

# "Oi Connect Really Delivered for the Ocean Science and Technology Community"



Oceanology International 2020, held this year as a virtual event from 1 to 4 December on the custom-built, AI-driven Oi Connect events and meetings platform, completed its inaugural session to acclaim from the ocean science and technology communities.

Ralph Rayner, president of the Society for Underwater Technology, said: "2020 has presented its challenges to the world and the ocean science and technology community. However, I was delighted with how Oi Connect managed to bring so many of the community together. The Oi Connect platform saw many hundreds of meeting and conference hours delivered. Good business has been conducted and new relationships formed. In lieu of a face-to-face event, Oi Connect really delivered for the ocean science and

technology community."

Oceanology International is widely regarded as an essential date in the calendar for professionals working in the global marine science and ocean technology sector, with key conferences, multiple product launches and innumerable face-to-face meetings. The ongoing coronavirus pandemic forced the difficult decisions first to postpone the exhibition and then to run it as a virtual event, but these choices have been vindicated by the results. Oi Connect saw 2,843 attendees from 117 countries actively engage on the virtual platform, including 138 exhibiting companies.

This turnout generated 1,057 attended meetings, rated an average of 4.4 out of 5 stars on Oi Connect's review tool. The 27 conferences run over the course of the event attracted 7,686 views, totalling 2,448 hours. Rob Howard, VP Sales & Marketing at US-based digital and print publisher MarineLink, said: "Marine Technology Reporter were delighted to be part of Oi Connect. We made a number of connections that kept us up to date with our clients. In addition, our participation in the conference sessions, both attending and as a moderator, was extremely informative."

## Interaction and Connection

The conference programme covered a diverse range of subjects, including oceanography, autonomy, hydrography, biochemistry, machine learning and geophysics. All of these are areas of rapid growth, and sharing information is crucial to maintaining momentum in research – often of key value in preserving the marine environment. David Ince, events director at Reed Exhibitions, commented: "We are delighted that we have been able to deliver a first-time virtual event on the Oi Connect platform. It's difficult to replicate the interaction and connection experienced live at Oi, and we have tried to structure Oi Connect around the facility to see, connect and meet with visitors and exhibitors across the week. There are things that were not perfect, and a huge amount we have learned in the process, but the overall objective to provide a digital space to bring together exhibitors, visitors, delegates, suppliers and buyers of ocean technology in a safe environment has been a success."

Looking forward, the team at Reed Exhibitions – organizers of Oi 2020 – are excited to be able to confirm the dates for the next live events in the Oceanology portfolio. Oi Middle East will take place from 20-22 September 2021 at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre. Oceanology International will return as a physical event at London ExCeL from 15-17 March 2022, while Oi Americas will run from 13-15 February 2023 at the San Diego Convention Center. "We look forward to opening the doors and welcoming you all back soon," concludes Ince.