

Chat Summary: Room 3 — Digital Fundraising Conference 2026

Hosted by Simon Sriver

Session 1: The Digital Skills Fundraisers Actually Need in 2026 — Quarina Sultana, Digital Strategist

This session set the tone for the day, focusing on the practical digital skills fundraisers need to build now rather than chase every emerging trend. It was well received, with attendees reflecting on how to make digital communications feel genuinely authentic rather than overly polished or formulaic.

Session 2: Rethinking Supporter Growth in a Changing Consent Landscape — Rhiannan Sullivan, Care2

This session looked at how consent requirements are reshaping supporter acquisition and growth strategies.

Resources shared:

- A related upcoming live Q&A session, "Your Soft Opt-In Questions Answered," for anyone wanting to go deeper on consent and opt-in practice.
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Session 3: Meet the World's First AI Fundraiser — Ben Cohen

This was one of the most talked-about sessions of the day — a live demonstration and case study of an AI fundraising agent that attendees described as equal parts fascinating and unsettling. It sparked genuine discussion around balancing the growing use of AI in the sector against its environmental footprint, and questions about what this means for fundraisers' own roles and the skills needed to manage AI tools effectively going forward.

Session 4: The Digital Fundraiser's Toolkit — The Tools That Save You Hours — Tereza Litsa

A well-received, practical session covering time-saving digital tools for fundraisers, including a discussion of link-shortening tools and the kinds of technical issues (such as links being blocked by corporate firewalls) that can affect their reliability.

Session 5: Cyber Security: The Basics — Patrick Burgess, Nutbourne

This session covered foundational cyber security practices for charities, with the speaker staying active in the chat to answer follow-up questions directly. Recommended platforms for phishing simulation training included uSecure and KnowBe4, and attendees were encouraged to check their cyber insurance policies, since many already bundle this kind of training for free.

Resources shared:

- uSecure and KnowBe4 — recommended platforms for phishing simulation training.

Session 6: 3 Steps to Creating Viral Videos / Building a Winning Video Strategy — Emily Semmens, Praxis

A highly engaged session that generated one of the richest Q&As of the day, with a colleague from the speaker's team helping field additional questions in the chat. Key themes: keeping video production sustainable for small teams by setting firm limits on time spent per video, prioritising getting content out over perfecting it, and adapting approaches where filming staff or the public isn't possible due to safeguarding or consent concerns (for example, using audio overlays instead of on-camera faces). One practical growth tip shared: republishing a high-performing video as a "trial reel," which is only shown to non-followers, as an easy way to reach new audiences without creating anything new. On tools, Manychat was named as a popular option for automated DM responses.

Resources shared:

- Manychat — recommended for automating direct message responses.

Notable tips shared by fellow attendees in the chat

- During the AI fundraiser session, one attendee shared a quote that resonated with the room: AI itself won't replace fundraisers, but those who learn to work well with it may have an edge over those who don't.
- During the video strategy session, attendees shared two practical workarounds for teams with limited capacity or camera-shy staff: inviting volunteers to film

short, informal clips themselves on a rotating basis (spreading the content out over the following weeks), and compiling several videos' best moments into a single highlights reel before releasing the individual clips separately.