



## **Evaluation Report Highlights, Innovating e-Learning 2009 Online Conference**

This is an evaluation of the JISC funded Innovating e-Learning 2009 online conference. It has three sections:

- A. Summary
- B. Twitter and other social media
- C. Formal feedback survey results

Where figures are given in brackets after the 2009 figures, they give the equivalent figure for 2008.

### **A. Summary**

The statistics collected through the online survey and, equally importantly, the informal feedback received indicates that the conference was, like last year, very well received and highly valued. In particular:

- This was the largest online conference the JISC has run, with 446 participants.
- It was also the most complex conference with a wide range of formats and more live events.
- The papers and presentations were generally considered high quality (these are now available from the JISC website).
- The discussions were very active with about 177,000 words of postings. This is very slightly down on the 180,000 postings made in 2008. However, this year we more than doubled the number of live sessions, and the increased interaction and discussion in these sessions almost certainly had the side effect of reducing activity in the asynchronous areas. This is indicative of changing patterns of use.
- The total number of postings was lower than last year at 1386 (1685). This excludes the blog and social area, and again would have been affected by the increased activity in the live sessions.
- 92% (96%) of respondents thought the conference good value for money and 99% (97%) of respondents would be willing to attend further online conferences.
- There were no technical problems with any of the various conference platforms during the conference period, though some participants did have firewall issues with the Elluminate sessions, and some were unable to effectively use SL because of hardware/firewall limitations. Some delegates recorded problems with sound when in the live Elluminate sessions; the importance of testing equipment before joining an Elluminate session is strongly recommended in the delegate information provided on registration.
- Overall feedback was extremely positive.

### **B. Twitter and other social media**

This year, as would perhaps be expected, saw a much greater use of Twitter and other social media, both within and external to the conference.



Prior to the start, we began tweeting about the conference as part of the publicity activities. During the conference, we used a dedicated Twitter feed to give notice of events, particularly when live sessions were due to start. This feed was also displayed on the opening page of the conference. We also used other feeds to promote key themes and messages emerging from the conference and also as a way of tracking feedback.

We also strongly promoted the use of a hash tag, *jiscel2009*, to collect together the various tweets about the conference. At the time of writing this report, mid January 2010, there are still tweets appearing with that hash tag, and a total of 597 tweets. These can be seen at the archive at:

- Twitter archive: <http://twapperkeeper.com/jiscel09/?limit=1000>

The resources have also been used in numerous other places, even before they have been made available on the web site. For example, see the cloudworks site at:

- Cloudworks: <http://cloudworks.ac.uk/index.php/cloudscape/view/1935>

Flickr was used to display photos from the very popular Second Life tours. See:

- Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tags/jiscel09/>

## C. Formal feedback survey results

This survey was carried out shortly after the conference closed, using SurveyMonkey. There were 70 (69) responses, a response rate of 16% (18%).

### 1. Did you find the pre-conference support and documentation helpful? (1 is not helpful at all, 5 is very helpful).

	2008	2009
1	3%	0%
2	4%	0%
3	19%	9%
4	35%	50%
5	36%	41%

This is a significant improvement on last year, probably reflecting the updating and improvement of guidance materials.

### 2. Did you log in during the pre-conference week?

- 84% (78%) of respondents logged in during the pre-conference week.
- Of those, 71% (78%) found it either very useful or essential.
- 93% (85%) read/viewed presentation materials before the discussions started.
- 88% viewed the materials in the delegate pack.



**3. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the presentation materials (i.e. papers, PPT, video, etc.)? (1 is poor, 5 is excellent)**

	2008	2009
1	2%	0%
2	8%	3%
3	23%	16%
4	49%	61%
5	18%	19%

This is an improvement on last year – and may at least partly be due to the influence of the live sessions.

**4. Overall, how would you rate the quality of the discussions you followed or participated in? (1 is poor, 5 is excellent).**

	2008	2009
1	6%	2%
2	8%	6%
3	23%	23%
4	41%	52%
5	22%	18%

Again, an improvement on last year's data.

**5. Did you read the conference blog Letters from the Edge?**

	2008	2009
Yes	79%	65%
No	21%	35%

This was read by fewer people this year (in percentage terms). The narrative feedback indicates that this was partly because the conference generally was extremely busy; but also because it was perceived as being more useful for people attending a JISC online conference for the first time. Amongst people who did read it, feedback was extremely positive.

**6. Overall, how useful did you find the Have-a-Go area? (1 is not useful at all, 5 is essential).**

1	5%
2	16%
3	45%
4	21%



5 14%

80% found it useful or better, which is very pleasing, and indicates that it was well worth adding this to the conference.

### **7. How do you plan to make use of the materials from the conference in your role?**

Sample comments are included below.

- Inform thinking and approach to transforming practice.
- Made me think about e-learning more and also how to use it in induction.
- I have written up my notes from the conference in a personal blog, which I am sharing with colleagues. I have built up a paper folder of notes and printouts, to use as a desktop resource (and to assist me in studying for an MA in online learning). I have taken some of the themes (and some related materials) to discuss and develop with colleagues in the context of live projects. And I have uploaded copies of some documentation to my team wiki/sharespace, for reference.
- I'm really impressed with the format of the conference and have a meeting next week to show somebody just how an online conference can work. Would like to revisit the discussion forums and pull together a report of the overall conference. Also promoting Elluminate to my Faculty as a useful piece of software to use.
- Disseminate ideas throughout our department.
- I have already used materials from the discussion in presentations to the College e-Strategy team.
- Have already fed back some items, put some ideas onto Moodle internally and used some in my own teaching and especially with teacher training classes.
- Found more contacts, academics using virtual worlds in education.
- Materials helped me learn a lot more, some of which I have shared with others, some of which I need for personal development.

### **8. Were you able to devote enough time to the conference? And if not, what was the reason for this?**

Yes	38%
No	62%

Most people were not able to devote enough time. Various reasons were given, including:

- Other work commitments
- Not setting time aside to attend the conference
- Not using the reading week
- Logging in from work, rather than home (or some other dedicated area), hence too easily interrupted
- Too much reading to do
- Underestimating how much activity there would be in the conference.



**9. This year we had a number of live webcast events in Elluminate. Would you like to see more in future conferences?**

Yes	81%
No	6%
Don't know	13%

**10. Would you like to see more live events in virtual worlds?**

	2008	2009
Yes	38%	35%
No	25%	27%
Don't know	37%	38%

As last year, there is quite a wide split on this, with a very high proportion of 'don't knows'.

**11. Was the delegate fee of £50 good value?**

	2008	2009
Yes	96%	92%
No	4%	8%

**12. Would you be willing to attend future online conferences?**

	2008	2009
Yes	97%	99%
No	3%	1%

**13. If yes, when is the best time of year to run one?**

There was no conclusive answer or consensus to this, with all sorts of different times being suggested.

**Comments from the survey**

There was a large amount of narrative feedback from different sources, including the survey. The great majority of it was positive, with a few negative comments about particular aspects of the conference. For example, a number of people commented on the back channel (the text chat) in Elluminate. Some found it very annoying and distracting; some thought it added a



lot of value to the sessions. Others commented on the asynchronous discussions, most finding them very valuable, with some not liking the way they operated. Where there were issues, these are recorded and will be reviewed for future conferences.

Below are a few comments extracted from the survey.

- [I'd like to] congratulate the conveners and organisers for the highly effective organisation of the event from start to finish (and after). The reminders, chivvying emails, prompts, suggestions - everything was quite excellent. Many thanks and best wishes.
- Very good event - friendly atmosphere - helpful and useful.
- First experience of an online conference and I learnt a vast amount without leaving my desk. Thank you. This is the way to run things in the future with stretched resources. Although I realise it probably took a vast amount of organisation and co-ordination behind the scenes, it all went very smoothly from a participant's view.
- The whole conference was extremely well organised and supported. A really worthwhile experience - thank you.
- Well moderated as always. I know how intense it is for those delivering and facilitating and the standard remained high throughout.
- Enjoyed it and learnt a lot not only about the subject matter but also how to do / participate in something like this.
- I enjoyed the conference and got a lot out of it. I just wish I could've spent more time there.
- It was my first online conference and I found it a very rich and rewarding experience.