

Virtual Conference 201

or

How to work the room when it's all on Zoom

Snowden Becker

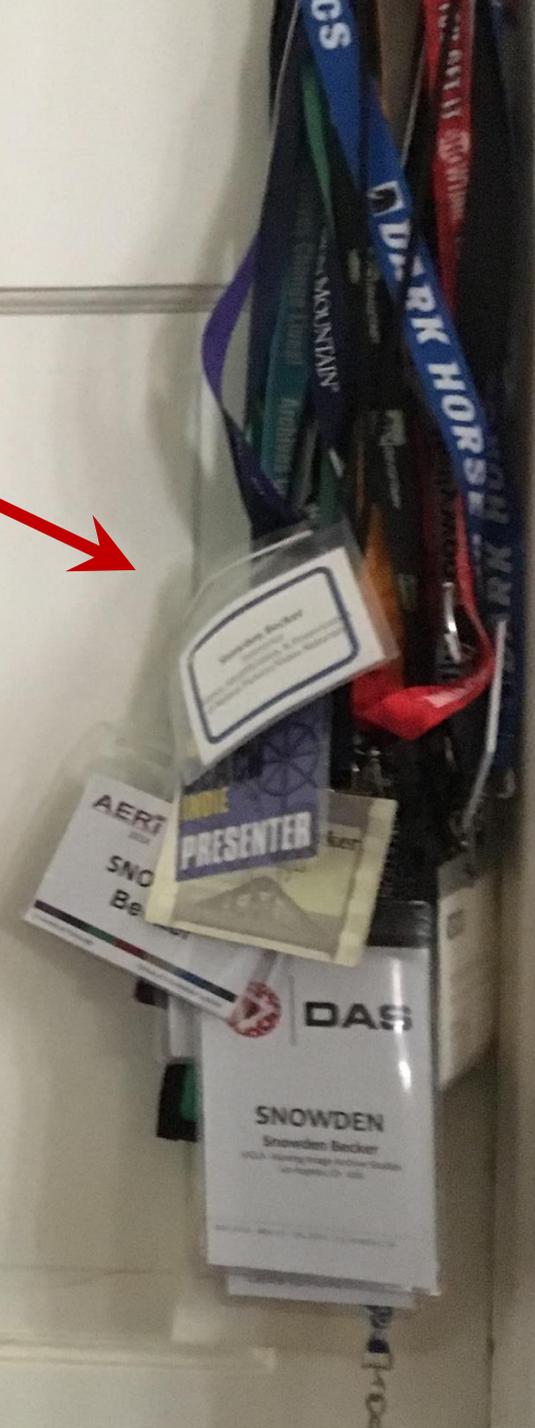
AMIA 2021 pre-conference – 3/26/21



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My qualifications

Plus at least 55 conference presentations, 22 panels, 7 program committees, 5 keynote addresses, and a bunch of virtual events, too



What we will cover

- Virtual conference basics
- AMIA-specific tips and strategies
- Setting goals & practicing self-care
- Chat pane networking how-tos
- Following up & demonstrating value
- Your questions and concerns!

What we won't cover*

*but I can direct you to some resources for if you're curious!

- Being a good presenter online
- Writing great conference proposals
- How to run a virtual conference

Want to see workshops on these or other topics in the future? [Contact the AMIA CEA Task Force!](#)

What else? You tell me!

- **There are no dumb questions**
 - Experts often forget how much of the knowledge that they use every day took them a long time to acquire
- Ask anything via the Q&A!
- Or select “Host” in the Chat and ask privately, if you prefer anonymity

Prepping for a **virtual** conference

- Make a folder (or running document) for your stuff!
 - Registration confirmation and log-in info
 - Copy of the program
 - Notes, names, contact info, items to follow up on
- Review schedule: highlight, make notes, rank choices, etc.
- Make liberal use of browser tabs!
- Set up your physical space and clear the proverbial decks
 - “Out of office” reply for email
 - Negotiate as needed (shared workspace, caregiving responsibilities)
 - Make sure you’re putting your best virtual foot forward...

Virtual networking

- Google yourself!
 - <https://knowledgeenthusiast.com/2017/09/20/the-right-way-to-google-yourself-infographic/>
- Update your profiles (LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)
- If you don't have a personal web site, **make one**. If you do, **update it**.
- **Especially** important if you're on the job market...but you should do this if you're "just listening" too.
- Be ready to share resources, links, examples of your work, etc.
 - Use your conference folder/running document to make this easy!
- Block out time in the 1-2 weeks after the conference for follow-up
 - A few hours for emails; dedicated time for virtual coffees, etc.

Decisions, decisions: the Program

- Virtual format means streamlined content, less wandering around; however, you'll still have lots to choose from!
- **Plenary sessions** = full (everyone in a big room)
- **Concurrent sessions** = running at the same time
 - Read session descriptions and “shop” (names, affiliations, topics)
 - <http://www.amiaconference.net/preliminary-program-6/>
 - Have an A pick and a B pick (and maybe a C?)
- Don't sleep on vendor demos, pAVilion, and sponsor content. These folks are members and presenters, too; they know stuff!

General conference how-to

- Code of conduct: <http://www.amiaconference.net/amia-code-of-conduct/>
- **Show up.** Go to stuff. As much as you can (see self-care...)
- Events like the AMIA/DLF Hack Day & Community Archives Workshop are open to **ALL!** They're a great way to **meet new folks** and **learn new things**.
- **Talk to people.** As many as possible. They're here to meet and learn too.
- Feel free to ask questions. Everyone is a valid participant here.
- If you're tweeting, use the hashtags and speakers' handles! **#AMIA21**
- If you love it here, think about levelling up for next time!
 - **This year:** volunteer for a committee or project?
 - **Next year:** submit a proposal and present?
 - **3-5 years from now:** chair a committee, or run for a seat on the Board?

The (virtual) tote bag

- Setting up your space for comfort and convenience is key!
 - Headphones
 - Phone/laptop chargers
 - Cardigan, hoodie, or wrap
 - Water bottle
 - Snacks!
 - Notebook or notepad and pens
 - Lighting and sound (especially if you're presenting)
- **OR DON'T**

Take the show on the road

- Zoom fatigue is REAL! Don't feel you must sit & stare.
 - Plug your laptop into your TV so you can have it on the big screen
 - Log in from a mobile device and go for a walk
 - Put in Bluetooth headphones and go work in your garden, do laundry, whatever

Self-care strategies

- Eat, sleep, and drink water.
- Wash your hands.
- Check in with yourself from time to time.
- Check in with friends or a “conference buddy,” too.
- **Going to everything ≠ being productive.** Downtime is good. Play virtual hooky with a friend! Time-shift sessions!
- Decide what your basic, stretch, and “you’re doing amazing, sweetie” goals for the day will be.

Networking in a virtual space

- Same basic steps as ever:
 - Say hi!
 - Find a point of connection
 - Follow up (especially with presenters or potential mentors)
- For some folks, this will be a LOT easier this year, because you don't have to do it in person! Much less to worry about.
- You do still have to be **active**, not passive—it's net**work**ing!
- Bear in mind that **everyone** brings something to the table, regardless of seniority, background, experience, etc.

Now let's talk about you!

- Take the next 5 minutes to compose your virtual elevator speech. Ex:
Hi, I'm Snowden Becker (she/her). After almost a decade in academia, I'm now working as a consultant for archival collections with the Myriad consulting group.
- It should be 1-2 sentences that cover who you are, what you're doing now, and/or what you're interested in doing going forward.
- Details are doorways! This is a close-knit professional community; identifying **specifically** where you've been and who you've worked with gives people more ways to connect with you.
- Post in the Chat when you're ready to say hi!

Was it worth it? Tell your boss how!

- Many people will find it easier to make a case for attending AMIA this year, because it's virtual, and therefore cheaper. Leveraging this experience for attendance at future in-person conferences is key!
- Keeping that running document for notes, etc. is a first step
 - How many sessions? What topics? How many people did you meet?
 - How does this relate to your current position (if you have one)?
 - How does this make you a better candidate for jobs you're considering?
 - How would presenting your own work in this venue help you/r institution?
- Our work isn't really done until it's shared
- Our community can function as an extension of our own brains

What's your **most** basic question?

- (That thing everyone talks about like it's completely obvious, but you don't know?)
- Chances are someone else wonders the same thing and will appreciate you asking.
- **The success of the conference is always dependent on attendees and participants.**

Thanks for listening!

- Slides will be posted via the AMIA conference site and on my website: <https://snowdenbecker.com/upcoming/>
- Consider me a resource; feel free to follow up directly anytime.
 - snowdenbecker@gmail.com
 - [@snowdenbecker](#) on Twitter
- Please say hi during the AMIA conference, and let me know what parts of this prep session (if any) were helpful to you!