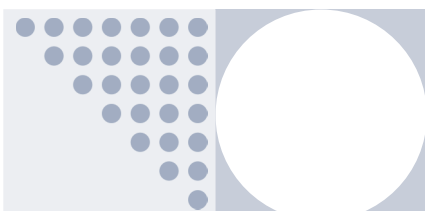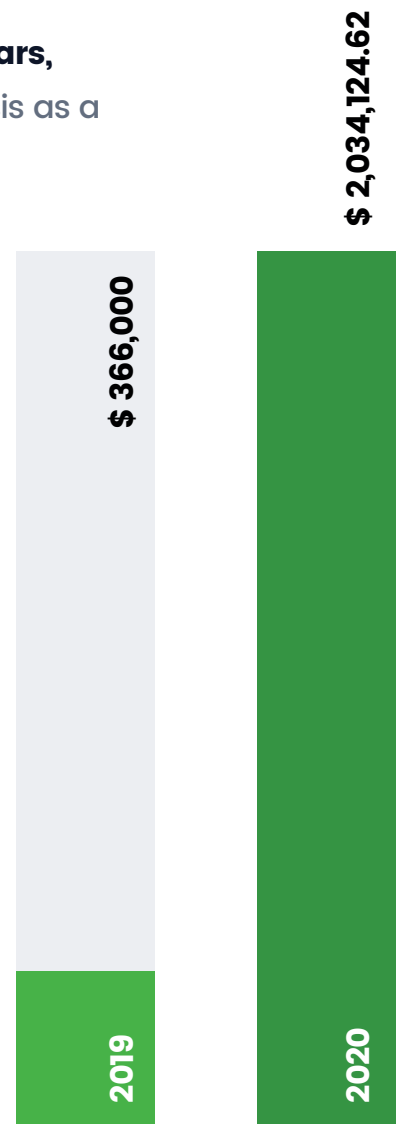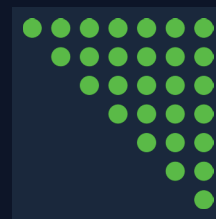
Online events – the future of marketing and training sectors

So far, we have walked you through the findings from the analysis regarding ClickMeeting's platform statistics.

In this section of our report, we will step out from our data and dive into other reports strongly related to the key business goals for running online events – education and marketing.

Webinars – a video marketing success story of 2020

First, let's get a bird's-eye-view of what was happening in the industry from a marketing and sales perspective.

As every year, Wyzowl has released a respectful State of Video Marketing report, which backs up a significant rise in using video marketing in general and webinars, in particular, in 2020.

According to Wyzowl's survey carried out among B2B marketers, the departure from the pre-pandemic reality strongly affected their activities and attitude towards video marketing.

Around **40%** of marketers say their plans around video marketing have been, or being affected, by the coronavirus pandemic.

Out of those people, **74%** say the pandemic made them more likely to use video, while 26% say it became less likely.

60% of marketers expect the pandemic to affect their video marketing budget for 2021. Of these, 7 out of 10 say their budget will increase, while the other 3 out of 10 say their budget is likely to shrink.

68% of consumers say the pandemic has impacted the amount of video content they've watched online, with the overwhelming majority (**96%**) saying this has increased.

91% of marketers feel video is more important for brands in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

Moreover, the business results, these marketers confirm, should convince other businesses, reluctant to video formats, to change their habits:

- **86%** of video marketers say **video has increased traffic** to their website.

- **94%** say video has helped **increase user understanding** of their product or service.

- **78%** say video has directly helped **increase sales**, and **84%** admit that video has **generated more leads**.
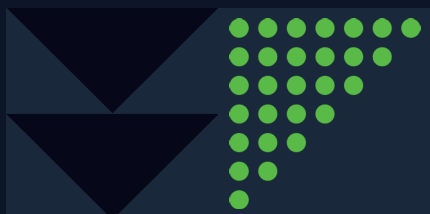
When it comes to choosing a platform to put video marketing in action, it strikes that YouTube is the most widely used platform for 87% of marketers, but webinars are also on a roll – quoting after Wyzowl:

- "Webinars were the video success of 2020. In 2019, just 46% used webinars – but in 2020, this **rose significantly to 62%**".

- "**91% of webinar marketers say they've been a success** – an increase of 10% from 2019 – making the most effective video marketing channel of all those listed".

The rise of webinars also comes forth when we look at what video formats marketers plan to use in 2021.

Webinars find their place right after the top four: YouTube, Facebook Video, LinkedIn Video, and Instagram Video, with the result of **53%** - and most importantly – are the only format with such an (**11%**) increase over last year's voting.

How do marketers plan to use video channels in 2021

YouTube	**89%**	(+1%)
Facebook Video	**70%**	(−6%)
LinkedIn Video	**63%**	(−3%)
Instagram Video	**58%**	(−7%)
Webinar	**53%**	(+11%)

Source: Wyzowl, State of Video Marketing report

Trends and challenges for 2021

Since we know that marketers have been efficiently using and are planning to use webinars in 2021, it's time to understand what experts in the field have to say when it comes to predictions for this year.

When you visit **HubSpot's Marketing Trends to Watch in 2021**, one of the first things you'll notice will be virtual events as the first marketing trend.

What's noteworthy, although experts cited by HubSpot agree that online events will stay and will keep on playing a crucial role for marketers and businesses, they also tend to notice challenges:

Latané Conant, Chief Market Officer at 6sense: *"This year saw an explosion of virtual events as marketers adapted to a changing world. While I suspect a lot of us are feeling some virtual burnout right now, there will still be a place for these kinds of events, even after we resume in-person ones. Imagine a virtual event running 24/7".*

The burnout, also referred to as "zoom fatigue syndrome", may also be a difficulty to beat for businesses who transformed their traditional events into virtual ones:

Adam Masur, VP of Marketing at Credly: *"The era of anchoring marketing around a big industry event is coming to a close. We've all seen the annual conference go virtual due to the impact of COVID-19. But I expect hosts to find that their audience's appetite for the singular virtual gathering will wane, as well".*

The reasons behind this burnout come down to the vast number of events out there and quality that's needs some tweaking. Replicating traditional trade shows or industrial conferences may not be enough to find success in running virtual events.
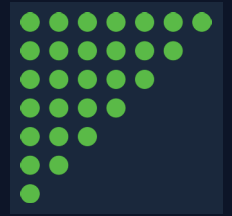
What might be the solution? As we can find in HubSpot's report, companies and marketers should focus on creating connections and contributing to their audiences by creating a valuable conversation.

"Look for more intimate and more typical online get-togethers in 2021. Experts with verified digital credentials and a willingness to share will be highly valued virtual community leaders and influencers".

The role of online events technology in training and education

Meeting online with students, pupils, and trainees has become the only way to maintain the teaching and training continuity.

As we mentioned earlier, as much as 44,2% of online events held on ClickMeeting, were online courses and training session, we decided to make some space here for quoting The State of the Training Industry – Benchmark Report 2020:

"There has been a great reaction from many training businesses, shifting to eLearning and Online Learning. A need for change has been enforced, and the training industry has reacted to ensure its customers can continue to learn, embracing the remote world and the power of web meetings. This year will see the largest change in how technology will be used to interface with customers, how providers administer those courses, deliver training, and gather feedback, all with trainers and students only shaking hands virtually".

According to accessplanit's report, the industry is entering the new year with confidence when it comes to continuing online training and e-learning model.

Bearing in mind that **e-learning, blended learning**, and "other" options stand for the same virtual training theme, we can say that the industry has a clear roadmap of what to do in the nearest future.

However, education is a broad category, with many types of events and formats to juggle. For the sake of our report, we would like to highlight two findings from this survey:

- **Distance learning** – scored 25% of votes for the current situation and 45% in terms of future planning.

- **Webinar** – 34% of answers concerning 2020, and a spike of 50% when it comes to the months ahead.
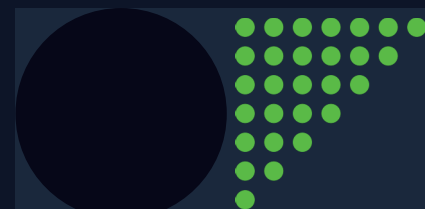
Webinar

Now	34%
Future	50%

Distance learning

Now	25%
Future	45%

Soruce: The State of the Training Industry – Benchmark Report 2020

But despite organizations having to switch to virtual trainings and distance learning models and plan further investments in this matter, the industry's state is far from being flawless.

As we can read from accessplanit's report, the educational and training sector needs to stand against some crucial challenges such as:

- Low training quality that leaves a mark on a business;

- Processing course bookings and inquiries;

- Course promotion;

- Course and event scheduling;

- Arranging trainers.

For some of these aspects, technology is the answer:

"From eLearning, webinars, and online training, to the rise of online bookings and the decline of paper-happy sheets, it's clear that 2020 was and will be the year of digitization for the training industry."

Final words

There is no doubt that the pandemic fueled enormous changes in how we work, teach, train, run businesses, and communicate our brands with audiences.

Accelerated digitalization of all educational, marketing, and business processes found its confirmation in hard data:

- **2,316,074 online events** were held on the ClickMeeting platform, which gathered a total audience of **30,779,244 attendees**.

- **$ 2,034,124.62** – the total amount of money earned worldwide through organizing paid online events.

However, with the dwell-time going down and experts warning about the burnout syndrome and lower training quality, this should be a north star for organizations running online events in 2021:

- High-quality;

- Security;

- Stable technology;

- Building connections;

- Engagement and contribution.
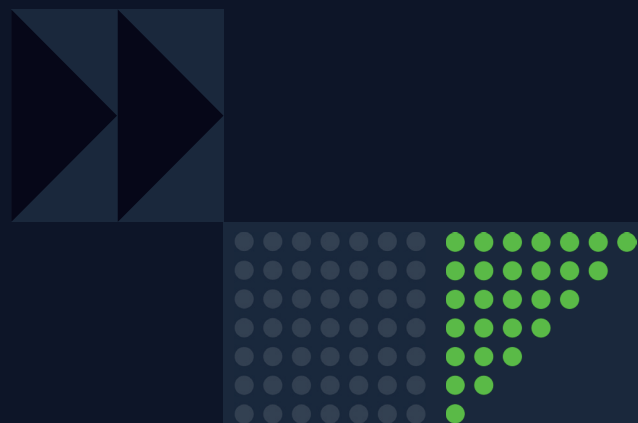
Online events
– our new reality
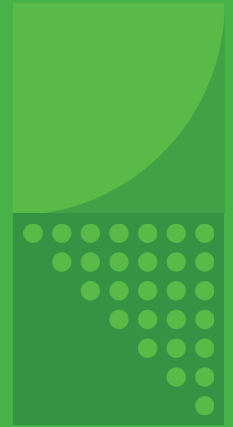
Videoconferencing, online meetings, and webinars have become the "new normal." While getting together in virtual rooms has been an attractive option back in the day, it transformed into a necessity in pandemic times. And it applies to a wide range of aspects. We do video calls with friends and relatives with whom we cannot meet in person. We run online meetings with colleagues, managers, business partners, and employees. Finally, we teach, learn, and train in virtual classrooms. What's more, trade shows, business, and scientific conferences had to reinvent themself as online (or hybrid) summits.

This new reality, that forced people worldwide to switch to online communication, is reflected both in our data and in reports based on external data.

It will therefore come as no surprise that ClickMeeting, as a platform, will consistently strive to help people stay connected and conveniently host any online event type – small, large, huge, live, or automated. That's why we no longer deliver technology to host just webinars, but in a broader perspective, we are a platform to host online events of all shapes and sizes. Hence, our report changed its name from the State of Webinars to the State of Online Events.

Dominika Paciorkowska

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