

Tips for Attending Conferences from Your Couch - 020

In this episode we'll discuss how you can learn from other folks who attend conferences while you stay at home. You'll hear strategies for attending online conferences that don't require any travel, as well as ways to follow along with a conference when you don't plan on making the trip to the event!

Hello there! My name is Monica Burns, I'm a former classroom teacher and now I spend my time sharing tips, strategies and activity ideas to make easy EdTech integration a possibility in your classroom. You may be familiar with my books, like [Tasks Before Apps](#) or my blog [ClassTechTips.com](#). Whether we've met at a conference or special event, you've followed along with my EdTech tips for years, or simply joining in for the first time today, I'm so glad you're here!

Each week I share popular content from my blog. I read aloud a blog post, add a few extra things, and try my best to bring the content to life for you — all in audio format.

In this bite-sized podcast you'll get some quick info and actionable tips to energize and elevate teaching and learning!

You can head to my website classtechtips.com/podcast for all of the show notes. That's where you'll find the transcript for each episode, links to resources, and any of the free downloads I mention.

I have some big announcements coming up over the next few months so make sure you are on my newsletter list by heading to classtechtips.com/signup -- when you sign up for the newsletter you'll instantly get access to my free EdTech guides with lots of tips I know you'll love!

This week's podcast is titled "[Tips for Attending Conferences from Your Couch](#)" and I'm excited to share this during the week of [ISTE's](#) annual conference. Although these tips are great for anytime of year, this topic feels especially timely during one of the biggest conferences I attend each year.

2019 marks my 7th ISTE conference, and I had to double check on that number of 7 because it is just so hard to believe so much time has flown by! But yes, this makes number seven and this year I'm especially excited since I'm one of ISTE's featured voices.

But this podcast episode isn't about how to navigate the bustling hallways of a conference or what to do if there is a line out the door to a session you were super excited about; this podcast is all about attending a conference from your couch. Now I'm using air quotes right now as I record this, because the word "attending" might seem a little forced for this topic. But essentially, I'm going to share strategies you can use to follow along with the action of a big conference at home, and tell you about online conferences and how they are gaining popularity.

First, let's jump into a few of my favorite strategies for attending a big conference (like [ISTE](#), [FETC](#), [TCEA](#), or [SXSW](#)) right from your couch!

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Social media channels like [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) make it easy to follow along with live events, even if you're not there. During the NBA Finals I could follow the hashtag and see what other people were saying about the game; the same thing is true if I'm watching an episode of Real Housewives of New York, I can follow the hashtag on Twitter and watch as other people talk about the episode in real time. This strategy is particularly useful during a conference when people are tweeting and snapping pictures from an event they are attending.

When you follow a hashtag for the event, you can see what everyone else is saying and get a behind the scenes look at a conference. For example, using the search bar on Twitter or Instagram, you can type in a hashtag like #ISTE19 and see

what everyone is sharing about the ISTE conference. The same is true of January's FETC conference, where they use the hashtag #FETC. If you're not sure what the hashtag is for the event you'd like to follow, just head over to their website. Big conferences like SXSWedu, ISTE or FETC usually showcase the event hashtag on their website.

What will you find people sharing? Usually social media posts related to a conference fall into a few different categories. The first is around big speakers from the event, like the keynote. These social shares usually include quotes or big takeaways from something they said, or links to a resource they shared. You'll also find people sharing observations from the Expo Hall of an event which could include a big announcement from a popular EdTech tool or an unexpected connection. You'll see attendees share information from smaller sessions too and sometimes they'll tweet the link to resources from a session so you can find all of the information shared by the presenter. Although following a hashtag is a great way to attend an event in real time from your couch, you can always search for the hashtag after the event is over and play catch up at a time that is most convenient for you.

MUSIC

The next tip on our list of ways to attend a conference from your couch is to look for a live stream. Now that live video is more popular (and easier to use) than ever, you will find a lot of live video updates for the event. From Twitter, to Facebook, to Instagram, all of these platforms make it easy for someone at an event to turn on their live video feed and talk into the camera to share something they learned. You might also find that some presentations are live streamed, too.

If you follow someone already on social media, you will likely either get a notification on your phone that they have started a live video feed, or see the live video posted after it is complete. If you are able to tune in live, then you can post questions in real time. Although of course everyone at the conference won't use live video to give updates, if you follow folks who are passionate about EdTech and attending the conference, stay on the lookout for any of their updates. I know that I plan on "going live" while at the conference, so you'll want to make sure to tune in on Facebook and Instagram to catch those videos.

MUSIC

In addition to watching live video feeds and searching for an event hashtag, snapped stories are another great way to follow along. [Snapchat](#), Facebook and Instagram all provide users ways to give updates in story format throughout the day. If you follow someone who is attending the event, you'll want to check in on their stories to see what updates they are providing. I use Instagram to share stories and try to include a combination of video and pictures during an event.

If you don't know many people attending an event, you can use the hashtag strategy to find people who are there and then click on their stories to follow along. You can also access the list of speakers from an event's website to see who is speaking at that event. Speaker bios often include social media links for that person so finding them on your favorite social network shouldn't be too challenging.

So far, our three strategies for attending a conference from your couch is to follow

along with the hashtag, stay on the lookout for live video streams, and check in on snapped stories, like the ones I love to share on my Instagram feed @classtechtips. Now let's talk about attending an online conference from your couch, another fantastic way to experience virtual professional learning.

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In last week's episode of the [Easy EdTech Podcast, episode 19](#), I talked about making the most of webinars. Webinars are a fantastic option for professional learning and if you've followed along with my work you know I love hosting them. In the show notes for this episode, which you can find at classtechtips.com/podcast, I'll make sure to include a link to episode 19 on how to make the most of teacher webinars.

In addition to webinars, another way to attend a conference from your couch is to sign up for an online conference. This summer I'm participating in the Teach with Tech Conference for the second year in a row. This is one example of an online conference and I'll link to registration details in the show notes for this episode, or you can just go to teachwithtechconference.com and find it there.

An online conference is a perfect way to learn and grow, straight from your couch, kitchen table, home office, or maybe even sitting by the pool this summer -- I don't have a pool, but I imagine this would be a pretty delightful option for summer learning. The Teach with Tech Conference is one example of an online conference, and it will take place over a few days this July. It will have back-to-back sessions which include videos (kind of like a webinar) and discussion with fellow attendees as well as the presenters. I love this format for virtual learning and it's definitely one

way to participate in a conference with educators who are passionate about the same topic as you!

So let's make this EdTech easy...

1. Choose a conference you want to attend virtually.
2. Find the hashtag for the event and identify a few people there to follow.
3. Search for the hashtag and stay on the lookout for any live video updates.
4. Bookmark links, take a screenshot of interesting information, and dive deeper into these ideas right from your couch!

This is episode 20 of the Easy EdTech Podcast and we're off next week for the Fourth of July holiday. This is a great chance to play catch up with earlier episodes. They are all under 20 minutes and you can find them right here -- wherever you're listening to this episode -- or on classtechtips.com/podcast

Remember, there are exciting things happening at ClassTechTips this summer! Make sure to tune in and subscribe for my free newsletter by heading to classtechtips.com/signup

I love bringing you free resources like this podcast to energize and elevate teaching and learning! Can you do me a favor? If you like the podcast, leave a review on [iTunes](#), [Spotify](#) or wherever you're listening to this... tell a friend about the podcast, or post a link to the episode on your social media. And if you'd like to stay connected follow @classtechtips on Instagram or your favorite social network. I visit schools and conferences all over the world, so if your organization is in need of professional learning -- just send a message my way!

See you next week with more easy EdTech tips!