

Media Evolution



Tool 3 – The MESH Festival

MESH Festival was a virtual pick-and-choose online festival that mixed inspiring talks, interactive workshops and roundtable discussions with linear TV, film streaming, artist showcases and other activities. It spanned design, sustainability and technology. The entire festival was free to attend.

The digital festival was organised by Media Evolution, an organisation driven by the mission to foster growth and innovation in the digital and creative industries of southern Sweden. The core of the organisation is the member community and a platform for sharing ideas, developing competencies and driving innovation for the members. Media Evolution also pursues pioneering projects, locally and globally to create new markets for the members.

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Aim and target group

The MESH Festival was envisioned as a tool to test different collaboration formats. Both Media Evolution and the Creative Ports' network of CCI companies were brought together to discover new ways to meet and to gain and share knowledge in an online context.

The aim was to:

Share inspiration for new ideas, methods and technologies

Inspire cooperation between participants

Offer formats from concrete capacity building and peer learning

Share information about new markets and soft landing

Mesh festival in figures

400 Participants

4 Days

16 Happenings

7 Showcases

80% Said that the event was relevant for their work

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The program

Media Evolution ran an international conference for ten years in Malmö, Sweden. "The Conference" was a two-day conference where curious minds from all over the world met to delve into the promises and pitfalls of digital development. When Covid struck, the MESH Festival was created in place of The Conference to give Media Evolution's members, CCIs in the Baltic Sea Region and others a chance to meet and greet in a new way.

The MESH program was a medley of formats, all less than a day long. They ranged from talks and masterclasses and roundtable discussions to workshops and showcases. The goal was to create a sense of surprise and intrigue and to offer participants a sensory experience. By exploring different formats, the organisers could discover what worked and what didn't.

Event schedule

Tuesday november 10

Waste as a resource

Daylight trilogy – Part 1: Humans

World Film Premiere: *Only the devil lives without hope*

Directors talk: *Only the devil lives without hope*

Wednesday november 11

Lunch with new friends – Creative conversations virtually

DDDD – Discover, Define and Design with Data

What is design ethics?

Southern Sweden Design Days studio visits

Design talk salon

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Thursday november 12

Lunch with new friends – Internationalisation through a pandemic
Changemakers design phase workshop
Designing the natural world
Très bien

Top image
MESH TV

Middle image
Digital flyer

Friday november 13

Round table conversation: *A regenerative mindset*
Lunch with new friends – Internationalisation through a pandemic
Inventing point B – A workshop with Amy Whitaker

Bottom image
Workshop on Zoom

Communication

An easy-to-use graphic profile was created that linked to the Creative Ports graphic material. Facebook was the most important communication channel and each event had a dedicated registration page.

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Testimonials from participants

“I was able to deepen my understanding of many topics that I only superficially knew of before, and some useful approaches to thinking in "frameworks" or abstractions to aid understanding and connection on deeper levels.”

“As I've been to The Conference, I know the work you put into the details around arranging your events. Here, you clearly put a lot of work into the speakers and the content, but it all felt a bit "cheap" when arranging it on Zoom. This is really the only improvement feedback I can give, as I really enjoyed the webinars that I attended. I just wished I had more time to attend more of them.”

Lessons learnt

After years of organising meetings, gatherings, conferences and festivals, Media Evolution had to take a crash course in implementing an online festival. Here are some of the key learnings:

Scheduling

Rather a pick and choose format than jam-packed days.

Four days during the same week was maybe too much – quality over quantity.

Or, distribute events over an extended time frame for example, a themed month.

Smaller events like workshops and round table con-

versations had a better show-up rate than webinars, but people still dropped off more than in real-life events. A no-show fee or a nominal registration fee could be used to build greater commitment.

What formats worked best?

Interviews and Q&As – This format proved a success in an online setting. You end up closer to the speaker/interviewee when you're in front of a screen than you do in real life. A questions based format was more dynamic than a straightforward presentation.

Conversation based knowledge sharing (peer learning) – Round table conversations led by a moderator worked particularly well online as the online format functions as a leveler and helps focus the conversation.

All artist studio visits were pre-recorded and these showcases were well suited to the on-demand format.

That storytelling and intimacy trump a powerpoint, was something participants experienced when one of the speakers accidentally had to give his talk with a smartphone. This unexpected, ad hoc solution led to a more personal talk that took us on a live tour through the speaker's kitchen.