

# Survey on the Use of Virtual Meetings at the University of Bradford

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[www.goodcampus.org](http://www.goodcampus.org)



## Summary

A survey of staff at University of Bradford was carried out in December 2010 -January 2011 to explore the use of virtual meetings. A total of 111 staff began the survey and 92 completed it to the end. The respondents were from a range of schools/departments. Headline results include:

- 61% of respondents had participated in some kind of virtual meeting in 2010
- Of the 39% who had not, 60% were interested in making greater use of virtual meetings. The main reason for non participation was difficulties in setting one up.
- Of the respondents who had participated in some kind of virtual meeting (the relevant population for all the following points), 41% had used an audio conference, 38% Elluminate, 32% a web conference and 10% a videoconferencing suite.
- Respondents had participated in an average of 2-3 virtual meetings over the 4 weeks prior to the survey.
- For their last virtual meeting, most people (38%) had used audio-only conference while 22% had used Elluminate.
- This last meeting had, on average, a duration of 56 minutes, 6-7 participants, and 3-4 separate locations. Most respondents (59%) were located at their university office.
- 61% of respondents said that this last meeting had been completely successful in meeting its objectives, and a further 31% said that it had been partially successful.
- 29% of respondents said that their last call definitely replaced a face to face meeting, and another 15% said that this was almost certainly the case. For this cohort, the virtual meeting replaced, on average, 308 miles at an average cost of £131, and freed up 7-8 hours of time. The majority (73%) would have travelled by train.
- 88% of respondents said that their last virtual meeting did not stimulate additional travel.
- 32% of respondents felt that there are considerable further opportunities to replace their face to face with virtual meetings, and a further 56% felt that there were some opportunities.
- The main impacts of virtual meetings were reduced stress/time of travelling (75%), better control of time (61%) and easier to stay in touch with colleagues (39%).

## Background

This document presents the results of the first of a series of surveys of conferencing use in UK universities and colleges being conducted by the University of Bradford's SustelT initiative, in collaboration with JANET and the Welsh Video Network. The work is being funded by JISC's Green IT programme. By summer 2011 we expect to have similar data from 5-6 other universities, as well as information from a survey of sector travel managers and users of the JANET Videoconferencing Service (JVCS). A full analysis will be conducted then so, for the moment, we are simply releasing results without comment.

The survey ran during December 2010 -January 2011 and was open to all University staff. It is not intended to be representative in any way, but simply to present a snapshot of use and views within the University. The first question was answered by 111 people, and the last by 92. Respondents were routed according to their responses so not everyone answered every question. Hence, the number of responses varies considerably between questions.

The survey is partially based on - and intended to be comparable with - previous ones conducted for other private and public organisations, so some of the questions are worded to cover many different situations. We found it difficult to find wordings that encompasses all different aspects of the topic but chose 'virtual meetings' as the one with fewest ambiguities. We defined this as ones where people interact in real time over the telephone network (when three or more locations are involved), the Internet or other electronic channels. Examples include audio, video and web conferencing and Elluminate sessions.

# Results

## Question 1

Have you participated in any kind of virtual meeting during 2010? (NB We define a virtual meeting as one where people interact in real time over the telephone network, the Internet or other electronic channels using technologies such as audio, video and web conferencing and Elluminate sessions. Please ignore ordinary telephone calls involving just two locations though).

Respondents: 111

No : 43 (38.7%)

Yes : 68 (61.3%) (routed to Q8)

## Question 2

Have you considered participating in any virtual meetings during 2010?

Respondents: 44

Yes : 13 (29.5%)

No : 28 (63.6%) (routed to Q5)

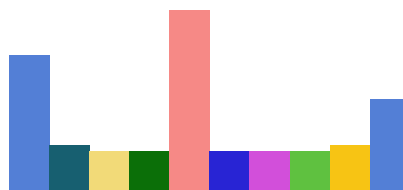
Do not know : 3 (6.8%) (routed to Q5)

## Question 3

Which of the following reasons best explains why you didn't take your interest in virtual meeting participation further? Please tick all that apply and, if possible, give your answers in the context of a particular meeting that didn't work out virtually.

Respondents: 11

- Concern about whether it would work technically : **3** (27.3%)
- Concern about whether it would be an effective meeting : **1** (9.1%)
- Losing networking/social opportunities connected to the meeting : (0.0%)
- Cost : (0.0%)
- Difficulties (actual or perceived) in setting it up : **4** (36.4%)
- Don't know enough about the technology to be comfortable : (0.0%)
- Don't like being on camera : (0.0%)
- Enjoy time away from the office : (0.0%)
- Needed to travel to a meeting location anyway : **1**(9.1%)
- Other : **2** (18.2%)



## Question 4

What other reasons have led to your not using virtual meetings? (Text response – not provided here).

### Question 5

How often does your current role require you to travel from your normal office base or work location to another work location (either to another campus on university or outside the university)?

Respondents: 35

- Very frequently (more than 2 days per week on average) : **3** (8.6%)
- Frequently (1-2 days per week on average) : **5** (14.3%)
- Infrequently (less than 1 day a week on average) : **26** (74.3%)
- Don't know : **1** (2.9%)

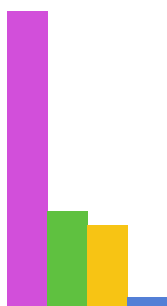


### Question 6

Would you be interested in making greater use of virtual meetings if they were easier to access and use?

Respondents: 35

- Yes : **21** (60.0%)
- No : **7** (20.0%) (routed to Q43)
- Maybe : **6** (17.1%) (routed to Q43)
- Do not know : **1** (2.9%) (routed to Q43)



### Question 7

What would encourage you to use virtual meetings more? (after this routed to Q43) (Text response – not provided here).

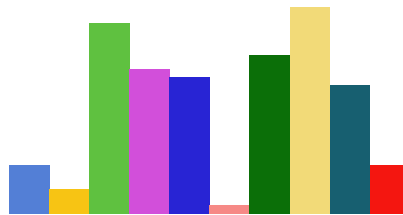
### Question 8

Which of the following virtual meeting technologies have you made use of in 2010? Please tick all that apply.

Respondents: 63

- Videoconferencing suite - Bradford : **6** (9.5%) (route to Q10)

- Videoconferencing suite - elsewhere : **3** (4.8%)
- Elluminate : **24** (38.1%)
- Desktop video (e.g. JVCS Desktop, Skype) with 1 other person : **18** (28.6%)
- Desktop video (e.g. JVCS Desktop, Skype) with 2 or more other people : **17** (27.0%)
- Access grid node : **1** (1.6%)
- Web conference (audio + viewing documents etc. on screen) : **20** (31.7%)
- Audio only conference (e.g. telephone based using BT Meet Me) with 2 or more other people : **26** (41.3%)
- Instant messaging (e.g. MSN, Skype) with 2 or more other people : **16** (25.4%)
- Other : **6** (9.5%)



### Question 9

Which other conferencing type have you used in 2010?

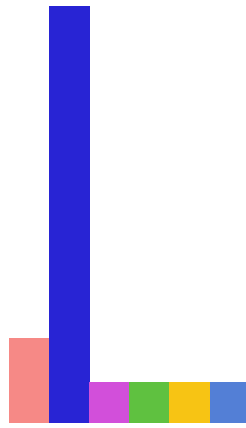
- GoTo Meeting
- skype other online tools hosted by external organisations.
- skype
- Skype
- skype
- telephone conference call
- Wimba virtual classroom - hosted elsewhere

### Question 10

How satisfactory have you found the experience of using a Bradford videoconferencing suite?

Respondents: 6

- Very satisfactory : **1** (16.7%)
- Quite satisfactory : **5** (83.3%)
- Neutral : (0.0%)
- Quite unsatisfactory : (0.0%) (routed to Q11)
- Very unsatisfactory : (0.0%) (routed to Q11)
- Not sure/Do not know : (0.0%)



**Question 11**

Please explain why you found it unsatisfactory.

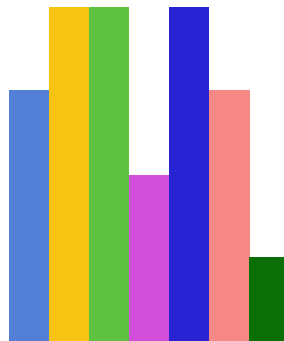
Respondents : 0

**Question 12**

What would encourage you to make greater use of a Bradford videoconferencing suite?

Respondents: 6

- A more convenient location : **3** (50.0%)
- Out of hours access : **4** (66.7%)
- Better booking facility : **4** (66.7%)
- Out of hours staff support on hand : **2** (33.3%)
- An 'at my desk' service rather than travelling to a dedicated facility : **4** (66.7%)
- Top quality service in terms of audio and visual (telepresence) : **3** (50.0%)
- Other : **1** (16.7%)



**Question 13**

What other factors would encourage you to use a Bradford videoconferencing suite? (Text response – not provided here).

**Question 14**

Approximately, how many times did you participate in a virtual meeting over your last four full working weeks (i.e. excluding holidays, sick leave etc.)?

Respondents: 61

AVERAGE: 2.15 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 2.98 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

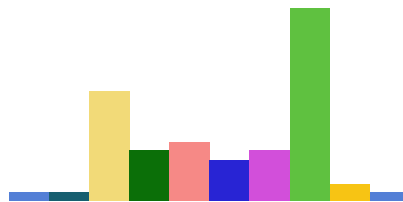
### Question 15

The next few questions relate to the last virtual meeting (excluding 1:1 telephone calls) that you actively participated in through comments, questions etc. with other attendees (i.e. excluding large scale calls that are mainly about one way dissemination of information). This will allow us to create a 'snapshot' of conferencing in the University.

What conferencing type did you make use of for your last conference?

Respondents: 60

- Videoconferencing suite - Bradford : 1 (1.7%)
- Videoconferencing suite - elsewhere : 1 (1.7%)
- Elluminate : 13 (21.7%)
- Desktop video (e.g. JVCS Desktop, Skype) with 1 other person : 6 (10.0%) (routed to Q16)
- Desktop video (e.g. JVCS Desktop, Skype) with 2 or more other people : 7 (11.7%) (routed to Q16)
- Access grid node : (0.0%)
- Web conference (audio + viewing documents etc. on screen) : 6 (10.0%)
- Audio only conference (e.g. telephone based using BT Meet Me) with 2 or more other people : 23 (38.3%)
- Instant messaging with 2 or more other people : 2 (3.3%)
- Other : 1 (1.7%)



### Question 16

What desktop video software did you use?

Respondents: 13

- Adobe Connect: 0 (0%)
- Elluminate: 0 (0%)
- JVCS Desktop/Tandberg ConferenceMe: 0(0%)
- Microsoft OCS: 1( 7.6%(
- Other: 12 (92%)

### Question 17

What other type of technology did you use?

Respondents: 4

- GoTo Meeting
- Online 'chat' facility set up by the host.
- Pronto IM (part of Blackboard)
- Skype

### Question 18

How long, in minutes, did your last virtual meeting take?

Respondents: 49

AVERAGE: 56.35 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 56.35 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

### Question 19

How many people participated in your last virtual meeting?

Respondents: 49

AVERAGE: 6.48 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 6.48 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

### Question 20

How many separate locations were involved in your last virtual meeting? (NB If several people in the same building participated, please count as one location)

Respondents: 59

AVERAGE: 3.75 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

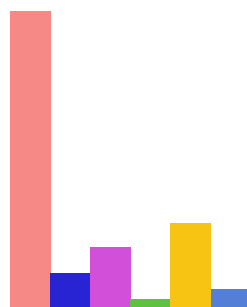
AVERAGE: 3.75 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

### Question 21

Where were you located for your last virtual meeting?

Respondents: 59

- My main University of Bradford office : **35** (59.3%)
- University of Bradford videoconferencing suite : **4** (6.8%)
- Another University of Bradford location : **7** (11.9%)
- In another university than Bradford : **1** (1.7%)
- At home : **10** (16.9%)
- Other : **2** (3.4%) (routed to Q22)



### Question 22

Please describe your location during your last virtual meeting. (Text response – not provided here).

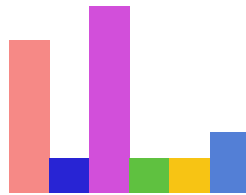
### Question 23

Which of the following best describes the nature of your last virtual meeting?

Respondents: 59

- Continuing regular discussion – e.g. team/project meeting : **18** (30.5%)
- A specially set up one-off call to deliver information (e.g. management briefing) : **4** (6.8%)
- A specially set up one-off call to discuss a specific issue or problem : **22** (37.3%)

- A formal meeting e.g. governance, exam board : **4** (6.8%)
- A teaching/learning session involving students : **4** (6.8%)
- Other : **7** (11.9%) (routed to Q24)



#### Question 24

Please describe the nature of your last virtual meeting

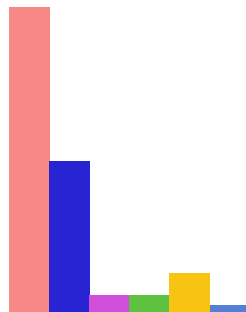
Respondents: 0

#### Question 25

Was your last virtual meeting successful in meeting its objectives?

Respondents: 59

- Completely successful : **36** (61.0%)
- Partially successful : **18** (30.5%)
- Neutral : **2** (3.4%)
- Partially unsuccessful : **2** (3.4%) (routed to Q26)
- Completely unsuccessful : **0** (0.0%) (routed to Q26)
- Do not know : **1** (1.7%)

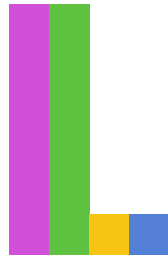


#### Question 26

Was the failure in meeting the objectives of your last conference call related to its 'virtual' nature?

Respondents: 2

- Completely : **1** (50.0%)
- Partially : **1** (50.0%)
- Not at all : **0** (0.0%)
- Do not know : **0** (0.0%)

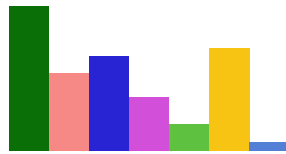


### Question 27

For you, personally, did your last virtual meeting:

Respondents: 59

- Definitely (100% certainty) replace a face-to-face meeting? : **17** (28.8%)
- Almost certainly (>90% certainty) replace a face-to-face meeting? : **9** (15.3%)
- Probably (50-90% certainty) replace a face-to-face meeting? : **11** (18.6%) (routed to Q36)
- Possibly (less than 50% certainty) replace a face-to-face meeting? : **6** (10.2%) (routed o Q36)
- Not replace a face-to-face meeting? : **3** (5.1%) (routed to Q36)
- Enable a meeting, which otherwise would not have happened? : **12** (20.3%) (routed to Q36)
- Do not know : **1** (1.7%) (routed to Q36)



### Question 28

If a face-to-face meeting had taken place instead of a virtual one, how many people would have definitely needed to attend?

Respondents: 26

AVERAGE: 7.04 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 7.04 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

### Question 29

Would the avoided face-to-face meeting have taken place at your own normal working location, or elsewhere?

Respondents: 26

- At my location : **10** (38.5%)
- Elsewhere : **15** (57.7%)
- Do not know : **1** (3.8%)



### Question 30

Where would the avoided face-to-face meeting have been located?

Respondents: 15

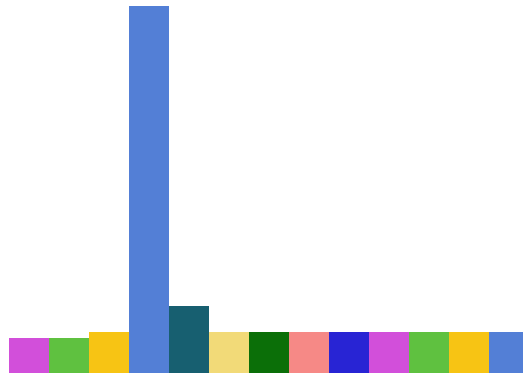
- Birmingham
- Birmingham
- don't know, probably another University
- international conference
- London
- London
- London or Liverpool
- Manchester
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Not sure, a commercial centre, possibly London, or closer to Bradford, such as Leeds, Manchester or York.
- Nottingham or Bournemouth
- Probably Birmingham or London using external conference facilities - meeting partners are from institutions as far north as Northumbria and as far south as Plymouth.
- Probably Birmingham or Oxford
- Probably in Rome (Italy).

### Question 31

What is the primary form of transport (i.e. the one you travelled furthest in) that you would have used to attend the avoided face-to-face meeting? (This is a standard question - we know Bradford doesn't have a Tube system!)

Respondents: 15

- Petrol car : **1** (6.7%)
- Diesel car : **1** (6.7%)
- Van/LGV : (0.0%)
- Train : **11** (73.3%)
- Plane : **2** (13.3%)
- Taxi : (0.0%)
- Tube/metro : (0.0%)
- Bus : (0.0%)
- Tram : (0.0%)
- Bicycle : (0.0%)
- Walk : (0.0%)
- Other : (0.0%)
- Do not know : (0.0%)



**Question 32**

How many miles would you have travelled to the avoided meeting, there and back, using the transport specified in the last question? (NB if more than the maximum entry allowed of 1000 miles, please enter 1000 and make a comment on the actual distance at the end of the questionnaire.)

Respondents: 15

AVERAGE: 307.6 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 307.6 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

**Question 33**

How much (in British pounds) would the primary transport (i.e. the mode you travelled furthest in) to the avoided meeting have cost the University?

Respondents: 15

AVERAGE: 113.33 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 130.77 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

**Question 34**

Please estimate (to the nearest hour) the total working time that your last virtual meeting 'freed up' for you by avoiding travel. To avoid exaggeration, please take account of any time that you might have spent working whilst travelling.

Respondents: 26

AVERAGE: 6.35 (excluding any 'do not know' responses)

AVERAGE: 7.5 (excluding any 'do not know' and '0' responses)

**Question 35**

Would the avoided meeting have required an overnight stay?

Respondents: 26

Yes : **3** (11.5%)

No : **23** (88.5%)

Do Not Know : (0.0%)



### Question 36

Sometimes a virtual meeting can actually stimulate travel, e.g. by requiring travel to a special videoconferencing location, or linking strangers together who subsequently decide to meet. Did this happen with your own last virtual meeting?

Respondents: 59

- Definitely : **2** (3.4%)
- Probably : **1** (1.7%)
- Possibly : **3** (5.1%)
- No : **52** (88.1%)
- Do not know : **1** (1.7%)



### Question 37

Could you provide more details of how the virtual meeting generated further travel? (Text responses – not provided here)

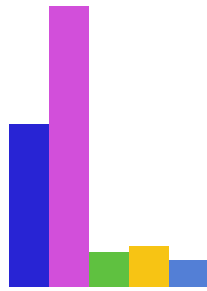
### Question 38

What do you feel is the scope to replace the meetings you currently attend in person with virtual equivalents in future?

Respondents: 59

- Considerable further opportunities to replace my meetings : **19** (32.2%)
- Some further opportunities to replace my meetings : **33** (55.9%)
- No further scope to reduce my meetings : **4** (6.8%)

- Conferencing has replaced to many of my meetings and should be used less : (0.0%)
- Do not know : **3** (5.1%)



**Question 39**

Could you briefly explain where you see the opportunities for greater use of virtual meetings? (Text response – not provided here).

**Question 40**

Could you briefly explain why you feel that virtual meetings should be used less?

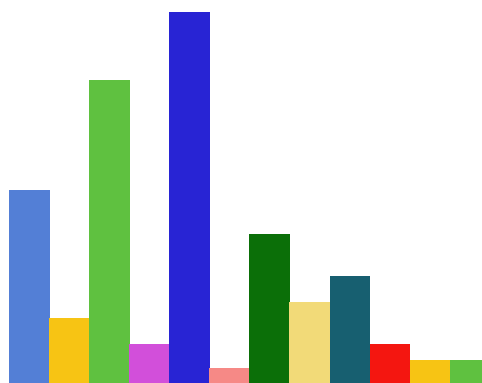
Respondents: 0

**Question 41**

What do you feel are the main impacts of virtual meetings on your work?

Respondents: 59

- Easier to stay in touch with colleagues : **23** (39.0%)
- Feeling more part of a team : **8** (13.6%)
- Better control of time : **36** (61.0%)
- Easier to make decisions : **5** (8.5%)
- Reduced stress/time of travelling : **44** (74.6%)
- Improved knowledge and understanding of the business : **2** (3.4%)
- Easier to access expertise : **18** (30.5%)
- Problems because of reduced face to face contact with important colleagues : **10** (16.9%)
- Less effective meetings : **13** (22.0%)
- Other effects than these : **5** (8.5%) (routed to Q42)
- No effect : **3** (5.1%)
- Do not know : **3** (5.1%)



#### Question 42

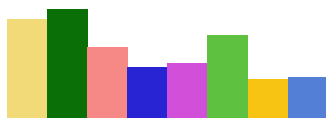
Could you briefly explain what other impacts you feel that conferencing has had on your work? (Text response – not provided here)

#### Question 43

It's helpful for our analysis to have some basic details on respondents. All information will be treated as confidential. Which of the following best describes your role?

Respondents: 92

- Academic - mainly research : **18** (19.6%)
- Academic - mainly teaching : **20** (21.7%)
- Academic - other : **13** (14.1%)
- Administrative : **9** (9.8%)
- Management : **10** (10.9%)
- Specialised (Estates/IT/Technical etc) : **15** (16.3%)
- Other : **7** (7.6%)
- Prefer not to answer : (0.0%)



#### Question 44

What is your School/Department?

Respondents: 92

- School of Engineering, design and Technology : **4** (4.3%)
- School of Health Studies : **8** (8.7%)
- School of Informatics : **8** (8.7%)
- School of Life Sciences : **10** (10.9%)
- School of Lifelong Education and Development (SLED) : **2** (2.2%)
- School of Management : **10** (10.9%)
- School of Social and International Studies : **9** (9.8%)
- Academic Administration : **6** (6.5%)
- Estates and Facilities : **10** (10.9%)
- Financial and Commercial Services : **2** (2.2%)
- Human Resources : (0.0%)
- Learner Support Services : **8** (8.7%)
- Research and Knowledge Transfer Support : **2** (2.2%)
- Student Union : **1** (1.1%)
- Other : **11** (12.0%)
- Prefer not to answer : **1** (1.1%)



#### Question 45

If there are any final comments you wish to make about virtual meetings in general, or specifically within the organisation, please make them here. (Text response – not provided here).

Respondents: 90