You’ve met us. We’d like to meet you.

Ask:

Who’s from an art museum? A history museum? A science and natural history organization? Outdoor site like arboretum? Did I miss a category?

Do any of your organizations have a distance learning program? If so, get brief description of 2 or 3 of them.

I think, although our example is that of an art museum, you will find the general principles and concepts we talk about apply to all organizations.
Why do it?
What we are doing at SAAM?
How can you begin a distance learning program?
What technology is needed?
How market it?

During the next 50 minutes we will be providing an overview and answering these questions....

We will leave time for questions at the end, but if you need clarification, please ask as we go along.

And, we will have questions for you. Please feel free to participate.

Transition,
So let’s begin with the question...Why, why do a distance learning program?
Why do it?

**Why would you want to start a distance learning program?**

Your museum is undergoing renovation and is closed

Allows you to use your collection in a new way

Expand your audience and access to museum
   Schools in rural areas and those not likely to visit
   Expand access such as senior centers that are not near museum
   Reach populations who might not feel welcome in a museum

Although a drastic reason, you may find your museum under renovation...our museum was closed between 2000 and 2005. Our program began while the museum was closed. Kept our docents involved and brought the collection to the public.

More likely, you will want to do it because

Allows you to use your collection in a new way.
Depending on your collection and mission, may not need to be digitized...could do in gallery or demonstrate an experiment. We will talk more about this later. Right now, just know that digitization of your collection may not be a requirement.

Expand your audience
Reach schools in rural areas and/or not doing field trips...for example, high schools don’t usually do field trips...with multiple subject periods would require a lot of coordination and lost classroom time.

Senior citizens/retirement homes may not be able to travel....
distance learning can open your museum to those who may not feel welcome or comfortable in a museum. 
May never have been to a museum...feel it is not for them....too formal a setting?

Transition:
The comments we receive from teachers support a distance learning program.
“We live in a rural area without access to major museums, and this opportunity allows us to see great art from our classroom.”

“We do not have the resources to travel to museums and this experience gave our kids a meaningful museum experience.”

“The AP history tests now ask only stimulus-based multiple choice, and the ability to decipher artwork gives our kids a serious edge.”
Artful Connections is the name of our distance learning program.

This year (school year, Sept. 2018-Aug. 2019), we conducted 255 programs with 4,696 people. (4700)

Those people, 3rd grade through senior adult, lived in 33 different states in the US and 5 countries around the world.

The majority...75% of our virtual visits are with students: 169 programs with 3,595 students in grades 3-12 (this year we didn’t meet with any college students, although we do occasionally).

we met for 83 programs with 1,051 adults age 55 (approximately 25% of our participants)

We offer orientation sessions to introduce teachers to the experience their students will have during our programs, preview the ten different topics that are currently available, and share strategies for incorporating our programs into their teaching,
which aren’t popular, but can be helpful.

Artful connections winner of the CILC (Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration) Pinnacle Award, which recognizes programs of distinction and outstanding ratings by educators and activity directors.

Content Providers, representing museums, science centers, art galleries, zoos, aquariums, musicians, and authors, as recipients of this annual award, stand out as demonstrating remarkable quality of educational content and exceptional skill at program delivery.

**Transition:**

*Rogers is going to walk you through some of our content.*
These are the 10 topics we currently offer, which fall under three headings.

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<th>Celebrating Heritage</th>
<th>Exploring History</th>
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<td>• African American Artists</td>
<td>• Young America</td>
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<td>• American Indians</td>
<td>• Lure of the West</td>
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<td>• Latino Art and Culture</td>
<td>• A House Divided: Civil War</td>
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<td>Looking at Art</td>
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<td>• To See Is to Think</td>
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<td>• Found Object Artworks</td>
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<td>• Contemporary Craft Works</td>
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As you prepare for a presentation, consider these points.

- What message/information do you want to convey?
- How does your museum collection help tell this story?
- Who is your audience? What is of interest to them?
- For students, link to what is taught in the classroom; support core curriculum standards.
- Make it age appropriate so it informs, engages and challenges the age group.
African American Art and Artists at the Smithsonian American Art Museum

The Great Migration and
The Harlem Renaissance

I’ll give you an example of how I might engage students during a videoconference.
Engaging a Distant Audience

Important to develop a dialogue with the audience

Explain your theme and develop a flow building on earlier slides/pieces

Use open questions to engage the students and try to draw out some creative thinking and analysis

Find some hooks to engage and challenge students:
  - use videos, poetry, audio
  - pair share, act it out
  - if you were there, what would you tweet your friend?
Who is she?

What do we know about her story?

Why is she important?

What symbols does the artist use?

Why does he use these symbols?

How do these symbols help tell her story?

Will V-Day Be Me-Day Too?
by
James Langston Hughes

Over There,
World War II.

Dear Fellow Americans,
I write this letter
Hoping times will be better
When this war
Is through.
I’m a Tan-skinned Yank
Driving a tank.
I ask, WILL V-DAY
BE ME-DAY, TOO?
……

Sincerely,
GI Joe

Recording can be found at https://archive.org/details/BessieSmithIveGotWhatItTakes1927 beginning at :46

**Empress of the Blues**
As you saw, many of the techniques Rogers used were familiar to you. You already use them in your in-person tours.

How are they different?

Able to incorporate other media such as music and videos.

Transition:
You are able to make your sessions very interactive and engage the audience...
“[SAAM] offered a great review of material they had learned but also encouraged the higher-order thinking questions to get them to pull what they have learned into the interpretation of the art.”

“My students made a connection to learning in their Social Studies and Science curriculum, which made oil paintings accessible and interpretable. ... The kids loved the audio (music) connection. ... Great experience!”

“The class was very interactive and allowed for students to stay engaged and apply their knowledge.”

“It is a phenomenal way to have students engaged in learning the content.”

Transition:
So what do you need to start a distance learning program?
So, you want to start a distance learning program?

Three components

Talent...your docents are already experts in your collection. Distance learning is a collaboration with museum staff...will need staff to help with technology, scheduling, the behind the scenes or operations part of the program

Training...
You’re already experts in your collection and at engaging your audience in the gallery. There are a couple of other things that your talent will need to know...

Power point...we create our content so we make our own power points.

Training/experience to become comfortable in talking to a remote audience through the camera. Tips for working with your content thru the camera will need to happen.

Transition:
Third T is technology... and Becky will talk about the technology options.
Many considerations will affect what you need. To relieve some anxiety and answer the big question, here’s the minimum. Then, we can talk about variations.

A computer, laptop, or tablet
A plugged in webcam
A plugged in microphone
A broadband Internet connection
Maybe directional lighting and a nice backdrop

As you can see, it’s not terribly complicated. This kind of set up doesn’t need a lot of space, and if you use a headset microphone, you could work in a space that’s not completely soundproof.
There are other variations in equipment that might be worth considering. Before we examine them, there are some important considerations to address. Additional information can be found on the handout at the end of the packet of slides.

Audience and content come first. Once you’ve figured out whom you’re reaching, what they need, and how your org. or institution can fill that need, you can move forward. Don’t use technology just because it’s cool or it will appeal to kids.

Consider what you will be featuring during your programs. Where you will be and what you want to show will guide the kind of equipment you need to use.

Does your site already have equipment you can use? Investigate what you already have, and try starting there, perhaps with some updating.

Who will be handling the equipment? At our museum, I handle tests before the program and connections on the day of the program, while our volunteer presenters teach from PowerPoint presentations independently in the studio during the program. Will operation involve a production team? Just docents? Who will
conduct the tests or tech dress rehearsals with the participating site(s) prior to the program?

And, importantly, what’s your budget? Costs can range from a few hundred dollars to $15k. With whom can you partner to share costs, if your institution can shoulder it all?
Examples

What types of equipment can be used?

Taking those four points into consideration, here are some examples of different set ups at a variety of institutions.

SAAM—studio with a green screen; one person can run the whole thing; H.323 legacy equipment and upgraded equipment with a video/audio mixer

Cleveland Museum of Art—studio with a green screen; production equipment; producer and presenter

California PORTS (Parks Online Resources for Teachers & Students)—tripod and iPhone; some parks have equipment on souped up golf carts/ATVs that can travel in rugged areas of parks

Boston Museum of Fine Arts—tablet in the museum; must have some reference screen to see class on but it’s not in the photo; two person operation

Amon Carter Museum of American Art—mobile cart in the gallery; one person operation
Two additional important items:

- Your Internet connection
- A video connection platform

Two other items to note that aren’t hardware but are important.

The quality of your Internet connection matters. Ideally, you will be able to plug in. If you need to be mobile, make sure your wifi is strong.

You will need some kind of video connection platform. This enables you, with whatever equipment you have, to connect with a site at the other end, no matter what type of equipment they have.
### Equipment

**What does the other side need?**

- Computer, laptop, or tablet
- Webcam
- Microphone
- Projector or smartboard
- Broadband Internet connection

A brief note about what the other side needs to connect with you:

A computer, laptop, or tablet  
A plugged in webcam  
A plugged in microphone  
A projector or smartboard  
A broadband Internet connection

As you can see, it’s not terribly complicated, and most schools have this equipment already. Many community groups already have this equipment, too, and with a video connection platform provided by your institution, you are ready to go. Just be sure to conduct a test prior to every program—Murphy’s law.
Where is your target audience located?

Local marketing can be directly with schools, teachers, area agencies on aging (if targeting an older population that can’t easily come to your site) or lifelong learning divisions of community colleges and universities. Work with your site’s marketing department.

Regional marketing might depend on your state. Some states have strong networks of organizations that facilitate distance programming: the Educational Service Centers in MN and TX, the BOCES in NY. Area agencies on aging might again offer contacts at assisted living sites. Lifelong learning institutes in the region can also be an option.

National marketing can happen using clearinghouse sites such as CILC, Streamable Learning, Field Trip Zoom, Skype in the Classroom. CILC offers a lifelong-learning-focused set of programs; there are also OLLIs and Road Scholar Lifelong Learning Institute Network, and Senior Learning Network.
You have a story to tell.

You have the docent talent.

You can use simple applications of technology.

We have time for some questions, if you have some.
Have some questions after the session?

Becky Fulcher
FulcherR@si.edu

Do let us know if you are able to start a distance learning program at your own museum!
Reframing the Museum Experience: Creating a Distance Learning Program
Becky Fulcher, Rogers LeBaron, Sue Linden
Friday, October 25, 9:30-10:30

Equipment Needs

At a minimum, you and your connecting site need some basic equipment:

- Computer, laptop, or tablet
- Webcam
- Microphone
- Broadband Internet connection

The camera and microphone might be built into your hardware, but a plug-in microphone can often pick up sound better than a built in one. You may also need to consider adding extra lights or a nice backdrop to make your presentation look a bit more professional. The entire set up could cost a few hundred dollars. At the other end of the spectrum, if you want a video mixer, a greenscreen or chromakey function, a soundboard, etc., you would want to set aside around $15,000.

As you consider your site’s equipment needs, keep these points in mind:

The program’s content can point toward the equipment needed:
Will you be outside or inside? Will you use the actual or digitized objects? Artifacts or live demos? Will your program feature a historic house, gardens, or live animals? Small artifacts? To show off a historic house, gardens, or animals, having a mobile cart or an iPad might be useful. Small artifacts might require a document camera in a studio. A digitized collection could be shown using a green screen from a studio.

Explore what equipment your site already owns.
Is H.323 or SIP videoconference-specific equipment available, or will you be using a computer? Could you retrofit a cart to become a mobile unit? Maybe some unused videoconferencing equipment (now considered to somewhat outdated, or “legacy” equipment) could be updated. Equipment should be somewhat current, but if it’s only a few years old that should still work. Start there and plan for improvements.

Consider who will be the designated equipment person/people.
Will operation involve a production team, a team of staff and docents, or only docents? Who will conduct the tests or tech dress rehearsals with the participating site(s) prior to the program?

Know the available budget.
Plan for equipment costs, maintenance contracts on the important equipment, a video connection platform, upgrading equipment down the road, and perhaps a dedicated Internet line to ensure enough bandwidth or a wifi signal booster. Are donors, grants, or partner institutions available to support or share costs?
Additional Considerations

You need a fast Internet connection to support high quality video and audio—both what you’re sending out and what you’re receiving. A speed of 1.5 Megabits/second (Mbps) for uploading and downloading is a good guide, which is less than you’d need for streaming something like Netflix in HD. Plug into your Internet connection if you can or use a very strong wifi signal.

A video connection platform enables you to connect with a site at the other end, no matter what type of equipment each side has. Zoom is a very popular platform, because it’s very user-friendly and very cost-effective. Other professional platforms include Google Hangouts or Meet (they’re in the process of changing what they offer), Adobe Connect, Cisco Webex, and others. Skype and Facetime have high familiarity, making it easier for teachers to use, but they don’t always offer great quality connections.

Marketing

Where you market could depend upon the geographic area you’re trying to reach. Work with the marketing department at your institution to get started, and consider these suggestions, as well.

Local

Local marketing can be flyers at schools, teacher union representatives, teacher nights hosted at your site, email lists developed by your site’s staff, area agencies on aging (if targeting an older population that can’t easily come to your site) or lifelong learning divisions of community colleges and universities.

Regional

Some states have strong networks of organizations that facilitate distance programming, such as the Educational Service Centers in MN and TX or the BOCES in NY. Research these organizations and make sure staff know about what you’re offering so they can talk up the programs to the schools and teachers they assist. For older virtual visitors, area agencies on aging might offer contacts at assisted living sites. Lifelong learning institutes in the region can also be an option.

National

Consider using clearinghouse sites such as CILC (Center for Interactive Learning and Collaboration), Streamable Learning, Field Trip Zoom, or Skype in the Classroom—search these sites’ titles for more information. CILC offers a lifelong-learning-focused set of programs, so this would be a good place to market programs. There are also OLLIs (Osher Lifelong Learning Institutes) and the Road Scholar Lifelong Learning Institute Network; the smaller Senior Learning Network can also offer students eager to learn and at a distance.