



Case study: Using Cloudworks at Conferences

Phase-1 and 2 Evaluation report: Using Cloudworks at conferences

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Introduction

This report will review the use of Cloudworks at conferences over phases 1 and 2 of the JISC-OULDI project (Nov 2008 – July 2010). This use of the tool was not planned for but has become one of the core uses of the site. The use of the site at conferences can be seen to bring in new educational communities, and is likely to contribute significantly to the sustainability of the site. As such, this use relates to the following project critical success factors:

Critical Success Factor 1 (objectives 5, 6 and 7):

A body of evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the Cloudworks website has created real enhancement in the professional knowledge and understanding of participants and increased their sense of belonging to a community of practice.

Critical Success Factor 2 (objectives 1 and 5)

A community of sufficient size and/ or a sufficient annual programme of community engagements that ensure the site will continue to be used frequently without intervention from the project team.

Critical Success Factor 5 (objectives 6 and 7):

Two software products that are regarded fit-for-purpose, for install and use in diverse university settings and that have either been used by, or inspired use in, several of these settings.

The table in [Appendix 1](#) details the ca. 60 Conference Cloudscapes which were set up between November 2008 and the end of July 2010. Of these, most have been set up by the Cloudworks project team but increasingly they have been set up by conference delegates or conference organisers. The four conferences chosen for detailed review are:

- Ascilite, Melbourne, AUS, 30th November – 3rd December 2008
- OER Meeting, Monterey, CA, USA 3rd March 2009
- ALT-C, Manchester, UK, 8th September 2009 - 10th September 2009
- JISC Innovation Forum 2010 (JIF2010), Surrey, UK 27 July 2010 - 28 July 2010

These conferences have been chosen because they were spread through phases 1 and 2 of the development of the site, and each made use of new functionality as it was added. The Monterey and JIF2020 Cloudscapes were set up by the conference organisers, and the ALT-C and Ascilite Cloudscapes were set up by the Cloudworks team.



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Methodology

It is the aim of Cloudworks to enhance professional knowledge and understanding, and increase the sense of belonging to a professional community. It is proposed that the following methodology will be used to discover how effective Cloudworks is in achieving these aims as a tool used at conferences, and to explore what other value it may add. User questionnaires, usage data for conference Cloudscapes and a log of the types of interactions and comments posted will be used. The usage data and log of interactions will be represented visually, and a detailed evaluation of four example conferences completed. This methodology has been structured by the Community Indicators framework developed by the project team (see Galley et al, 2010 and Alevizou et al., 2010). This framework has been informed by a review of the online-communities literature and combines perspectives on CMC and facilitation/mentoring in online learning environments, and consists of four broad aspects or indicators which appear to influence the development of productive, participatory activity: participation, cohesion, identity and creative capability ([Appendix 2](#)).

User surveys

Where the Cloudscape has been set up by the Cloudworks team, a project survey has been used, and participants in the conference Cloudscape are encouraged to complete it. Currently the survey can be found at Survey Monkey

http://www.surveymonkey.net/MySurvey_EditorFull.aspx?sm=xvjxBk1AqrePHOxr5uTIJoJcW338ZfcZq%2bd3tXEI7q8%3d .

In the case of the Monterey and JIF2010 conferences, where the Cloudscapes have been set up by the conference organisers, we have either been sent data from their evaluations or have asked evaluative questions in the Cloudscape itself. All data from the surveys is anonymous.

Reflective logs

Where the Cloudworks team were involved in setting up the Conference Cloudscape, reflective logs were kept documenting this process. Where appropriate, extracts have been used from these in the evaluations. Where used, reflections have been previously available in public blogs and links to the full postings have been included.

Usage data

User activity data will be collected from the site relating to:



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- **Content:** number of Clouds in the Cloudscape, items of extra content, embeds, comments and links
- **People:** number of followers, distinct people contributing, number people marked as attending
- **Views:** number of views of the Cloudscape page, number of distinct people logged in and viewing Cloudscape Clouds, number of distinct guests (i.e. distinct IP addresses) viewing Cloudscape Clouds

We will analyse this data to discover patterns of use across time, and of specific groups within the Cloudscape. This data is publically available on the site.

Analysis of interaction

Types of interactions will be documented, with a focus on those that may indicate increases of knowledge and understanding and sense of community. Interactions will be broadly split into the following types:

- **informational** (sharing of resources, links, annotations of presentations, live blogging, etc)
- **practical** (sharing of practice or experience)
- **social** (information modes of address, personal narratives, suggestions to recommendations), that lead or relate to:
 - discursive (affirmations, welcome notes, supportive interchanges, humour and word plays, etc)
 - deliberative (instigating debates, asking probing questions etc)

It is expected that a Cloud may contain different types of interaction but that a single comment or post is likely to have a primary purpose. This data is publically available but names and personal references have been removed for this report.

Activity distribution

The problem of how to visualise the distribution of activity has been considered by Cross (2010) in his investigation of spheres of sharing in Cloudworks. His aim is to unpack and examine patterns of engagement and, in order to help support this process, he has developed a representational form that seeks to give an instant overview of which Clouds the subscriber contributed to, what they contributed, how much, the time between contributions, and, importantly, how all this fits in to the wider sequence of contributions to these Clouds by others. Where appropriate, activity distribution graphs have been used which have been adapted



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from Cross's model, and used alongside pie charts and bar charts to provide a holistic view of activity in the space.

Ascilite 2008

Conference: Ascilite, Nov 30th - Dec 3rd 2008

Location: Melbourne, AUS

Date Cloudscape created: 29th November 2008

Cloudscape: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/453>

Background

This was the first conference where Cloudworks was used. A Cloudscape was set up the evening before the conference by the Cloudworks project lead who was attending, and Clouds added organically, or as they were needed (rather than systematically) through the conference. The Cloudworks lead presented a paper at this event about development of the site. The conference organisers were not involved in the use of the site at the event. The Cloudworks lead writes in her blog on the second day of the conference:

"We have drastically revised the Cloudworks site and now have the concept of 'cloudscape's which are spaces that can be set up for specific communities or purposes. I am testing the notion out at the Ascilite 2008 conference. I have set up an Ascilite Conference Cloudscape and am adding options to it. It's really interesting because the mixture of Cloudworks as a kind of web 2.0 repository, shared discussion space, micro blog and blog is making a lot of sense to me and I am finding it provides something distinct and different to blogging or twitter. I have been live creating clouds during this morning's keynotes."

The complete posting can be found at <http://e4innovation.com/?m=200812>



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Cloudscape stats

Content:

| | | | |
|--------------------|----|----------------------------------|----|
| Number of clouds | 21 | Number of items of extra content | 0 |
| Number of comments | 44 | Number of links | 15 |
| Number of embeds | 1 | | |

People:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Number of followers | 11 |
| Number of attendees | 0 |
| Number of distinct people commenting | 11 |

Views:

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of views of cloudscape | 431 |
| Number of distinct people logged in and viewing cloudscape clouds | 94 |
| Number of distinct guests (i.e. distinct IP addresses) viewing cloudscape clouds | 1079 |

Activity patterns

The Asclilite 2008 conference has generated 478 unique views¹ between the creation of the Cloudscape and the time the data was collected (29 November 2008 - 19 August

¹ A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.



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2010). Of these views over half (268) were generated during the conference and a further third in the year following the event. There have been very few views in the year since (32)

Conference Clouds fall into the following categories:

- Informational
- Archival notes
- Project descriptions
- Discussion & debate spaces

In total there were 11 unique active participants in the Ascilite 08 conference Cloudscape; a very small proportion of the total participants in the event (total number of conference participants unknown but is likely to have been around 200). The graph below shows the distribution of activity across a total of 13 days of activity. There was a high level of supportive and social facilitation from Cloudworks project lead. The majority of discussion was between the project lead and participants, with extremely limited discussion between participants. Of the 20 Clouds set up for conference 3 were set up by participants and 17 by the Cloudworks lead. Of the 44 comments, 21 were made by participants and 23 by the Cloudworks team (primarily the project lead).

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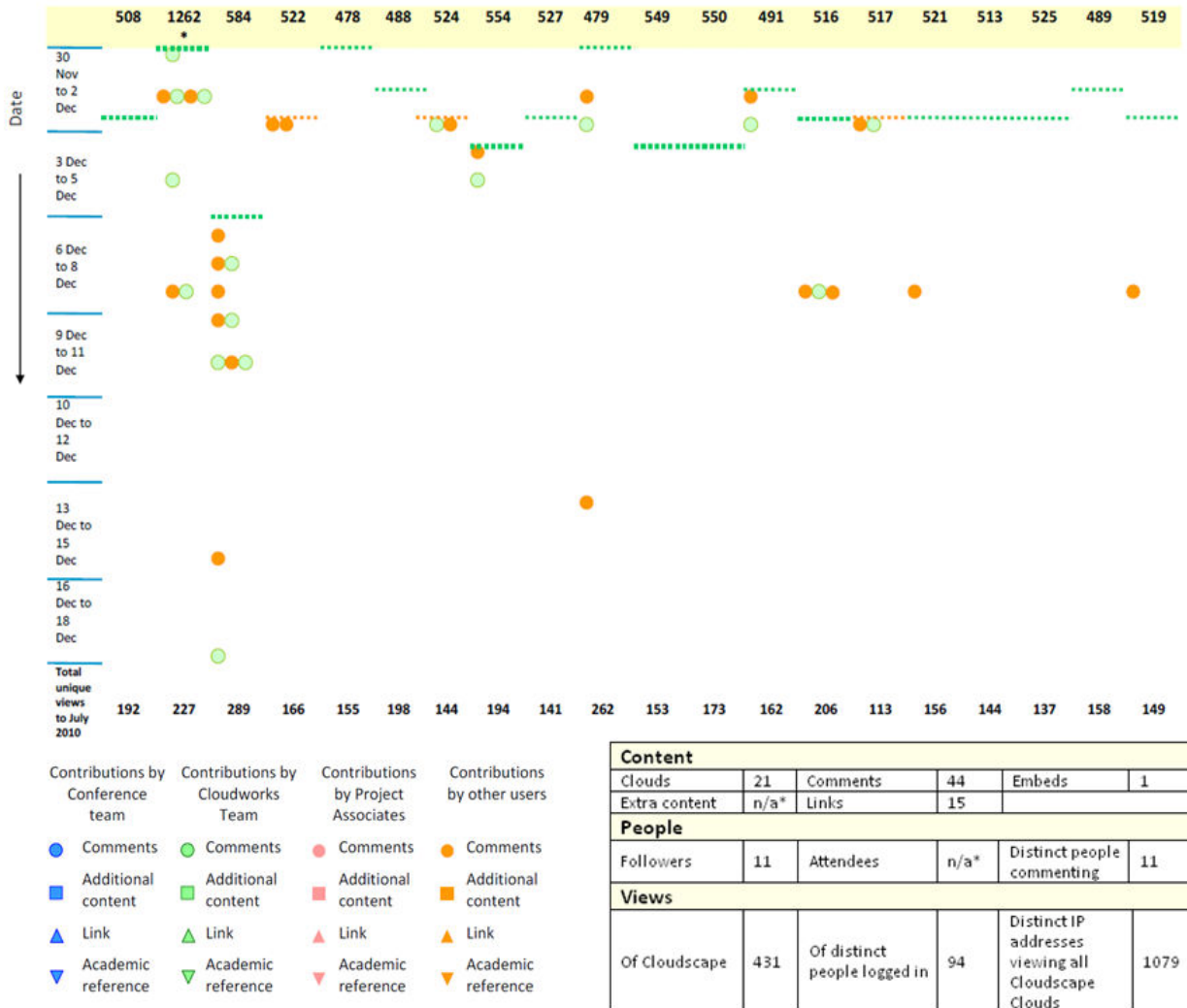


Figure 1 Activity distribution graph where the x-axis is Clouds and y-axis time

As with the Monterey OER Meeting detailed next, Cloudworks was in its Alpha version during the Ascilite event, and features such as links or external content embeds (e.g. from Slideshare, YouTube, etc) were part of the ‘comments’ space; as a result they are not easily identifiable as separate entries.

Participant feedback

Because the use of Cloudworks at this conference was spontaneous, no formal way of capturing feedback from participants was developed. However, some participants chose to offer feedback about Cloudworks on the Cloudscape, and made suggestions for development:

"Thanks for a great talk, looks like a fantastic environment!"

"A useful reflective tool, especially with the links!"

"Is the Cloudworks software available? Is it also used in other places?"



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I'm thinking about to use this as platform for my school staff to have a place to collect new ideas and suggestions ... Maybe I can add another suggestion?

It may be positive to find people with a similar profile than a oneself. A person who uses a similar combination of tags, to view persons with similar profiles. People that you follow should be excluded, because you know them already. Maybe it's also possible to make that with objects too. Here should those be excluded which are in the same cloudscape. The idea is to make automated connections between people and objects in addition to the connections users make. The results could be shown in a small box 'You may be interested in this person's ideas'".

Another participant links to a blog they wrote after the event where they reflected on the tool and offered suggestions for development. Whereas the recommendations are intended to inform general development of the site given that the feedback was given in response to use at a conference it is felt it is relevant here:

"Straight up, I can see this is a great idea, and I really hope it takes off... The website is quite easy to use and navigate, and re-uses many of the same themes of other social networking services such as flickr and twitter discussed previously. For those who currently use social networking software, it is particularly easy to get into Cloudworks.

I can see that this service is something that could be promoted to teaching staff at my own institution to try and engage teachers in conversation around learning designs, and to share and collaborate with one another.

Allowing comments on clouds is excellent. This really facilitates the social aspect of the service and allows feedback and generation of further ideas around clouds...

Conole, et. al. (2008) in their paper identified two key verbs for their service: find, and share. While I think the share aspect is pretty straight forward and flexible, the find aspect may need a little more work...while the share side of things is pretty good, there are a few things that might help improve the service.

1. First and foremost, RSS feeds. To really be called a social networking service, you must have RSS so that the data can be mashed and re-used, otherwise it is really just another repository. I can see on the 'What we are working on' page that RSS feeds for cloudscaapes, people and tags is coming. Hopefully this will get a high priority.

2. Another idea which may belong to the long-term category is the ability to integrate Cloudworks with blogging services such that you can write your own clouds on your own personal blog and have it ping Cloudworks. This way you can create your clouds using your own blogging tool, and use it to share your cloud with Cloudworks.



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On the whole, I think this has the potential to be a great resource for learning designers and I really hope that it takes off. I'll try to add some of my own creations to the service when I have a moment. I'd be interested to hear feedback from others on what I have done and how it could have been improved"

Blog posting

Cloudworks team reflective log

The Cloudworks project lead also added her reflective thoughts to her blog after the event:

"I was really surprised how useful it was using this as a mechanism for live blogging. It seemed to form a compliment to more detailed, reflective blog posts (such as the one I did on the Ascilite keynotes) and one-line tweets. Also having the ability to have others commenting on the clouds and/or adding clouds was really useful.

It was interesting to see how the [project] cloud I put in was then picked up by XX and added to the [project] framework cloudscape he has now created - very much Weinberger's 'Everything is miscellaneous' in practice!"

The complete posting can be found here <http://e4innovation.com/?p=289>

Key findings and lessons learnt

- The Cloudscape was 'owned' by the Cloudworks project lead and she facilitated it entirely. There was very limited activity except in relation to her.
- The project lead engaged in a facilitative role which was nurturing, supportive and social. This appears to be important in terms of getting people to engage in discussions.
- Cloudworks was not embedded in conference activities, but an archive was created of conference presentations (in the form of live blogs and discussion).
- Only a very small percentage of conference attendees were active on the site.
- Feedback from participants was very positive with development points around enabling better sociality between people, and better navigation and search facilities.
- It appears that Cloudworks can be a useful addition to other social networking tools at conferences, and creates a useful link between short Twitter posts and longer more reflective blog postings.



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Monterey OER 2008

Conference: OER Meeting, 3rd March 2009

Location: Monterey, CA, USA.

Date Cloudscape created: 13th February 2009

Cloudscape: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/873>

Background

This gathering of OER advocates, practitioners and funders was co-hosted by the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education (MITE) and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation March 2009 in Monterey, California. The MITE team decided to use Cloudworks to support the facilitation of the meeting following a presentation by the Cloudworks project lead, and set up the Cloudscape and associated Clouds without support from the Cloudworks team, although members of the team and members of the associated OLnet project did attend the meeting and help moderate the Cloudscape during this time and afterwards. Sessions Clouds were organised around the topics suggested for the meeting by the OER grantees.

The screenshot displays the Cloudworks interface for the 'OER Meeting, Monterey 2009' cloudscape. At the top, there are navigation buttons: 'Create a Cloud', 'Create a Cloudscape', 'All Clouds', 'All Cloudscapes', and 'Tags'. The main content area features a welcome message from Juliette Culver, a photo of a coastline, and a list of 'Clouds in this cloudscape' including topics like 'OLnet: shaping up the network', 'Social Networking and OER', and 'Interest Driven Learning Environments'. The interface is designed to facilitate discussion and sharing of resources related to the conference.

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Cloudscape stats

Content:

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----|----------------------------------|---|
| Number of clouds | 33 | Number of items of extra content | 2 |
| Number of comments | 210 | Number of links | 8 |
| Number of embeds | 0 | | |

People:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Number of followers | 75 |
| Number of attendees | 0 |
| Number of distinct people commenting | 43 |

Views:

| | |
|--|------|
| Number of views of cloudscape | 949 |
| Number of distinct people logged in and viewing cloudscape clouds | 84 |
| Number of distinct guests (i.e. distinct IP addresses) viewing cloudscape clouds | 2866 |

Activity patterns

The Monterey meeting has generated 949 unique views² between the creation of the Cloudscape and the time that the data was collected (13 March 2009 – 5 November 2010). Of these views, about a quarter were generated prior to and during the event. This suggests that this space also acts as a resource for ‘lurkers’ who come to the site from Google searches or through searches and navigational tags within Cloudworks.

Conference Clouds fall into the following categories:

- Instructional
- Informational
- Archival Notes
- Resource Aggregator
- Project descriptions –
- Discussion & debate spaces
- Interviews

² A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.

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- Evaluative/technical feedback

In total, there were 43 unique active participants in the Monterey meeting, 41% of the total participants³ to the event (total of 103). Of those, 33 were Hewlett grantees (Associated Project Communities), 5 from the OLnet team (Critical Friends), 2 from the Cloudworks team and 3 other (Other) participants.

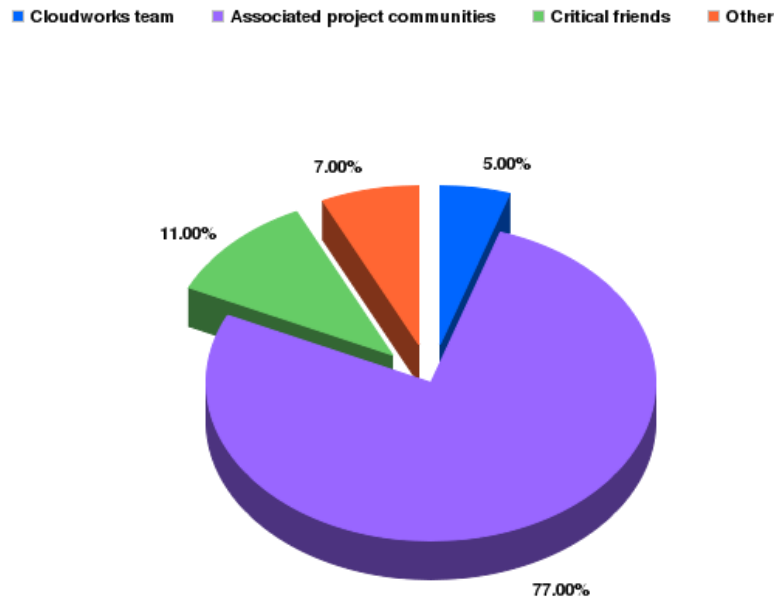


Figure 1: Participants distribution in the 'OER Meeting, Monterey 2009'

The Cloudworks lead and the two OLnet members who were physically present at the meeting acted as champions during the event, in that they guided participants through the site's interface and directed participants to core debates within the Cloudscape. What was also crucial during the event was the fact that most workshops run were designed to use the functionality of Cloudworks. It is felt that the role of champions in supporting and promoting the site during the event, and organisers structuring of activities to promote use were both very important factors in the success of this Cloudscape.

Adding comments was the most popular activity among participants. Cloudworks was in its Alpha version during the Monterey event, and features such as links or external content embeds (e.g. from Slideshare, YouTube, etc) were part of the 'comments' space; as a result they are not easily identifiable as separate entries. There was however a wealth of links to OER projects contributed. Apart from participating actively in discussions, members of the OLnet team added links to a number of video-recorded mini interviews from key participants at the event, and one sought to visualize core themes from

³ Participation is defined by activity that involves setting up Cloudscape and Clouds, commenting and adding links or extra content.

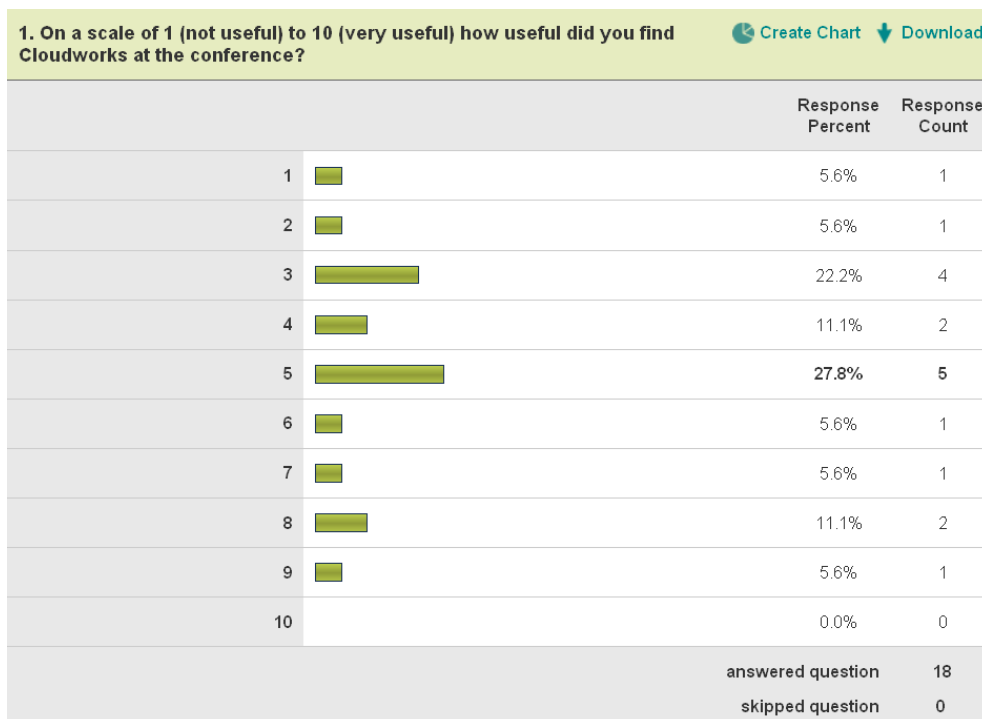
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presentations and active debates through the concept mapping tool, Compendium. Maps were deposited in the Lab Space and were added as a separate Cloud.

Interestingly, although the participation of the associated project communities *during* the event was very good, only a small percentage of the associated project communities (approximately 15%), were active either prior to or after the event. This is very different to the activity profile of most conferences we have reviewed, where participation immediately before and after tends to be good, and participation during the event very relatively light.

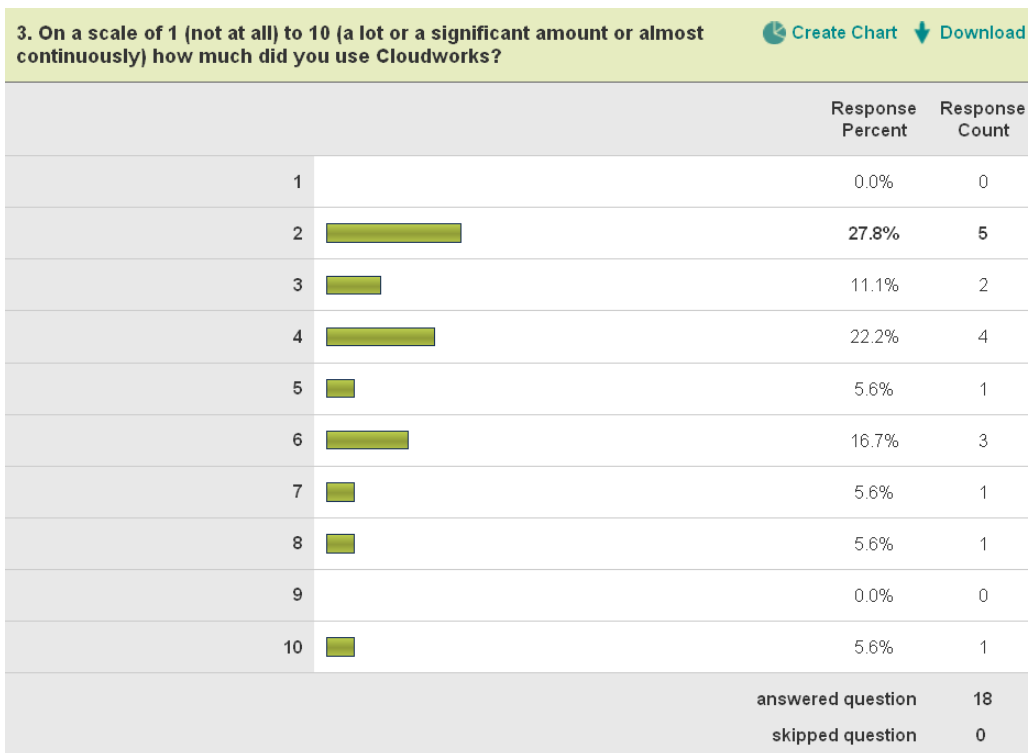
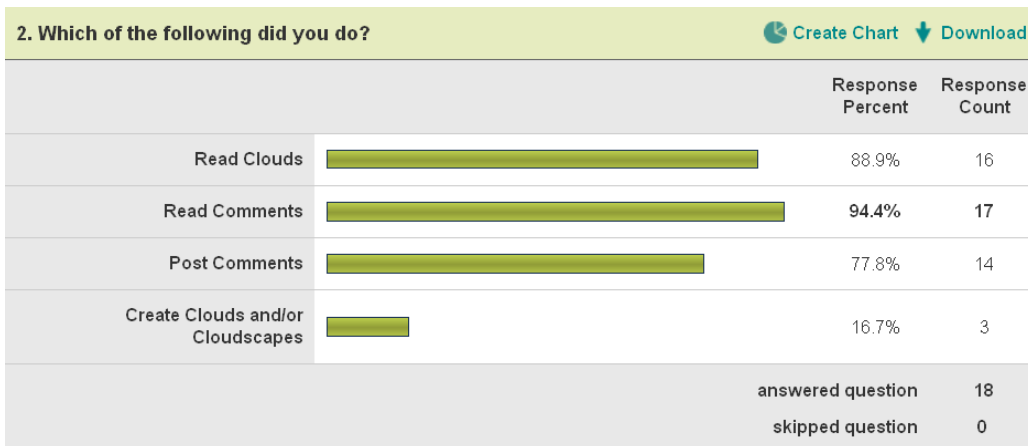
Participant feedback

An online SurveyMonkey survey was set up to elicit feedback from conference participants. 18 people responded between 3rd and 5th March 2009. Feedback was mixed with the user interface and navigation being the primary issue cited.





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“Updates and comments for sections you were not able to attend”

“The concept and idea of sharing ideas visually via virtual conceptualization of the topics discussed”.

“Creating own areas, adding clouds of others to own, following others' areas”

“Nice to have one place to have all the content from the conference, but I'm not sure if it's on the OLnet cloudscape or the conference cloudscape”

“Openness, sharing, transparency”.



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"I like the fact that information from and during the conference is posted in one place".

"The goals, the vision, the metaphor"

"Nice to see what others are thinking and to have the activity in the discussions documented".

"I liked the aggregation of twitter and blogs".

"Everything in one place is nice"

"Good idea to have a good unconference tool"

"Seemed intuitive"

"Know about other parts of the conference"

"Easy access to updated information; ability to view session feedback and follow-up thoughts immediately"

"Easy to find other people from the conference".

5. What did you dislike about Cloudworks?

[Download](#)

Response
Count

"So many clouds that areas that were updated were pushed down on the list"

"The user interface could use some major work. Navigation is horrible without a search function".

"No hierarchy or easy way to get back to where you were. Formatting text with the editor was stubborn - lines breaks, etc. - have to use html to get it right. Cannot yet edit comments or keep in draft mode. No threaded discussion. Can't post docs"

"I found navigation around the site extremely difficult. I also missed being able to comment on other peoples' comments".

"You left out a word on Question 3. of this survey. Navigation in Cloudworks is problematic, confusing, not user friendly!"

"I think the evaluation is better done a month from now when we will go back to Cloudworks".

"It's still really an alpha and needs more usability design".

"Too much interface - not clear that the value of the detailed documentation in this rough form is worth the investment of time to use the interface"

"It is hard to read the threads (recommend slight color changes between comments). It is hard to get oriented as a user and can't see relationships between clouds. These relationships could be user developed or instilled by the cloud creators".

"Clutter of clouds - no hierarchical organization apparent."



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“Hard to navigate back and forth. Wanted to comment on comments, not just have things in one long string. never tagged--wasn't obvious”.

“Needs more integration with existing social tools, or ways to leverage existing tools people are using, and aggregation of user contribution. ratings, or ways to crowd source the ideas presented, e.g. some features like User Voice has would be more useful to focus discussions over time ... better ways to filter the contribution”

“YASN= yet another social network”

“Navigation”

“A few usability issues - pretty minor though... right hand text needs to be something other than white, and re-organized so it follows the agenda”

“Disorganized. Difficult to find desired cloud. Comments could not be edited after posting and were difficult to format properly”.

6. Do you think you would use Cloudworks again in the future?

[Download](#)

Response
Count

“Yes- I liked it”

“If it were improved”

“Yes, it's fun and provokes some creativity”

“You're in alpha - I'd like to see Beta before I say”

“I doubt it unless the interface and navigation are improved”.

“Yes, absolutely”

“I'd consider it if improved”.

“I would rather not”

“Not on my own. A few tweaks will make it more valuable”

“Perhaps at a conference”

“Maybe”

“Maybe”

“At a conference”

“Yes”

“No”

7. Do you have any other comments about Cloudworks?

[Download](#)

Response
Count



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"Think it would have more use if people are given more time to explore it; also fewer topics initially or better way to group clouds based on the "tracks""

"Too confusing when speakers asked us to perform several tasks simultaneously. Need to give instructions for one task at a time".

"I tended to be more focused on the session presenters and networking between sessions".

"Really appreciate the initiative. I know how difficult it can be to do this".

"A nice try - it's difficult to develop a tool that meets the needs and expectations of a variety of users".

"Great idea. Confusing use of Cloudworks, Cloudspace, Clouds. Not clear what all distinction is in terms of functionality. Doesn't need to be like that. Having to learn complete new terminology yet again"

"No - run this survey again in 1 week"

"I used the Cloudworks site to let my wife know what I was doing in Monterey. She could monitor my activities and also know what I do".

"Would prefer an actual blog, with all participants granted access and ability to post".

Key findings and lessons learnt

- The Cloudscape was set up and owned by the conference organisers, this ensured a close alignment between event activities and the layout and functionality of the Cloudscape.
- Cloudworks was used for conference activities and in sessions as a recording and discussion tool.
- 41% of the total event attendees were active on the site.
- Participants told us that there were issues with navigation and the user interface which were off putting to participants.
- Some participants found core concepts such as Clouds and Cloudscapes confusing.
- Some participants thought it a distraction to use during the meeting.
- Cloudworks champions attended the event, promoted use and helped with moderation. They were particularly useful in making links between people and discussions, and promoting sociality.
- Adding comments was the most popular activity but participants were also creative in adding different types of media despite the site not offering the functionality to at this point. This was done by hacking into the code and required some technical expertise.



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ALT-C 2009

Conference: ALT-C, 8th September 2009 - 10th September 2009

Location: Manchester, UK

Date Cloudscape created: 24th August 2009

Cloudscape: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1870>

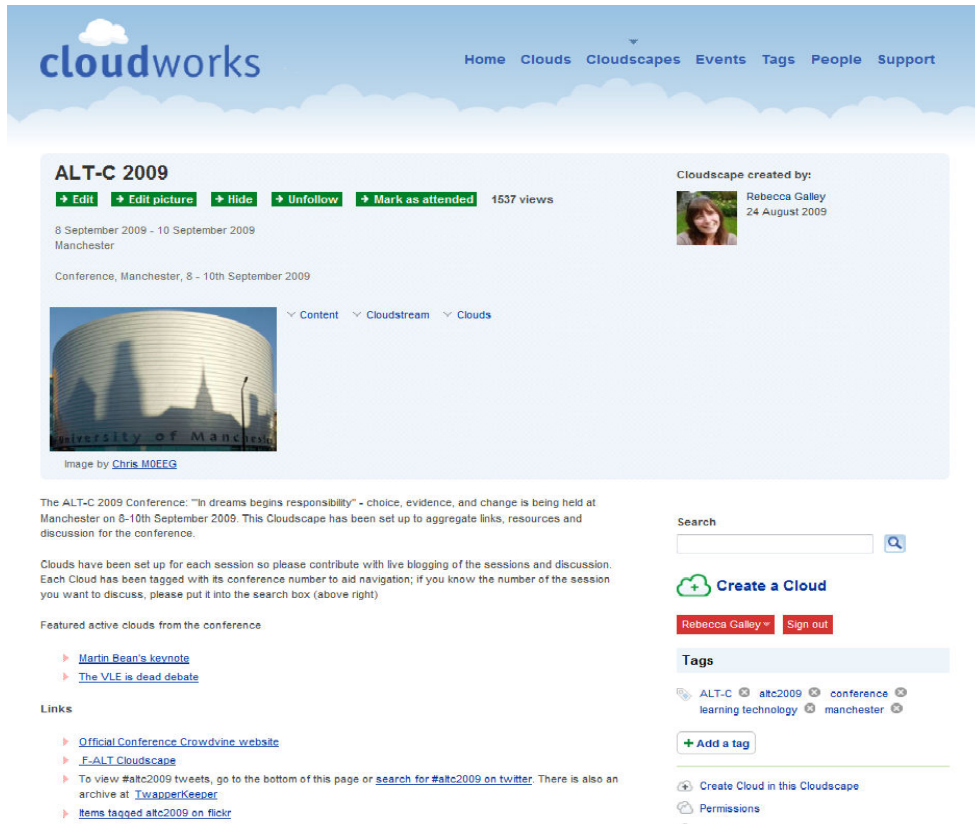
Background

By the end of August 2009, the month prior to this conference, approximately 100 new users were registering each month and there were a total of 1027 registered users. The Cloudworks team believed that reaching 'critical mass' would be key to sustainability of the site and had noticed that conferences were becoming important in offering opportunities to both showcase the functionality of the site, and recruit new users. The ALT-C conference is a large annual conference which attracts educators interested in technology from both the FE and HE sectors and it was decided that the team would be proactive in promoting use of the site for and at this conference.

Previous conference use had suggested that Cloudworks appeared to work well alongside other social media tools, and the team were keen to explore how the site worked alongside the social networking site chosen by the organisers. The tool chosen by conference organisers appeared to offer strong functionality for the social side of conference facilitation - in that it acted as a conference notice board - but did not appear to support collaborative professional discussion and debate well. It was hoped that we would see evidence that the two sites would complement each other. The conference organisers were not involved in anyway in the development of this Cloudscape, and although they did not object to us setting up the space, stressed the importance of avoiding a confusing divergence between the official conference social network and Cloudworks. We worked to maintain good links between conference organisers and the Cloudworks team, especially through the Cloudworks developer.

Clouds were set up for each of the 200+ sessions and a number of volunteer 'live-bloggers' were recruited to seed the area with content. University staff attending the conference were sent an email inviting them to use the site, and an open invitation to all conference attendees was 'Tweeted'. The site was publicised at the conference through flyers and a blog post was written on the site summarising how to use Cloudworks at the conference: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/blog/view/1477>

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The screenshot shows a Cloudworks Cloudscape page titled "ALT-C 2009". At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, Clouds, Cloudscapes, Events, Tags, People, and Support. Below the navigation bar, the page header includes the Cloudworks logo and the title "ALT-C 2009". There are several action buttons: Edit, Edit picture, Hide, Unfollow, and Mark as attended, along with a view count of 1537 views. The page content includes a date range (8 September 2009 - 10 September 2009), a location (Manchester), and a description of the conference. A featured image shows a large, curved, metallic structure, likely a part of the conference venue. Below the image, there is a search bar, a "Create a Cloud" button, and a list of tags including "ALT-C", "altc2009", "conference", "learning technology", and "manchester". There is also a "Sign out" button for the user "Rebecca Galley".

Cloudscape stats

Content:

Number of clouds 213 Number of items of extra content 52

Number of comments 89 Number of links 395

Number of embeds 6

People:

Number of followers 32

Number of attendees 2

Number of distinct people commenting 27

Views:

Number of views of cloudscape 1537

Number of distinct people logged in and viewing cloudscape clouds 431

Number of distinct guests (i.e. distinct IP addresses) viewing cloudscape clouds 6414

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Activity patterns

The ALT-C 2009 conference Cloudscape has generated 2600 total page views , 1537 unique views⁴ between the creation of the Cloudscape and the time the data was collected (24 August 2009 - 8 November 2010). This ‘front page’ was viewed from 51 different countries with the majority of views coming from the UK (74% of unique views).

The pie charts below show the numbers of registered and unregistered visitors visiting ALT-C Clouds before, during and after the event. It can be seen that although 491 individuals visited Clouds during the event, nearly twice as many visited in the two weeks after the event and continue to visit conference Clouds more than a year later. This suggests that Clouds archived in this Cloudscape continue to be valued as a resource over time.

- Before conference (24th August - 7th Sept 2009)
- During conference (8th - 10th Sept 2009)
- Two weeks following conference (11th - 25th Sept 2009)
- from two weeks to present (26th Sept 2009 - 8th Nov 2010)

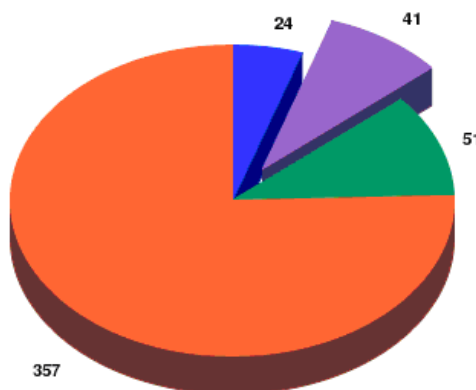


Figure 2 Numbers of registered and logged in users visiting ALT-C 2009 Clouds before, during and after the event

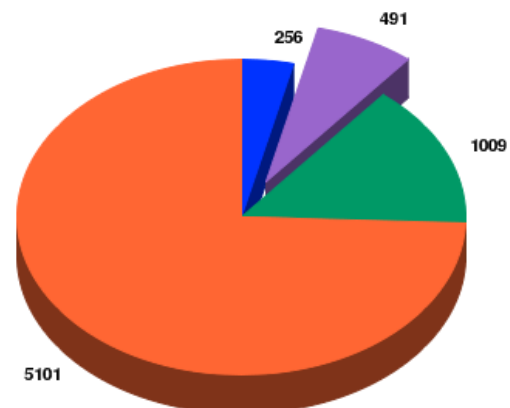


Figure 3 Numbers of distinct visitors visiting ALT-C 2009 Clouds (including unregistered users) before, during and after the event

Despite the large number of visits over time, the amount of participatory activity remained disappointingly low. With only 27 individuals participating across 213 Clouds, including 3 members of the Cloudworks team and 2 project associates. A great many Clouds remain simply ‘place-holders’ and contain only short abstracts. Where there were exceptions to this, Clouds were largely used to aggregate activity and discussion going on elsewhere. See for example ‘**The VLE is Dead**’ Cloud (<http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloud/view/2162>) which alone had 1981 unique views, 9 active

⁴ A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.



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participants, 50 links, 13 comments, 8 items of extra or embedded content and 2 academic references.

Where there is activity, conference Clouds fall into the following categories:

- Informational
- Resource aggregator
- Archival notes
- Project descriptions
- Discussion & debate spaces

Participant feedback and reflections

There was some unsolicited positive feedback during or within two weeks of the conference on Twitter and in public blogs:

“For those of us not at #altc2009, check out the Cloudworks - a great resource Cloudworks - ALT-C 2009” Tweet

“Cloudworks, which I was initially hesitant about, has proved itself as a great online place for links, comments and resources”. Blog posting

“I’ve followed the development of Cloudworks for a while now with some scepticism. However, its use around the VLE-PLE debate and this blogging-Twitter discussion has really changed my views. I now get it, see a purpose and think it could have a really important role to play as an aggregator, a record and focal point for our discussions”. Blog posting

and after the event but relating to the conference:

“Cloudworks is really starting to grow on me as a collective tool. The resources on the ‘VLE is Dead’ debate for example have made it much easier to direct people to the superb collection of blog articles on the subject.” Blog posting

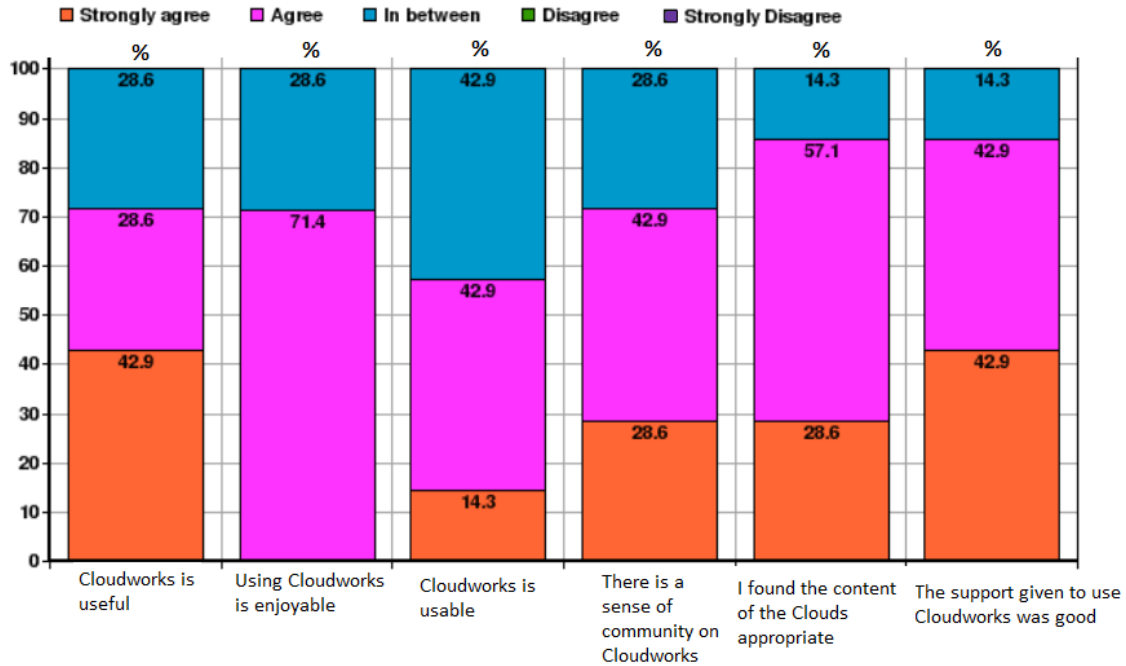
In addition, the project survey used at Monterey was developed to include questions with a focus on usability, usefulness and enjoyment, factors that were beginning to emerge as key to the success and sustainability of the site, and which subsequently have become part of the project's Community Indicators framework (Galley et al. 2010). The survey was made available online as before through SurveyMonkey.

7 responses were received between 10th and 21st of September 2009. All respondents had registered with Cloudworks several months before the conference (none of the respondents were new to the site) and said that prior to the conference they had viewed Cloudworks either occasionally (57.1%) or often (42.9%). Feedback from this group was

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very positive; most (71.4%) thought that Cloudworks had supported the conference well and the rest (28.6%) thought the conference had been supported very well.

The chart below shows the level of agreement with statements relating to usability, usefulness, content and enjoyment during the conference:



Team reflections

The Cloudworks project lead and the Cloudworks developer both wrote detailed reflective log entries relating to the event. The following are excerpts from these:

“Using the site at the conference illuminated quite a few things for me. Firstly, it made me realise that the main value of the site at the conference was twofold. Firstly for crowdsourcing an archive of what was presented and discussed so that people can find information six months or a year hence. I think the tags are going to be really important here.

Secondly, quite a few people who weren't at the conference commented on how useful Cloudworks was in helping them follow the conference. Being at the conference myself made me realise how little time there is at the conference to actual engage in real, deep discussion in real life let alone virtually, and that I don't think we can expect that to happen. I'd like to look more into holding wholly virtual events though...

ALT-C was also interesting because of the co-presence of [official conference social network]. I think this is going to become more and more common at conferences and it's an interesting question how our site sits with that. I think here I see the role of



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[official conference social network] and Twitter as one to support the short quick communication that people want to do at the event itself (and in the case of [official conference social network] give timetabling information) whereas Cloudworks is more about persistence and enabling people to search e.g. for all presentations on a topic across all conferences, not just one conference”.

Cloudworks developer

The complete blog posting can be found here:

<http://cloudworks.ac.uk/blog/view/1485>

“We set up a cloudscape for the conference and put stub-Clouds for each of the sessions. The intention was that the Cloudscape would complement the ALT [official conference social network] site and act as a means of aggregating resources and debates around sessions. Whereas the [official conference social network] site provided a useful flow of discussion, means of connecting with others at the conference and centred around the programme at the conference, we felt the Cloudscape focussed specifically on the actual sessions. A number of folk live blogged sessions they went to ...I didn't attend the conference but participated remotely. Ironically I felt that I almost learnt more about the conference by following what was happening in the Cloudscape than I would have done if I had attended. But perhaps that says more about me gossiping and networking too much at conferences, than about the usefulness of the site per se.

I think there are mixed views as to how well [official conference social network] and the Cloudscape worked together and we need to reflect on these. One key concern, not surprisingly, was whether the cloudscape detracted from/diluted the activities on [official conference social network]. However, certainly a number of people watching in remotely said that they found the Cloudscape useful as a simple way of keeping in touch with what was happening at the conference. There were a number of trigger clouds around which there was significant activity – the two most active were [The VLE is Dead debate](#) and [Martin Bean's Keynote](#). I think the adding links and academic reference functionality on clouds worked well. Similarly adding additional content to clouds and additional comments also seemed to work well, although we are aware that the current two-column format for this isn't quite right. I found that I wanted to be able to interact with people



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more – to be able to post something on their profile, so this is something we are going to look into.

We have activity streams for individuals and cloudsapes as well as the whole site. I found I was using this a lot as a means of keeping abreast of new things happening on the site, but I wonder to what extent other people are using these features or indeed whether they are even aware they are there? Likewise to what extent are people using the RSS feed feature?"

Cloudworks project lead

The complete blog posting can be found here: <http://e4innovation.com/?p=336>

Key findings and lessons learnt

- New functionality added prior the conference worked well (tagging, academic references, adding links, separation of discussion and extra content). The links/references and content/discussion divides worked well.
- Although the auto-creation of 'place-holder' Clouds for each session has created a useful archive of the event, and made it easier for us to add live blog posts, doing this seemed to limit the participation of others (see this conference for example in comparison with Monterey Meeting 2009 where participants developed the Cloudscape and levels of participation were high) and impacted on the navigatability of the space.
- It was hoped that conference participants would take over ownership for their session Clouds however this did not happen. It would be useful to develop strategies (including functionality) to encourage people to do this – for example a way of saying 'this is my presentation/ poster'.
- One of the impacts of creating all the Clouds was that the Cloudscape started off big, rather than evolving organically as would usually be the case. This impacted of the ability of champions to mediate and encourage participation.
- At this conference, Cloudworks seemed to work well in terms of crowdsourcing and archiving, but not sociality. This made the site more useful more for people not at the conference and as an archive for future This is not unexpected given that the site has been developed to be object- rather than ego-focused but this may impact on the site's take-up as a conference tool. We need to reflect on whether we want to introduce additional functionality for social interaction (i.e. direct messaging, person tagging etc) and consider the impact this might have on other uses of the site and the overarching vision.



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- Cloudworks did not seem to detract from the official social network however the two sites did not work together as hoped. It is the aim to add value to existing social networks by facilitating connections, links and relationships, to do this more effectively better integration between Cloudworks and other platforms would need to be developed. Although we need to remain mindful of the risk of dispersing activity rather than enriching it, there is no evidence of this happening.
- It may be appropriate to focus on virtual/ blended events in Cloudworks - if we could make it a good place to hold virtual events, and a good support for real conferences, then we would be doing something fairly distinctive



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JISC Innovation Forum 2010 (JIF2010)

Conference: JISC Innovation Forum 2010 (JIF2010) 27 July 2010 - 28 July 2010

Location: Royal Holloway (University of London), Egham, Surrey

Date Cloudscape created: 20 April 2010

Cloudscape: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2073>

Background

The purpose of the JISC Innovation Forum 2010 (JIF2010) was to bring together over 200 JISC funded projects for a networking, sharing and learning event. The focus of the event was on providing a forum for projects and programmes to meet, engage, share ideas and form useful relationships. The event was based around 5 main themes within which there were a number of sessions.

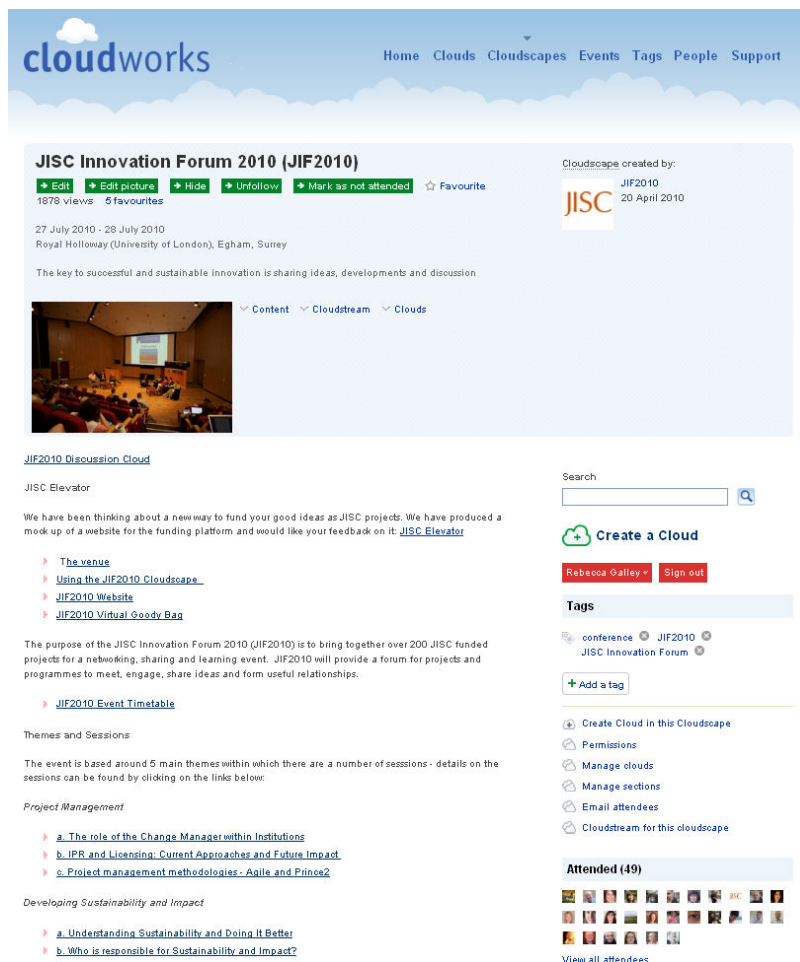
The suggestion for using Cloudworks originally came from a JISC programme manager involved in the organisation of the event, and he approached the Cloudworks project lead. The choice of social networking tool was between Cloudworks and Ning and in the end Cloudworks was chosen (although it is not known what the deciding factors were, aspects of functionality of both tools were reviewed). The conference team also set up:

- A conference web page linked to Cloudworks (<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/events/2010/07/jif10.aspx>),
- Eventsforce for registration linked to Cloudworks ([https://www.eventsforce.net/conferencecare/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=98282&eventID=319&CSPCHD=0000001q00003p04dFur000000tsvLySsYLZ\\$dv\\$q\\$Lu\\$bQ](https://www.eventsforce.net/conferencecare/frontend/reg/thome.csp?pageID=98282&eventID=319&CSPCHD=0000001q00003p04dFur000000tsvLySsYLZdvqLubQ))
- A separate blog page which did not link to or refer to Cloudworks. (<http://events.jiscinvolve.org/wp/jif10/>)

The Cloudscape and associated Clouds were set up by a member of the conference team and the Cloudworks project officer gave support with the editing of pages and the layout of the site. The Cloudscape was structured around 5 main themes within which there were a number of sessions (Clouds).

The conference was attended in person by both the Cloudworks project officer and lead developer, and virtually by the Cloudworks project lead. The project officer and project lead both did much of the facilitation during the event; JISC also employed two professional bloggers to add live blog posts to the Cloudscape.

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The screenshot shows the Cloudworks interface for a Cloudscape titled "JISC Innovation Forum 2010 (JIF2010)". It includes navigation links (Home, Clouds, Cloudscapes, Events, Tags, People, Support), event metadata (1878 views, 5 favourites), and a list of links for attendees such as "The venue", "Using the JIF2010 Cloudscape", and "JIF2010 Website".

Cloudscape stats

Content:

Number of clouds 32 Number of items of extra content 25 Number of embeds 8

Number of comments 38 Number of links 27

People:

Number of followers 38 Number of distinct people commenting 20

Number of attendees 49

Views:

Number of views of cloudscape 1878

Number of distinct people logged in and viewing cloudscape clouds 109

Number of distinct guests (i.e. distinct IP addresses) viewing cloudscape clouds 2552

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Activity patterns

The JIF2010 Cloudscape page has generated 1878 unique views⁵ between the creation of the Cloudscape and the time that the data was collected and in total there have been 2552 distinct guests visiting Clouds in the Cloudscape (20 April 2010 – 10 November 2010). 49 people marked themselves as attending the conference and 38 ‘followed’.

■ Before the event (20 April - 26th July 2010) ■ During the event (27th - 28th July 2010)
■ Two weeks following the event (29th July - 12th Aug 2010)
■ From 2 weeks to present (13th August - 10th Nov 2010)

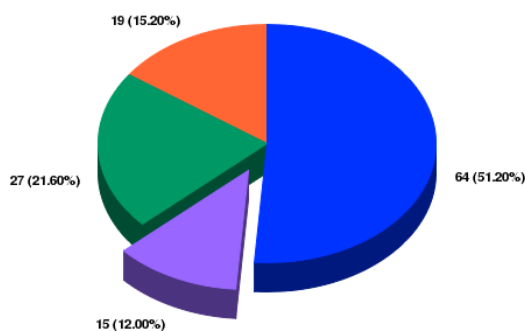


Figure 4 Numbers of registered and logged in users visiting JIF2010 Clouds before, during and after the event

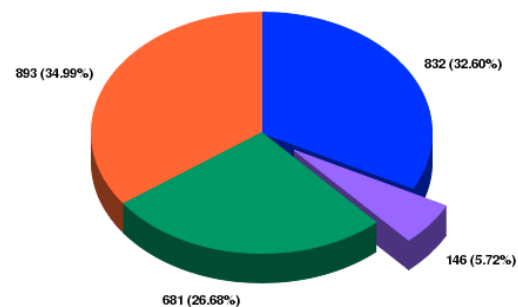


Figure 5 Numbers of distinct visitors visiting JIF2010 Clouds (including unregistered users) before, during and after the event

As can be seen, use during the event itself was limited with only 27 logged in individuals viewing the JIF2010 Clouds during the event and 146 visitors in total during that time. The most intense periods of viewing were a couple of days before the event, and in the two weeks after.





Conference Clouds fall into the following categories:

- Social
- Instructional
- Informational
- Archival Notes
- Resource Aggregator
- Project descriptions
- Discussion & debate spaces

⁵ A unique page view represents the number of sessions during which that page was viewed one or more times.

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250 people attended the conference, 160 of these worked on JISC funded projects and the remaining 90 were made up of JISC staff, JISC Services staff, speakers and VIPs. In total, there were 20 unique active participants in the JIF2010 Cloudscape, approximately 8% of the total participants⁶ to the event (total of 250). The first chart below shows the make-up of the group of active participants on the Cloudscape, and the second shows the levels of participation of the sub-groups. The subgroups are categorised as follows:

-  **Cloudworks team** (Cloudworks developer, project lead and project officer)
-  **Conference team** (Conference organiser, professional bloggers)
-  **Conference associates** (JISC staff, JISC Services staff, speakers and VIPs)
-  **Other** (JISC project teams and external contributors)

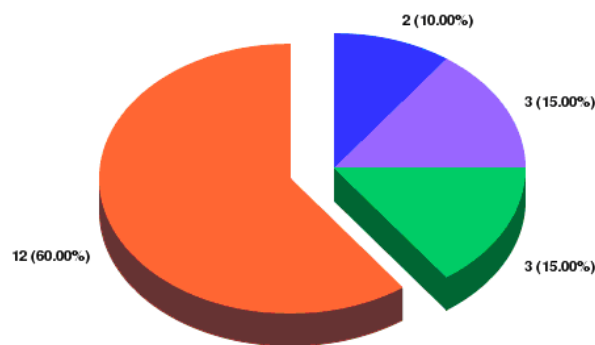


Figure 3: Participants distribution in the 'JIF2010' Cloudscape

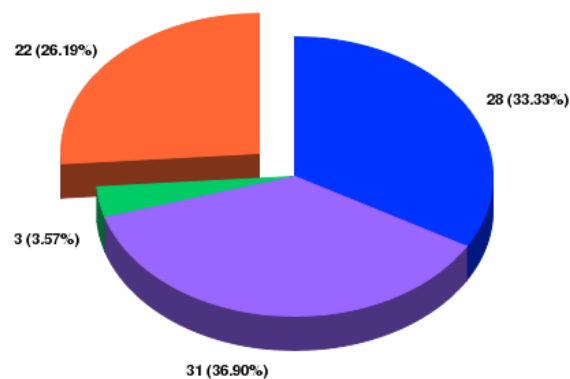


Figure 4: Distribution of activity between groups in the 'JIF2010' Cloudscape

As can be seen:

⁶ Participation is defined by activity that involves setting up Cloudscape and Clouds, commenting and adding links or extra content.

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- The 'Cloudworks team' form 10% of the active population and contribute to 33.33% of the activity (difference of + 23.33).
- The 'Conference team' form 15% of the active population and contribute to 36.9% of the activity (difference of + 21.9)
- The 'Conference associates' form 15% of the active population and contribute to 3.57% of the activity (difference of – 11.43)
- The 'Others' form 60% of the active population and contribute to 26.19% of the activity (difference of - 33.81)

There was a good range of types of activity in the Cloudscape with 20 live blog posts added and a mixture of rich media embedded. The discussion tended to be social rather than informational in nature (i.e. introductions and welcomes) but there were also some examples of engaged professional discussion.

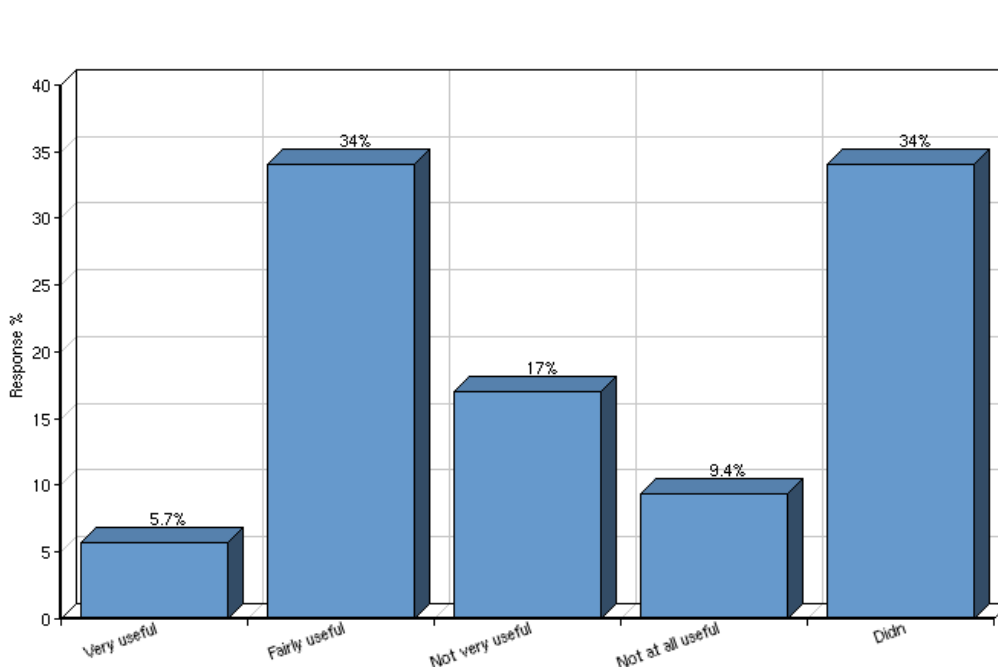
Participant feedback

The conference organisers completed the evaluation of the conference and sent us the results relating to Cloudworks. A key indicator of success used by the conference organisers was the use and usefulness of the 'Discussion Cloud' which participants used to introduce themselves before the conference, rather than the session Clouds which contained session related discussion. This suggests that conference evaluators may be separating social discussion and professional discussion and debate, and focusing on the social, networking aspects which in itself is quite interesting:

1. How useful was the JIF2010 Cloudscape?

| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|---------------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Very Useful | 5.7% | 6 |
| Fairly useful | 34.0% | 36 |
| Not very useful | 17.0% | 18 |
| Not at all useful | 9.4% | 10 |
| Didn't use | 34.0% | 36 |
| <i>answered question</i> | | 106 |
| <i>skipped question</i> | | 3 |

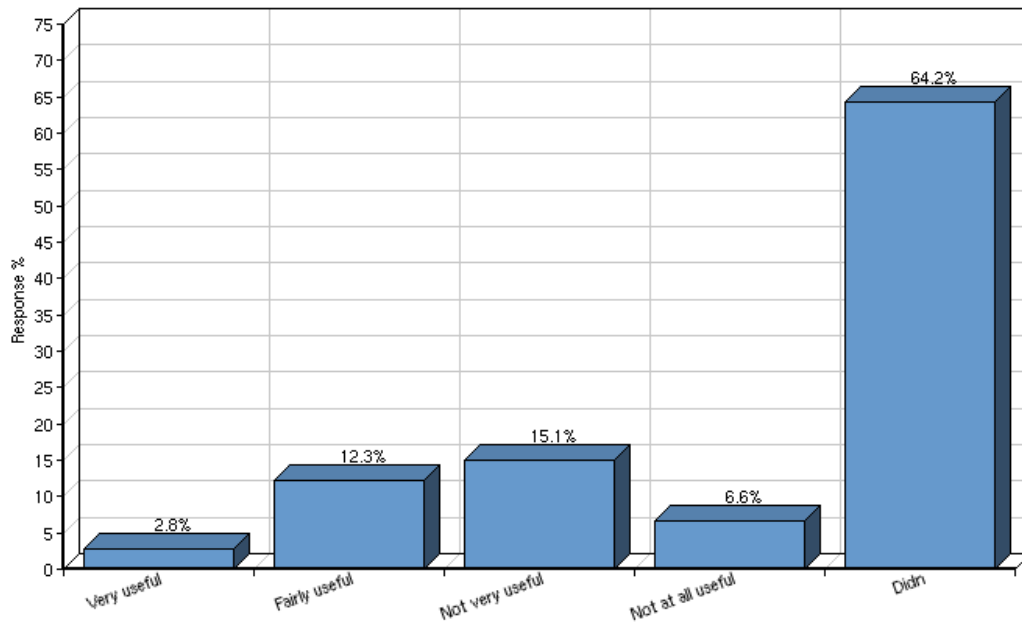
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2. How useful was the JIF2010 Discussion Cloud?

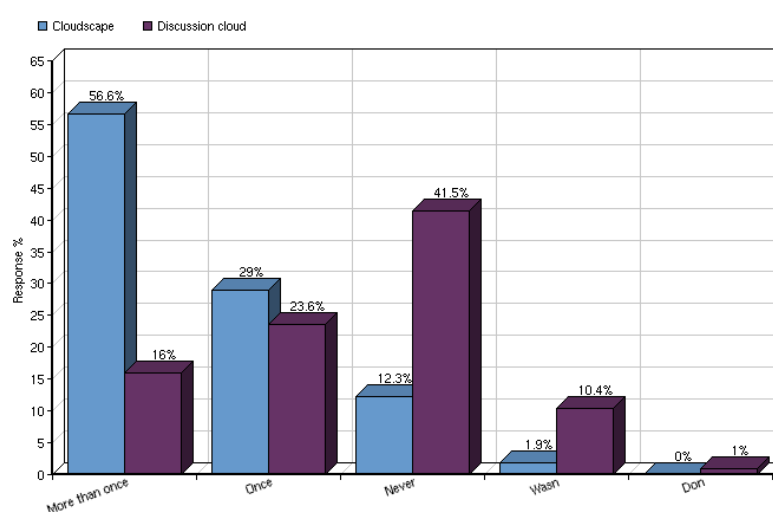
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Very Useful | 2.8% | 3 |
| Fairly useful | 12.3% | 13 |
| Not very useful | 15.1% | 16 |
| Not at all useful | 6.6% | 7 |
| Didn't use | 64.2% | 68 |
| answered question | | 106 |
| skipped question | | 3 |

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3. Did you use or visit any of the following BEFORE the event?

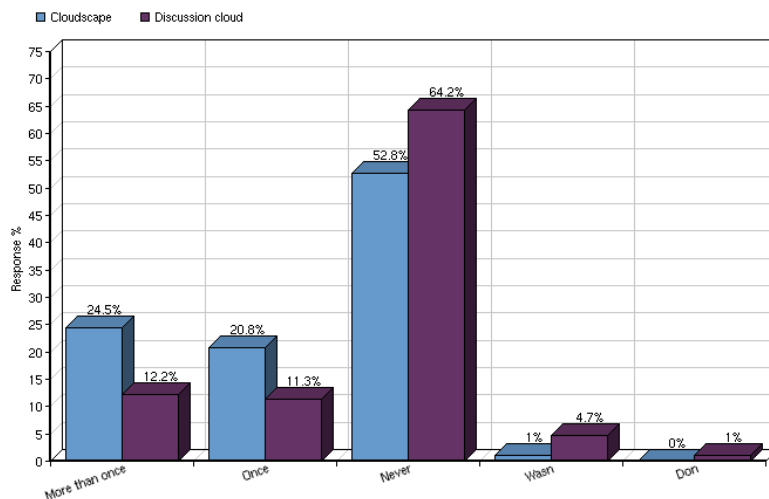
| Answer Options | JIF2010 Cloudscape | JIF2010 Discussion cloud | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| More than once | 56.6%(60) | 16% (17) | 60 |
| Once | 29% (31) | 23.6% (25) | 47 |
| Never | 12.3% (13) | 41.5% (44) | 44 |
| Wasnt aware of it | 1.9% (2) | 10.4% (11) | 11 |
| Don't know | 0 | 1% (1) | 1 |
| answered question | | | 106 |
| skipped question | | | 3 |



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4. Did you use or visit any of the following DURING the event?

| Answer Options | JIF2010 Cloudscape | JIF2010 Discussion cloud | Response Count |
|--------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| More than once | 24.5% (26) | 12.2% (13) | 29 |
| Once | 20.8% (22) | 11.3% (12) | 26 |
| Never | 52.8% (56) | 64.2% (68) | 75 |
| Wasnt aware of it | 1% (1) | 4.7% (5) | 5 |
| Don't know | 0 | 1% (1) | 1 |
| answered question | | | 106 |
| skipped question | | | 3 |



4b. When asked what social networking tools they used at the conference delegates answered:

“person-to-person and twitter most useful”

“face-to-face”

“Twitter hashtag #JIF10”

“Talking to people face to face”

“Twitter”

“Sustainability newsletter”

“twitter helpful”

“twitter”

“Twitter Jif10”

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"Twitter"

"Twitter"

"twitter stream as gave an idea of other sessions"

"Twitter"

"Face to face networking"

"face-to-face conversations at the event"

"I used Twitter. Valuable, as ever. "

"Lots of facetime - don't come to conferences to stick my nose into a web site! "

"twitter"

"I had issues with the cloudscape and access, which left me feeling excluded, I tried to resolve this by emailing admin, but the timescales/holidays transpired against this, therefore although I wanted to investigate before/during the event I could not. "

"twitter.com #jif10"

"Twitter stream #JIF10"

"Twitter! "

"prefer direct people contact but know e-contact is essential"

"Twitter back channel was useful for discussion during the event"

"twitter feed"

"Twitter"

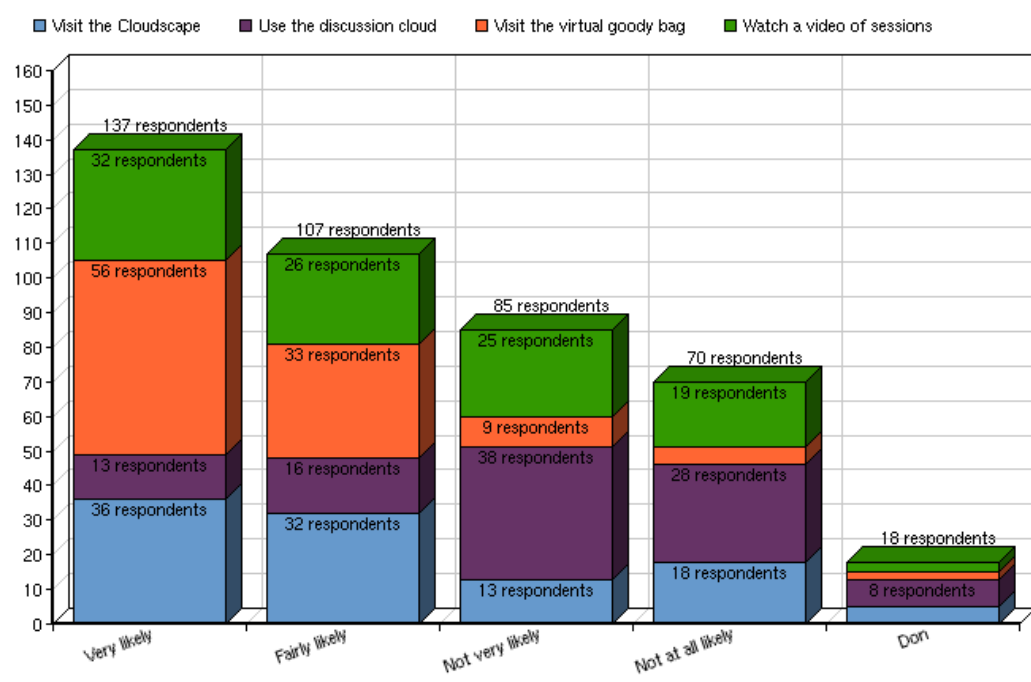
"I didn't have time to really get involved in these things"

5. How likely are you to do any of the following AFTER the event?

| Answer Options | Visit the JIF2010 Cloudscape | Visit the virtual goody bag? | Watch a video of a sessions | Use the JIF2010 discussion cloud | Response Count |
|-----------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Very likely | 36 | 56 | 32 | 13 | 63 |
| Fairly likely | 32 | 33 | 26 | 16 | 69 |
| Not very likely | 13 | 9 | 25 | 38 | 57 |
| Not at all | 18 | 5 | 19 | 28 | 38 |

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| | | | | | | |
|------------|--------------------------|---|---|---|----|------------|
| likely | | | | | | |
| Don't know | 5 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 12 | |
| | answered question | | | | | 106 |
| | skipped question | | | | | 3 |



The conference organiser summarised their thoughts about how effective the use of Cloudworks had been at the conference:

“The cloudscape received a mixed response and we discussed this at our post event wrap-up meeting. We felt that as a pre-event information tool it was very useful and it was a great place for bloggers to add their posts during the event, however it didn't work so well as a networking and discussion tool. This may be because it is a relatively new tool and so not embedded into people’s workflow in the same way as other tools such as Twitter, perhaps given time and sufficient usage and promotion, Cloudworks could become embedded.

It was also felt that it would be useful for the cloudscape to have more tabs so that information can be separated, rather than being one long flow. We were sent a link to another tool was given by one of the delegates <http://transfersummit.com> which uses tabs at the top of the page to separate the information, perhaps something like that might be good to make navigation of the information a little clearer”



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Key findings and lessons learnt

- The Cloudscape was set up and owned by the conference organisers, the space was very well publicised and the layout/ structure of the area was closely aligned with the structure and foci of the event.
- The site was not at all active during the conference (except as a place to post live blogs). Delegates preferred to network face-to-face and use Twitter to keep up with what was happening. However before and after the conference the Cloudscape and associated Clouds were very well visited. Better integration of other tools such as a more interactive Twitter widget may promote use at conferences but actually the site's value seems to lie before and after the event.
- Post-conference feedback from conference organisers suggests that they had hoped for a tool that particularly facilitated sociality and person to person networking, rather than discussion around themes or sessions. Currently Cloudworks is firmly object-focused and we will need to consider how far we want to add functionality that supports person- centred activity, and the impact that may have on the primary aims of the site (i.e. as a place to discuss and share learning and teaching, and share design).
- There still appear to be some issues with navigation of information on the site; (this feedback came from conference organisers rather than participants). The Cloudworks project officer supported the conference organisers with the editing and layout of Clouds and Cloudscapes. Clearer guidance still required to support conference organisers.
- 8% of the total event attendees were active on the site
- 60% of active participants were not associated with the Cloudworks project or with the organisation of the conference but were delegates. However, most of these people only posted once.
- Adding comments was the most popular activity with 38 comments made, although there were almost as many items of extra content (mostly live blogs – 25) and links (27).



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Summary review

Three broad themes have emerged from the conference evaluations relating to:

- Ownership, appropriation and moderation
- Patterns of use (across time, with other tools, patterns of interaction)
- Usability and functionality (range of functions, navigation, support and guidance)

Ownership, appropriation and moderation

Most often conference Cloudscapes will be set up by delegates as an informal ‘backchannel’ to that conference, rather than by conference organisers. These Cloudscapes tend to grow organically as people add Clouds and related materials as they need to, and will consist, primarily, of informational postings and archival content - for example live blogs and links to papers. Occasionally, ‘flash debates’ will emerge where delegates collect around a short but intense discussion, usually sparked by some controversial statement. These discussions can be seen to move back and forth across and between a variety of platforms, for example Twitter, blogs, Facebook and Cloudworks. As backchannels, Cloudscapes tend to be less formal in structure and language than Cloudscapes set up by conference organisers. There tend to be fewer visitors to conference Cloudscapes set up in this way but the difference between numbers of non-participatory and participatory visitors tends to be smaller as people are more likely to go there because they want to get involved.

We can see in the case of the Monterey conference that where the conference organisers set up the Cloudscape, and fully integrate use of the site, and the site’s functionality into conference proceedings, the site can be very well used (41% of conference participants used the site in the Monterey example) and discussions in the space are more likely to be scholarly and reflective. In the Monterey example, conference delegates received clear messages about what the space was for and how they might use it. However, more often, even when conference organisers decide to use Cloudworks independently, they will prefer the Cloudworks team to take the lead on deciding the structure and style of the space. Perhaps partly as a consequence of this, conference teams often do not sufficiently embed use of the tool in conference organisation, for example by positively promoting use of the site in publicity materials, using it for pre-conference activities, and in the collation of papers, conference photographs and videos of presentations. There are likely to be a number of reasons for not fully integrating the tool as the Monterey team did, including fear that the tool will be difficult to use or will fail, or because deadlines are left too tight for exploration and creativity, some will struggle to get used to different, and in many ways unique, functionality. Where the tool is not fully integrated, or when a



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conference team decides to use multiple tools ('just in case' or because there is only partial buy-in for the tool), delegates can become confused about the purpose of the space and when they might use it.

In the examples of JIF2010 and ALT-C 2009, placeholder Clouds were set up for each of the sessions in advance of the conference. It was anticipated by the Cloudworks team that speakers, facilitators and delegates would begin to engage with session issues early however this only occasionally happened (examples include 'The VLE is Dead' ATL-C 2009 session, and the JIF2010 Discussion Cloud where delegates introduced themselves). There are clearly benefits to setting up conference Cloudscapes in this way (to establish a more logical structure to the space, introduce a level of branding, and make it easier for live bloggers to add material for example). However, setting up placeholder Clouds also prevents the Cloudscape growing organically as it usually would, this can result in the space being more difficult to navigate intuitively, and having a lot of 'dead ends' (i.e. Clouds with no content or activity) which can be de-motivating to users.

The structure of the space, and the style of facilitation and moderation can be seen to have an impact on the types of discussions that happen there. a high proportion of social interchanges are important in promoting professional and academic discussion; discursive exchanges (affirmations, welcome notes, supportive interchanges, humour and word play, etc) and deliberative activity (such as instigating debates, asking probing questions etc) can be seen to encourage participation and deeper levels of engagement (see also Alevizou et al. 2010). Where champions of the site attended events in person, whether from the Cloudworks team or elsewhere, engagement in the conference Cloudscape was significantly improved. Champions, or ambassadors, seem to play an important role in persuading others to contribute to discussions both face to face and in their facilitation of Clouds. They are also key to pulling together themes and making links between discussions across a number of social platforms and between people. And can also offer technical support although this seems to be rarely required.

Patterns of use

We are beginning to see clear evidence that although Cloudworks is a useful tool for passing on information before an event, and as an archive afterwards, it is not yet entirely successful in supporting activity either before or during an event (i.e. although many people will visit the space, few will engage in sustained participation at these times). The exception to this being engagement in 'flash debates'. The site has been developed to be object- centred so it is possibly not surprising that it does not support more generalised social networking as well as other more person-centred platforms can. In addition to this, feedback from conference delegates often tells us that actually they would prefer to network face-to-face rather than through their laptops or phones, and tend to use the



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quicker and more portable Twitter tool to keep up with what's happening across the conference.

There is increasing evidence from across the site, and in the examples given, that Cloudworks is effective in its integration with open and closed social media spaces, particularly Twitter, blogs, Slideshare and YouTube. As discussed above, the site can be seen to act as a hub; facilitating shifts between information gathering, debate, reflection and integration for the duration of these short-lived and intense discussions (see also Alevizou et al, 2010). In turn, through the 'flash debates', these tools can offer a less formalised, and more purposeful and socialised route into the conference Cloudscape. It may therefore be useful to people setting up conference Cloudscapes to consider how to best make use of a suite of social tools of which Cloudworks is one, and to consider setting up and publicising a flash debate around the conference theme to stimulate activity and interest in the space.

The site can be seen to be of great value to people interested in, but not attending the conference, and as a space for both delegates and virtual participants after the event. For this reason it would be interesting to review the tool overtime in supporting virtual and blended events. The development team will also need to reflect on whether they want to introduce additional functionality for ego-centred social interaction (i.e. direct messaging, person tagging etc) and consider the impact this might have on other uses of the site and the overarching vision. If the decision is made to promote use of the site for online events, better integration with meeting and visual collaboration tools is likely to be necessary (particularly Elluminate).

Usability and functionality

The site can be seen to have improved significantly in terms of usability during development phase 1 and 2. Feedback from users at conferences tells us that the majority of users find it easy to use and intuitive. As well as improvements to functionality, a significant amount of in-site support has been added and users report far fewer issues, for example, with confusion over the concepts of Clouds and Cloudscapes. However, despite the introduction of an improved search function, tags, and events listings there still seem to be issues with navigation of the site; users say they can't easily find what they are looking for. Further usability testing will help us explore exactly what the issues are for people.

The range of functions available to users seems to support activity around conferences well, although as discussed above improved integration with other open and closed social networking spaces and the ability to interact directly with others, is likely to improve participation levels and take up of the site as a conference tool.



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Recommendations:

- *Continue to encourage community ownership of Cloudscapes and Clouds rather than a reliance on the Cloudworks team. Seek feedback on the support documents from conference organisers.*
- *Suggest that conference Clouds should be added organically when needed rather than a framework constructed before the conference. Speakers should be encouraged to set up their Clouds themselves and add session materials. This should ensure that ownership and appropriation of the space is spread more widely across the conference community. This should ensure, with some moderation, that navigation is easier and more intuitive.*
- *Suggest ways in which Cloudworks functionality can be effectively used to support pre-conference activities and discussion, and post-conference collation of resources, discussion, reflection and records.*
- *Promote the use of Cloudworks champions at conferences, and offer guidance about facilitation and moderation tasks.*
- *Monitor and improve integration with other social media tools.*
- *Consider improving functionality which enables people to interact with each other directly in addition to the ability to interact around an object.*
- *Promote use of flash debate s as a strategy for getting delegates to engage with conference themes prior to and during the event.*
- *Review the use of the site for online and blended events.*

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Appendix 1

Table of Clouds and Cloudscapes set up in relation to Conferences during the first two phases of the OULDI-JISC project November 2008-July 2010

List of all events on Cloudworks can be found at

http://cloudworks.ac.uk/events/events_list_past

| Conference title | Conference date | Set up date | Main Cloudworks URL | Originator | No of |
|--|-------------------|--------------|---|-----------------|-------|
| JISC CETIS Conference 2008 | 25-26 Nov 2008 | 24 Nov 2008 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/402 | JC (Cloudworks) | 172 |
| ASCILITE 2008 | 30 Nov-3 Dec 2008 | 29 Nov 2008 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/453 | GC (Cloudworks) | 431 |
| LAMS Conference 2008 | 5 Dec 2008 | 4 Dec 2008 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/571 | GC (Cloudworks) | 321 |
| Learning in Digital Worlds CAL 09 | 23-25 Mar 2009 | 20 Mar 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1261 | GC (Cloudworks) | 320 |
| ISKS Conference 2009 | 11 May 2009 | 11 May 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1571 | GC (Cloudworks) | 288 |
| Eden Conference 2009 | 10-13 June 2009 | 10 June 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1744 | GC (Cloudworks) | 291 |
| Design Bash 2009 | 8 July 2009 | 19 June 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1773 | SP (Conference) | 650 |
| European LAMS & Learning Design Conference 2009 | 6-9 July 2009 | 3 July 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1862 | RG (Cloudworks) | 619 |
| Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning | 22-25 Sep 2009 | 22 Sep 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1890 | GC (Cloudworks) | 713 |
| ALT-C 2009 | 8-10 Sep 2009 | 24 Aug 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1870 | RG (Cloudworks) | 1412 |
| AECT Conference 2009 | 27-31 Oct 2009 | 29 Oct 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1917 | GC (Cloudworks) | 393 |
| Tech it Up! Conference | 22-24 Oct 2009 | 23 Oct 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1913 | GC (Cloudworks) | 390 |
| Associate Lecturers National Conference | 21 Nov 2009 | 21 Nov 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1933 | GC (Cloudworks) | 307 |
| Massey University Blended Learning Conference | 10-14 Dec 2009 | 10 Dec 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1950 | GC (Cloudworks) | 296 |
| ASCILITE 2009 | 5-9 Dec 2009 | 24 Nov 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1936 | GC (Cloudworks) | 677 |

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| | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-------------|---|--------------------------|-----|
| Annual International CODE Symposia | 18-19 Feb 2010 | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1975 | GC (Cloudworks) | 373 |
| Higher Education Leadership Summit | 11 Feb 2010 | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1973 | PMcA (Associate) | 754 |
| Learn about Fair | 10 Feb 2010 | 21 Jan 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1963 | RG (Cloudworks) | 702 |
| International Arab Conference of e-Technology (IACET) 2010 | 30-31 Mar 2010 | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1976 | GC (Cloudworks) | 124 |
| PGRS Methods Conference 2010 | 23-24 Mar 2010 | 12 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2036 | SocialLearn (Conference) | 339 |
| OER10 | 22-24 Mar 2010 | 22 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2048 | KC (Associate) | 314 |
| Activity Theory and Practice Learning Conference | 10-11 Mar 2010 | 10 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2032 | GA (Associate) | 359 |
| Becta Conference | 9 Mar 2010 | 9 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2025 | RG (Cloudworks) | 87 |
| Software Engineering Conference | 8-12 Mar 2010 | 4 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2020 | AKB (Participant) | 222 |
| OER 2010 (Monterey) | 3 Mar 2009 | 13 Feb 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/873 | MITE (Conference) | 901 |
| 2010 DEANZ Conference | 25-28 Apr 2010 | 13 Sep 2009 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1878 | MB (Conference) | 288 |
| HRD 2010 | 21-22 Apr 2010 | 2 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2015 | AF (Conference) | 124 |
| Beyond Borders OER Conference 2010 | 20 Apr 2010 | 8 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1988 | GC (Cloudworks) | 254 |
| NDLR Fest 2010 | 14 Apr 2010 | 24 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2051 | KC (Associate) | 87 |
| MoodleMoot UK 2010 | 13-14 Apr 2010 | 15 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1999 | JC (Cloudworks) | 132 |
| JISC Annual Conference 2010 | 12-13 Apr 2010 | 5 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1982 | GC (Cloudworks) | 185 |
| Plymouth eLearning Conference | 8-12 April 2010 | 15 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2000 | JC (Cloudworks) | 140 |
| 6th International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry - ICQI10 | 26-29 May 2010 | 27 May 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2108 | JK (Conference) | 180 |
| CALRG Annual Conference 2010 | 24-25 May 2010 | 24 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2005 | CB (Conference) | 279 |
| Global Learn Conference 2010 | 17-20 May 2010 | 19 May 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2103 | GC (Cloudworks) | 69 |
| Global Learning Conference | 12-14 | 7 Feb | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1985 | GC | 117 |

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| | May 2010 | 2010 | | (Cloudworks) | |
|--|--------------------|-------------|---|---------------------------|----------|
| Networked Learning Conference 2010 | 3-4 May 2010 | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1977 | JC (Cloudworks) | 688 |
| EISTA 2010 8 th International Conference | 29 Jun-2 Jul 2010 | 4 March | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2016 | GC (Cloudworks) | 139 |
| EdMedia 2010 | 28 Jun-2 Jul | 7 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1986 | GC (Cloudworks) | 184 |
| ConnectEd Design Conference 2010 | 28 Jun-1 Jul | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1974 | GC (Cloudworks) | 225 |
| Open University annual Learning and Technology Conference 2010 | 21 Jun-23 Jun 2010 | 2 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2012 | MW (Conference) | 259 5 |
| International Blended Learning Conference 2010 | 16-17 Jun 2010 | 23 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2003 | MC (Conference) | 608 |
| HSC PhD Conference (OU) | 10 Jun 2010 | 8 Jun 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2120 | Social Learn (Conference) | 163 |
| EDEN Conference 2010 | 9-12 June 2010 | 4 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1978 | GC (Cloudworks) | 194 |
| CRC PhD Student Conference | 3-4 Jun 2010 | 26 May 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2106 | Social Learn (Conference) | 175 |
| JISC Innovation Forum (JIF2010) | 29-29 Jul 2010 | 20 Apr 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2073 | JISC (Conference) | 146 7 |
| IADIS International eLearning 2010 | 26-31 Jul 2010 | 7 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1984 | GC (Cloudworks) | 163 |
| UKOER10 | 23 Jul 2010 | 22 Jul 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2153 | GA (Associate) | 41 |
| International Computer Assisted Assessment (CAA) Conference 2010 | 20-21 Jul 2010 | 16 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2002 | JC (Cloudworks) | 145 |
| International Conference on Hybrid Learning (ICHL2010) | 16 Jul-18 Aug 2010 | 24 Jun 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2135 | ZW (Conference) | 75 |
| Design Bash 2010 | 16 Jul 2010 | 31 May 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2111 | SMcN (Conference) | 380 |
| European LAMS & Learning Design Conference 2010 | 15-16 Jul 2010 | 15 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2001 | JC (Cloudworks) | 179 |
| E-Access 10 | 13 Jul 2010 | 9 Jul 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2145 | NF (Associate) | 93 |
| Wikimania 2010 | 9-11 Jul 2010 | 9 Jul 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2144 | GA (Associate) | 31 |
| PLE Conference | 8-9 Jul 2010 | 6 Feb 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/1983 | MM (Conference) | 181 |
| WikiSym 2010 | 7-9 Jul | 2 Jul 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2141 | GA (associate) | 43 |

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| | 2010 | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------|---|---------------------|-----|
| eLearning @ Greenwich 2010 | 7 Jul 2010 | 18 Mar 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2044 | RG (Cloudworks) | 162 |
| ODET 2010 | 30 Jun- 2 Jul 2010 | 12 May 2010 | http://cloudworks.ac.uk/cloudscape/view/2099 | SBS (Conference) | 299 |

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Appendix 2

| | Participation | Cohesion | Identity | Creative capability |
|-----------------------------|--|---|---|---|
| Indicators | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sustained participation o Commitment from a core group of participants o Emerging roles and hierarchy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Support o Tolerance (Walzer 1997, p 11). o Reciprocity (Herring, 2004; Erickson, 1997 Putnam, 2000) o Humour and playfulness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Group self-awareness o Membership (Erickson, 1997) o Shared language (Baym 1998, p62) o Sense of community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Igniting purpose (questions, visions, task) (Gratton, 2001) o Multiple points of view, traditions and interests (Engestrom, 2001) o Contradiction (Engestrom, 2001) o Creation of knowledge links and patterns |
| Observation criteria | <p>Sustained - Measured over time.</p> <p>Core participants identified on the basis of frequency of posting and rate of response received to messages posted, or via text-based social net-work analysis.(Herring, 2004, p. 356)</p> <p>Roles and hierarchy can be adduced through participation patterns and speech analysis (e.g., Herring & Nix, 1997, which considers the different acts performed by group leaders and non-leaders).</p> | <p>Observed verbal humour (Baym, 1995), jokes, banter and playfulness. Sociality characterized by combination of work and play (Wittel, 2001)</p> <p>Support(Herring, 1994) and tolerance(Walzer 1997) through speech act analysis focusing , for example, on acts of positive politeness openness, curiosity, and respect - a willingness to listen and learn</p> <p>Reciprocity through analysis of turn initiation and response (Rafaeli & Sudweeks, 1997)</p> | <p>Self-awareness can be manifested in its members' references to the group as a group</p> <p>Shared language Baym identifies 4 types of 'consistent and distinctive language practices' that indicate the emergence of a coherent online community: group specific vocabulary; forms of non-verbal communication; genres; and humour (Baym 2003, p1016)</p> | <p>Igniting purpose - Areas of significantly higher activity indicating flashpoints of interest and engagement (Gratton, 2001, Engestrom, 2007)</p> <p>Contradictions in terms of experience and knowledge.</p> <p>Multiple points of view expressed and contradicted or challenged. Evidence of <i>networks of relationships</i> cross teams, disciplines, function and organisations.</p> <p>Knowledge links and patterns made, referred to and developed</p> |
| Evaluation questions | <p>Clear roles and hierarchy: Did participants take on any special roles over the course of the review? What was the hierarchical structure? Were these effective in promoting and supporting collaborative activity?</p> <p>Commitment from a core group of participants: Was there a core group of participants, who contributed regularly? How far did a core group of participants encourage the engagement and activity of others?</p> <p>Sustained engagement: How far did participants make repeated contributions? Did they continue to contribute into the wider Cloudworks space?</p> | <p>Support and tolerance: Were people polite and friendly to others? Was there evidence of a willingness to listen and learn from others? Were less confident participants encouraged to participate further? Can this kind of behaviour be seen to impact on engagement?</p> <p>Turn taking and response: Did participants take turns in discussions and respond to each others' comments? Did participants ask or answer questions of others?</p> | <p>Shared language and vocabulary: Did participants use similar vocabulary and phraseology? Was a similar tone and style used? Was the style and tone used inclusive or exclusive of other groups?</p> <p>Group self awareness: Do participants use "us verses them" language? Particularly in statements such as, "We do things this way here" (implying an awareness that they might be done differently elsewhere)</p> | <p>Crossing organisational/ role boundaries: Were multiple points of view expressed? Did people from different types of roles and workplaces contribute? Did people find participating exciting, interesting and relevant to them?</p> <p>Creation of knowledge links and patterns: Were links made between concepts and ideas? Did participants attempt to connect their knowledge and experience to that of others?</p> <p>Create or develop new knowledge and practices: Did participants challenge existing knowledge and practices and work with others to conceive alternatives?</p> <p>Sense of purpose: Did visitors to the site understand the purpose of what they were doing? Did they feel drawn to participate and get involved?</p> |

Table 1 Cloudworks evaluation framework (Galley et al, submitted, p.21)

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