

Producing an Access Grid Event

Lessons Learned: Alliance Chautauqua
99

At Boston University

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Overview

- **The production team: roles, responsibilities, and necessary skills**
- **Show-time communications**
- **New challenges**

- **Addressed to the host site – but lessons are here for remote sites as well**

Key Phrases

- **When Something Breaks**
- **Trust**
- **Communication**

Our Context: Boston 1999

- 250-seat auditorium
- One AG node, 1 x 3 projectors
- Two 8-hour plenary sessions
- 3 months lead time after ANL workshop



Boston University



National Computational Science Alliance

The Production Team

- **Producer**
- **Technical team, led by technical director**
 - **Technical director/display control**
 - **Audio control**
 - **Network/transmit monitor**
 - **“Floater” (cameras, mics, podium ppt, etc)**
- **Master of ceremonies**
- **Floor manager**

Your New Best Friend

- **Technical director and producer**
 - Must absolutely trust each others judgment
 - Must absolutely be able to communicate in shorthand
 - Must inspire the trust of the entire production team
- **If technical director and producer are not trusting each other, they are driving each other crazy**

Producer Manages the Team

- **Before show**

- Get to know the AG and MUD
- Develop technical agenda
- Run pre-show meeting

- **During show**

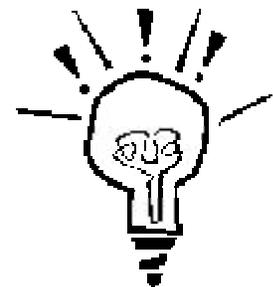
- Coordinate closely with technical director, master of ceremonies, and floor manager
- Oversee screen and window composition
- Determine when/how it is appropriate to deviate from technical agenda
- Keep running list of announcements for MC

Producer Needs to Be. . .

- **An excellent manager (people skills)**
- **A direct, concise communicator**
- **Familiar and comfortable with AG technology**
 - **Should attend as many nanocruises as possible**
 - **Ideal to have driven node at least once**
 - **Should use MUD frequently and know who's who**
- **Good at visual layout**
- **Comfortable calling the shots in a crisis**

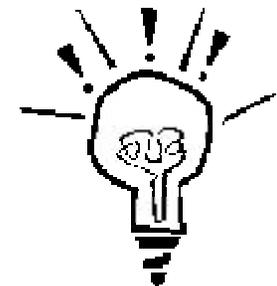
Producer: Tips

- **Contingency plans**
 - Have good local backup presenters
 - Don't be afraid to use them. You should be able to switch to contingency on a moment's notice.
- **Pre-show meeting/MC tutorial**
 - Producer, technical director, master of ceremonies
- **Try not to have any other jobs**
 - Don't be running tutorials, calling the caterer, shuttling the speakers



Producer: Tips on the Technical Agenda

- **One-stop shopping**
 - Don't use more detail than you need
 - Work with your technical team to find out what they need
- You need plenty of breaks for troubleshooting
- Sample from Boston



Technical Director Manages the AG

- **Russ Wolf has an excellent talk about:**
 - **Who to worry about**
 - **What to worry about**
 - **When to worry about it**

Technical Director Needs to Be. . .

- **Excellent at communicating concisely and directly**
 - **MUD**
 - **Backchannel conference call**
 - **Frontline**
- **Master of AG technologies**
- **Able to command respect and earn trust**
- **Knowledgable about networking food chain**
- **Comfortable with public speaking**
 - **Ready to handle the isolation situation**

Master of Ceremonies Manages the Audience

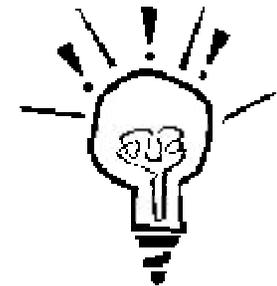
- **Before show**
 - Study technical agenda
 - Attend pre-show meeting
- **During show**
 - Introduce speakers
 - Provide smooth, continuous presence for local and remote Chautauqua audience
 - May be called upon by floor manager to graciously ask speakers to wrap up presentations if they've run past allotted time
 - Assist speakers with management of remote questions
 - Local audience microphone management?

Master of Ceremonies Needs to Be. . .

- **An excellent public speaker**
- **Comfortable in a crisis – can tap dance well**
- **Able to take directions well**

Master of Ceremonies: Tips

- **When something breaks**
 - Stay calm
 - This is evidence that we're pushing limits of available technology
 - What happened, why, and what impressive amounts of data we're pushing through the pipes
 - (This is equally effective from technical director instead)
- **Don't give up the floor**



Master of Ceremonies: Tips

- **Handling remote questions**

- Floor manager holds cue card
- Display control holds mouse over “asking” site to highlight window
- Master of ceremonies introduces question



**Remote
Question**



Floor Manager Manages the Talent

- **Before show**
 - Study technical agenda
 - Attend pre-show meeting
- **During show**
 - Ensure that all speakers arrive on stage at the appropriate times
 - Use cue cards to communicate with speaker
 - If problems arise related to speaker preparation, contact any/all staff needed for resolution
 - Primary timekeeper for agenda

Floor Manager Needs to Be . . .

- **Quick-thinking and resourceful**
 - **When something breaks**
- **Good at juggling multiple tasks**
 - **One speaker on-deck, one speaker wrapping up**
- **Excellent people skills – must lay down the law for speakers and do all their last-minute prep**

Showtime Communications Infrastructure

- **In-room communications**
 - Headset radios: everybody but MC
 - Cue cards: floor manager
 - MUD: producer plus all technical staff
 - Strategic proximity

Cue Cards

5 Minutes
Left

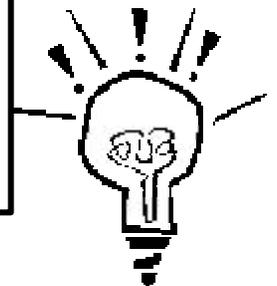
Audio is
Down

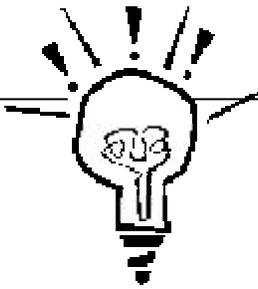
Time's
Up

Audio is
Back Up

Remote
Question

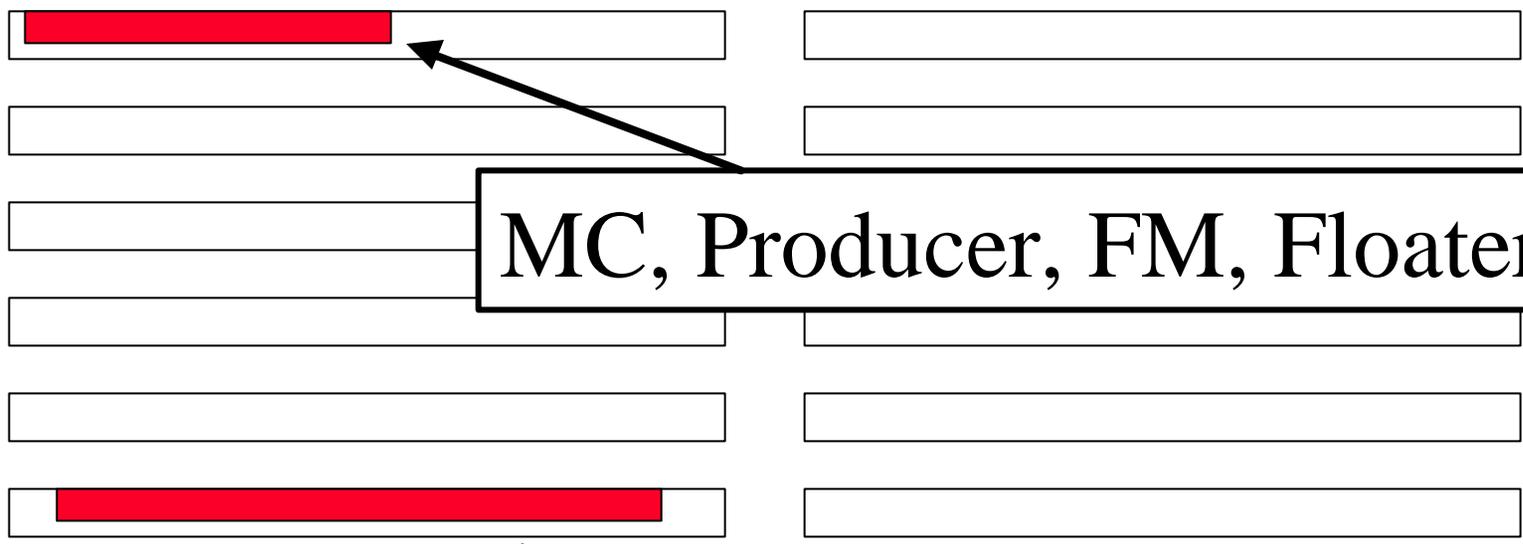
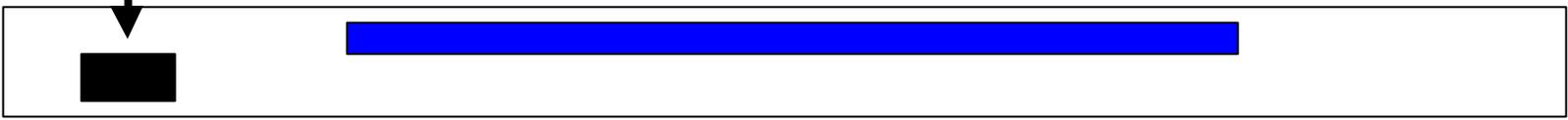
Speak Up





Podium

Screens



MC, Producer, FM, Floater

AG boxes, TD, DC, AC, NM, phones

Grid-wide Showtime Communications

- **Everybody on MUD**
- **All sites on backchannel conference call**
 - **Technical director**
- **Stick to the protocols**
 - **Sites with audiences have top priority**
 - **Watch for major sites' requests (ie, to change camera angles, adjust audio levels)**

New Challenges for C2K

- **Expectations are higher**
- **Lead time is shorter**
- **Multiple physical rooms**
 - **Need more machines, more staff, more network connections, more packets, much more Tylenol**
- **Distributed tutorials**
 - **What is the nature of the tutorial setting vs plenary setting?**

New Challenges for C2K (Cont.)

- **Increased participation by remote sites**
- **Use of virtual venues**
- **<The unknown>**

New Advantages for C2K

- **Last year's experience**
- **New tools**
- **Fresh horses**
 - **New people bring new ideas**
- **More and better “buzz” for both Access Grid and Chautauqua**
- **<the unknown>**