

## **Zooming Through Crisis: Navigating the Move to Online Programming**

**Alissa Droog**

Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Kimberly Shotick**

Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Kate Swope**

Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Wayne Finley**

Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Beth McGowan**

Northern Illinois University Libraries

**Sarah McHone-Chase**

Phillips Library, Aurora University

**Abstract:** When the COVID-19 pandemic stretched into the fall of 2020, the Programming and Promotions Committee of Northern Illinois University Libraries transformed its Research and Artistry Series from an in-person event to a virtual event. To do so, the Committee honed its technology skills by using software for Committee meetings, perfecting its use of document-sharing technologies, and standardizing its creation and dissemination of publicity. This behind-the-scenes learning involved experimentation with multiple platforms for the events themselves, including Adobe Connect, Zoom, and Zoom Webinar, some of which necessitated coordination with other University units. While the Committee anticipated such coordination would lessen its work to host events, it soon found that in-house production was easier than coordination. This article recounts the decision-making process of involved librarians, noting successes and pitfalls.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, academic libraries, virtual programming, Zoom, faculty outreach

## Introduction

In 2017, the Programming and Promotions Committee of Northern Illinois University (NIU) Libraries began offering programming in earnest—a nascent, if perhaps overdue, endeavor that quickly gained traction among library users, as well as library faculty and staff. By 2019, the Committee had implemented the Research and Artistry Series, branding the program with a name and focusing on the work of faculty and the NIU student body. The Research and Artistry Series was in-person programming, with each program truly an “event” with a live speaker, audience interaction, networking, and food. However, with the pandemic, the Committee needed to regroup and reconsider: could programming still be offered? *Should* it still be offered? And, if yes, then how?

The Committee decided to move forward, offering the Research and Artistry Series virtually, keeping several guiding principles in mind. Firstly, the Committee acknowledged that this programming might not be successful: to give permission to try is inherently giving permission to fail. The Committee decided that “If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly” (Chesterton, 1912, p. 254), realizing that virtual programming would not be perfect from the very beginning and that the Committee needed to be comfortable with that if it was going to proceed. The Committee members also joked amongst themselves about “crisertunity,”—a word coined in *The Simpsons* episode “Fear of Flying”—meant to represent the concept of a crisis also being an opportunity (Sacks et al., 1994). As the Committee began to experiment with virtual options to determine what would and would not work, it found several unexpected benefits. The Committee was challenged to learn new technologies for marketing and outreach in ways not contemplated previously. The Committee also noticed anecdotally that virtual attendance remained stable with that of previous years—an unanticipated but very welcome bonus. Though the Committee only accepted virtual programming because COVID made it a necessity, it found that such programming helped evolve services and reach a broader audience. Indeed, virtual programming became the Library’s crisertunity.

## Literature Review

Library programming has long been a staple of public libraries and has been increasingly tied to academic libraries’ strategic initiatives. Studies have demonstrated

the link between engagement with the library and student success (Brown, 2018), leading libraries to prioritize programming that engages their communities. Much of the literature covers programming initiatives for students (Karle, 2008; Eshbach, 2020; Kasten-Mutkus, 2020) but misses an opportunity to include programming for faculty. Student-centered programs, such as Penn State's ConnectED series, tend to focus on fostering academic and social engagement with the library (Eshbach, 2020). As Kasten notes, "Programming is a crucial means of branding the library as an intellectual nexus on campus, as well as a way to publicize emerging areas in research services and to create additional access points to physical and electronic collections" (2018, p. 406). The liaison model allows librarians to foster relationships with faculty and staff across campus and brands the library as a site of interdisciplinary partnerships that is reflected in its programming. In addition to being primarily student-centered, library programming has been generally an in-person activity.

When COVID-19 shut down much of the United States in mid-March of 2020, libraries had to find alternatives for their planned programs. Recent articles on library programming focus on public libraries' switch from in-person to virtual programming. Public libraries were able to transition quickly because traditional library offerings, such as storytimes, translated well to virtual events (Freudenberger, 2020). Facebook Live is a popular platform for passive programs in which the audience is not an active participant (James, 2020). Public libraries found success in offering virtual programming where their users were already comfortable using a specific platform. For one library, this meant creating a Discord server for teens (a virtual space that teens are already familiar with) and making its in-person *Dungeons & Dragons* and video game social groups virtual (Ford, 2020). Goddard (2020) noted, "Even those libraries that did not previously have any virtual programs managed to very quickly provide quality programs to their patrons" (p. 2). Other libraries that had already experimented with or established virtual programming were able to transition their programs almost instantly once the COVID-19 pandemic emerged.

Prior to the pandemic, academic librarians' experience with moving programming from in-person to virtual was relegated to professional meetings and conferences rather than programming. In 2018, the ACRL University Libraries Section's (ULS) Technology in University Libraries Committee used Zoom for its midwinter virtual meeting (Nichols, 2018). Nichols (2018) highlighted the utility of Zoom, as it has an "easy-to-use chat box, the ability to share meeting recordings with participants quickly, and ADA compliance"

(p. 165). The move to virtual programming in academia was spurred mainly from the pandemic crisis. In 2020, the Charleston Conference was held via Zoom, and while a member of the conference directors group mourned the loss of a visit to the beautiful city, he recognized that an online conference increases access and equity, eliminating costs associated with travel and attendance (O'Donnell, 2020). MIT Press had previously avoided virtual author events because it determined that it lacked the social and celebratory elements that made its events successful (Stileman & Nyren, 2020). However, the COVID-19 crisis forced MIT Press to rethink its approach, and it also settled on Zoom, *Wirecutter's* top recommendation in 2020 for videoconferencing. *Wirecutter*, a *New York Times Company* publication that reviews products with editorial independence, again recommended Zoom for 2021's best videoconferencing service, noting its "usability, reliability, performance, security, and features that you need to get work done remotely" (Keough, 2020, para. 1). While Zoom has paid options with enhanced features and time limits, a basic account is free and allows for sessions up to 40 minutes. State University of New York (SUNY) at Albany transitioned its School of Education's annual poster session for graduate students to Zoom using the basic free version (Haji-Georgi et al., 2020). The poster session organizers chose Zoom because they, and the university community, were already comfortable using it. The organizers worked within the limitations of the free version of Zoom by breaking up the poster presentations into several sessions. More than half of the attendees reported having a better experience in the virtual environment than in person. When libraries, public or academic, chose a platform they identified their audiences were familiar with, they reported success as measured by attendance and/or satisfaction.

This paper examines one academic library's transition from in-person to virtual programming as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors document the brief history of programming at the library and the ways in which they delivered online programming. In addition, the authors discuss the challenges they faced in choosing virtual programming platforms, how they delivered programs, and what they learned from the transition.

## **Context**

Northern Illinois University, located in DeKalb, IL, is a community of approximately 42,000 located west of the Chicago suburbs. With a full-time student population of approximately 16,609 in 2019 (Illinois Board of Higher Education, n.d.) the University is the region's largest state-funded institute of higher education. NIU carries a Carnegie Two Classification of Doctoral Universities: High Research Activity, and its Carnegie Undergraduate Profile is a four-year, full-time, selective, higher transfer. The institution grants undergraduate, master's, doctoral, and doctorate degrees and serves a diverse student population. The institution has two other campuses, also located in northern Illinois.

Located at the physical center of campus, Founders Memorial Library houses a collection of approximately 2.3 million monographs as well as over 300 electronic databases. The NIU Libraries are comprised of the main Founders Memorial Library in addition to the Music Library and a Chemistry Library, both located in other campus buildings. Founders Memorial Library (i.e., the Library) also has several distinctive collections, including the Southeast Asia collection, the Rare Books and Special Collections, and the Albert Johanssen and Edward T. LeBlanc Collections (dime novels).

The University Libraries employs 21 librarians, including three administrators. All librarians are full members of the University's faculty and share identical tenure and promotion requirements. The Library also employs 38 civil service personnel and one supportive professional staff. The Library's central location on campus makes it an ideal spot for several student-centered University offices, including the Information Technology Support Desk and various tutoring and writing centers.

### **The Birth of Faculty Programming at NIU Libraries**

Historically, NIU Libraries offered little in the way of library programming. However, this changed in 2017, when several librarians coordinated a set of interdisciplinary yearlong events and programming to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the birth of Gwendolyn Brooks, the late poet laureate of Illinois. The librarians also used the celebration to highlight the work of faculty and the NIU student body in English, art, history, and music. Almost simultaneously with this work, the Library began an annual celebration of NIU faculty book publications. This event brought

together faculty across campus to celebrate the shared mission of all universities: the creation of new knowledge. Faculty author celebrations have long been identified as valuable endeavors that not only improve faculty relationships with the library but also improve overall faculty morale (Riddle et al., 2005). The success and popularity of these two programs, which included many departments and a celebration of the shared enterprise of the University, spurred NIU librarians to use their programming and events to highlight the Library's position as the obvious, interdisciplinary center of campus.

Several librarians then created a series of interdisciplinary programs to highlight the scholarship and artistry of the University's faculty and instructors. In addition, the same librarians proposed a working group charged with promoting these and other library events and activities. The librarians proposed their idea to the Library's Dean, and Library Administration approved of both ideas. Accordingly, in 2018, the Library established the Programming and Promotions Committee. Comprised of both library faculty and staff, the Committee's charge is to plan and organize library events, promote the library, and monitor the library's social media platforms.

The Programming and Promotions Committee began hosting and promoting events, some of which responded to current events, while others responded to community interests. The first program, an immigration talk where a member of the law school faculty discussed the ongoing family separation crisis and issues pertaining to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, was held in September 2018. In October of that year, the Committee also hosted a cosplay contest to promote the Library's new graphic novel collection.

In late 2019, the Committee finally implemented a formal interdisciplinary program: the NIU Libraries' Research and Artistry Series. The series of events was intended to "serve as a venue for NIU faculty and instructors to share their knowledge, creativity, and hard work with others at Northern Illinois University and the broader NIU community" (NIU Libraries). The first event of the series was Tuba Christmas, a lecture/performance by the Tuba and Euphonium ensemble from NIU's School of Music. During this December 2019 event, the ensemble performed holiday music, the ensemble's director spoke about the history of the tuba, and attendees ate cookies and drank hot cocoa. With over 90 guests in attendance, Tuba Christmas was one of the largest events the Library ever held.

When developing the Research and Artistry Series, the Committee intended to host programs at least monthly. The Committee successfully hosted faculty lectures in both January and February of 2020 that responded to current events: one responding to tensions in Iran and the other discussing the history of African American Olympians. Each event was attended by about 25 students and faculty, which the members of the Programming and Promotions Committee considered a success for this new series of programming.

Faculty librarians invited these first two speakers, whom they knew through their relationships as subject specialists or other connections, such as service on university-wide committees. The Committee also created a form on the Library's website to give faculty the opportunity to volunteer to share their research and artistry through this series. Also, the member of the Committee who invited the speaker hosted the event and worked with the speaker to create event summaries, which were used for press releases and other promotional materials. Before the Library could host another lecture scheduled in March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States. The University switched to remote learning and effectively ended the Research and Artistry Series.

## **COVID-19 and the Transition to Virtual**

When it was clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would continue into the fall of 2020, the Libraries' Programming and Promotions Committee was determined to carry on with the Research and Artistry Series in whatever way possible. The campus continued with remote learning, and no in-person events were allowed. As most of the campus was closed and most classes were being taught remotely, the Committee was charged with the arduous task of moving all the events to an exclusively virtual platform. While many of the Committee members had participated in and/or presented using virtual software, no one had experience hosting full events in this manner. Likewise, the Committee was comfortable dividing the workload of planning and promoting in-person events, but learning new software and dividing duties to plan and promote online events was another undertaking.

The Committee's first event of the 2020-2021 academic year was a lecture-discussion with a single faculty presenter on the "Challenges of Communiversity Organizing." The event was designed as a 45-minute interactive lecture followed by a

Q&A. As with the in-person Research and Artistry Series, members of the Committee solicited speakers based on connections they had forged in their roles as subject specialist librarians and on university committees. For this event, another unit on campus was invited to help the Committee manage the online component. This unit had experience hosting virtual events, such as webinars for faculty and other University organizations. This department was chosen to jump-start the virtual Research and Artistry series in the hopes of utilizing them throughout the year. Unfortunately, the online platform that this department used, Adobe Connect, presented challenges for the Committee, which were significant enough to cause the presentation to be cut short and rescheduled. For example, the presenter had complications getting Adobe Connect to run properly on their computer. Despite testing the software prior to the scheduled event, the presenter experienced further technical difficulties when the event went live. As a result, the lecture-style event was canceled and rescheduled for November 2020. Additionally, in the days leading up to the event, organizers received emails from potential attendees asking how to use the platform since the audience was unfamiliar with it.

Perhaps the biggest obstacle to overcome with this partnership was not the platform itself, but the Committee's lack of control over the event by having it hosted by an outside campus unit. As the Committee geared up for the initial presentation, it realized that it was feeding all event information to another party, causing planning and promoting to take much longer than necessary. No one on the Committee had administrative rights to the Adobe Connect event, and the Committee was therefore unable to send invitations, manage the chat, or create links on its own. While the Committee was hoping that Adobe Connect would be a powerful tool for presenting programming, in the end, it was decided that other platforms simply worked better for the Committee's programming needs.

After the challenges with outsourcing and using Adobe Connect, the Committee decided to hold its programming using Zoom. Zoom also presented challenges, mainly in the time and expertise required to transition to a new software successfully, but the Committee no longer needed to outsource technical help, as was necessary with Adobe Connect. To help make the events run safely and efficiently, several Committee members took Zoom training via the University's subscription with LinkedIn Learning. Based on the training, the members created a list of best practices and settings for hosting public Zoom events. Moving to the Zoom platform also shifted the way that the

Committee worked. As with the in-person events, the person who knew the speaker(s) best would host the event, and the host would also moderate questions from the chat box. However, with the technical knowledge required to run an event on Zoom, the Committee moved toward having more defined roles (see Appendix A). The Program Coordinator who invited the speaker(s) still determined the direction of the event, but some Committee members who developed expertise in administering Zoom worked on the technical aspects of the presentation as the Zoom Administrator, while others worked on assessment or formalized the promotional planning for each event. Using these newly defined roles, the Committee successfully ran five additional lectures and panel-style events via Zoom. Each event included a Q&A in which speakers interacted with the audience by chat and voice.

One event that created many growth opportunities was moving the Libraries' Fourth Annual Faculty Book Reception online. The event honors all books written, edited, or translated by NIU faculty in the previous calendar year and is one of the highlights of the Research and Artistry Series. In past versions of this event, the Library had purchased and exhibited all 30-40+ books authored or edited by NIU faculty on the main floor of the Library. Attendees were invited to mingle with authors, family, and friends and view the displayed books, all while being serenaded by a jazz band and plied with wine and cheese. As so much of this event is based on informal conversation amongst attendees, moving this event online proved a significant challenge. Building from previous successful lecture-style events on Zoom, the Committee reimaged this event as a live presentation that lasted about 40 minutes. The event started with introductory remarks from the Dean of Libraries and Provost. It was followed by congratulations to each author and a slideshow with photos of each book and author. The audience was encouraged to participate via Zoom Reactions and by sending congratulations in the chat. To maintain some elements of the in-person event, a professor in Jazz Studies at NIU agreed to record music that was then played in the background during the presentation. This proved difficult to incorporate because it was to hear the speakers over the music during the event. With the possibility that the Fifth Annual Faculty Book Reception may also be held online, the event may have to be reimaged yet again. The ability to mingle during an in-person reception cannot be replicated, but some medium might be found that would incorporate more interaction between attendees.

In total, the Committee hosted six virtual events in the 2020-2021 academic year: three lectures from faculty on their research, two panel discussions, and the Annual Faculty Book Reception presentation. Altogether, the events were attended by over 150 participants, including many faculty, staff, and students at NIU, as well as guests from the community. Lecture and panel events translated well to an online environment, whereas events that thrive on audience-to-audience interaction were challenging. This reflects the recent experiences of libraries engaging in virtual programming in the COVID era (Stileman & Nyren, 2020; Haji-Georgi et al., 2020).

## **Virtual Event Marketing**

Previous Library events were marketed via social media on both Facebook and Twitter, the Libraries' website, university and community news outlets and press releases, and signage throughout the Library. Marketing virtual events was a challenge in that the elimination of physical marketing opportunities reduced the possibility that individuals would hear about the events. Additionally, "Zoom fatigue" hit higher education during the pandemic and libraries, therefore, reported lower attendance in their virtual events compared to in-person events (Surbaugh, 2021). However, the Committee intentionally utilized all possible virtual marketing outlets to recoup some of the lost visibility and marketed to the larger community in which the university is located in order to maximize attendance, opportunity, and impact.

To organize marketing outlets and distribute work, the Committee created a promotion plan (see Appendix B) to coordinate on- and off-campus marketing opportunities. The work of reaching out to each outlet was divided amongst several members familiar with each category: social media, internal campus messaging, and external outreach. Despite efforts to organize, successful marketing depended on timely identification of key event details, such as speakers' names, the event title, and the abstract. Details changed and often came too late for some marketing outlets, such as inclusion in the local community newspaper. However, the virtual marketing efforts were impactful, as attendees polled during and/or after the event indicated. Amongst the responses received, the most popular marketing methods were *NIU Today* (campus newsletter), email, and personal invitation. Less successful was the use of social media, which echoes research that shows limited return on investment in social media activity,

especially regarding external constituents (Griffin & Taylor, 2013; Shafawi & Hassan, 2018).

## **Discussion**

In moving events to a virtual platform, the Programming and Promotions Committee has discovered many benefits of hosting events online versus in-person. Although attendance statistics from previous years were not tracked, the Committee feels that attendance has remained stable in the virtual environment. The virtual platform has also made events more accessible not just to our local audience at the University and within the community, but also to audience members from around the nation who would typically not have a chance to attend in person. In addition, going virtual has forced the Committee to become more organized than in previous years. Overall, the change to a virtual event platform has shown tremendous benefits to the Programming and Promotions Committee.

Moving the programs online made it necessary for the Committee to create promotional plans and rigid documentation to ensure that each event was organized successfully. The Committee quickly discovered the need to create clearly defined roles, which strengthened the Committee's work and will continue to benefit all the Committee's programs. To start, the Program and Promotions Committee saw the need for a more organized way to collaborate. NIU uses Office 365, which comes with multiple productivity applications (see Table 1), so the Committee fully utilized its software: SharePoint to store, edit, and review documents, Teams to hold the Committee's monthly meetings, and Office 365 email to incorporate a Committee-shared mailbox. The Committee chose to create a single, shared email address in Office 365 to be more efficient in maintaining communication with campus contacts, rather than relying on one or two Committee members to communicate all event details. The Committee is also diligent about labeling and organizing files within SharePoint as well as creating templates for event planning and promotion. Along with more clearly defined individual roles, use of Office 365 has increased Committee productivity and organization.

**Table 1. Software/Applications and Use for Programming**

<b>Software/Applications</b>	<b>Usage</b>
SharePoint	File management, collaboration among all Committee members
Teams	Monthly virtual meetings, chat, quick file sharing via chat
Office365 Shared mailbox	Single email address for Committee, one contact for university-wide communication
Qualtrics	Event assessment forms
Zoom	Individual faculty presentations
Zoom Webinar	Panel discussions
LinkedIn Learning	Zoom training
PowerPoint	Event slides
Air Table	Social media post organization

As the Committee shifted from organizing programs as single events to creating a series of events with standard roles for each member, documentation of the Committee roles and responsibilities was necessary for its current members and future committee iterations. Appendix A outlines the Committee's individualized roles in event planning, and Appendix B gives an example of the template used to organize all the planning and promoting of events. It should be noted that while moving online, the Committee updated the Programming and Promotions web presence by rethinking its branding, images, weblinks, hashtags usage, etc. A few individuals from the Committee worked closely with the University's Creative Services department to create university-approved images that brought uniformity to all the Research and Artistry events.

Moving events online also had some drawbacks. Outsourcing the administration of the first event to another campus unit did save some time, but the original platform proved challenging to work with. As a result, the Committee chose to administer all events, which required a large amount of start-up work, including learning new software, formalizing promotional and organizational plans for events, and booking extra practice sessions to test sound for presenters. While there are pros and cons to outsourcing help with programming, the Committee found that the in-house method has been slightly more time-consuming but results in better outcomes for the Committee, presenters, and attendees. Each event presented new challenges, required

additional learning, and called for more time to sort out problems and details. For example, one program necessitated revisiting the Zoom settings so that the speaker could administer breakout rooms safely and securely.

Another challenge is that certain types of events lend themselves better to online formats than others. Lectures and panel discussions that require little discussion amongst the audience have worked well. However, events based in community building, such as the Faculty Author Book Reception, have been challenging to recreate online. It is important to recognize and accept the limits of different software for online events and try to work within them. While there have been some drawbacks to moving events online, the Committee has recognized the value of virtual lecture and panel-style events for the future.

Library programming is labor intensive. Learning to transition online has also been time consuming but valuable. In the future, the Programming and Promotions Committee plans to continue offering both online and in-person programming, choosing the best format for each event. The Committee has learned that online programming works well for their audience; the Zoom platform works best for the needs of the Committee, the presenters, and the audience; and the programming attracts a significant audience, despite the limitations dictated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the Committee cannot know how programming will be impacted post-COVID, there are several strategies it intends to implement in the future to continue to improve the programming. This includes continuing to keep an open mind while learning from mistakes. The Committee will continue to maintain strong documentation for events and divide tasks among members. Although the Committee is just beginning to assess its events using surveys, it plans to develop in this area, using the feedback gathered to improve future events. The Committee is also considering how to archive recordings of past virtual Research and Artistry events, which is something that was never considered pre-COVID, since none of the Research and Artistry events were recorded.

While the virtual Research and Artistry events created in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have merit and benefits, the virtual format is not always ideal for library programming. Even though a digital environment can approximate many of a library's services, its lack of human contact is limiting. The programming that NIU Libraries developed over the last few years not only physically brought people into the Library, it also fostered relationships among speakers, librarians, and audience members. In a

university and world of siloed interests and in an environment in which libraries are concerned with gate counts and student use, relationships are essential in reinforcing the centrality of a library to its community. These interactions, especially when facilitated by a library, emphasize the library's role as the natural site of comradery and interdisciplinarity. The Committee misses these elements of in-person programming and is anxious to return to them.

While it took some time to organize the Committee's promotional plan, learn new software, and create more individualized roles, the Committee members have anecdotally found that faculty, staff, and students enjoy online programming. The overall comments from the Qualtrics post-event satisfaction surveys were positive. One commenter responded, "very well done. Do more of these!" The few critical comments reflected the inability of the participant to understand or hear a speaker clearly. With each event, Committee members learned something new, which strengthens the Committee's programming. The Committee anticipates that the virtual platform will continue, in some form, giving the audience the opportunity to attend from anywhere. It is the Committee's hope to continue with virtual programming well into the future, even when the University returns to in-person classes. There will likely be some setbacks as the Library transitions, once again, to in-person programming, but the Programming and Promotions Committee is committed to maintaining a virtual presence with its outreach programs.

## **Conclusion**

The Programming and Promotions Committee never considered moving library programming from in-person to virtual prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Having made the decision to switch formats to abide by state and University regulations and to protect the well-being of both the hosts and attendees, the Committee has found significant value in the experience. This decision necessitated much learning and experimentation with various platforms and settings, which was sometimes daunting and frustrating. However, the ultimate outcomes have been well worth the time and energy from all involved. Virtual programming allows the Committee to be more flexible, reach more users, offer more programming than before, and better adapt programming when quick changes are needed. The Committee has formalized procedures and improved organization; these efforts will benefit the Committee even in

future iterations. It seems clear to the Committee that virtual programming, in some capacity, will be a regular tool in its efforts to reach patrons even after the pandemic has passed. The Committee is confident that the lessons learned can be applied to the next "crisertunity."

## References

- Brown, K. (2018). Evidence of academic library impact on student learning and success: Advancing library leadership and advocacy with assessment in action. In K. E. Brown, D. L. Gilchrist, S. Goek, L. J. Hinchliffe, K. J. Malenfant, C. Ollis, & A. Payne (Eds.), *Shaping the campus conversation on student learning and experience: Activating the results of assessment in action* (pp. 9-22). Association of College & Research Libraries.
- Chesterton, G.K. (1912). *What's wrong with the world*. Cassel and Company.
- Eshbach, B. E. (2020). Supporting and engaging students through academic library programming. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 46(3), 102-129. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2020.102129>
- Ford, A. (2020, June 1). Pandemic forces programs to move online. *American Libraries Magazine*. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/06/01/pandemic-forces-programs-to-move-online/>
- Freudenberger, E. (2020, May 22). Programming through the pandemic. *Library Journal*. <https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=Programming-Through-the-Pandemic-covid-19>
- Goddard, J. (2020). Public libraries respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating a new service model. *Information Technology & Libraries*, 39(4), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.6017/ital.v39i4.12847>
- Griffin, M., & Taylor, T. I. (2013). Of fans, friends, and followers: Methods for assessing social media outreach in special collections repositories. *Journal of Web Librarianship*, 7(3), 255-271. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19322909.2013.812471>

- Haji-Georgi, M., Xu, X., & Rosca, O. (2021). Academic conferencing in 2020: A virtual conference model. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 3, 176–184. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.235>
- Illinois Board of Higher Education. (n.d.). *Institution profiles: Northern Illinois University*. IBHE. <https://ibheprofiles.ibhe.org/profile.aspx?fice=001737>
- James, N. (2020). Technology & innovation: Virtual programming with Zoom. *Arkansas Libraries*, 77(1/2), 48–49.
- Karle, E. M. (2008). Invigorating the academic library experience: Creative programming ideas. *College & Research Libraries News*, 69(3), 141-144. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.69.3.7950>
- Kasten, K. (2018). Library as forum: Building relationships and identity through faculty speaker events. *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, 24(3/4), 406–417. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13614533.2018.1498796>
- Kasten-Mutkus, K. (2020). Programming as pedagogy in the academic library. *Portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 20(3), 425-434. <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2020.0023>
- Keough, B. (2020, November 5). The best videoconferencing service. *Wirecutter*. <https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-video-conferencing-service/>
- Nichols, J. (2018). Tech Bits... brought to you by the ACRL ULS Technology in University Libraries Committee. *College & Research Libraries News*, 79(3), 113.
- NIU Libraries. (n.d.) *Research and artistry series*. Northern Illinois University Libraries. <https://library.niu.edu/university-libraries/about/researchandartistryrequest.shtml>
- O'Donnell, J. (2020). Back talk: Zooming to Charleston. *Against the Grain*, 32(4), 86–85.
- Riddle, J., Le, B., & Mugridge, R. (2005). The value of faculty recognition programs for libraries: More than just "good will." *Library Leadership & Management*, 19(2), 75-81.
- Sacks, D. (Writer), Appel, R. (Writer), Crittenden, J. (Writer), & Kirkland, M. (Director). (1994, December 18). Fear of flying (Season 6, Episode 11) [TV series episode]. In

J. L. Brooks, M. Groening, D. Mirkin, S. Simon (Executive Producers), *The Simpsons*. Gracie Films; Twentieth Century Fox Film Productions.

Shafawi, S., & Hassan, B. (2018). User engagement with social media, implication on the library usage: A case of selected public and academic libraries in Malaysia. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, 1.

Stileman, K., & Nyren, H. (2020). The A to Zoom of digital book events: How one press managed the overnight transition to virtual events due to the Coronavirus. *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, 51(4), 228–233. <https://doi.org/10.3138/jsp.51.4.02>

Surbaugh, H. (2021). Quick pivots: Maintaining an agile approach to outreach during an evolving crisis. *Marketing Libraries Journal*, 5(1), 108-127. [https://journal.marketinglibraries.org/summer2021/07\\_MLJv5i1.pdf](https://journal.marketinglibraries.org/summer2021/07_MLJv5i1.pdf)

## Appendix A

### Virtual Programming Workflows

1. Assign event roles from the Virtual Programming Workflows (program coordinator, Zoom administrator, and event moderator).
2. Create a folder for the event (yyyy.mm.dd title).
3. Add the following items to the folder:
4. A copy of the Promotions Template. The Program Coordinator should indicate event roles and fill in event description.
5. Moderator Slides template.
6. Email Promotions Lead when description is ready so promotions can go out. Promotions need 4 weeks' notice.

### Event Roles

#### Program Coordinator

- Provides a date, time, title, and description for the event 1 month prior to the event.
- Fills in programming statistics after event.

#### Zoom Administrator

- Creates Zoom registration link.
- Administrates Zoom session and lets people into the room.
- Sends out feedback form after event.

#### Moderator

- Creates slides to introduce event and speakers.
- Introduces speakers and guidelines for participating in the event.
- Moderates the chat and Q&A sessions

## Appendix B

### Template Promotion Plan: Research and Artistry Series 2020-2021

#### Required Promotional Materials

- Title (Program Coordinator)
- Date and Time (Program Coordinator)
- Description (Program Coordinator)
- Registration Link (Zoom Administrator)

#### Promotion Methods

Promotion Method	Contact	When to send	Who's Responsible	Status
<b>Social Media</b>				
Social Media Graphics		Request 3 weeks before event		
Air Table		Post 1 week before event and 1 day before		
Twitter				
Instagram				
Facebook Posts				
Facebook Event		Approx. 3 weeks before event		
<b>NIU Internal Community</b>				
NIU Events Calendar		2-4 weeks before event		
NIU Today Emails		Thurs. before event		
NIU Announcements Emails		2-4 weeks before event		

Library-wide email		1 week before event		
<b>Local Community</b>				
Daily Chronicle		1 Month before event		
Northern Public Radio				
DeKalb Public Library				
Alumni Association Newsletter				

## **About the Authors**

**Alissa Droog** (MLIS, MA, OCT) is an Assistant Professor and the Education & Social Sciences Librarian at Northern Illinois University where she works primarily with faculty and graduate students in the College of Education.

**Wayne Finley** is an Associate Professor and Business Librarian at Northern Illinois University. He has published articles and book chapters about library marketing, management, outreach, and collection development.

**Beth McGowan** is Curator of Rare Books and Special Collections at Northern Illinois University Libraries. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature from University of Pennsylvania with a specialty the Reformation. Her current research interests include the history of reading and library history.

**Kimberly Shotick** (she/they), is an assistant professor at the University Libraries at Northern Illinois University (NIU). Her work includes supporting NIU's Communication students and faculty as a subject specialist librarian, curating library materials, teaching information literacy concepts, and supporting students through services and the

coordination of spaces and resources. Kimberly's research areas include critical information literacy instruction, accessibility, library space and design, and library outreach and marketing. She has published on universal design for learning, is co-author of the forthcoming book *Practical Marketing for the Academic Library* (Libraries Unlimited) and has presented nationally on a number of academic library topics from accessibility to Wikipedia. She holds an MLIS from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign and an MA from Northeastern Illinois University.

**Kate Swope** (MM, MM, PC) is the Senior Music Library Specialist for the Northern Illinois University's Music Library. Here she manages all circulation procedures and reserve items. She also conducts small group and individualized tours and research sessions. She is dedicated to providing high quality information literacy sessions to all students and faculty within the Northern Illinois School of Music community. Kate is currently pursuing an MLIS degree through the University of Illinois' iSchool program.

**Sarah McHone-Chase** is currently Director of the University Library at Aurora University. She previously served as Head of User Services for the Founders Memorial Library at Northern Illinois University. She has an MA in English Language and Literature from Illinois State University and an MS in Library Science and Information from University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.



Copyright: © 2022 Droog, Shotick, Swope, Finley, McGowan, & McHone-Chase. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike License (CC BY-NC-SA), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, sharing, adapting, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.