



CONGREG  
SWITZERLAND

ASSOCIATION  
& CONGRESS  
EXPERTS

## Methods

A consecutive series of neuro-endovascular  
strokes were performed by a neuro-endovascular  
surgeon. The fellow and attending were  
connected using the Proximie platform, a cloud-  
based solution that enables users to capture  
clinical environment to a remote user in a  
setting. Two video streams were obtained  
directly from the AP and lateral cameras on the  
telescope. Additional video of the operator from a  
remote attending surgeon providing them  
with immediate vocal feedback could  
over an intercom. The attending could also  
employ Proximie's augmented reality tool which  
were visible to the fellow in real time on a  
laptop in the angiography suite.



## Methods



Whitepaper:

ORGANISING A COST-EFFECTIVE HYBRID CONGRESS  
– THE ESMINT CONGRESS 2021

# TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction & Background	3
1. The Concept	4
2. The Script	5
3. The Platform	6
4. Interaction	7
5. The Programme	8
6. Moderators	9
7. Speaker Briefing	10
8. Sponsors	11
9. On-Demand Content	12
10. The Rehearsal	13
11. Staff	14
12. Emotions	15
Interview with Mike Iliopoulos from ESMINT	16
About Congrex Switzerland	17



# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

Although the world is slowly getting back to normal, we anticipate that hybrid events will continue to be necessary for some time and may be here to stay. They offer the best solution to current issues such as limiting social contact, ever tighter budgets and growing environmental concerns. Our early experiences with the hybrid format have also shown that the combination of face-to-face and online events are the best way to reach the widest possible audience.

There are a number of ways in which hybrid events can be organised. Offering a fully virtual platform in addition to the organisation of a complete physical congress is the most expensive option, and the costs can easily be double that of a purely physical event. But there are also more cost-effective alternatives that won't compromise the quality of your event or the opportunities for participants to interact.

Our client ESMINT (the European Society of Minimally Invasive Neurological Therapy) chose to host a cost-effective hybrid congress, which we helped them to organise. The ESMINT congress typically welcomes almost a thousand participants from over sixty countries every year. The congress in 2021 was originally planned to be only a physical event. However, due to the ongoing Corona situation, the organisers decided during the year to adapt the event to the hybrid model.

What does it take to organise a cost-efficient hybrid congress?

The most important elements, and how we specifically handled each aspect for ESMINT are listed below.

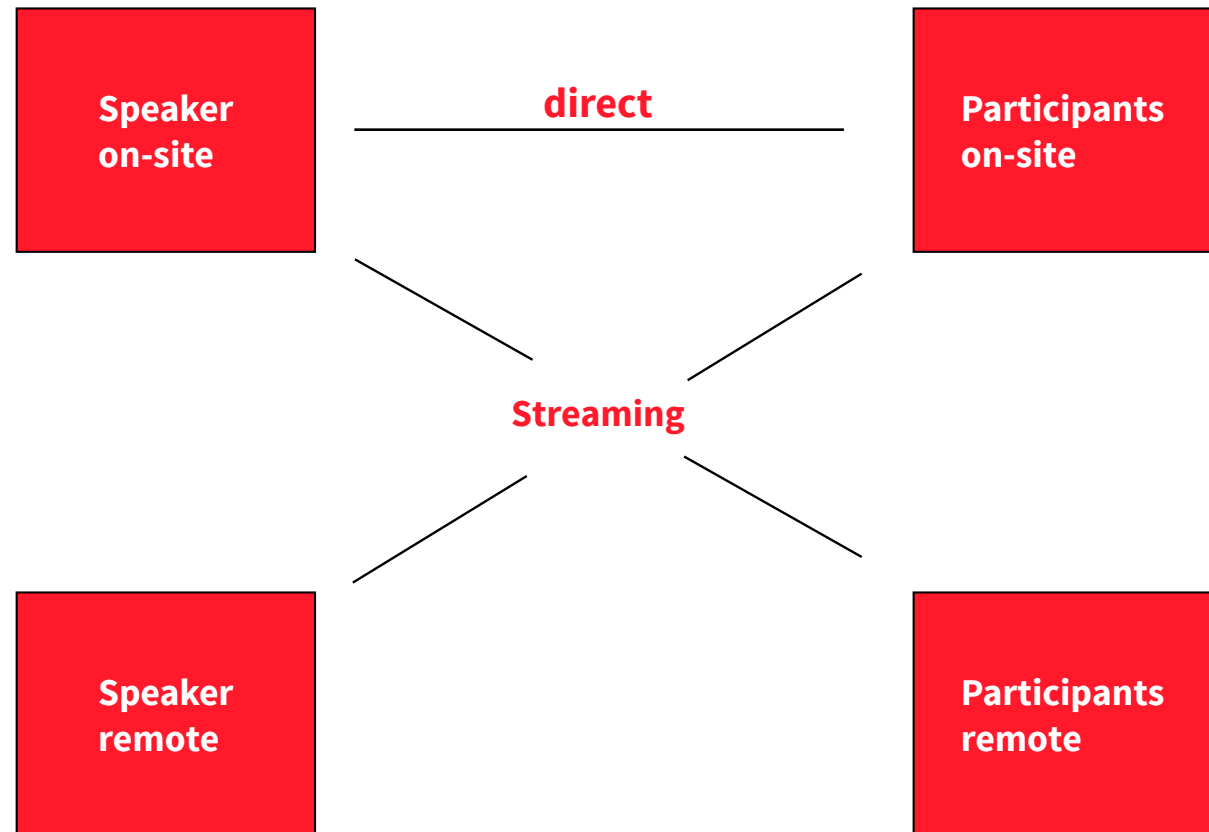


# 1. THE CONCEPT

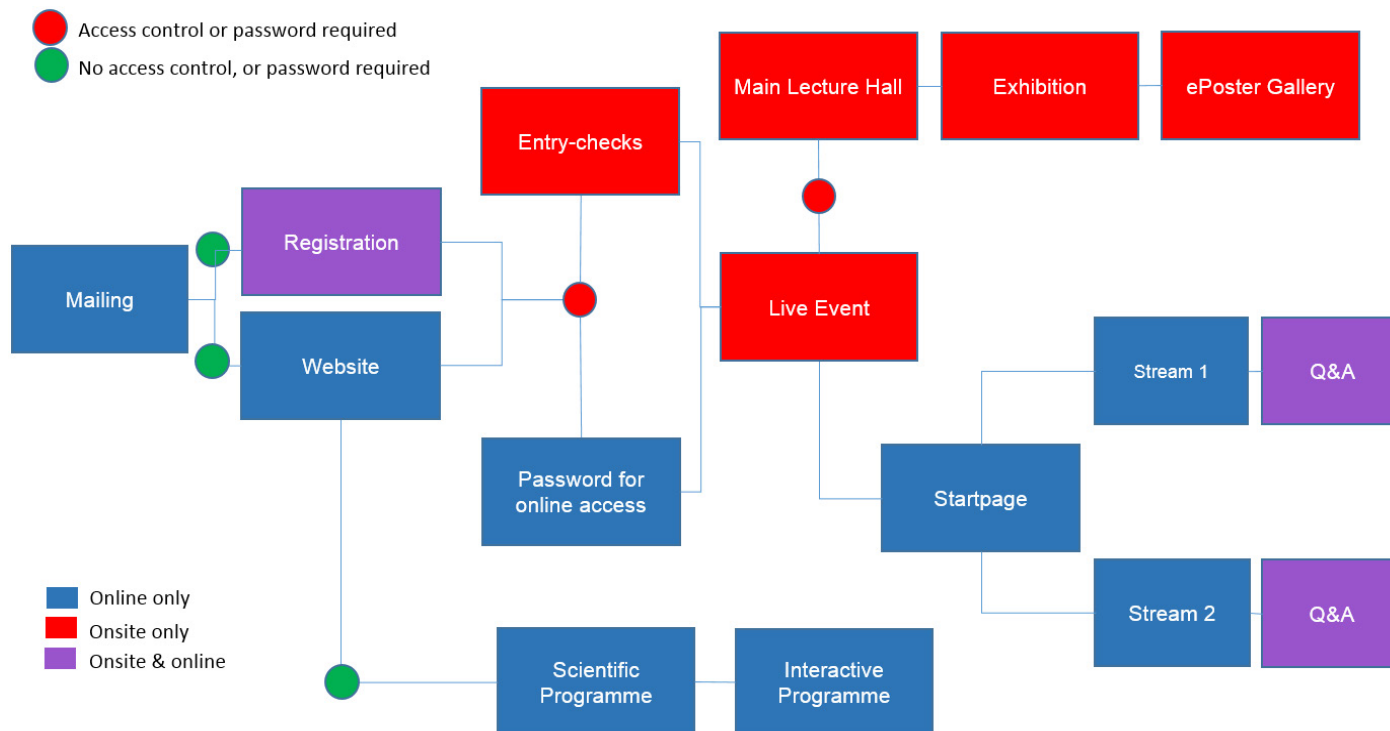
**A hybrid congress offers participants and speakers the choice of either attending online from home or in-person at the congress venue.**

In our cost-efficient concept, both groups of participants (online and in-person) receive the same programme. Sessions presented by speakers on-site will be made available online via live streaming. Speakers who are unable to give their presentation on-site due to travel restrictions, for example, can do so remotely. These presentations will be made available to both on-site and online participants via video stream. This ensures that all participants will have access to the same content.

This concept was utilised for the ESMINT congress and proved to be very successful.



## 2. THE SCRIPT



**A hybrid event is a complex undertaking that requires extensive planning.**

As the concept clearly shows, in the hybrid format we have two groups of participants, as well as two groups of speakers. To keep track of this complex project, it is important to create a script that combines both the online and on-site components in one document. This document is the basis for organising the entire congress and makes it possible for everyone involved to have a quick overview that is easily accessible, making things as stress-free as possible.



It can also be very helpful to show the participant journey graphically, including both on-site and online participants. See the example from the ESMINT Congress on the left.


### 3. THE PLATFORM

**There are a number of different ways to stage a hybrid event.**

As already mentioned in the introduction, the cost-efficient variant of a hybrid event does not employ a separate virtual platform. Instead, at ESMINT access to the live-streaming window was integrated directly into the congress website. This reduced the cost and simplified the user experience.

To control access, all participants had to sign in via a link in the e-mail they received to confirm their registration.





13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the  
European Society of  
Minimally Invasive Neurological Therapy

September 8–10, 2021  
Nice, France  
[www.esmint.eu](http://www.esmint.eu)

## Welcome to the online platform of the ESMINT Congress 2021

We need verify your login information. Please make sure to enter the correct information below before entering the room.

Email \*

Name \*

First name \*

[» Go to room 1](#)[» Go to room 2](#)

### Sponsors

[Go to the sponsors](#)

## 4. INTERACTION



**At a hybrid congress, it is important to give both online and on-site participants the same opportunity to interact and ask questions at the sessions.**

It is a good idea to have members of the online audience ask the first and last questions in the Q&A portion at the end of each session.

At ESMINT, online participants were able to submit questions via a chat function during the presentations. As a result, questions from online participants were already available at the end of the sessions, while on-site participants had to wait to ask their questions after the presentation.

Coordinating both the online and on-site questions requires moderators who can keep an eye on several things at once. They need to be chosen carefully.




## 5. THE PROGRAMME

**Not all session formats are suitable for both online and on-site participants.**

The 2021 ESMINT Congress was originally planned to be only an on-site event and was changed to a hybrid format due to the ongoing Corona situation. As a result, some programme content had to be adapted.

In addition, a new discussion format was explored at the ESMINT Congress - **The Oxford Style Debate.**

In the Oxford debate, a given statement is considered from two opposing perspectives, and the two sides argue either 'for' or 'against' the statement within a formal structure. In doing so, both parties have equal opportunity to share their arguments and opinions. This promotes intellectual diversity and stimulates discussions.



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Vertical Horizontal List

<...> XS S M L XL XS S M L XL

Scientific Programme

★ Itinerary

Sign in

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Search the programme...

Types

Themes

Rooms

	Wednesday, 08 September 2021	Thursday, 09 September 2021	Friday, 10 September 2021
	Main Lecture Hall, Muses Area Level 3	Gallieni 1+2, Level 2	
8:00	08:00-08:15 08:15-09:30 Scientific Abstracts		
9:00	09:30-10:00 Industry Symposium	08:30-10:00 Young Interventionalists @ESMINT Congress 2021	
10:00	10:00-10:30 Coffee break		
11:00	10:30-11:30 EANS/ESMINT Joint Session: Vasospasm	10:30-13:00 Young Interventionalists @ESMINT Congress 2021	
12:00	11:30-12:30 Scientific Abstracts		
	12:30-13:00 Industry Symposium		
13:00	13:00-14:00 Lunch Break		



## 6. MODERATORS



**Choosing the right moderators is essential for the success of a hybrid event.**

The moderators face extra challenges with the hybrid model compared to a traditional event format. It is important to choose moderators who are well versed in the technology being used (the chat function for questions and answers, for example). The moderators should be particularly attentive and able to multi-task and react quickly to any unforeseen events.

## 7. SPEAKER BRIEFING

**An extensive speaker briefing is particularly important at a hybrid congress.**

These briefings should be planned well in advance to ensure that a suitable time can be found with each speaker.

When briefing the remote speakers, technical details should be fully covered. It is important to explain any technical aspects as simply and clearly as possible, as different speakers have different levels of technical knowledge.

The briefing of the speakers for the ESMINT Congress took place several weeks before the Congress and ensured the speakers were comfortable with the format.





## 8. SPONSORS



**Sponsorship is often an important part of financing a congress, and this can be especially true with the hybrid format.**

In the past months, many options have been explored in the ways sponsors can present themselves at a virtual congress. We are aware that virtual interaction between attendees and sponsors can present some challenges compared to a real-world event. However, online congresses can also offer some advantages for sponsors. The hybrid event format combines both aspects.

At ESMINT, sponsors were given the opportunity to present themselves at a traditional exhibition booth on site, as well as being featured on the event website with a link to a page of their choice.


It is important to make sure sponsors are informed about their options, both on and offline, at an early stage and to request any material well in advance.



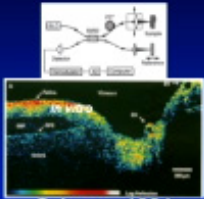
## 9. ON-DEMAND CONTENT

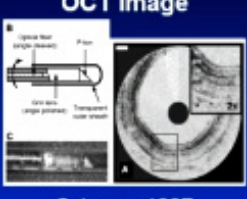
**A great advantage of a hybrid congress is that all sessions are being recorded.**

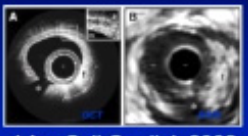
This allows to make the content available online after the congress is finished, creating added value for all the participants. It is important to discuss the technical requirements for on-demand content with the streaming team at an early stage. It is also essential to plan where the content should be available after the congress (on the platform, the event website, etc.), for whom it should be accessible and how long it should be at one's disposal.

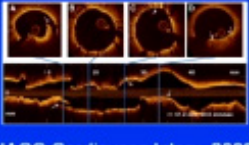


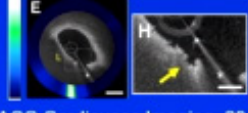
### Historical Timeline of OCT

**Nov 1991: First OCT image**  
  
*Science*, 1991

**Jun 1997: First in vivo endoscopic OCT image**  
  
*Science*, 1997

**Early 2000s: First clinical use of intravascular (time-domain) OCT**  
  
*J Am Coll Cardiol*, 2002


**2010s: Regulatory approval for frequency-domain OCT**  
  
*JACC Cardiovasc Interv*, 2009

**2015: First clinical use of multi-modality OCT in the coronaries with molecular imaging**  
  
*JACC Cardiovasc Imaging*, 2016

NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR STROKE RESEARCH

UMASS

13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Society of Minimally Invasive Neurological Therapy  
8 – 10 September 2021 • Acropolis Convention Centre – Nice, France & online • [www.esmint.eu](http://www.esmint.eu)

 ESMINT  
13<sup>th</sup> Congress 2021

## 10. THE REHEARSAL



**For a hybrid event, it is important to hold a final rehearsal shortly before the event.**

This took place at ESMINT two weeks before the congress and went very smoothly.

Here too, it is essential to coordinate the dates with all participants as early as possible. The rehearsal must recreate the actual congress as realistically as possible. It highlights any potential problems so that they can be resolved in the run-up to the event, ensuring everyone involved feels confident that everything will go smoothly.



## 11. STAFF

**Running a hybrid congress requires more staff on the event days than any other congress format.**

One example of this is the registration department, which will need some extra personnel to handle both the on-site participants, while also monitoring new online registrations (many participants will decide to attend online at the last minute) and always be available to deal with any queries.

At ESMINT, we decided to deploy the entire staff, including technicians, at the congress venue in Nice. A back office was set up on-site with facilities for the streaming staff, technicians for Zoom & Online Speakers and any other staff responsible for the virtual side of the event. It was important that both the in-house technicians and the streaming staff were in the same room to be able to coordinate with each other. This made it easy for everyone involved to communicate directly and trouble-free.





## 12. EMOTIONS



**One of the biggest advantages of a hybrid event compared to a virtual conference is the direct personal contact between participants, speakers, sponsors and organisers.**

Even wearing a face mask and at a distance - a face-to-face meeting creates the kind of connection that is hard to achieve online.

After several months of online meetings and social distancing, ESMINT did not want to miss the opportunity to host a networking event to thank the participants who made the journey to Nice. The event was a great success, and we received plenty of positive feedback from everyone who attended.

## INTERVIEW WITH MIKE ILIOPOULOS (EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ESMINT)

**What were the reasons for the decision to organise your annual congress as a hybrid event?**

The 2020 congress was purely virtual, with very adverse reactions from our members complaining about the lack of interaction at the scientific sessions. These comments led to the decision to run the meeting hybrid. Furthermore, it was clear that a face-2-face meeting is not possible without losing many participants not able to travel due to the Covid situation and its restrictions.

**In your opinion, what are the most significant advantages of a hybrid format? On the other side, what are the difficulties?**

It can have both advantages from the real and virtual world - flexibility for the speakers, the interaction between the participants in the session room, and online.

The first half-day was a bit of a challenge, technically and organisational-wise.



Awareness that the audience is physically and virtually present was the most challenging part because moderators and speakers had to talk to both groups.

**What feedback have you received from participants regarding the congress?**

Most of our online participants liked the way of the meeting. The participants felt the discussions between the speaker/moderator and the audience.

**In which format do you plan to organise your congress in the future and why?**

Although the costs are higher than only face-2-face, we will stay with the hybrid model. Reasons are the flexibility of the speaker management in case of absence (due to whatever reason) furthermore that the scientific content will be preserved and used for membership within its scientific repository.



# ABOUT CONGREX SWITZERLAND

Congrex Switzerland is a leading Professional Congress Organiser and Association Management Company. We offer a complete range of integrated solutions to a variety of international clients, especially non-profit organisations. This covers every aspect of conference organisation, from the management of hotel accommodation to strategic consulting for all types of medical and scientific organisations. Every year we typically manage between forty and fifty events involving around 80'000 participants.

## Disclaimer:

The information contained in this document represents the current view of Congrex Switzerland on the issues discussed as of the date of publication. Because Congrex Switzerland must respond to changing market conditions, it should not be interpreted to be a commitment on the part of Congrex Switzerland, and cannot guarantee the accuracy of any information presented after the date of publication.

