HELOA

Session Title:	Ensuring the success of your digital initiatives in a hybrid world
Speaker(s):	
Chair:	Michelle Terrell
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Speaker/Institution Bio/Information:	UniBuddy
Overview/Aim of session:	
Workshop Content	- Young people have grown up with digital – they don't necessarily see the divide between 'real life' and digital in the way that we do – they can and should blend. - THE research with around 2000 students showed they thought digital resources were most important. - Online course industry worth $250billion – ever-growing. - Changes are happening now – we don't have time to catch-up. - Native digital – someone who has grown up with tech being readily available (e.g. students). Native analogue – people who lived before tech was integral to life (e.g. most of us). 'Rethinking the style of content delivery' – not necessarily doing what we have always done, as it might not translate. - Rather than presentations, formal panels – try an academic hosting a chat with students. Conversational and invites questions from attendees. - Ambassador support – certificate to show they are in the role, socials etc. - Ship 30 for 30 is a creative writing course. Creates a community. - Seamless and invisible experiences - Use of student influencers to support marketing/recruitment. - Return on digital ads is not working.

Case Studies/Examples:	• Edwards School of Business UniBuddy account – if student is asked a question, they then might go and get a video from an academic to support the answer. Also having ten or so students monitoring one 'student' account, so that it is always managed.
	• University of Derby – digital offer wasn't going to mimic on-site activity. Focus on 'on demand' content.
	• NTU had planned for a virtual open day before the pandemic, so had planned it online from the outset.
	• Deakin University – badges for open day engagement, prize at the end of it (good prize like an iPad).
	• Online Santa experience for children and their families, and the option to pick a present from Santa which is then posted – is this something universities could replicate? Send resources via the post for prospects who engage in activity?
	• Mamas and Papas – still offering their virtual appointments even though stores have reopened. Again, how can we as a sector do activity like this? Option to book with a digital ambassador and get a digital, subject specific tour around campus? Can be personalised, rather than a generic online tour.
Scenarios/Roundtable discussions:	Challenges to moving something in-person to something online. • Academic staff – old timers – not open to new ways of doing things. • Patchy internet. • Accessibility – e.g. closed captions. Requires additional (necessary) staff resource. • Attempting to replicate the experience the students might have on campus. How do we promote facilities online? • Deciding which platform to use. • Keeping people engaged.
Questions and Answers:	What is the conversion for on-site activity compared to digital activity? – UniBuddy sets expectations for 6-9months time, not immediate return. Use of social media to engage students – need to follow the students to where they are, but staff might not have this expertise/it might not fit with the university ethos and therefore be inauthentic. Facebook isn't a growth platform. Limerick university have one of the best TikTok feeds because it is student led. Important to understand how to use the platforms and what young people are expecting on there – ensure content is relevant.
Summary Key takeaways:	Planning online activity as online activity from the outset is important – we are no longer in a position where we have to quickly pivot and move in-person activity to online. We should therefore plan accordingly, and ensure that online content is engaging and suitable for the platform. There are many unique ways of working online – not just within HE – and we can/should take inspiration from it all.