

# RSNA's First Virtual Conference: How You Can Prepare

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The RSNA conference is one of the biggest and most significant of the year. But this year, the 450,000 sq ft exhibit space has been replaced by a computer, monitor, mouse, and keyboard for coronavirus safety measures.

You may have the same doubts we do on whether the virtual RSNA will work. But it seems everyone is willing to give it a try as RSNA registration is on the same level as last year. Similar to all the virtual shows going on this year, this will be a learning curve for everyone.

The challenges with virtual shows are many, including bandwidth, network security, communication, and a host of other issues remaining to be known. No one can just drop in on a demo in progress like a traditional conference.

You also want to ask the right questions about products and get the answers you need. Not being able to interact with sales reps has been considered a huge negative.

However, there are positives to the virtual show. There are fewer vendors registered for the show, 239 vendors this year compared to 735 last year. But having fewer vendors can allow attendees to spend more time interacting with the representatives and company for a more in-depth experience and evaluation of the products and services.

The show is also far longer than in the previous years from 8 am to 6 pm, while also allowing industry presentations from 6pm to 9 pm, giving plenty of time for attendees to see and hear

it all.

Larger vendors with a global presence may also be staffing their sites 24/7, which would allow access even beyond extended hours. This is a major advantage for radiologists and others who maybe couldn't participate during regular show hours but still want to review what their colleagues have seen over the course of the meeting.

This also allows for hospital personnel beyond radiology to have input into product purchasing, whereas before, the decision was pretty much relegated to certain representatives of the group or facility.

They have also extended the conference by three days, so now seven rather than the usual four and a half. The conference will be from Sunday, Nov 29, through Saturday, Dec 5.

Another positive e is the access to exhibitor profile pages, it will be available on demand through April 30, 2021.

How can you best prepare for the show?

We created a list for you...

## **1- Know your bandwidth.**

Not being able to physically see or touch the devices is a feeling missing from the virtual conference. The image quality of the show will be an important factor in this respect. If you are at home, you will likely be fine, but if you are sharing with other departments within a hospital, it could cause problems for hospital operations or access to the show could be blocked by the hospital's security system. It's best to assume nothing and get cleared through your IT department. Downloading a 1,000-slice CT study or several 10-MB digital breast tomosynthesis images from a local server is one thing – doing it over the internet, especially over hospital bandwidth where you may be throttled back, is another.

## **2- Research vendors and the technology and create a list**

Once you are set you can start researching vendors and the technology. Use a search engine to find what you're looking for but narrow it down to exactly what product category you want. Narrowing down to the area of interest you have, for example, if you are looking at Artificial Intelligence, could be stroke, mammography, neurology, lung, or other. You then develop a vendor list from that. Once you have the list of vendors you want to see, you can then cross-reference it against vendors that are showing at RSNA this year.

Exhibiting at RSNA shows that the company has made a commitment to the radiology community by making its products and services available for review at a trade show. Even though a company may have displayed at RSNA 2019, fewer than half of the vendors last year had received the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's 510(k) clearance for their software as of the meeting, so you should also research this for the vendors you choose.

## **3- Make the most of vendor information on RSNA.**

Vendor websites are great for providing a broad overview, but the information provided online is where the RSNA shines. You will get much more information from RSNA than a website, and you can see demos, chat with representatives, etc. in real-time as well. The RSNA also allows a keyword search, so you can look up vendors in many ways. All exhibitors also have an exhibitor profile page that provides attendees with the following:

- Company description
- Social media links

- Location (filtered field)
- Product categories (filtered field)
- PDF collateral(s)
- Video(s)
- Ability for attendees to drop a business card
- Live chat with exhibitor representative
- The ability to schedule meeting with virtual network platform with company representative

## **Some vendors will also offer the ability to have:**

- Virtual meeting rooms (video conferences like Zoom) video chats, live booth demos, virtual reception desk, etc.
- Additional interactive features like product hot spots, introductory company videos, and booth fly-throughs
- Customized links to company's own third-party virtual booths/websites

The information you can get from a vendor's website combined with what the RSNA provides in greater detail should give you almost everything you need to know in advance. This will allow you to be ready to ask direct pointed questions once you log in to the show and make better decisions for your company.

RSNA is no doubt going to be very different this year. Even though the form and format have changed, the meeting will still provide a very valuable tool in helping to show the various imaging informatics solutions available to solve the problems radiology is facing.

It will be interesting to see how the virtual exhibiting plays out. If all goes as hoped and expected, expect a hybrid RSNA next year and in future years. These would provide for hands-on exhibits, as done in past years, combined with virtual presentations.

With travel budgets continually being slashed to the bone, bringing a core team to Chicago while also bringing the show to the people will provide the balance and value that this tradeshow and others have been lacking for years.

Collaborative Imaging team hope to see you online at the show.