



# 2020 Evergreen International Online Conference

## Report for The Evergreen Project Board

Evergreen Outreach Committee/Online Conference Committee

### Summary

In response to the cancellation of the 2020 Evergreen International Conference due to COVID-19, the community undertook a collaborative effort to bring forth some of the originally scheduled content. Several individuals and organizations, within a short time frame, planned, organized, and ultimately offered the 2020 Evergreen International Online Conference. This free, 3-day, virtual conference featured John Rempel as keynote speaker and a dual track schedule with learning sessions, discussion roundtables, and special interest groups. Three hundred forty-five individuals registered with an average of 61 participants in any given session. Recordings of the conference have been captioned and are available, through The Evergreen Project website, on YouTube. Feedback for the online conference was largely positive with suggestions and recommendations for similar events in the future.

### Inception

After the 2020 Conference Committee made the determination to cancel the in-person conference this year, the Outreach Committee agreed to put on an online version of the conference. Members of the Online Conference Committee were Andrea Buntz Neiman, Galen Charlton, Ruth Frasur, Ron Gagnon, Rogan Hamby, Debbie Luchenbill, and Amy Terlaga.

The Committee contacted all presenters and roundtable leaders scheduled for the 2020 conference and offered them a space in the Online Conference. Of the 35 presentations and roundtables originally scheduled, the presenters and facilitators for 23 agreed to present at the Online Conference, including the keynote speaker. The Online Conference also added a presentation on SQL, by Rogan Hamby, and included the regular community developers' update led by Galen Charlton.

The Committee determined that the Online Conference would take place over three days, starting in the early afternoon (Eastern Time) in order to facilitate attendance from across North America. After surveying the presenters, June 9 - June 11 was selected. Presentations were grouped into two tracks, General and Technical. Bibliomation volunteered to host a Virtual Happy Hour social event as a substitute for the Reception typically held at the in-person conference.

The Committee discussed, but ultimately abandoned, the idea of asking for donations from attendees. Instead, the Online Conference was offered free of charge to all attendees, and community sponsors (noted in the next section) supported the technology needs of the event.



## Technology

The Committee surveyed the community for organizations with webinar hosting licenses who would be interested in allowing the use of said licenses and providing staff member hosts. Based on this survey, the Committee determined that Zoom was the best choice of platform for the conference.

Community Zoom sponsors and hosts were Bibliomation (Amy Terlaga), Evergreen Indiana (Ruth Frasur), MOBIUS (Debbie Luchenbill), and NC Cardinal (April Durrence and Benjamin Murphy). Hosts were responsible for running the Zoom sessions, assisting presenters, starting recordings, monitoring chat, monitoring for bad actors, and posting interstitial slides between sessions. Hosts also held optional Zoom orientation sessions for presenters and captioners.

Due to the constraints of each sponsors' licenses, some sessions had to be hosted in webinar mode and others had to be hosted in meeting mode. Most licenses had an attendee limit of 100, but NC Cardinal was able to provide a 300-seat license for the opening remarks and keynote.

All sessions were recorded (with presenter permission) and live-captioned. Captioning was provided by CaptionAccess and sponsored by Equinox Open Library Initiative. Recorded sessions were put on the Evergreen community YouTube channel. As of July 8th, these recordings had over 900 views and around 160 hours of watched time. The most popular videos have been the keynote, the Self Check Roundtable, and Chris Sharp's *Understanding Evergreen Reports*.

## Registration & Attendance

Registration was conducted via a Google Form. A total of 345 deduplicated registrations were collected. Attendees were emailed appropriate Zoom links each day of the Online Conference.

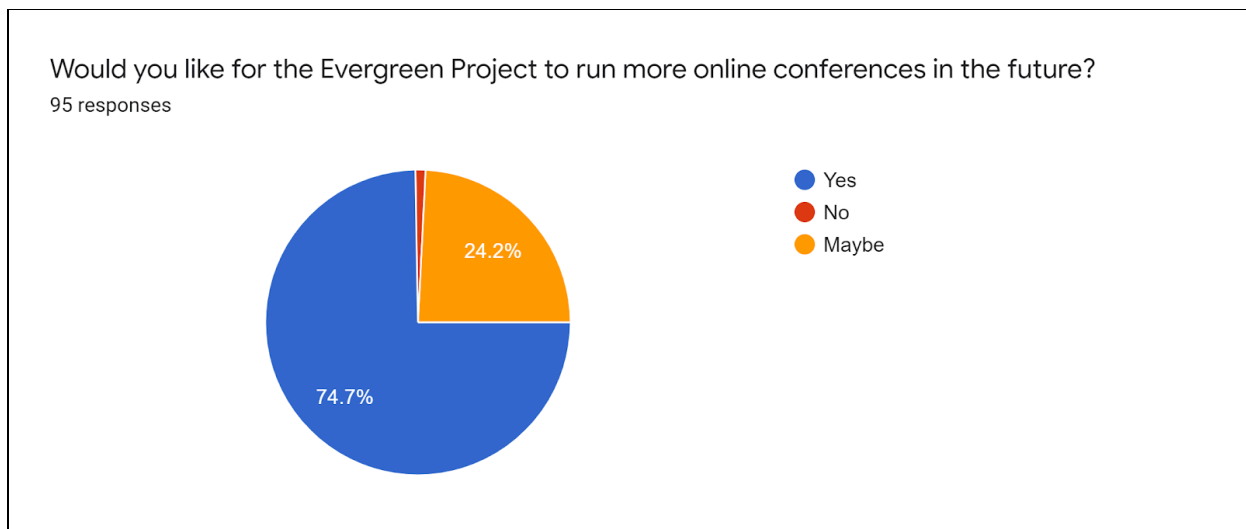
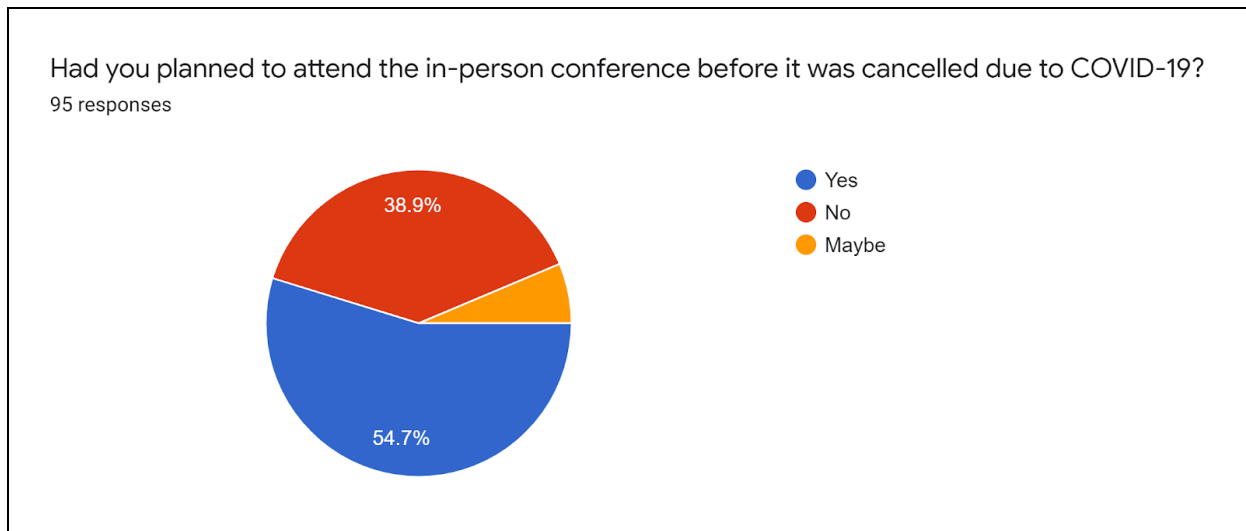
Most sessions were well attended. The keynote by John Rempel recorded the highest attendance at 150 attendees. The most-attended regular session was Chris Sharp's *Understanding Evergreen Reports*, which hit the session maximum of 100 attendees. Average attendance across all sessions was 61 attendees per session.

As usual, the event was governed by the community Code of Conduct, and Incident Responders were made available to attendees. For the Online Conference, a "Contact the Organizers" form was made available as well. The form did not garner any entries, and Incident Responders confirmed that no Code of Conduct violations were reported to them. Zoom hosts similarly confirmed no bad actors at any of the Online Conference sessions.

## Post-Conference Survey

Registrants were asked to complete a post conference survey, which garnered 95 responses (27.5% of registrants) and generally very positive feedback. The full results of the survey can be shared privately

with the Board and future Conference Committees as needed, but we will call out some highlights below.



As seen in the above charts, only a small majority of respondents had planned to attend the in-person conference; and a large majority of respondents are in favor of future online events. This speaks to a large untapped desire in the community for online events. Several of the survey's comments called this out as well, citing the convenience, affordability, and accessibility of the Online Conference. Many commenters remarked that they had never attended an Evergreen Conference due to expense and/or work or personal needs, and were very happy to be able to attend a community event online.

Respondents also gave uniformly high marks to presentation quality, usefulness, and informativeness. Approximately 90% of respondents rated those three metrics at either a 4 or a 5 on a scale of 1-5. The keynote was given similarly high marks - of the 65 respondents who attended the keynote, 59 of them



(91%) rated the keynote at a 4 or 5. Attendees went to an average of 7 sessions, with the largest clusters attending 3-5 sessions (31 respondents) or 10-12 sessions (22 respondents).

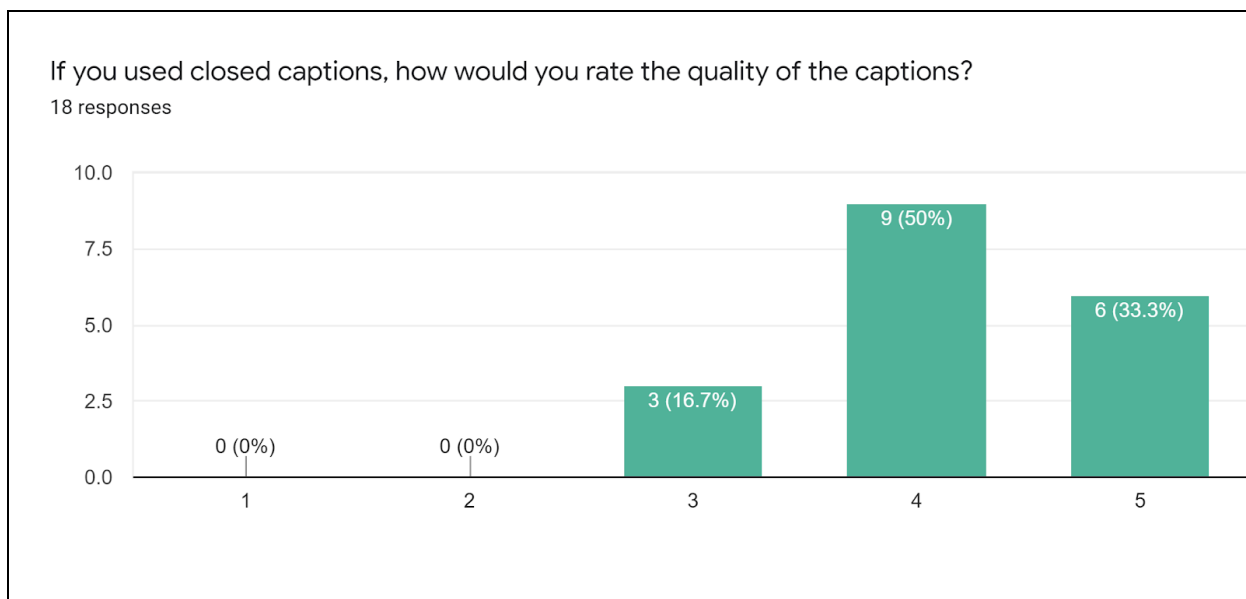
Some sessions that were specifically called out positively in the comments were:

- *Understanding Evergreen Reports*, by Chris Sharp (PINES)
- *Batches, Baskets, Buckets, and Bookbags*, by Elizabeth Thomsen (NOBLE)
- *Rethinking Patron and Staff Permission Groups in NC Cardinal*, by April Durrence and Benjamin Murphy (NC Cardinal)
- *Open Sesame: Creating Stricter Evergreen Login Requirements for Staff and Patrons*, by Jessica Woolford, Amy Terlaga, and Carol Yarrison (Bibliomation)

On the more critical end, commenters cited a desire for more introductory sessions, as well as more sessions on Cataloging, Serials, and Acquisitions.

From the technology side, the Zoom video and audio worked well for most attendees. The Zoom hosts in particular were called out for their excellent job managing sessions. As noted above, only one session (Chris Sharp's *Understanding Evergreen Reports*) went to maximum capacity. Respondents were very pleased that sessions were recorded, and 90% of respondents indicated that they planned to view presentations on YouTube.

There were 18 respondents who indicated that they made use of the live closed captioning. Most rated the captions quality at a 4 or a 5 (see chart below). Comments on the captioning were generally favorable, with many respondents expressing appreciation for the fact that captioning was provided. Captioners were lauded for their overall accuracy with community jargon, though some errors were noted and in one case a commenter noted that the captions were a little slow.





Response to the Virtual Happy Hour was generally positive for the 20 individuals who responded on the survey, though several noted that it was difficult to converse in a large group, and others noted that the 5:15pm EDT timing of the Happy Hour was unfriendly to non-East Coast attendees. It was also noted that chances for socialization were otherwise limited, and that future online events should consider providing more networking opportunities.

## Recommendations

The Online Conference Committee along with the Zoom hosts met to discuss the results of the survey and general impressions of the Online Conference. Our recommendations are as follows:

- Consider having TEP-funded online basic Evergreen training for community members.
  - “More intro sessions!” is a relatively common refrain at every conference.
  - Having a few basic end-user videos or short training sessions would be helpful to newer community members.
- Consider holding regular small online events to share content with those who can’t attend in person.
  - Recommend a nominal fee for attendance at these events.
  - Ask certain conference presenters to recreate / record their talks for these events, and also seek presentations from others who do not attend in-person events.
  - Allow space for lightning talks and networking.
  - Consider the needs of discussion groups and roundtables, which are in many ways harder to run online.
- Recommend that future online events use a single platform and single license.
  - Having different types of Zoom sessions (webinar vs meeting) was confusing for some attendees and also a lot of overhead to manage.
  - Having a single platform would streamline registration & payment.
  - Having a single platform would allow for stronger orientation of presenters and participants.
  - We do not have a specific platform recommendation, but the Hack-a-way will provide an opportunity to plan an online event on a longer timeline & potentially make use of a more interactive platform.