

Age & Opportunity

Bealtaine AT HOME 2020

Evaluation Report

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Preface

Bealtaine is Ireland's only festival celebrating the arts and creativity as we age. It is a national event that takes place across the entire month of May each year (from which it takes its name) and is produced by Age & Opportunity, the national organisation that promotes more positive attitudes to older people and ageing through the arts, sport and physical activity, education & personal development. The festival is one of the first of its kind in the world and remains influential within the international creative ageing movement, marking its 25th anniversary in 2020. The key aim of the festival is to create greater access to, and representation in, the arts for older people by forging links between communities, artists and creative ideas and celebrating the value of the arts throughout our lives.

The events of 2020 resulted in a Bealtaine which we had never intended to create. After the initial impact of Covid-19, and within the space of just 4 weeks, we had cancelled the official 25th anniversary Bealtaine 'partnered' festival and put together an entirely new event ready for May, Bealtaine AT HOME. Comprised of 38 online events, Bealtaine AT HOME 2020 was developed out of previously curated festival events which could transfer well into an online format (such as discussion and idea-based initiatives) and an entirely new set of events commissioned specifically for it. While time and circumstance did not allow Bealtaine AT HOME to be a painstakingly curated and devised festival that was perfectly balanced in terms of artform, genre and format, it represented a huge accomplishment for a targeted festival that had never had an online programme or the skills to deliver it.

Nevertheless, there were serious concerns for Bealtaine AT HOME. While we were not worried about the technical capacity or aptitude of our participants and audiences (many of whom would be regular users of online platforms and formats), we were concerned about basic access to technology across the country both in terms of infrastructure and hardware (still a concern though somewhat beyond our remit). Perhaps more fundamentally, any switch to online activity removed the very reason for people to engage with Bealtaine, or any arts events for that matter: to socialise, to be visible, to be part of the phenomenological world. How would this new event be received by both our loyal, as well as new, participants and audiences?

Notwithstanding these misgivings, we hoped that Bealtaine AT HOME represented a version of the festival that people could recognise, participate in, laugh with, be moved and inspired by, and would help us remain connected to them and them to each other in the most difficult of times.

As such, it was hugely gratifying to see the festival score so highly in terms of overall satisfaction, how it encouraged people to go to other arts events, feel more visible (crucial at this time), more creative and more confident and how its online format attracted new international audiences. Critically, Bealtaine AT HOME also achieved one of our most fundamental aims, helping people to feel more connected.

Interestingly enough, men reported a higher rate of connection through Bealtaine AT HOME, despite their generally lower participation rates of engagement with the festival continuing into 2020. Although the lower rate of men attending arts events remains a common statistic across the

arts, their even more modest than usual attendance at Bealtaine is of concern and remains a challenge to the festival.

This is not to say that women predominating at Bealtaine (and other arts events) is not something to be celebrated! The loyal and continued engagement of women at all of our events both on and offline is something we hugely cherish and a testament to women's powerful and hard-won social networks. Similarly, women reporting that they feel more positive than men about ageing after attending an arts event may not necessarily mean that men don't, rather there are grounds to suggest that ageing may be less of a concern for men than women in certain respects (and thus less reportable).

While we can't answer all of these festival questions right now, it would not be an overstatement to say, perhaps, that in 2020 we in the arts are left with more to consider than at any other point in history. In addition to the more discrete challenges for the festival referred to above, what is the future, both medium and long-term for the model of the arts (and artists) during and post-Covid-19? How can we develop flexible and imaginative online or remote models of arts initiatives which can help people through this global pandemic and approximate social contact, *whilst not giving up on live events*? How can we create something that continues to help us feel human?

Dr. Tara Byrne
Arts Programme Manager and Bealtaine Festival Artistic Director
Age & Opportunity

Executive Summary

Background

This was a Bealtaine Festival like no other before. The “Delay” phase of Ireland’s response to Covid-19 commenced on 12 March 2020 (school closures, limited outdoor gatherings, work from home if possible, etc.) while the “Stay at Home” enhanced lockdown phase commenced on 27 March. Restrictions were eased on a phased basis commencing 18 May but the response meant that the curated Bealtaine Festival as planned was cancelled. 38 events were moved online and it is this Bealtaine AT HOME Festival that is reported on here.

One of the unique features of the Bealtaine Festival is that any organisation promoting creativity as we age can get involved and organise an arts event. Usually this ‘partnered Festival’ sees hundreds of different arts activities taking place all over the country with the biggest arts institutions and the smallest community groups rubbing shoulders in the programme. With the help of these partners we usually measure the outcomes for this wider audience and the societal impact of the Festival as reported by organisers. However, this year, while some partnered events did go ahead online, we did not have the advance notice to administer surveys and so this report reflects only the Age & Opportunity curated events delivered online. We were also unable to draw comparisons between the in-house and partnered festival as in previous years.

This report is based on the body of work commissioned by Age & Opportunity in 2018 to build a framework for evaluation based on measuring stated outcomes for audiences in terms of changed behaviour/beliefs and impacts at a broader societal level. These findings reflect 194 survey responses collected from online audiences.

Key Findings

The stated audience outcomes for Bealtaine AT HOME were the same as those of previous and traditionally delivered festivals. Overall audience research demonstrates that Bealtaine AT HOME achieved these stated outcomes. As in previous years’ audiences report that they feel more artistic/creative (73%), more confident (60%), more connected to their communities (82%) and more likely to engage with the arts again (86%).

Furthermore, results indicate that Bealtaine AT HOME contributed to the overall aims of Age & Opportunity, with audiences reporting that participating in the Festival makes them feel more visible (52%), more active (61%) and more positive about ageing (68%).

Bealtaine AT HOME was successful in attracting new audiences nationwide and, for the first time, internationally, with Louth and Sligo the only counties not represented by survey respondents, 60% of respondents attending Bealtaine events for the first time and, as a happy consequence from the online delivery, the Festival attracted an international audience with 13 respondents from outside Ireland.

As in previous years we measured satisfaction levels with the festival using the Net Promoter Score which is based on a question about recommending to a friend. The 2020 NPS of 54 is higher

than the “hugely impressive” 2018 and 2019 NPS of 48. Findings from the audience surveys showed that NPS is higher than the norm when online audiences were engaged (66) or passive (58) rather than creative (52). This may be due to the type of engagement we expect and can engage in online – viewing or exchanging conversation rather than actively participating.

Most of this year’s events were recorded but several were transmitted – and therefore classified for this report as live or as live, meaning that they were accessed by audiences at the same time as a shared experience - albeit online. The NPS for recorded events was higher (59) than for live or as live events (51). Recorded events may have received a higher NPS than our live events because people were free to access the events at a time that suited them. They didn't feel like they needed to tune in at a particular time and could enjoy the content at their convenience. This may have made them more relaxed and willing to share with or recommend to a friend.

Those who attended more than one event were more likely to recommend a Bealtaine Festival event to a friend with an NPS of 64. As with previous Bealtaine Festivals, and indeed most Age & Opportunity events, men are a tougher audience to attract (13%) and a tougher audience to please with an NPS of 44 contrasted with 54 reported by women.

Aggregation has always been a challenge for the Bealtaine Festival but this year, Age & Opportunity’s Arts Programme and Communications teams used Google Analytics to track traffic to the events to ascertain how many people accessed the festival and on which platform.

Events were delivered via Facebook, YouTube, Zoom and Soundcloud. There were 829 Eventbrite Bookings and 323 Live YouTube Viewers for 6 live events, 9,161 YouTube Views (6,271 unique viewers), 94 Soundcloud Listens, 71 Zoom participants and 58,199 Facebook Views at the time of closing the survey end of June 2020.

Facebook and YouTube proved to be the most popular channels for the audience to access Bealtaine content. However, while the figures for the live events were low compared to the total number of views per event we must remember that offering a live event creates a sense of experience for the audience and emulates the design of an in-person event. For those who don't attend the live sessions it is most useful to have the recording available so they can access the content afterwards.

Furthermore, as most events do remain accessible on Age & Opportunity’s social media channels, one of the positives of the very challenging delivery this year is that Bealtaine AT HOME 2020 remained available after May for catch up audiences.

Context and Methodology

As a development organisation, Age & Opportunity has prioritised in our current strategy the high level objective of configuring its work in research frameworks to highlight its effectiveness and its relationship with public policy development.

To this end, in 2018 Age & Opportunity commissioned an independent evaluator to build an evaluation model that would form a robust baseline framework for future ongoing evaluations.

A pragmatic approach was taken, using ‘just enough’ research to understand the positive impact where it exists and attempt to determine those aspects of the Bealtaine programme that affect audience outcomes and broader societal impact and where changes could be made for improvement. The methodology needed to be “scaleable, low cost, and do-able in very tight timelines”.¹

Following a logic model approach the framework included the measurement of **inputs** and **activities** by partner organisations; **outputs** relating to both in-house and partner festivals – immediate results of the resources and actions: Number of attendees at events, Number of events; **outcomes** – reported here as “Distance travelled” by individuals – have they changed their behaviour or beliefs: attendees satisfaction, changed behaviour or beliefs, spontaneous feedback; and **impact** at community level in longer term - changed behaviour at societal level, changed behaviour by stakeholders, spontaneous feedback as reported by partner organisations.

While the 2020 Festival was a very different offering to the previous two years, the anticipated outcomes – changes at individual level - for audiences were not changed and so the evaluation framework for these was employed again. The evaluation was conducted by survey as before, although all surveys were collected on-line rather than on paper after the events. Outputs were aggregated by service data and by google metrics. Partner inputs and activities as well as the wider societal impacts measured in previous years were not possible to evaluate in 2020.

Parameters for Outcomes and Impacts

The outcomes or ‘distance travelled’ for Bealtaine audiences are clearly articulated as follows:

- Changed belief about feeling artistic / creative
- Changed belief about connection to community
- Anticipated change in behaviour regarding future attendance at artistic events
- Improved confidence

These outcomes were not revised in the context of the altered 2020 Festival.

Age & Opportunity aim to measure the following additional outcomes across all programmes and so they formed part of the survey also.

- Changed belief about feeling active

¹ Ward, Aideen (2018), Bealtaine Festival Evaluation Report

- Changed belief about feeling visible
- Changed attitude to ageing

In previous years the impact for audiences were estimated by Partner organisations and formed part of this report. In 2020 there was no organised Partner Festival - although we know that many organisations had online offerings - so it was not possible to survey and report on perceived impacts.

The table below sets the 2020 evaluation in the context of the original framework.

	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
What did we measure?			Attendance levels	Changes at individual level	
How did we get this information?	Organiser survey	Organiser survey	Organiser survey Web Metrics*	Audience Survey & Organiser Survey	Organiser Survey
What programme?	Partnered Festival	Partnered Festival	In-house & Partnered Festival	In-house & Partnered Festival	In-house & Partnered Festival
What did we ask?	Financial inputs	Hours invested	# events Attendance	Satisfaction NPS 6 outcomes Spontaneous feedback	5 impacts Spontaneous feedback

Text in **red** represents elements of the evaluation framework that it was not possible to carry out in 2020

Text in **bold** represents a new aggregation tool used in 2020

Research Subjects

The subjects for this research are the primary audiences for Age & Opportunity organised Bealtaine events during May 2020. As the Partnered Festival was cancelled along with many of the in-house Festival events due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, Partner Programme organisers and their audiences were not surveyed in 2020 as in previous years.

Reach of the Research

There were 194 survey responses and all were valid. Half of those surveyed had attended more than one event indicating that we should assume some level of repeat attendance overall.

As this report refers to the in-house events organised by Age & Opportunity and not the Partnered Festival, any comparisons with 2019 relate to surveys returned about in-house events. Furthermore, it must be highlighted that it is difficult to say how useful these comparisons are as they relate to two very different Festival experiences – live events attended in person in 2019 compared to on-line events viewed via zoom or similar platform in 2020.

Limitations of the Research

This research, like the 2020 Festival itself, is curtailed in comparison to previous years and focuses on self-reported Audience outcomes. Usually Age & Opportunity would also survey and present the Audience outcomes in relation to inputs and activities as reported by Partner organisers. However, with the partner Festival, and many in-house events, cancelled it was not possible to carry out these aspects in 2020. Furthermore, it was not possible to measure if Partner Organisations reported realising the stated impacts of the Festival as in previous years.

There were 38 events delivered online. Responses to the surveys related to 11 events or 29%. Furthermore 70% of responses relate to 3 events. Any conclusions should therefore be considered limited by this uneven response.

Research among the artists involved was not included in the scope of this evaluation.

Notes on Data Collection

194 Audience surveys were analysed for this research. All of these surveys were collected using survey monkey via a weblink which was e-mailed to registered attendees after events and again at the end of May. The link was also placed on the Bealtaine and Age & Opportunity website, YouTube Channel and other social media platforms.

Most responses were completed on three separate dates – 18 May (42), 25 May (48) and 1 June (99) – with the remaining 5 responses all in by 22 June. The survey was closed at the end of June.

Notes on Selected Questions

Bealtaine staff identified three parameters as potential contributors to outcomes. (These questions were entered by the administrative staff when inputting the audience's feedback. i.e. the audience was not asked to give these answers)

Q2. Audience Engagement type – this question sought to determine if the type of audience engagement contributes to successful outcomes. Data was divided into events that are:

- Passive – where the audience passively listens or watches
- Engaged – where the audience engages through Q&A, discussion, etc.
- Creative – where the audience makes arts in some form, dances, draws, performs, etc.

Q 5. Net Promoter Score is a worldwide standard question that measures the willingness of audiences to recommend a company's products or services to others. It is used as a proxy for gauging the customer's overall satisfaction with a product or service and a customer's loyalty to a brand. It uses a Likert scale of 0 – 10.

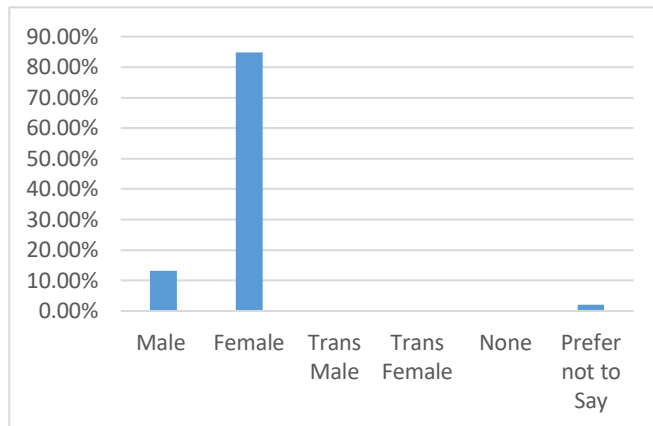
- 'Detractors' gave a score lower or equal to 6. They, with all likelihood, won't attend events again, could potentially damage the festival's reputation through negative word of mouth.

- ‘Passives’ gave a score of 7 or 8. They are somewhat satisfied and probably wouldn’t spread any negative word-of-mouth, but are not enthusiastic enough about the event to actually promote it.
- ‘Promoters’ answered 9 or 10. They love the event / festival. They will be the repeat attendees and are the enthusiastic promoters who will recommend the festival to other potential attendees. The Net Promoter Score (NPS) is determined by subtracting the percentage of customers who are detractors from the percentage who are promoters. What is generated is a score between -100 and 100 called the Net Promoter Score. At one end of the spectrum, if when surveyed, all of the customers gave a score lower or equal to 6, this would lead to a NPS of -100. On the other end of the spectrum, if all of the customers were answering the question with a 9 or 10, then the total Net Promoter Score would be 100. Net Promoter Score is difficult to “score well” on. In one study of commercial entities the median NPS was 16. (Reichheld 2003)

Findings

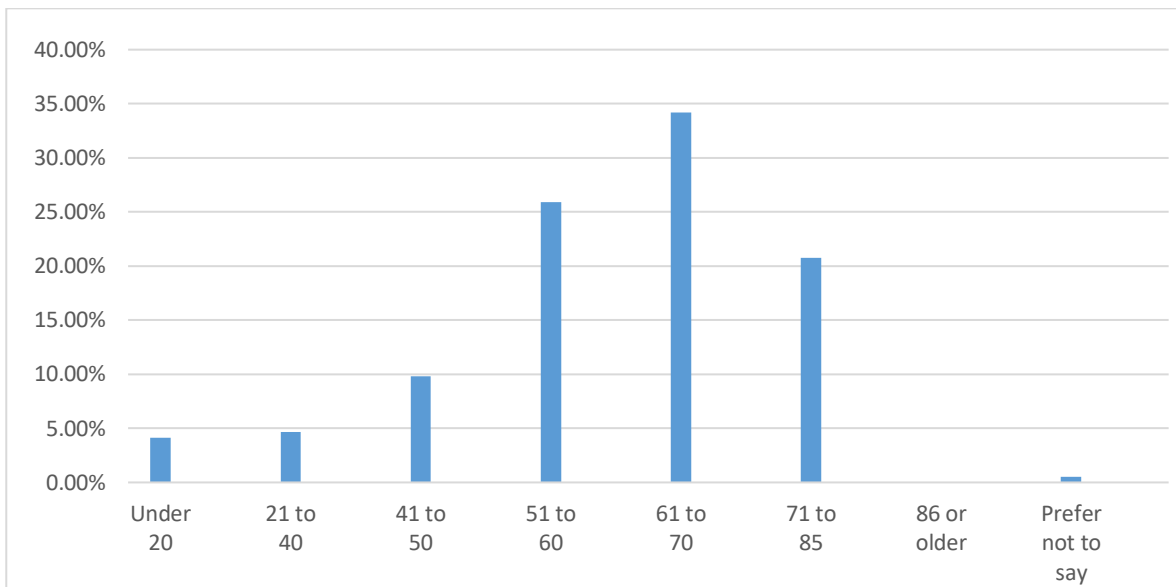
Characteristics of the Audience

Figure 1 – Gender



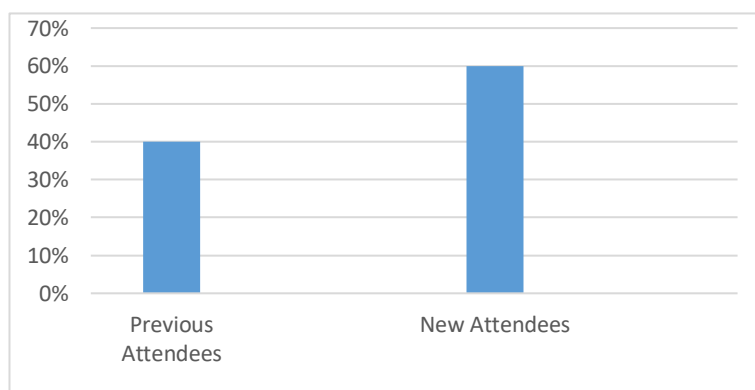
There were 191 responses to the question about gender. 3 people skipped the question. Disregarding those who did not answer, 85% of respondents identified as female and 13% as male. 4 respondents preferred not to identify their gender and we did receive some feedback about the question which is addressed in the recommendations. In 2019 Bealtaine audiences were 78% female and 20% male with 2% either trans-male, non-binary or preferred not to say. In 2018 those results were 76% female and 24% male. This year's results therefore reflect the traditional audience for Bealtaine to date, with a slight decrease over the last three years in male audiences, and the online nature does not appear to have made any significant difference to this pattern.

Figure 2 - Age



There were 193 responses to the question about age. 1 person skipped the question and 1 person preferred not to say. Of those who answered 81% were over 51, the target audience for Bealtaine. This figure was 72% for the in-house festival in 2019. This could suggest that the online Festival was less appealing to those under 51 or that they were not physically accompanying older relatives and friends to events as in previous years. It is interesting to note that there were no attendees over 86. While this does reflect audience profile in previous years (just .5% or 2 of all 419 2019 respondents who gave their age were 86+), it also indicates that any physical or transport barriers experienced by those over 86 in relation to live events have not been mitigated by digital participation.

Figure 3 - Previous Attendance

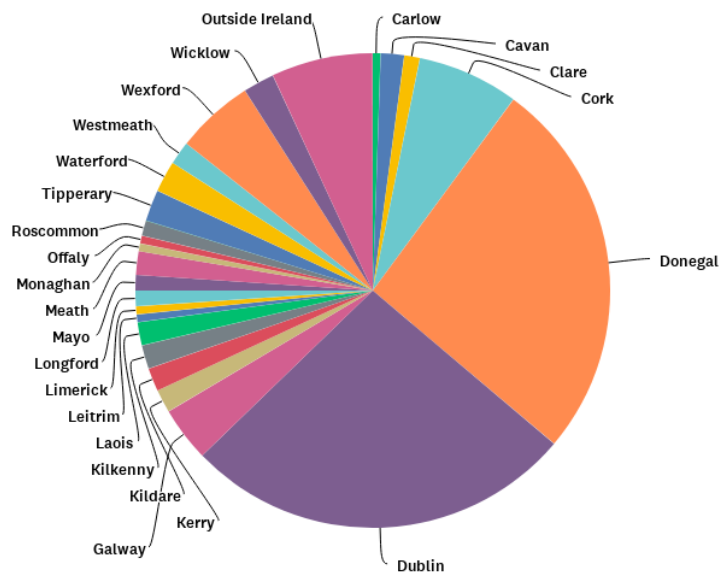


189 respondents answered a question about attending Bealtaine Festival events in previous years?

60% of those who answered this question reported attending Bealtaine events for the first time. This compares to 63% of respondents who attended in-house Festival

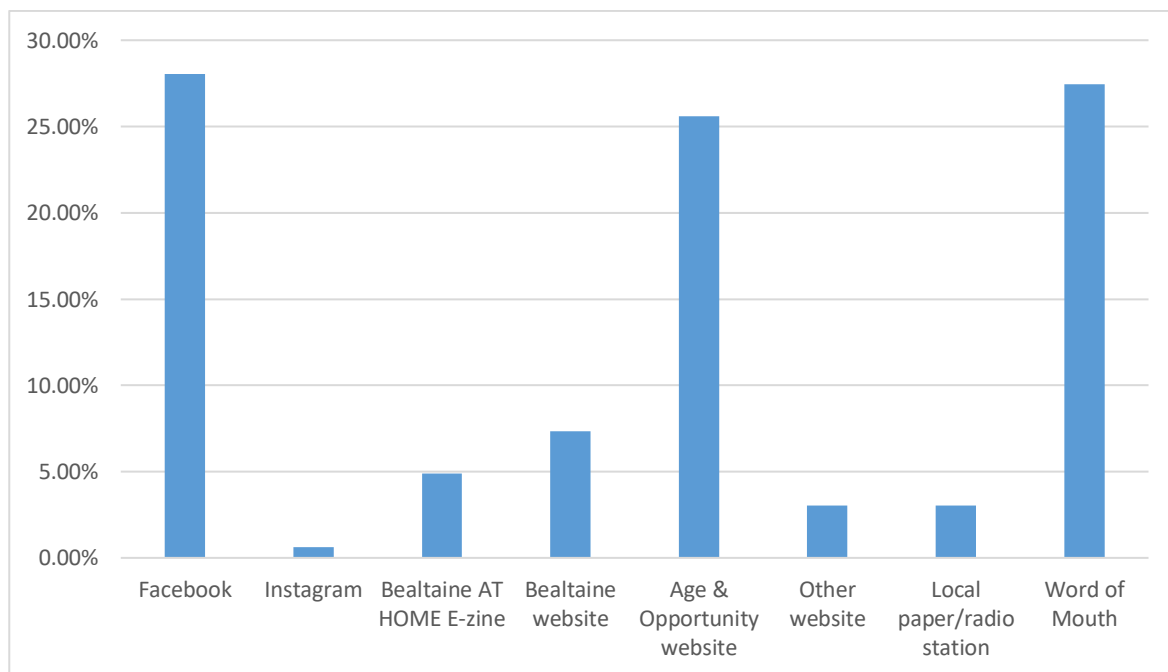
events in 2019 for the first time indicating that the 2020 on-line Festival attracted almost the same new audience numbers as the traditional Festival the previous year.

Figure 4 - Geographical Location



188 respondents answered a question about where they lived. There was a widespread distribution throughout and beyond Ireland with most respondents from Dublin and Donegal. The large Donegal response relates specifically to the Choir event held there which was supported and promoted locally by the local Authority. 13 respondents came from outside Ireland, specifically 4 from Northern Ireland, 3 from the USA and 1 each from Italy, Belgium, Canada, Tenerife, Malta and Germany.

Figure 5 - Where did you hear about Bealtaine AT HOME?



Facebook (28%) was marginally ahead of word of mouth (27%) as the main source of information about Bealtaine AT HOME. This represents an increase for Facebook from 18% in 2019 but a decrease for word of mouth which in previous years was the strongest deliverer of audiences at 43% in 2019 and 44% in 2018. Restricted social interaction during the COVID-19 Pandemic is the likely explanation for this. Traffic to the Age & Opportunity website to find out about Bealtaine increased from 18% to 27% but there was a decrease in traffic to the Bealtaine website from 17% to 7%. This could be explained by the nature of the Bealtaine website as a directory of events for both the in-house and partnered festival and the cancellation of most events due to the Covid-19 pandemic (and the presence of a large cancelled banner across the front of the Bealtaine website).

There were 33 comments attached to this question. 4 respondents received information from their local library (libraries – usually a major partner in every county - were all closed at this time with their own events cancelled but many continued to promote Bealtaine AT HOME online), 10 from the Choir Director in Donegal and 2 from Donegal County Council, 4 from Twitter (2 Michael Harding's own Twitter), 5 by e-mail, 1 from EventBrite and the remainder by another arts organisation or partner.

Satisfaction Findings from Audiences

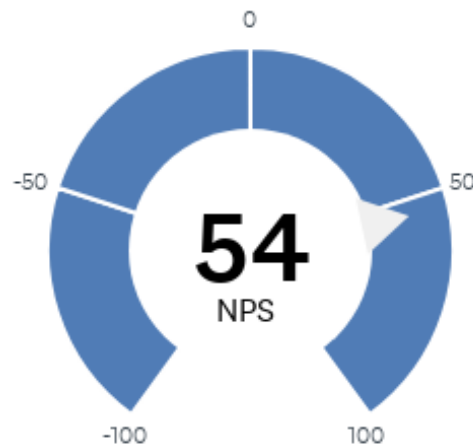
As an overall measure of satisfaction with the events the Net Promoter Score was used. A “good” NPS is highly dependent on the sector and little work has been done in the arts or in festival sectors for this scoring mechanism. However, rather than focusing on the score itself, what is of more interest is the relative score among the various events in the portfolio.

Nevertheless, a contextual side note shows that recent consumer research showed that the Irish travel and leisure sector scored 5 on this scale (Amarach Consulting 2015).

Among international brands achieving any score above 40 is considered exceptional.

Figure 6 - Overall Net Promoter Score

An



overall Net Promoter Score of 54 is very high and indicates that audiences were very satisfied with the on-line Festival. The NPS for the traditionally delivered festival in both 2018 and 2019 was 48.

In order to try and understand better what parameters influenced the high NPS, it was cross referenced as follows.

NPS x Repeat Attendees

There was no difference whatsoever between new audiences and those who had previously attended Bealtaine events with both groups delivering the same NPS of 54. However, the NPS delivered by those who had attended more than one event rises considerably to 64.

NPS x Age & Gender

When we look only at the NPS delivered by those over 51 who are the primary target audience for the festival it drops slightly to 51 and it drops further to 44 when we extract the male responses.

Selected Audience Comments

Well done to you all for being able to turn around the Bealtaine Festival to being an online event

I enjoyed the portrait project with Andy. It was very different.

It was really uplifting to take part and see our choir online after the disappointment of not taking part at live events!

Michael Harding is a very special writer and storyteller for me. I would drop everything to tune into him on radio or TV. He is a brilliant philosopher from the school of common sense. Evelyn Ó'Rourke is also a favourite of mine. She was the other half of a not to be missed interview.

The reading was very short - only 15 minutes and there was no avenue for audience participation so I felt a bit disconnected from it

Because I have been cocooning it was a pleasure to watch and listen to something interesting.

Loved the ease of access to brilliant interviews without leaving the house.

Brave of A&O to organise this. Well done all involved

I felt good about myself that I was able to participate in Zoom

I believe it is a wonderful, positive overview of older people. Donegal county council provided considerable technical support to us to assist and educate us with social media

This is such an important artistic resource for anyone at home to continue their practise and education.

It was my first time using Zoom and it empowered me to be more confident when using this technology.

A great opportunity for giving people in all walks of life to use their God given talents and give enjoyment.

I have been impressed by the convenience and accessibility of a digital programme. Thank you!

Brave of A&O to organise this. Well done all involved

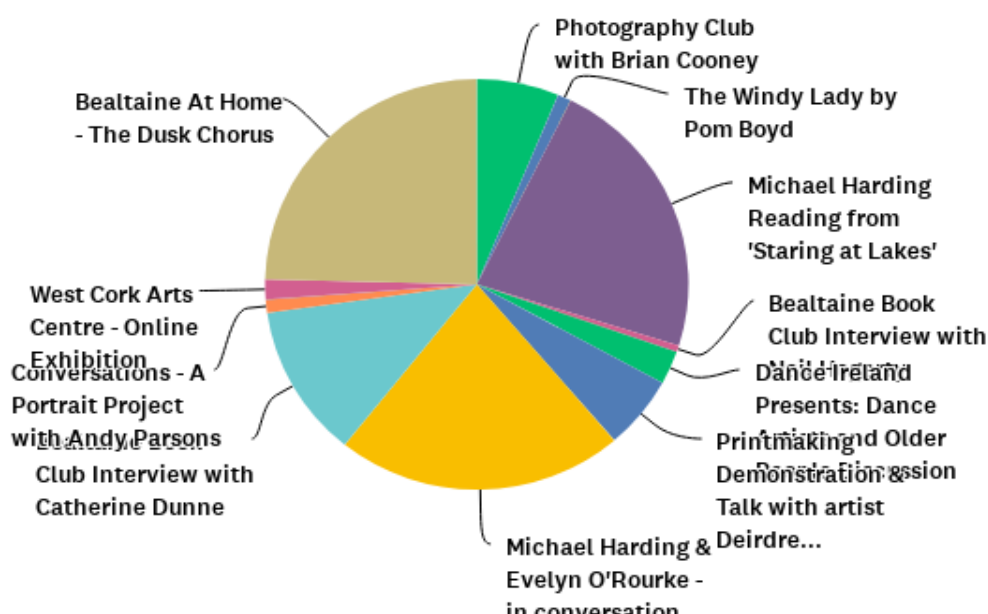
I enjoyed the portrait project with Andy. It was very different.

Great festival - more, please!

Outcomes for Audiences

Audiences were asked which event(s) they attended. Where they attended more than one event they were asked to choose one event and report outcomes from that event. In almost all cases they chose the first event listed so Figure 13 is representative of the attendance breakdown as it relates to outcomes reported further in this report.

Figure 7 - Event Attended



There were 38 events curated by Age &

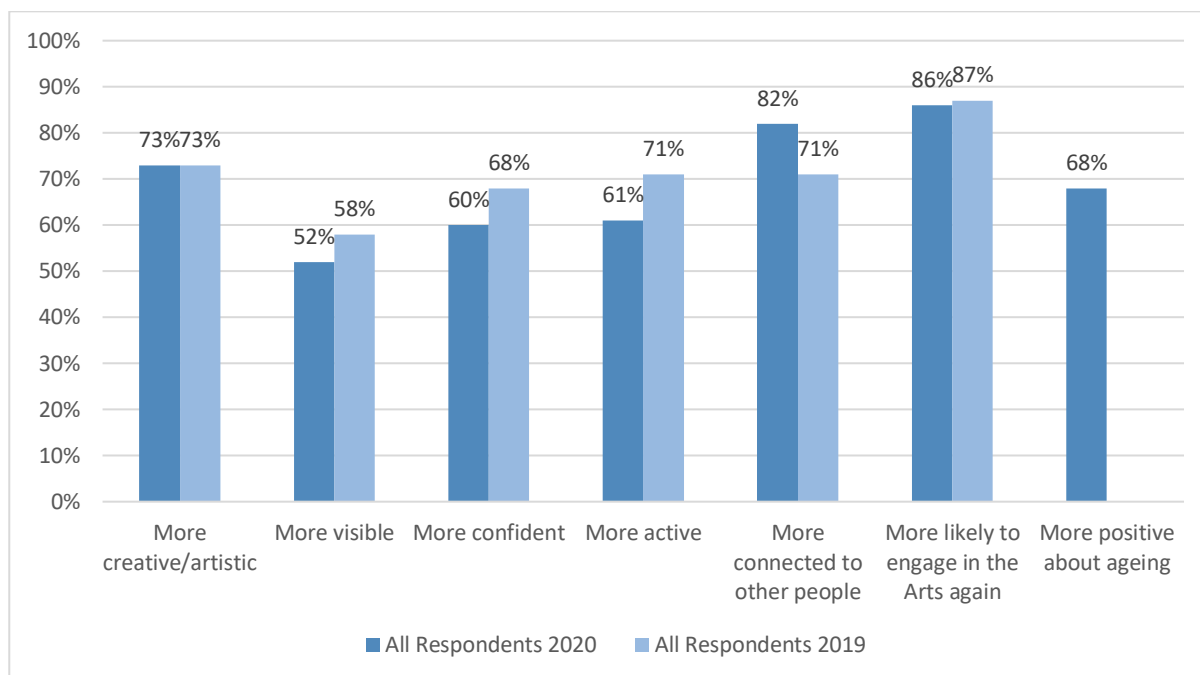
Opportunity in 2020. Survey responses were returned in relation to 18 of these events. Both Michael Harding events and the Dusk Chorus drew the largest audiences among respondents.

The table below shows the outcomes reported by the audiences across all events. These outcomes are changes in behaviour or beliefs and so represent a distance travelled by each individual who has engaged with Bealtaine. Highest levels of distance travelled is reported on the following where the percentage shows those who agree to some or a great extent about the following indicators (answering 4 or 5 on the Likert Scale).

Outcome	Audience Report feeling very much or a little bit more...	Comparison with In-house traditional delivery Festival 2019
More creative/artistic	66%	73%
More visible	50%	58%
More confident	63%	68%
More active	59%	71%
More connected to other people	73%	71%
More likely to engage in the Arts again	86%	87%
More positive about ageing	68%	No data*

*This question was not asked in 2019

Figure 8 - Distance Travelled x All Respondents

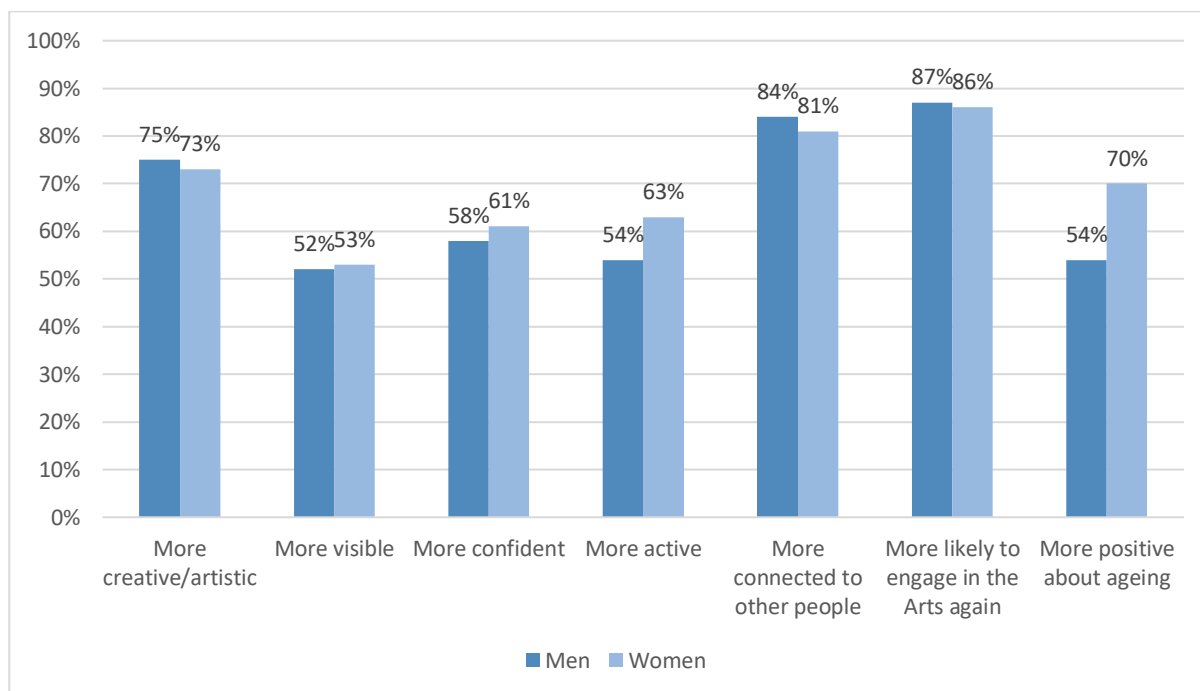


It was pointed out in previous evaluations that this measurement is crude as it asks audiences immediately after an event for their opinion and does not take into account the challenging nature of some events which may not have an immediate impact but may nevertheless change how one feels. However, there may have been a slight lag in on-line responses in 2020 allowing for greater reflection after events.

It is evident that the desired outcomes were achieved for at least half of attendees across all of the indicators - and over two thirds in all but three - so, even with the caveat above, it is evident that the Bealtaine Festival in 2020, despite its very changed nature, achieved its stated outcomes in relation to the changes in behaviour and beliefs – or distance travelled – by its audiences.

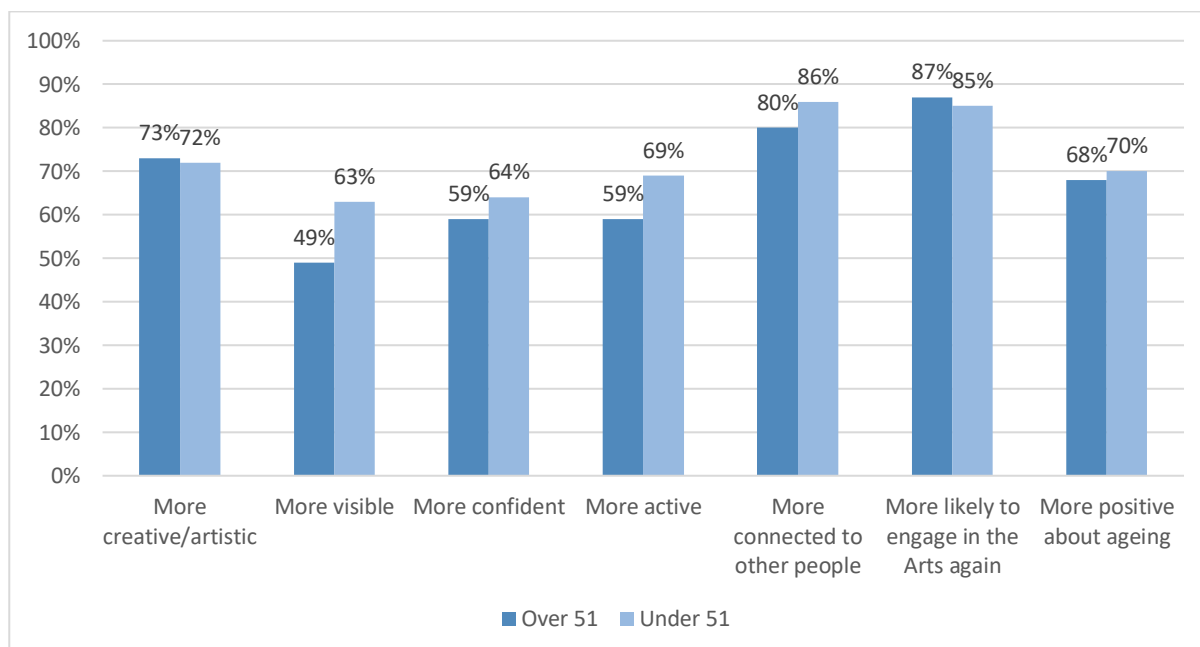
The overall result can be analysed in more detail and cross referenced with information about audiences, events and event type.

Figure 9 - Distance Travelled x Gender



There was little difference between genders in changed beliefs or distance travelled except for the outcome relating to feeling more positive about ageing. Women were more likely to have travelled a greater distance in this regard than men as a consequence of participation.

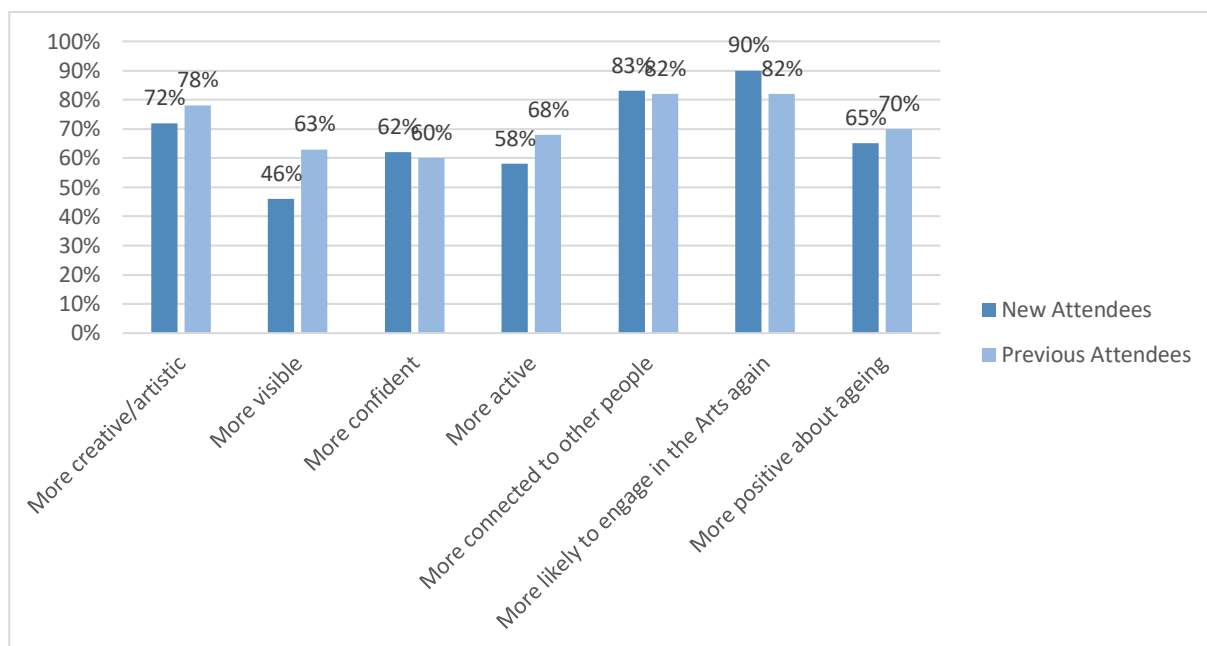
Figure 10 - Distance Travelled x Age



While the Bealtaine Festival attracts audiences of all ages each year, the primary target audience is over 51 years of age. Older people reported a greater distance travelled in most categories with a negligible difference in the two they did not – more creative and more likely to engage in the Arts again. The biggest difference was between those feeling more visible as a result of participation

according to age. This could relate to the specific context of those over 70 being advised to stay at home with extremely limited social interaction (cocooning) in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is interesting to note that there was almost no difference in distance travelled in relation to feeling more positive about ageing with 68% of those under 51 and 70% of those over 51 reporting this as an outcome.

Figure 11 - Distance Travelled x Attendance in Previous Years



When we compare audiences new to Bealtaine with those who have attended events in previous years we can see that previous attendees feel somewhat more creative and definitely more visible and more active with new attendees being more likely to engage in the arts again.

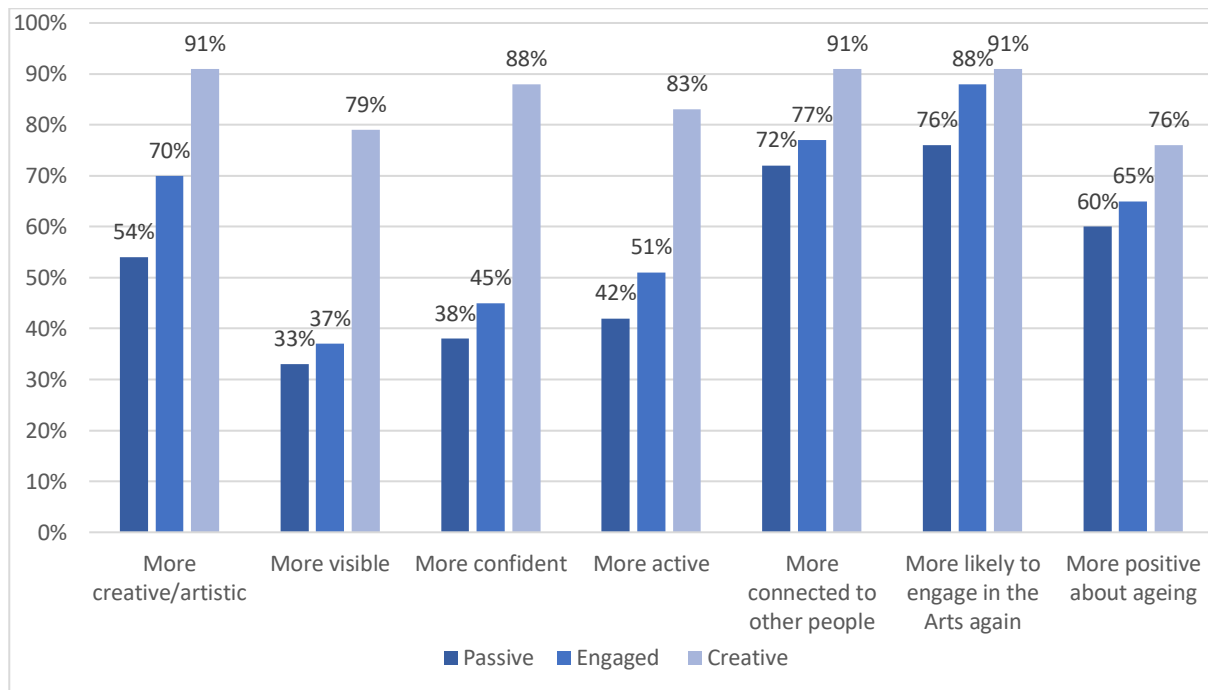
Outcomes Related to Type of Engagement

When we break down outcomes by type of engagement we can see that audience members scored some types of events higher than others.

The Age & Opportunity Arts Programme team classified each event according to how the audience engaged with it. Even though all events were virtual it was possible to use the following categories from previous years to describe different engagements at different events.

- Passive – where the audience passively listens or watches
- Engaged – where the audience engages through Q&A, discussion, etc.
- Creative – where the audience makes arts in some form, dances, draws, performs, etc.

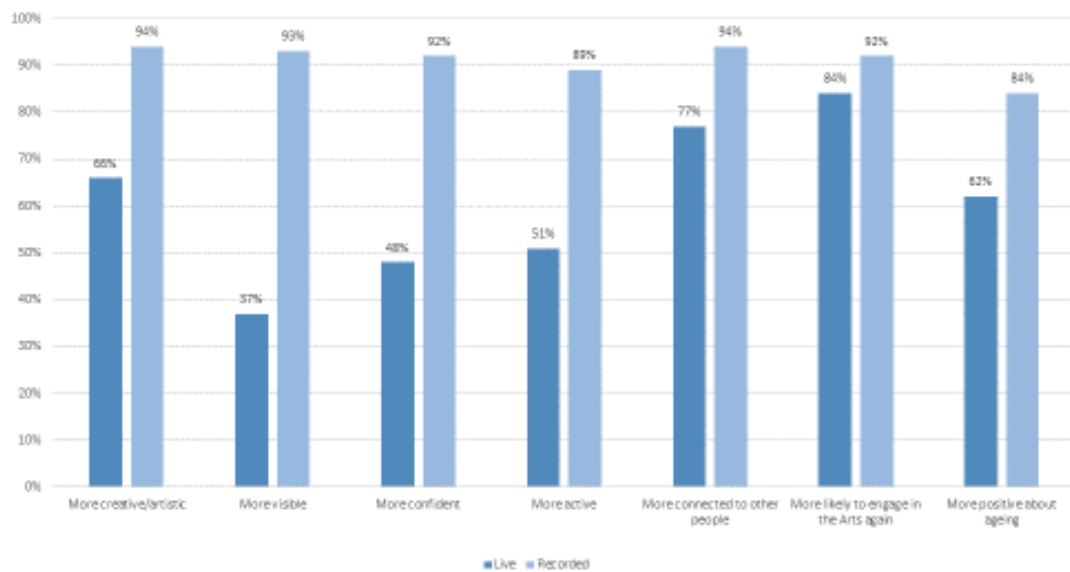
Figure 12 - Type of Engagement x Outcomes:



Unsurprisingly creative events made their audiences feel more creative and, in fact delivered the best outcomes across all categories but in particular making people feel more visible and more confident. Passive events did not deliver on outcomes as well as the other two categories which indicates that, even for online Arts events, greater engagement is desirable. All categories made audiences feel more connected to other people which, in the context of social restrictions due to Ireland's response to the pandemic, is a very positive result and there were high levels of feeling more likely to engage in the Arts again across all categories.

In relation to audience satisfaction engaged events had the highest NPS of 66, passive events had 58 and, despite delivering highest on all outcomes, creative events had the lowest – but still excellent - satisfaction rate of 53 which might indicate that a traditional hands-on delivery might be more desirable for a hands-on event.

Figure 13 - Distance Travelled x Live/Recorded Event



With the exception of the Photography Club and two partner events, all events were actually recorded in advance. From the audience point of view however Age & Opportunity classified those events streamed 'as live' at a particular time to be live events and events that could be accessed by audiences at any time as recorded events. Across the board recorded events were more successful in achieving audience outcomes than live or 'as live' events with the biggest difference in the feeling more visible report.

Selected Requests from Audiences

Send out emails in case we miss out on things on the website

Reminders would be great Bealtaine AT HOME

Notify me on Facebook well in advance

Course on how to access things online and how to use zoom or other form of group interaction

Advertise more

Have it at a more suitable time - it clashed with the News

Email upcoming events. Twitter can be a bit random & a maze!

It's always great to have the facility to watch online a recording of a live event at a later date

Keep the digital route really simple and easy to enable access to varied art forms/events

I found it awkward to have to "book" a ticket on Eventbrite just to receive a YouTube link...

More promotion and advertising

Aggregated Results

Bealtaine AT HOME was a curated online festival of 38 events. Age & Opportunity used online analytics to report the following engagements throughout the Festival and to the end of June 2020.

- 829 Eventbrite Bookings
- 323 Live YouTube Viewers for 6 live events
- 9,161 YouTube Views (6271 unique viewers)
- Facebook Reach 180,216 (number of unique people who saw the content)
- Facebook Views 58,199 (number of people who have watched Bealtaine videos)
- Facebook Engagements 12,737 (number of actions taken such as like/share)
- 94 Soundcloud Listens
- 71 Zoom participants

Bealtaine AT HOME Event	YouTube Views
The Windy Lady Part 1	2,289
The Windy Lady Part 2	813
The Windy Lady Part 3	415
The Windy Lady Part 4	422
Photography with Brian Cooney Part 1	20
Photography with Brian Cooney Part 2	41
Photography with Brian Cooney Part 3	25
Photography with Brian Cooney Part 4	10
Bealtaine Book Club - Mia Gallagher and Neil Hegarty	129
Bealtaine Book Club - Mia Gallagher and Catherine Dunne	235
Bealtaine Writers Club Reading	187
Bealtaine Book Club - Michael Harding and Evelyn O'Rourke	723
Drawing at Home Part 1 Botanical Illustration	414
Drawing at Home Part 2 - Perspective in Architectural Drawing	119
Drawing at Home Part 3 - Still Life and Tone	54
Print at Home - Household Objects	180
Print at Home - Carbon Paper Monoprinting	89
Print at Home - Stencils	32
Dusk Chorus Coolaney Gospel Choir	273
Dusk Chorus Amhrán Mór Virtual Choir	46
Dusk Chorus Desmond School of Performing Arts	51
Dusk Chorus Ceol le Cheile	3,212
Dusk Chorus Nás na Ríogh Singers	56
TOTAL	9,815

Conclusions

The Bealtaine Festival in 2020, despite its very changed nature, was very well received by audiences and achieved its stated outcomes in relation to the changes in behaviour and beliefs – or distance travelled – by its audiences.

Online Arts events make audiences feel more connected to other people. This conclusion must be taken in context of the extreme social restrictions imposed on all Irish citizens, especially those over 70, during May 2020 but still could be considered a noteworthy outcome for these new delivery methods.

While the Bealtaine Festival seeks to target people over 50, responses, as in previous years, indicate that there is a significant intergenerational element to the Festival. However, it should be noted that there were no respondents over 86 years of age.

For the first time Bealtaine attracted a small international audience opening possibilities to develop new audiences for Irish arts and learn from these audiences about online arts access in different countries.

The male audience for Bealtaine (as for all Age & Opportunity activities) is always small but this year it was even smaller than usual despite the very relevant content of the two headline Michael Harding events. We might conclude that men are less likely than women to access online arts.

Recommendations

While Face to face delivery is preferable for all sorts of reasons, now that some advantages of online delivery have been identified, Age & Opportunity should consider offering several on-line Arts events in addition to and alongside the traditional Bealtaine Festival in future.

Age & Opportunity should survey artists and their own Arts programme and Communications teams to find out more about their experience of Bealtaine AT HOME in order to inform future production and delivery of live and recorded events.

Age & Opportunity should continue to highlight the need for increased access to digital technology for all older people but particularly those over 86 years of age who did not access the online festival at all.

Bealtaine AT HOME was delivered in a very busy marketplace with many other Arts institutions offering online events and activities. This provides rich ground to explore further opportunities for learning what works best in this new artist/audience relationship. In light of the findings in this report it may be particularly interesting to examine differences in audience perceptions of live and recorded events.

The very unusual context in which Bealtaine AT HOME had to be delivered may reveal new opportunities for partnerships with other Arts institutions and new ways to promote and deliver arts events and activities.

The finding that recorded events were more successful in achieving audience outcomes than live or 'as live' events may warrant further examination in relation to production values, time of delivery and opportunities for audience interaction at live events. Furthermore, it may be interesting to explore how online arts events can be made more attractive and accessible for men and those aged 86+.

In order to achieve a greater and more even spread of responses across the Festival Age & Opportunity should consider incentivising audiences to complete post event surveys in future. The attraction of the Festival for international audiences highlights the benefits of keeping the festival networked and relevant in international contexts.

Age and Opportunity should share the learnings about delivering an online Festival with all Stakeholders at the 2020 Gathering and should also devise ways in which it can support a potential online partnered Festival in future years.

Appendix 1: Audience Survey Questions

1. What Bealtaine Event(s) did you attend/view/listen to? (You can select more than one event)
 - Photography Club with Brian Cooney
 - The Windy Lady by Pom Boyd
 - Celestial Waves by Cliona Ni Laoi
 - An Introduction to Drawing at Home with Ciara Rodgers
 - How to Print at Home with Aoife Barrett
 - Michael Harding Reading from 'Staring at Lakes'
 - Bealtaine Book Club Interview with Neil Hegarty
 - Bealtaine Book Club - Facebook group
 - Helium Arts presents: At the Table No One Grows Old
 - The Model presents: To Our Friends and Patrons - An Invitation
 - Dance Ireland Presents: Dance Artists and Older People Discussion
 - Printmaking Demonstration & Talk with artist Deirdre Meehan-Buttimer
 - Michael Harding & Evelyn O'Rourke - in conversation
 - Bealtaine Book Club Interview with Catherine Dunne
 - Conversations - A Portrait Project with Andy Parsons
 - Stories & Song - John Conway
 - West Cork Arts Centre - Online Exhibition
 - Bealtaine At Home - The Dusk Chorus
2. If you attended more than one event, please select just one and answer the rest of the questions about that one event.
3. How did you hear about Bealtaine Festival AT HOME?
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
 - Bealtaine AT HOME E-zine
 - Bealtaine website
 - Age & Opportunity website
 - Other website
 - Local paper/radio station
 - Word of Mouth
 - Other (please specify)
4. Did you attend Bealtaine Festival events in previous years?
 - Yes
 - No

5. How likely is it that you would recommend Bealtaine Festival AT HOME to a friend or colleague?

Not at all likely

Extremely Likely

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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6. Bealtaine Festival AT HOME made me feel

	Very much more	A little bit more	Neither more nor less	A little bit less	Very much less
More creative/artistic					
More visible					
More active					
More connected to other people					
More confident					

7. Bealtaine Festival AT HOME made me feel

	Very much more	A little bit more	Neither more nor less	A little bit less	Very much less
More likely to engage in the arts again					

8. Bealtaine Festival AT HOME made me feel

	Very much more	A little bit more	Neither more nor less	A little bit less	Very much less
More positive about ageing					

9. What could Age & Opportunity do to make it easier for you to access future online events?

10. Is there anything else you'd like to share about Bealtaine Festival AT HOME?

11. What is your age?

- Under 20
- 21 to 40
- 41 to 50

- 51 to 60
- 61 to 70
- 71 to 85
- 86 or older
- Prefer not to say

12. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Trans Male
- Trans Female
- None
- Other
- Prefer not to say

13. Thank you for taking our survey. This is the last question! In which county do you live?

Appendix 2: All Audience Comments

I enjoyed the portrait project with Andy. It was very different.
Very good programme and effort
I just joined the interview with Michael Harding as I enjoy his writing and his story telling, it was wonderful
Will probably attend Bealtaine Festival in future
Michael Harding is a very special writer and storyteller for me. I would drop everything to tune into him on radio or TV. He is a brilliant philosopher from the school of common sense. Evelyn Ó'Rourke is also a favourite of mine. She was the other half of a not to be missed interview.
I only took part in one thing - a reading by Michael Harding. I was disappointed by this event - it was only about 5 minutes long. I had expected more than that.
The reading was very short - only 15 minutes and there was no avenue for audience participation so I felt a bit disconnected from it
Really enjoyed
While it was nice to be able to witness the Catherine Dunne event and experience several others after the event on YouTube the online experience does not feel like a festival.
Because I have been cocooning it was a pleasure to watch and listen to something interesting.
Brave of A&O to organise this. Well done all involved
Loved the ease of access to brilliant interviews without leaving the house.
I was looking for things only (in my) area but didn't find them. How should I have searched? I was cocooning.
Good being part of something
It was my first time using Zoom and it empowered me to be more confident when using this technology.
I have been impressed by the convenience and accessibility of a digital programme. Thank you!
This is such an important artistic resource for anyone at home to continue their practise and education.
Would love to see a mix of online and live events in future. I have young kids so normally I can't get out to things like this but now I'd really make the extra effort knowing how good it was.
Keep it going
I never used anything technology other than a mobile phone before so the help from Kathleen on the phone talking me through how to do it and encourage me to take part made me feel very involved. She had the patience of a saint.
It was very enjoyable
Great to be part of it.
No except Thank you.....it was a fun experience
I had a very positive experience taking part & look forward to the next time.
A great opportunity for giving people in all walks of life to use their God given talents and give enjoyment.
Fantastic initiative
I felt good about myself that I was able to participate in Zoom

I believe it is a wonderful, positive overview of older people. Donegal county council provided considerable technical support to us to assist and educate us with social media
It was fantastic to be involved. A lot of work but just great fun too. Kept us together in these times. Had been so looking forward to performing in Dublin but not to be this year.
Don't write off older people.
More advertising about the events
Very enjoyable
Delighted to be part of Dusk Chorus
It was a new experience for me and look forward to looking at all the different projects that partook....especially Ceoil le Ceile.
It was really uplifting to take part and see our choir online after the disappointment of not taking part at live events!
Most enjoyable
A most enjoyable and worthwhile experience! Learning to zoom was a challenge we enjoyed.
It's an event which is well advertised and familiar to everyone
We took part!!!! Ceol le Cheile, absolutely amazing experience, we older persons do not want to be left behind!!! We need a little encouraging, and we certainly got it from Donegal Co Council, a very big thank you Mairead and Kathleen
It was very enjoyable to participate in.
How fabulous the dusk chorus was especially Ceol le Cheile
I love it
Great festival - more, please!
Enrich the talking-heads events with illustrations.
Well done to you all for being able to turn around the Bealtaine Festival to being an online event
Enjoyed what I saw and heard. Thanks to all for presenting festival online.
I would love more of these events online in the future
It was a really nice way to relax and unwind after work in the Health Services during COVID 19
Loved the events and the range of events
Catherine Dunne was an insightful, wise, and brilliant woman for this interview
I really enjoyed listening to Michael Harding. He is such a breath of fresh air and also so good at making you think of things differently.
Please continue with these events and thank you kindly
Better idea than cancelling !
It was a very inspirational interview and lovely to watch it from home
I have known about Bealtaine since my residency in Ireland in 2006! I have always wanted to attend live but never managed. COVID presented me with this opportunity!! Hope in future there can be some online events too for people living in other countries!! Very grateful!
I need to learn more myself about the internet so I won't miss your events.
Congratulations for giving us the opportunity to watch these events while in lockdown. Looking forward to going to live events again further down the road.
It has been great to connect with these events online in the absence of the live festival. Michael Harding is perfect for these COVID times, uplifting and real. Evelyn asked really

good questions and came across really naturally in conversation while getting her questions in.
very enjoyable
Great initiative. Thank you
Nope, just to thank you and Michael (Harding) for a wonderful talk
The event I listened to made me think deeper than I have done in quite a while, thank you for that.
The Photography Club was superb. Well organized, lots of preparation on Brian's part, excellent assignments, which led to good sharing and discussion.
This is a learning curve for me. I am up for new learning. The advantage is I can be in the garden and listen to a podcast
Really enjoying photography with Brian
Thank you, great transition
The event I viewed so far was Michael Harding's reading. I've read Staring at Lakes already and I really enjoyed his reading and what he said following the reading. He is very honest and engaging and I always love listening to him. Overall Bealtaine at home is a great initiative, congratulations!
Enjoyed Michael Harding
Fair dues to everyone at the Bealtaine fest
I expected the course to be about how to use my camera, as opposed to photography as an artform. But I enjoyed it, and learnt a lot. Thank you.
as above ... would like to see more of this, with different authors ... really enjoyed this AND looking forward to the interview next week.
Congratulations to all the great Bealtaine event organisers across the country who have managed to create a great Bealtaine programme online during very difficult times for everyone
Enjoyed it
My YouTube feed was out of sync, don't know if that was my computer ?!
Would have liked for reading to be longer
It's a great concept which facilitates access & creativity - and could be of value to continue as a regular part of future Bealtaine Festivals.
The above survey replies aren't great but I think it's a feature of the event I engaged with rather than a reflection on the overall event. I think the idea of Bealtaine at home is great and makes it easily accessible (well for my age anyway, not sure for the elderly re technology issues). The Michael Harding one was very disappointing. It was 10 minutes and just seemed flat and deflated. I'm not saying that to bitch or anything, just giving honest feedback. I came away from it going why did I bother to make the time for it. I hope the rest of the events went well for you. Keep up the good work
I wish you wouldn't pander to the deeply sexist gender ideology. My sex is female. That alone is the reason why I was targeted by sexual predators from a very early age - and subsequently made to feel guilty about and responsible for it. I tried to identify out of this by explicitly not conforming to gender stereotypes. It did not work, precisely because in the overwhelming number of cases, people can tell what sex you are and will treat (or mistreat) you accordingly. Transwomen do not experience misogyny, they experience (mostly) male aggression towards gender non-conforming behaviour; or some version of homophobia. I have no gender, just as I have no religion. You are free to believe in

"Gender". But please refrain from posing a question that assumes or rather prescribes that everybody has one. Even "prefer not to say" still only relates to a self-declared gender identity. Thank you.
It's a great incentive - love Bealtaine anyway and it's great to see it adapt to quickly to COVID restrictions.
Listening to Michael Harding reading from his book encouraged me to read the book. I am now looking forward to the interview with Evelyn O'Rourke
The Michael Harding reading was so short that I regretted adjusting my timetable to give it star status
As I also work in eldercare services, I wonder how many older people actually access the online events? Have people the knowledge to access them? Is their preference for real events?
Thank you for organising the Bealtaine Festival on-line. It is not ideal, but better than nothing.

Appendix 3: All Requests from Audiences

Send out emails in case we miss out on things on the website.
Keep me notified about events through e-mail contact
There was no problem with access
Reminders would be great
Notify me on Facebook well in advance.
get me a decent internet connection out here in the rural west
It was easy
Just continue the email connection with me.
Just e mail info
I didn't know so many things were on.
More communication
Make logging in to the class easier, I had to email the art centre to request a recording of the class. The did send it thankfully and it was great.
Really early programme
Educate & advertisers
Maybe send me emails or text about future events
Course on how to access things online and how to use zoom or other form of group interaction
More information on how to get involved would be great.
Advertise
Advertise more
Newsletter/email to alert re upcoming events.
Keep updating and forwarding information on upcoming events
Advertising on TV
More instructions on how to use on line Websites.
Lots of advertising
Advertise in local papers
Some training in using computer skills eg, zoom .FaceTime would be good
Reminders and notifications regarding up and coming events would help
Run an online class on various aspects of social media.
At present we are very well informed about all Bealtaine events
Info on accessing, zoom, which we got and was soooo helpful
Announce over more platforms
Local radio
this one was easy and enjoyable
Email me with events
Notice ahead of event
Send out the hook up information earlier.
I 've only just used them once. I was not aware of Age & Opportunity before this.
Newsletters
Maybe send an update on new events by email or text a few days before & also on the day to ensure people remember to tune in

More Facebook posts
Advertising a month in advance
Nothing more.
maybe a little more promotion of the event- I only heard about it pretty late but delighted to tune in. it was a wonderful thought provoking and delightful discussion
Run additional ad campaigns in the print media, radio and television outlining how to easily access electronic content
Just need to know when events are on and a reminder email
All was well planned.
Not sure. I missed it this year through my own fault. I didn't realise how great it was on line.
Found it easy to access this online event so no complaints.
please have them at a more accessible time in the evening (if evening events) 6.30 is very early. My mother is 78 and a big fan of Michael Harding but 6.30 is teatime - we did watch the interview live but it would have been better to have it from 7pm onwards
Raise the profile of Age and Opportunity. Possibly get some TV and Radio airtime
Plenty of advertising
The sound wasn't great with Evelyn O'Rourke when she was interviewing Michael Harding (his sound was fine) so it was hard to pick her up sometimes. Maybe look to improving sound quality. Other than that it was really enjoyable. Thank you
Have it at a more suitable time. It clashed with the News
Not sure, marketing, publicity, and follow-up is already very good.
Very important to see the cultural diversities represented as we age too.... we are moving in a different part of our evolution with different challenges - learning across access barriers ie poor internet connectivity shared space
Add me to mailing list
Do a practice run with Zoom prior to session 1.
Send an e mail about events
Email upcoming events. Twitter can be a bit random & a maze!
It's always great to have the facility to watch online a recording of a live event at a later date
More readings
More face book and twitter
Nothing, really. Just to advertise widely, including through public library newsletters
if having events online ... it would be helpful to have them on a little later in the evening - 6.30pm for Michael Harding (LOVED THE EVENTS) but it's very early
More promotion and advertising
Advertise. I didn't know what it was until I saw MI Harding sharing it. I am a fan of Michael.
Keep the digital route really simple and easy to enable access to varied art forms/events.
I found it awkward to have to "book" a ticket on Eventbrite just to receive a YouTube link...
email is great - I might miss if on Facebook.
Notification of events.
have events a little later in the evening

Keep selecting people like Michael Harding !
Access was no problem
Notification by email or text. I am 66 in November. Will be leaving permanent work.
Nothing really, I am competent on the online access. Time is more of an issue as I am still working.
I think it would be easier if we didn't have to register & book tickets with Eventbrite. Why can't you simply have it live streaming on your Facebook page, in the same way that you do the 'Go for Life' exercises?



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