

Digital Readiness for SMAs

During the last year SMAs have learned a great deal about digital readiness and the online pivot. How much of “pandemic practice” will become standard SMA programming? SMAs experienced the positives of virtual conferences, with expanded audiences and flexible scheduling. They also struggled with finding ways to monetize the new way of serving their members. The June webinar will focus on ***Digital Readiness for SMAs*** and will be led by Alex Freeman, Executive Director of the Texas Association of Museums. He will share insights gained through his work with digital readiness in Texas museums and the TAM virtual conference 2021. An expert in new technologies that impact informal learning, Alex is nationally recognized for his work with the New Media Consortium, where he researched and authored the NMC *Horizon Report* series. Mark your calendar and register today!

Slide 2: Agenda

1. [From Ft. Worth to the Cloud](#) - 450t
2. [Record Keeping and Data](#) - 1100
 - a. Q/A
3. [From Broadcasting to Audience Engagement](#) - 2300
 - a. Q/A
4. [Monetizing Digital Programs](#) - 450
 - a. Q/A
5. [Future Directions](#) - 750
 - a. Q/A

Script:

SLIDE 3: 1. From Ft. Worth to the Cloud

My, what a year and half we've experienced at SMAs. If we hadn't already done so we had to rethink how we did our work and how to survive with emergency grants and strictly digital content. Today, I want to talk a bit about my digital journey at the Texas Association of Museums and how my observations might help catalyze a discussion about how we move together

collectively. I'm going to Walk the Walk when emphasizing audience engagement so after each section I will stop for a Q/A instead of holding all Q/A at the end.

Slide 4: MADMEN

You may have heard my anecdote that we became highly skilled in working in the 20th century using telephone, fax machines, copy machines, filing cabinets, and mail. Times have changed and modern work tools and approaches have changed the office space. If you haven't been in an Office Depot recently this change is striking -- most of the store is devoted to furniture now and envelopes and folders and other equipment take up a shrinking amount of space. Look at this image out of Mad Men, not much changed when I got my first office job in 1970 except for cubicle walls and a desktop that had a font that only came in white or green.

Slide : 5 CLOUD

I came to TAM to modernize the way we do our business. How did I do this? First off, I've been working remotely since 2013 using cloud-based tools so I learned early on how to be productive without being tied to 20th century tools and approaches. Cloud-based tools made a major difference. Cloud-based tools or applications are online or web based applications that are accessible generally via a web browser. They range from basic websites to complex and highly interactive online learning environments that we will talk about today. Many are free for education and low-cost to non-profits or may have basic versions which are free, while possibly charging for more advanced functionality.

Slide 6 : JACK

As an information worker who lived in Austin, I didn't need the TAM office in Ft. Worth. Sure it held all of the tools I needed to do business in the old way but with digital tools and the cloud, we streamlined our equipment and tools and focused on making sure we had stored our important documents in a way that did not require me to drive 3 hours every time I needed to do work. I hear that many of you work remotely so you have already made this shift. For our colleagues in museums where people bring objects and spaces alive, the past 18 months have turned their jobs upside down if they still had one. I believe the future will remain hybrid with a blend of onsite and offsite work. That allows for more hybrid experiences for our collective audiences who have learned to overcome the greatest disruption of the century.

Slide 7: TEXT

In the 21st century work is an activity and not a place.

SLIDE 8: 2: Record Keeping and Data

Slide 9: Website and Data Collection

After significant research TAM purchased a Novi Association Management Software website subscription. It was clear through our latest member survey that our community wanted a better user experience and we delivered! Using the NOVI AMS platform, we have broken down our

data silos with a fresh new interface. I run Constant Contact and Quickbooks Online through Novi. The customizable database also allows us to tag and filter our members in a few important ways such as museum type and region. The business profiles allow for better digital marketing opportunities for museum serving vendors. With a brand new look and updated technology, we'll better serve all our members, prospects, and greater museum community. We've already had many positive responses. Folks can easily register for events, update their profile information, track event attendance, search our member directory, view/pay invoices, and create a job posting, and more. By having a robust website, we could refresh our membership structure to have all in memberships for institutional members.

SLIDE 10: MEMBERSHIP

Over much of 2020, the membership committee from TAM's board of directors scanned the environment and our years of members data to come up with new membership levels and benefits. Having lost members steadily over the past several years, it was important to not only rebuild that revenue piece but to be stickier. That means, we needed a way to move beyond the restrictive designee label to something that was more akin to other associations where anyone connected with an organization is a beneficiary. I thought about that quite a bit when I started this position. I believe we stuck with designees to reduce the number of things we needed to print. Technology is inherently scalable so if we could find a tool that supported this "all in" digital model, we had the opportunity to grow our relevance and influence and more importantly our revenue. TAM works with world class institutions with hundreds of staff and scrappy volunteer run organizations, so we knew some of the challenges we would have moving from a more traditional association to a digitally savvy one. That brings me to my next section on taking the pulse of our community during the pandemic.

SLIDE 11: Needs assessment

SLIDE 12 AND 13:

Over the past 10 years, TAM has been involved in museum sustainability. From the Summerlee Commission Report published in 2018, we knew museums were in trouble and this was well before the pandemic. Since then we completed work on a Houston Endowment funded project called **Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability Through Coaching**. This groundbreaking project explored fresh ways for about 10 history museums and history organizations to address issues of relevance and financial sustainability under the guidance of experienced coaches.

SLIDE 14:

In summer 2020, Texas Association of Museums (TAM) began work on an expanded continuation of the successful initiative "Finding Alternative Futures: Sustainability Through Coaching." Exploring ways to help museums build capacity by leveraging technology. Finding Alternative Futures, Phase 2 (FAF2) retains the goals of assisting participating museums in understanding their options for sustainability, elevating

professionalism, and preparing for positive change. In addition, FAF2 is addressing digital readiness and technologies that can help move the museum community forward in the current environment. While our pilot work is focused on the Houston region, our goal is to repackage our FAF2 work to benefit the greater museum community.

To begin this work we spent two months gathering data to assess the areas of greatest need. We began by building a planning team that created a process for gathering and analyzing information. We started with a list of general museum-related tech topics, determined the questions for a survey instrument, distributed the survey, schedule one-on-one phone call interviews, held a focus group, analyzed results, and determined the final topic areas.

By the numbers:

- September to November 2020
- 148 Organizations Identified
- 27 Survey Questions
- 19 Surveys Completed
- From experience we knew that we could diagnose an institutions digital readiness by exploring responses to questions around these areas of Special Interest
 - Assessing a museum’s digital strategy
 - Developing proposals for financial support
 - Informing organizational decision-making
 - Managing vendor relationships
 - Using social media for community engagement
- Topics of Focus Group Questions include
 - **Changed payment processes** - 1/3 changed their process - want to know more about that - what changed, will it change more? Accepting payment, less paper based, more tech based.
 - **Staffing** - website/social media, decision made as tagging onto a staff member or no one's job? Is it based on “everyone” vs they don’t know how to use it.
 - **Analytics to drive decision making from website** - point of sale, social media. How are you using it? Are you collecting and not analyzing?
 - **Content Development Strategy** - who on your staff drives content strategy for digital outlets? The person posting/managing or expert on topics within staff? Do you have a digital project calendar?
 - **What drives what you choose to write grants for?** Why is technology not included in those?
 - **What purposes are you using Facebook/social media for?** Event promotion, ticket sales, organizational updates, expert news, general org promotion (staff, collection, behind the scenes, etc), partner promotion/sharing,

SLIDE 15: FINAL TOPICS

This needs assessment informed the concept development of four online content modules that serve as the core of *FAF2*. These online offerings address central challenges raised by museums in the Houston area, as well as the information gleaned from the follow-up focus group. With the assistance of an Advisory Board of museum experts, we designed a professional development opportunity that will increase fluency in digital applications, requirements, and solutions. Part self-paced learning online, part one-on-one virtual coaching, and part resource sharing and networking, this holistic program will cover the following topics that should keep us busy for a few years:

- **Operational Capacity and Continuity:** Transitioning towards increasing digitally-enabled operations requires establishing new priorities and policies for business continuity.
- **Digital-Savvy Leadership:** Managing today requires agile thinking, continuous and varied communication efforts, and other responsive actions. Understanding how digital tools and platforms support these key functions is critical.
- **Online Programming:** Virtual visitors are here to stay. Designing desirable online experiences and supporting them effectively through digital means is now a core program need.
- **Community Engagement:** Museums must use digital platforms to connect with and grow stronger in their community collaborations.

We are excited to start this module this summer. Another exciting element that I am currently working on are the member-facing blog posts and whitepapers that we will release monthly starting this month. We will be working with Ed Rodley, a former colleague of mine who helped contribute to the Horizon Report Series, that analyzed and forecasted the uptake of technology in the museum sector. He recently co-hosted Museopunks podcast at AAM and is starting his own venture called the Experience Alchemists. I'll talk a little more about this when I return to monetizing your digital strategy.

<https://theexperiencealchemists.com/>

<https://www.texasmuseums.org/finding-alternative-futures-phase-2>

SLIDE 16: Q: How are you collecting and analyzing data? What tools are you using?

SLIDE 17: From Broadcasting to Audience Engagement

In this section I would like to go a little deeper on a topic that I have been thinking deeply about for quite some time. In grad school I intentionally took on digital projects because, 1. They actually paid me and 2. These tools were new so there were no experts in some of these areas. So, I consider myself an expert in audience engagement and will share some ideas in which you may or may not be familiar.

SLIDE 18: Audience Participation Use Cases

For the past 15 years or so, we've done a good job using the Internet to market and broadcast ideas but the rise of user generated content and more engagement methods have changed even basic (Sage on the Stage) presentations like this one. I recently presented about the shift from broadcasting to an increased focus on audience participation in live streamed events for the Museum Learning Hub. My intermediate session followed an introduction to live streaming a museum program to YouTube using StreamYard - the broadcast portion if you will.

Nowadays the keyboard is only one of the tools we use to connect with each other -- like it or not we have become home video producers. To have a conversation in the virtual realm you will need to know how to have a voice. That means understanding that your laptop/smartphone is a powerful tool. With the right accessories to capture video, project video, and speak or listen in some cases, you can join in the conversation and shape what you see in front of you.

Let's get started with a few of the case uses that museums and associations are creating to increase engagement with their online visitors. Some take more of a live question and answer approach while others only work if the audience is active throughout and completes an experience.

SLIDE 19:

Interviews and Performances

Perhaps the lowest barrier for entry is adding participatory elements to broadcasts of interviews or performances. Just like the Ask a Curator Day, you can tap your in-house experts to share their knowledge in a live streamed question-and-answer session. Host a laidback Ask Me Anything (AMA) on social media or invite speakers or artists to give a talk or performance. Everything from TED-style talks, dance performances, or intimate interviews are fair game. Interactive games and contests can also increase engagement.

<https://generalpublic.co.uk/news/ask-a-curator-branding/>

SLIDE 20:

Behind-the-scenes tours

Technology can provide even greater access to your spaces and collections. Behind-the-scenes tours open up a whole new set of possibilities for online visitors giving them a peek behind the curtain. Museums, galleries, and historic sites, can offer viewers glimpses at what it's like to visit.

SLIDE 21:

Workshops and classes

For more complex topics or sequential museum programs, webinars, virtual workshops, and online classes might work well. These formats can offer deep dives around specific themes, skill sets, tools, and more.

Slide 22:

Conferences and Symposia

Even large-scale events can have a virtual component. From AAM's Annual Meeting to SXSW, live concerts and summits have been streamed online so that people who can't attend in person can gain access. Well that "nice to have" feature became a "must have" for any museum or association affected by shutdowns - especially those with educational missions. But over the past year, there have been many conferences that take place entirely online, with networking and meetings integrated, too.

Workshops, Classes, Conference and Symposia are all areas that TAM is increasingly exploring.

Slide 23:

Although I do not currently work at a museum, I've been creating online participatory experiences since my beard was black in 2014. I recently stumbled across a post for the blog Art Museum Teaching. It promoted the New Media Consortium's [Future of Museums Symposium](#) I created that brought together a collaborative global conversation around issues of technology, museums, and the future. My, have the tools greatly improved since then! I used Google Hangouts for that symposium but it went a long way to help me understand how to create audience participation in this lived streamed event.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= iklhhNl6k4>

Slide 24:

Most recently I hosted the Texas Association of Museum's annual meeting virtually in mid-April, so increasing audience participation was top of mind for me. We used the virtual platform Whova that combined Zoom functions with breakout rooms, and other engagement tools such as gamified elements, interactive message boards, speed networking, and more. Attendees said:

Slide 25:

This conference was organized and happened on a single platform. It was easy to find more information and to engage with speakers. Whova as a conference app was a phenomenal decision.

Can we say all? But really it was the opportunity to feel included. That gets lost in other meetings, so it was refreshing to know my opinion was valued.

Overall I think just the fact that the system was user friendly....it was totally a more relaxed learning atmosphere and I was able to attend some of the 'talk' sessions and actually participate.

*The fact that I can go back and listen/review for three months is a total success for me!!!
Also being able to interact with everyone via messaging system during and after sessions - gives the ability to carry on conversations with more than one person without feeling I'm being rude.*

As you can see from the use cases above, there are many formats to digitally share the people, spaces, and objects that form the identity of your museum or cultural institution. Next we will dive into ways in which you can use other tools such as Zoom and Add-ons to create greater audience participation in your online programs and events.

SLIDE 26: Audience Participation in Zoom

SLIDE 27: ZOOM/STREAMYARD

I believe over the past year that we've all broadcasted some kind of programming to viewers on YouTube. In my Museum Learning Hub workshop, I followed a basic introduction to broadcasting from Streamyard to Youtube. The benefits for that tool are boundless and it even allows you to see comments in YouTube while a live program is in progress that can be monitored and communicated to the broadcasters. The primary difference between StreamYard and Zoom, with the exception of StreamYard's cost and accessibility features, is that with StreamYard and the Webinar feature in Zoom, there is more of a virtual wall during a broadcast between the museum and viewer. Meaning that the focus is on the presenter and controlling the presentation rather than engaging with the viewers in real-time. In some cases you may not even see anyone else in the broadcast or webinar besides the hosts. Engagement really happens when you virtually populate the room with people who can message or ask questions anytime during the program.

SLIDE 28: ZOOM AND WEBSITES

Now I'm going to talk about other tools built into other services and other tools you can add to increase audience participation. We'll start with a dive into Zoom's capabilities and then chat about some other add ons to consider. It's likely that you have not made it through the pandemic without being in at least one Zoom video call. Like many video conferencing tools Zoom enables you to host a meeting or webinar with familiar audio and video features. You may get a free Zoom account that provides 40 minutes of meeting time - if you pay for the professional version you can do much much more for a monthly subscription. I believe Zoom offers a special

nonprofit discount and you can also get discounts through partners like [TechSoup](#) and [NonProfit Rate](#).

<https://zoom.us/>

<https://www.techsoup.org/>

<https://nonprofitrate.com/>

SLIDE 29: ALEX WITH CONTROLS

You can't have audience participation if your audience can't connect. That being said, maybe you are more comfortable with the written word or that is the only way you can best communicate. If that is the case, then you can participate and shape a program through other means. They include chat to all or a specific person in the meeting, taking part in a poll, raising your hand, adding an emoji such as clapping, thumbs up, love, laugh, wow, or celebrate, or contributing a question through Q and A. There are a growing number of reactions including stating yes, no, speed up or slow down.

SLIDE 30:

Advanced Audience Participation with Zoom Breakouts

In Zoom you can create break out rooms which enable you to take a large group and break them into smaller groups with more audience participation. Picture a traditional "before times" exhibition opening where the director climbs up a few steps of the staircase and she addresses a crowd below of a hundred or so people. After a welcome and description of the show, they invite you to gather in smaller groups where a docent leads a tour. In that smaller group, you can have a more intimate experience and ask questions of the objects, spaces, or people presented. As you can imagine, besides a few people that can grab a microphone and ask a question in the large hall, it is difficult to have a meaningful dialogue or discussion in that plenary format.

SLIDE 31: TAM COUNCIL

Event breakout meeting ideas are just one of the ways you can bring your attendees together for meaningful conversations, thought leadership, and professional networking. The beauty of these sessions, groups, or meetings, is that their small, structured groupings lead to more natural conversation on focused topics. In addition, your speakers have a better chance to get to everyone's questions and mingle with the group.

SLIDE 32: MANUAL

Zoom breakout rooms work in the following way. Decide how many breakout rooms you'd like and then give them names and it is best to have a host per room if possible to orient and lead a discussion and possibly be the recorder. Or you can assign people these different roles. After

you have created the rooms, then choose the option of assigning each person automatically, manually, or let participants choose their room. You can change your view from Brady Bunch style grids to presenter mode if someone is describing an object, for example. In Breakouts your video, camera, and chat work the same way as when everyone is in the larger meeting.

<https://involved.unl.edu/rsobook/Virtual%20Teambuilding%20Resource.pdf>

SLIDE 33: THINKING MUSEUM

If you are looking for step-by-step guides on how to access the tools within Zoom, there are a couple of resources I've included with this workshop. The Thinking Museum's Post *6 quick-fire ways to improve your Zoom confidence* is a great place to start. Bonus tips include: Setting small goals, keep it simple, watch other breakouts and take notes, and debrief.

<https://thinkingmuseum.com/2021/02/03/6-quick-fire-ways-to-improve-your-zoom-confidence/>.

SLIDE 34: CEO

If you are vain like me, here is another resource aimed at CEO, directors, and other high level museum positions: the Entrepreneur.com article *25 Ways to Make Your Zoom Meetings Awesome!* has great illustrations on how to make yourself look the great and some etiquette and things to think about to help you rock your presentation such as avoiding backlighting. As a nod to our previous presenter and magician David, I included the clip that states "Make every moment magical" which encourages you to have some cool objects nearby. One of the things I love about museum folks is their love of objects and materiality. That should be an easy one for this group.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/349091>

SLIDE 35:

And lastly, for educators or anyone wanting to deeply engage with groups of people, there is a great handout that the University of Nebraska Lincoln created called *Team Building Activities and IceBreakers for the Virtual Environment* that goes into greater detail.

<https://involved.unl.edu/rsobook/Virtual%20Teambuilding%20Resource.pdf>

Make sure to have a clear reason why you are creating a breakout room, whether it is an opportunity to share ideas, to network, or to discuss ideas raised in an interview or plenary session. Whatever the reason, be clear about it and most importantly communicate this to your online audiences so they are prepared to get the most out of it. All people learn and process information differently, so provide instructions on how the breakout session will work in four formats: verbally, via a slide on the screen, via the chat box, and as an email link with a PDF containing instructions including the links to and names of the various breakout sessions.

SLIDE 36:

The UK Group GEM or Group for Education in Museums, has been thinking and writing a lot about education outside of the museum. Their post on breakout rooms brings up some salient points about why to use breakout rooms. They mention something I stated earlier about modes of communication. In a break out room, you may engage through text or through speech and video. This provides both extroverts and introverts a new opportunity to learn and collaborate.

Their 4 key takeaways when planning a breakout room are:

1. Is your breakout room valuable to attendees?
2. Inform attendees of the use of breakout rooms prior to the session.
3. Set out a clear code of conduct for the breakout rooms.
4. Do everything you can to ensure that people will feel safe and confident during the breakout room.

<https://gem.org.uk/breakout-rooms/>

SLIDE 37:

Beyond hosting in-depth discussions, breakouts allow for real-time brainstorming when paired with additional tools. In some instances, event producers ask attendees to fill out a brief survey at the beginning of a program that will gather information about their educational interests, likes and dislikes, and preferences that will match them with similar attendees and content throughout their event. This is especially useful for summit and conference breakout sessions. Use this technology to your advantage and gather attendees together that match your content objectives.

The Harvard Business Review's post *Break Up Your Big Virtual Meetings* highlights research that encourages one to rethink brainstorming sessions in breakouts. They say you can increase the quality of audience participation by sharing working documents such as a Google Doc to attendees in advance of a breakout with key questions that need to be addressed during the meeting. <https://hbr.org/2020/04/break-up-your-big-virtual-meetings>

SLIDE 38: Q: How have you increased audience participation in your digital programs? What has or hasn't worked for your SMA?

SLIDE 39: Monetizing Digital Programs

A core aspect of monetizing your digital programs is to think of your digital content and approaches strategically. I already used the example of knowing that we wanted to expand our member base but couldn't scale that without the right digital tools. You can see that its important to know where you want to go and then choose the correct solutions to get you there. That was the problem with mobile apps. A board member

would say, we need a mobile app because x has one without really knowing what that app was for. That is the wrong way to use digital and certainly a hard way to monetize something. We were honored to have Nik Honeysett from the Balboa Park Online Collaborative join our FAF 2 advisory board and give a session at TAM 2021 Virtual. Title "Creating and Monetizing a Digital Strategy" he gets at the heart of the issue.

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1ZCJVyUhgrvO0q6ZP-X-j0ichRkkM0odHeOvSiSTEyY4/viewer?f=0>

SLIDE 41:

Highlights include:

- Making money from digital - need highly desirable content and/or large scale to be profitable
- Your audience is your most valuable and prolific source of new ideas - measure and collect feedback on all programs!
- To grow following on social media, make your content relevant to your community, current events, and follower's everyday lives
- Money from social media content requires many followers and high quality content posted regularly - investment is required
- Think about and plan for global distribution and audience, because digital content is accessible to anybody from anywhere
- The most popular museum on Tiktok is the Black Country Museum in the UK because it has living history performers make Tiktok videos in character

<http://bit.ly/BPOC-Digital-Strategy>

SLIDE 42: COPE

Since grad school, I have worked in the COPE method - create once, publish everywhere. That means that I think of digital content such as text or videos in smaller chunks that can be remixed or re-used for other writings or programs. Heck, I re-mixed about six different presentations for this one. I want to return to the member-facing monthly publications we're doing with Ed Rodley for FAF 2. The value in that writing is two-fold, timely access and in joining a greater conversation around digital fluency. Although the greater conversation is great and maybe a grant might come our way because of it, to monetize that activity, we need to push the value elsewhere. By expanding our member base and focusing on timely topics, we've made our memberships more valuable. Although we will eventually release for free to the public, we will release the publications to members-only first and privilege them in our live discussions.

Slide 43: Q: What are some ways that you are monetizing your digital programs? Where have you seen success? Where have you seen pitfalls?

SLIDE 44: Future Directions

Broadband - infrastructure and Advocacy

At AAM's Museums Advocacy Day I learned how to speak with a unified voice -- expressing the public worth of museums, asking for greater dollars for federal agencies, and requesting a review of tax policy. I also listened deeply to the pet projects my senators were pushing that had anything to do with improving the status of museums. My Senators are Ted Cruz and John Cornyn. It was clear visiting Senator Cornyn's office that he understands the importance of increasing broadband in rural communities. I know having met many of you that we all have areas in our states where there's a whole lot of land and not a whole lot of people -- in a state that covers two time zones the need is even more apparent. Nearly everything we did during the pandemic from filing claims or requesting a vaccine appointment required you to be connected to the Internet and there's no going back now. State Museum Associations can't further the progress we've made building new networks or educating our communities virtually if our members struggle to get online and become more digitally fluent.

The pandemic has highlighted the difficulties that many of our member museums face when confronted with the need to deliver their content and programs without the use of their buildings or collections. For smaller and more rural museums across the state of Texas, this problem is even more acute. Saddled with outdated, inadequate, or nonexistent websites, these museums struggle to communicate basic information to their communities, to publish digital-only programs, or to perform even rudimentary community outreach. While larger, better-resourced museums have pivoted to publishing existing content on their websites or producing new digital content to engage online visitors, many smaller Texas museums have only a Facebook presence at best to connect with their audiences in this time of distance.

Future directions point to a growing Rural Electrification Act-like focus on delivering low-cost and sustainable broadband to cohorts of isolated organizations. In the same way that Rural Electrification paved the way for the modernization of rural areas across the United States, broadband initiatives seek to prepare individuals, businesses, and museums across Texas to meet the demands of 21st-century media and ways of working. At the state level, we've already seen movement

Slide:

I recently ran across this headline on Texas Public Radio, *In A Rare Show Of Bipartisanship, Texas Lawmakers Try To Improve Broadband Internet Access*. [House Bill 5](#), or "The Texas Broadband Bill," was one of the few pieces of legislation that passed with strong bipartisan support during an especially contentious legislative session only eight weeks after its

official announcement by Governor Abbott. The bill establishes the creation of a “Broadband Development Office” within the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts. That includes the formation of a broadband development program, the establishment of a broadband development map to be updated regularly and published by the office and the development of a statewide broadband plan within one year of the bill becoming law on Sept. 1. The COVID-19 pandemic made clear the need for a more extensive internet infrastructure as workers and students in quarantine at home struggled with limited and unreliable access. The bill received unanimous legislative committee support from the beginning. These signs are encouraging as we are finally seeing legislators across the aisle recognize the importance of this information highway infrastructure project.

<https://www.tpr.org/technology-entrepreneurship/2021-06-01/texas-legislature-broadband-bill-passes-to-close-digital->

Slide:

That fate of similar bi-partisan federal legislation may not sail as smoothly as it did in Texas, but from the Biden administration's Fact Sheet for the American Jobs Plan shows broadband as a major priority. Under the plan, the administration wants to Deliver clean drinking water, a renewed electric grid, and high-speed broadband to all Americans. The goal is to bring affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband to every American, including the more than 35 percent of rural Americans who lack access to broadband at minimally acceptable speeds.

Biden lays out a vision for revitalizing America’s digital infrastructure by investing \$100 billion to:

- Build high-speed broadband infrastructure to reach 100 percent coverage.
- Promote transparency and competition.
- Reduce the cost of broadband internet service and promote more widespread adoption.

We won’t know if his administration will get \$100 billion but the message is clear, we need to address the digital divide on all fronts for everyone in our nation to have the opportunity to participate in a modern society and the modern economy.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/>

Slide 48: Q: Are your states pursuing Broadband Initiatives? What impact do you think this will have on museums?

Slide 49: “The future is already here -- it’s just not very evenly distributed.” - William Gibson

Slide 50: Thank you