



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

Empowering WSIPC Cooperative members through an incredible hybrid conference





WSIPC is a not for profit Cooperative that provides technology solutions, services, and support to K-12 public, private/independent, charter, and tribal schools. They offer student, business, human resources, and reporting applications, along with an array of premium technologies. Jennifer Bower, Account Manager, and Jamie Cowan, Account Manager, together manage WSIPC's three-day software user group conference WASWUG, along with their small team. "WASWUG is the single largest branding and marketing event we do as an organization annually," notes Jamie.

1,200


CONFERENCE
REGISTRANTS

888

ATTENDEE HUB EVENT APP
DOWNLOADS

110+

SESSIONS MANAGED



Successfully moving conference management in-house at WSIPC

The conference typically hosts over 1,000+ Skyward software users from schools in Washington State and across the Pacific Northwest. Attendees can network, attend professional development sessions, and share experiences and ideas. “We provide networking opportunities, professional development sessions, and we have a lot of fun,” Jennifer elaborates. Their 2023 conference was the most attended in WSIPC’s history, nearing their capacity of 1,200.

For this conference, WSIPC decided to move to a hybrid model for the first time. They chose to livestream all 112 breakout sessions, making them available on-demand for continued engagement post-event. “From a planning and audiovisual point of view, that was one of our biggest challenges in putting on the conference,” notes Jamie. Jennifer notes that another concern was ensuring virtual attendees would feel “as included as possible.”

To help facilitate this complex hybrid experience, WSIPC turned to Cvent. They used their existing Cvent Registration platform along with several new solutions, which included Abstract Management, the Speaker Resource Center, Attendee Hub, and the Event App.

Until 2022, they had relied on a third party to manage many aspects of WASWUG. For 2023, they brought these tools and processes in-house, executing WASWUG entirely on their own for the first time – a huge accomplishment. Jamie shares, “Taking over the registration process, event app, and eMarketing of our event was just the beginning of a positive paradigm shift in how we manage our events.”



Managing a complex hybrid conference with Cvent solutions

To execute a successful WASWUG, WSIPC used Cvent's Registration solution to process registrations, manage payments, and track attendee information. The platform provides WSIPC a flexible means of differentiating registration paths and attendee types to help create a more personalized attendee experience. They're also able to gather accurate data for all attendees in a single source of truth, automatically integrating their registration data with other solutions like Attendee Hub. This reduces manual labor for their small team, creating efficiencies and improving data accuracy. Importantly, attendees can self-serve and modify their registration as needed, freeing up valuable time for the five-member team.

One particular challenge was creating and executing a complex conference agenda. They outlined eight breakout session time slots over three days, with 14 simultaneous livestreamed sessions being run and recorded during every time slot. Across their session mix, which included featured sessions and sponsored breakouts, they had to manage over 100 presenters. These speakers each had to manage livestreaming and recording their presentations for on-demand viewing.



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JENNIFER BOWER
Account Manager

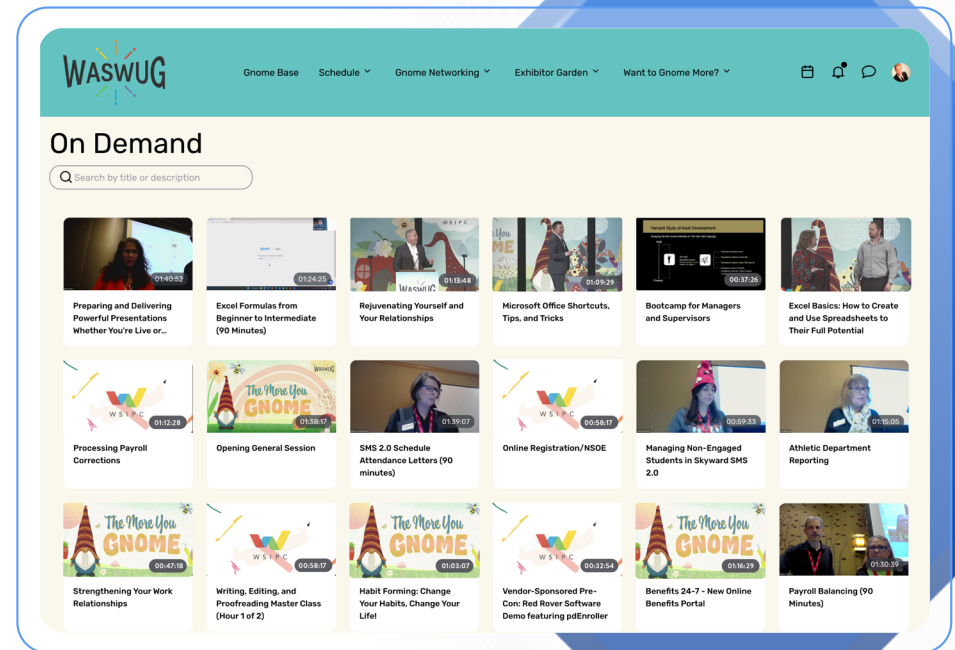
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“Each of the breakout sessions had at least one presenter and one moderator, and we were responsible for making sure everything was set up properly in Cvent’s backend,” notes Jennifer. “We had to manage the logistics of training 101 presenters, 62 moderators, the venue’s AV techs, and our own IT staff.”

They did so using the Cvent Video Player in Attendee Hub. This turnkey solution provided a seamless means of capturing and streaming all video content, making it easy and straightforward for presenters to manage. To ensure continued engagement with the content, they made all sessions available on-demand in Attendee Hub for 90 days post-event.

With competing priorities and new technologies, WSIPC says leaning on their Cvent team members during this time was crucial. “We asked Cvent reps and programmers a lot of questions, we set up and ran test scenarios until we knew exactly how areas in Cvent’s software worked, and we pushed the platform hard,” notes Jamie.

Jennifer adds that utilizing Cvent’s day-of professional services was “helpful and informative.” The dedicated support ensured everything went smoothly for WSIPC during the conference, and WSIPC’s Cvent Account Manager even joined onsite to ensure the event was a success.



◆ The power of the Cvent ◆ Attendee Hub for virtual and in-person attendees

The Attendee Hub served as the central resource for attendees to engage with content, speakers, and one another, whether they attended virtually via the web platform or in-person using the Event App. Here, they could easily build their agenda, view session and speaker details, and stay up to date with push notifications. They could also connect with their peers through integrated networking, including direct messaging, attendee recommendations, discussions, and more.

As their primary marketing event for the year, a top concern for WSIPC was ensuring the branding of their conference was consistent and clear. “It’s a large part of the identity of what we do with our conference,” Jamie notes. With a new creative theme chosen each year, the 2023 conference was themed “The More You Gnome,” with their branding woven throughout the experience. By using integrated Cvent solutions, they were able to provide a consistent brand experience from the event website to the registration site and even through to the mobile app and post-event surveys. “When we looked at all the opportunities there were with Attendee Hub and the app, it was about how many ways we could customize and play with our theme,” Jennifer says. “From banners to the custom cards and everything in between, we took advantage of every single opportunity and customized everything.”



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Onsite, attendees could access and self-manage their personalized agenda via the mobile app. Features like chat and Q&A allowed attendees to engage with one another and the speakers in real time. In fact, Jennifer and Jamie note that they had 62 moderators logged into Attendee Hub to engage with the virtual audience throughout the conference, thereby fostering a sense of inclusivity for virtual attendees. In addition, they turned on attendee recommendations so attendees could network with those who had similar interests. “One-to-one messaging allowed attendees to message one another throughout the conference, so it really helps to have those kinds of tools,” Jennifer states.

With custom cards, WSIPC was able to drive specific attendee actions as well. “We used custom cards to direct our attendees to things such as feedback surveys, and we were able to promote a donation portal with a custom card to benefit our selected charity for this year,” Jennifer shares.

This feedback was provided via embedded surveys in Attendee Hub at both the session and event level. Jamie notes that while the event is not focused on generating revenue, engagement is a key metric of success. Across their 1,200 registrants, they saw 1,137 unique logins for Attendee Hub as well as 888 app downloads – an impressive feat that meant nearly all of their onsite attendees downloaded the app.



Another way they determine success is in driving engagement for sponsors and exhibitors. In 2023, they hosted 25 exhibitors and sponsors onsite along with more than 50 booth reps. As an additional offering, WSIPC gave all exhibitors and sponsors virtual booths in Attendee Hub. Here, they could upload collateral or links, meet with attendees virtually, and receive inbound leads via messaging. The booths also remained live for three months after the close of the conference. “That’s a good investment for our exhibitors and sponsors,” Jennifer says. For sponsored sessions, WSIPC was also able to provide session metrics and attendance numbers to help prove the value of the investment.

In fact, the reporting tools available in Cvent are critical for the WSIPC team, particularly when awarding continuing education credits. “With the reporting tools we had out of Attendee Hub, we were able to provide our attendees reports for their clock hours, which was really helpful,” shares Jennifer.

Being able to self-serve through on-demand reporting in Cvent is a huge benefit for the small team. “It was so nice to have access to that ourselves within the Attendee Hub, because in the past we were not able to do that,” she adds.



Doing more with less using Cvent event tech

WSIPC also leveraged other new tools to help alleviate the workload for their team. “We’re a small team of five, so having Abstract Management and the Speaker Resource Center was a huge advantage for us,” says Jennifer. Abstract Management serves as a central portal for all speaking abstract submissions, consolidating the process to save time and allowing event managers to easily track, review, and score submissions. They’re also able to automate invitation, confirmation, and reminder emails from a single source.

The Speaker Resource Center coordinates speaker activities within a single portal, allowing speakers to self-serve and complete tasks like uploading their bio, updating social links, and providing materials. Automated task reminders eliminate the more manual back-and-forth communication with speakers to save WSIPC time. “It was incredible having our speakers upload the materials into the Speaker Resource Center, create the tasks, give them the information they needed, and have it all in one place,” Jennifer says

She adds that in the past, their third-party partner used Google docs and other manual solutions they didn’t have the ability to view. “We didn’t have access to any of that information until it was time for the conference, so having everything available to us this time around was amazing and really made the whole process so much easier,” Jennifer says. In addition, these automated solutions integrate with the rest of their Cvent platform, ensuring they maintain full visibility into all content and reporting in a single location.



Evaluating success at WASWUG 2023

In evaluating WSIPC's conference performance, one key indicator of success is meeting their registration goal. "We were thrilled this year because we exceeded our goals, which was great," Jamie says. "We were also very excited about the enthusiasm from everyone onsite, because we weren't sure how the hybrid opportunity would go."

She explains that as a Cooperative, it's important to remember that their attendees are from K-12 schools with limited budgets and even less time. "It's really important to us that when the schools make that kind of investment to send their staff to our conference, they feel like it's worth being away," she says. "So it means a lot that in our feedback, when we asked if the investment was worth it for our attendees, the overwhelming response was yes."

Jamie elaborates that the most important metric of success is the feedback from their attendees. "Given the feedback we received, the 2023 conference was a big success," she says.



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Evolving WSIPC's event strategy for the future

As they look at their upcoming event roadmap, the WSIPC team is excited to see how they could expand the impact of WASWUG. "It's the largest K-12 user group, but we think it could even be bigger," shares Jennifer. With new leadership at the helm, they are now evaluating ways to make the conference the central focus of the year. "We're exploring ways to engage our Cooperative members throughout the year," explains Jennifer. "We're considering new approaches to expand WASWUG from a single event in March into a more continuous, year-round experience."

Jaime agrees, noting that though the organization has grown dramatically since its founding in 1967, WSIPC is, at its core, focused on benefiting their members. "We believe this is a really big part of what we can provide to our Cooperative members," she says. Jamie, Jennifer, and the entire WSIPC team are excited to see how they can continue impacting their members in the near future with an expanded event portfolio and tech-forward experiences.



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Cvent is the global meeting, event, travel, and hospitality technology leader.

Cvent provides easy-to-use, integrated technology solutions to maximize the impact of meetings and events of all sizes. We help organizations plan and market events, execute onsite, engage audiences, and measure and analyze results.

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