

ALT-C 2011 – *Thriving in a colder and more challenging climate*

6-8 September 2011, Leeds, UK

Call and Guidelines for the submission of abstracts of **Short Papers, Short Presentations (ePosters), Symposia, Workshops and Demonstrations**

Call opens in mid December 2010 and closes at midnight GMT on Wednesday 2 March 2011 (*extended deadline*)

This document can be found at http://www.alt.ac.uk/guidelines_papers.html

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1 Welcome and introduction

Welcome. Whether you've been involved in ALT for years, are new to the learning technology domain, or are an experienced practitioner, supplier, funder, policy maker, researcher, writer, or presenter from other fields, please take the time to review this call and guidelines document. With your help the 2011 ALT Conference can be a truly outstanding, influential, and enjoyable event internationally.

The conference will be co-chaired by John Cook (Professor of Technology Enhanced Learning at the Learning Technology Research Institute, London Metropolitan University), and Sugata Mitra (Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University).

ALT, the Conference Co-Chairs, and the ALT-C 2011 Programme Committee call for high quality proposals for inclusion in the ALT-C 2011 programme.

This document is the call and guidelines for abstract-based submissions, namely: short papers; short presentations (ePosters); symposia; workshops; and demonstrations.

A companion document (also at http://www.alt.ac.uk/guidelines_papers.html) is the call and guidelines for proceedings papers. It is accompanied by a research paper template at the same location.

2 The call for conference abstracts

We invite the submission of abstracts for sessions of the following types.

- Short papers (20 minutes as part of a 40, 60 or 80 minute session, comprising approximately 12 minutes presentation and 8 minutes for discussion).
- Short Presentations (ePosters). Posters will be made available electronically rather than physically and can be accompanied by up to 10 "overheads" (loosely defined!), also electronically, although this is not compulsory. There will be the opportunity to present these overheads at the conference in a "PechaKucha" format – the overheads will cycle at fixed 30 sec intervals giving a five minute slot to present the key themes of the ePoster with three questions only then allowed. This replaces the traditional (and somewhat dated) poster format.
- Symposia (60 or occasionally 80 minutes).
- Workshops (60 minutes).
- Demonstrations (30 minutes as part of a 30 or 60 minute session).

Submissions should address one or more of:

- the six themes described in section 4 below;
- any other aspect of learning technology research, practice or policy.

As in previous years, we are particularly interested in innovative and creative presentations of wide scope, provided that we are convinced that these will be of high quality, and of interest and value to conference delegates.

In line with the theme of the conference title, proposals which describe changes with some aspect of economic driver are particularly welcome. However, quality, and relevance to the overall focus of ALT-C 2011 remain the overriding criteria.

3 Submission deadline

The deadline for submissions is **midnight GMT on Wednesday 2 March 2011 (extended deadline)**.

4 About the conference

The conference "Thriving in a colder and more challenging climate" will be co-chaired by John Cook (Professor of Technology Enhanced Learning at the Learning Technology Research Institute, London Metropolitan University), and Sugata Mitra (Professor of Educational Technology at Newcastle University).

In 2011, education systems throughout the world are attempting to do more, better, and often with less. As the political, economic, social, agency and technological landscapes change, it is tempting for people in the learning technology community simply to "go on with vigour, hoping for the best" (Pitt the Younger, 1791). But this would be to miss a major opportunity.

Innovation is strongly stimulated by crises and pressures of all kinds. Our challenges are to:

- analyse and plan, and create and marshal evidence;
- demonstrate the benefits of astute deployment of technology to support learning;
- listen to and involve learners, teachers, and institutional leaders;
- draw on know-how and practice internationally, from across and outside our individual fields;
- take an institutional approach, whilst focusing on openness and frugality.

Time, the social tide, the expectations of learners, and economic pressure at organisational level will themselves be a driving force for innovation. The scope for people in our community to make a difference is great.

Accordingly, the ALT-C 2011 themes will be:

1. **Research and rigour** – creating, marshalling and making effective use of evidence
2. **Making things happen** – systematic design, planning, and implementation
3. **Broad tents and strange bedfellows** – collaborating, scavenging and sharing to increase value
4. **At the sharp end** – enabling organisations and their managers to solve business, pedagogic and technical challenges
5. **Teachers of the future** – understanding and influencing the future role and practices of teachers
6. **Preparing for a thaw** – looking ahead to a time beyond the disruptive discontinuities of the next few years

Thus we are seeking papers that help to enable institutions and individuals round the world to play their part in helping learning to survive and thrive in the changing environments of education. Learning Technology and Learning Technologists have an increasingly key role to play in this.

5 Publication

Accepted abstracts will appear online before the conference.

The collection of abstracts will be identified by an ISBN and printed copies will be lodged with the relevant copyright libraries after the conference.

In addition, after the conference the abstracts will, at ALT's discretion, be hosted online in ALT's repository.

6 Rules for all abstract submissions

For short papers, short presentations (ePosters), symposia, workshops and demonstrations:

- The maximum word count is 350 words. Any references will **not** be counted towards the 350 word limit. Longer abstracts will not be reviewed.
- Any references should be limited to those that really are key to the contents of the abstract – ideally two or three and under no circumstances more than six – and should follow the Chicago Author-Date System, which is described in full at http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/style/reference/af_F.pdf. (An example is given below.)
- The abstract text should not contain headings, footnotes, or presenters' names. The abstract title and presenter names and organisations are entered into the submission system in separate fields.
- Authors are required to submit **two** versions of the abstract, the first is the complete abstract, and the second is an anonymised version of the abstract that will be used for reviewing purposes¹.
- The anonymised abstract should have all author names, institutions and references to the authors work removed. Thus a text fragment like

“one of the authors, Jane Digby (2006), described how work at the University of Manchester ...”

with the accompanying reference

“Digby, J. 2006. Tapetum character states: Analytical keys for tapetum types and activities. *Canadian Journal of Botany* 75: 1448–59.”

should appear as

“one of the authors, <author A>, described (2006) how work at the University of ...”

with the Digby, J. 2006. reference removed from the list of references.

- A list of author-provided tags (akin to keywords) is required for each submission: see section 11.2.
- Contributions must not have appeared elsewhere, in whole or in part.
- ALT is committed to an open publication model for conference contributions. By submitting a proposal to ALT-C 2011, authors agree that they or their employer retain copyright, but that the abstract if published will be licensed for use with a Creative Commons “Attribution-Non-Commercial-No Derivative Works 2.0 UK: England & Wales licence” (see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/uk/>).

In addition, ALT:

- may approach those submitting proposals to seek clarification or request changes so that they better fit the conference programme;
- may return ill-structured or grammatically poor submissions to the authors for correction before the review process (typically these comprise a very small proportion of all submissions);
- reserves the right to make sense-preserving grammatical edits to accepted abstracts during the proof-reading and publication process;
- will not make any alterations to the titles of accepted abstracts, but please ensure that titles are **concise, readily comprehensible**, and that they avoid **florid or pretentious language**.

¹ As in previous years, all proposals will be reviewed “blind”. By asking you to provide the anonymised version we avoid the risk that your proposal will suffer during the anonymisation process, since you are in control of this process.

7 Guidance for different session types

7.1 Short (oral) papers

20 minutes as part of a 40, 60 or 80 minute session, comprising approximately 12 minutes for presentation and 8 minutes for discussion.

An abstract for a short paper should describe and analyse either innovative work or some other significant contribution to the field of learning technology. The short paper format is suitable, e.g., for reviews of projects, for substantial work-in-progress, or for discussion or position papers. A key requirement is that the paper has a clear focus. In 12 minutes of presentation time it will be difficult to present a considerable body of work, such as a complete project. Instead, presenters need to draw out and focus on key areas or points. These may, for example, be a theory or model generated from data, a framework used to analyse experience, or key results that have significance for future activities.

As a **guide**, the abstract for a short paper will include the following topics:

- **Background:** The area and theoretical framework of the work, e.g. "This paper takes a socio-cultural perspective on the design of networked learning." or "This is an action research study of the introduction of mobile technology for learning."
- **Description of approach used:** Describe the methods being employed in the work.
- **Results of work done:** Give an account of the work that is in progress or has been carried out, and why it is important. Show how you have evaluated or conducted a critical appraisal of the work.
- **Conclusion:** Reflect on the successes and limitations of the work and its potential for further development.

Note that **a written paper is not required** in addition to the abstract.

7.2 Short Presentations (ePosters)

This format is new to ALT-C 2011. Traditional posters are beginning to look rather odd at a conference about learning technology. Last year we experimented with having the posters online as well as in the form of a physical artefact. This year we are moving to online for the "poster aspect". This allows sharing information visually, and it is therefore important that it has a substantial graphic component and not just text. There will be an option of placing online a short (maximum 10 "overheads") presentation about the poster. This can have voice over or just be free standing. Finally for those taking this option, there will be the opportunity to present the "overheads" in a "PechaKucha" style format. Each presenter will have a 6 minute slot with overheads automatically moving on at the end of a fixed 30 sec time. Three questions only will be allowed. Discussions can of course carry on after the presentation and there will be opportunities to have further dialogue both online and face to face at the conference.

Short presentations (ePosters) need to be described in an abstract which is submitted via the process described in this document. The form of the ePoster is an A0 or A1 pdf, preferably in portrait orientation. This will be submitted, along with the optional presentation before the conference so that it is made available to participants in advance. However at the proposal stage it is not required – **only an abstract is submitted.**

Prizes will be awarded to the best short presentations (ePosters) during the conference. See section 10. ePosters are especially welcome from new practitioners or researchers, including postgraduates working in LT who may wish to make an early announcement of work in progress.

As an indicative but not mandatory guide, the abstract for a poster will include the following topics.

- **Background:** The area and theoretical framework of the work.
- **Description of approach used:** Describe the methods being employed in the work, and how you will convey this to conference participants. Include a description of any diagram or picture that will form the focus of the poster.
- **Results of work done:** An account of the work that is in progress or has been carried out, and why it is important.

- **Conclusion:** Summarise the effect of the work done and any developments you anticipate.

7.3 Symposia

60 minutes (occasionally 80 minutes)

A symposium involves a panel of presenters who discuss or debate a key theme. Debate is of the essence and so a symposium should **not** consist of a series of presentations followed by some time for questions. The panel must work together on a theme and pose issues for debate. Panel members may choose to defend or argue against a position, theory, model or concept; highlight areas of uncertainties; or offer different interpretations of well-known studies and their results, etc. It is also possible for one or two panel members to take one position or viewpoint and the other panel members argue against that position.

A key outcome of a symposium should be that, with contributions from the audience, an area of knowledge has been redefined or that new understandings have emerged.

All proposals should assume the 60 minute format. Should ALT decide that a topic is of sufficient weight to consider an 80 minute symposium, you will be approached to this effect in May 2011 but the choice would then be yours.

As a guide, the abstract for a symposium will include the following topics.

- **Background:** The area and theoretical framework of the topic chosen, e.g. "This symposium will debate learning system embedding-related change in institutions in relation to organizational theory".
- **Ideas to be explored:** Indicate what will be discussed and why it is likely to attract an audience. Describe how your panel members will represent a range of approaches to and views on the symposium theme, to create a challenging debate or discussion.
- **Structure of session and activities:** Briefly indicate how the format will give those who attend the symposium the opportunity to contribute to the debate or discussion.
- **Intended outcomes for participants:** Describe what participants might learn from the session.

During the process of uploading your abstract (i.e. not as part of the abstract itself), you will be asked to give indicative timings to clarify the structure of the symposium.

7.4 Workshops

60 or exceptionally 80 minutes.

Workshops involve active participation and discussion with the focus on participants being able to develop skills, conceptual understanding or practical ideas for future implementation in their own practice, and we particularly workshop proposals that:

- cover new processes and approaches, especially those involving creativity and fresh explorations;
- enhance the ability of participants to evaluate research or reflect on practice, including opportunities for dissemination;
- help participants solve problems in the context of their own organisation.

(A workshop might also take the form of a 'master class' where, for example, an aspect of research or evaluation is dealt with in more depth and might be aimed at 'new' researchers.)

A workshop session **must** involve significant audience participation – note that a presentation plus a discussion does not constitute a workshop.

A workshop session might involve a large proportion of the conference delegates doing some active problem solving in a flat-floored space laid out in "cabaret" style.

As a guide, the abstract for a workshop will include the following topics:

- **Background:** The area and/or theoretical framework of the workshop, e.g. "This workshop will explore how evidence-based practice can be used to inform the future development of technology enhanced learning in schools."
- **Ideas to be explored or skills to be acquired or problems to be addressed:** Indicate what will be discussed and how participants will engage with the ideas.
- **Intended outcomes for participants:** Describe what participants might do in the session and how they might learn from the session.

During the process of uploading your abstract (i.e. not as part of the abstract itself), you will be asked to give indicative timings to clarify the structure of the workshop.

7.5 Demonstrations

30 minutes as part of a 30 or 60 minute session.

Demonstrations give an opportunity for participants to engage with practical examples of the use of technology in learning, teaching and assessment. The applications or tools to be demonstrated should either be innovative in themselves or, alternatively, be established technologies that are being used in an innovative way.

Audience engagement may be by demonstration only, or by 'hands-on' use of the application(s) being demonstrated. In either case, a significant part of the session should be spent on demonstration or 'hands-on' use.

Demonstration presenters are encouraged additionally to submit a proposal for a short presentation (ePoster) that supplements their demonstration. This may be of particular benefit to presenters who are hoping to disseminate information to the conference at large, not just to the participants at the demonstration. When coupled to a demonstration it is not necessary to have the presentational part of the short presentation format – an electronic poster will suffice.

As a guide, the abstract for a demonstration will include the following topics.

- **Background:** The area and any theoretical framework of the work, which should include the issue(s) which it addresses and why the solution was selected.
- **Description of approach used:** The nature of the system/product or idea to be demonstrated.
- **Structure of session and activities:** Give an outline of the structure of the demonstration showing how the demonstration will be incorporated into the presentation, in particular showing how this will be more than a presentation. Indicate whether this will be a 'hands-on' demonstration or not.
- **Intended outcomes for participants:** Describe what participants might learn from the demonstration.

During the process of uploading your abstract (i.e. not as part of the abstract itself), you will be asked to give indicative timings to clarify the structure of the demonstration.

All rooms will be equipped with good wifi and so demonstrations that are based on internet access by participants will be easily possible provided they are asked to bring network enabled devices. If software needs to be downloaded however, then this should be put down as a specific requirement as part of the submission.

8 The reviewing, selection, and acceptance process

After review (and, possibly, one cycle of change and re-submission) the abstract editors and the conference Programme Committee **select** abstracts for potential inclusion in the conference. After at least one presenter has booked their place at the conference, **and only then**, the paper is **fully accepted** for inclusion in the conference programme and publication.

8.1 Criteria for proposal review and selection

Abstracts will be refereed according to appropriate criteria drawn from the following.

- Relevance to the conference title “*Thriving in a colder and more challenging climate*” although this does not exclude other high quality proposals.
- Relevance to helping solve the problems being faced by institutions.
- Usefulness to conference participants including those from outside the UK.
- Contribution to scholarship and research into the integration of learning technologies into education.
- Reference to the characteristics and needs of learners.
- Appropriate reflection and evaluation.
- Clarity and coherence.

In the above, education is considered broadly and includes formal and informal learning settings in schools, colleges, universities, the workplace, homes and communities, at any stage in learners’ lives, including continuing adult education.

Proposals that are merely anecdotal or describe implementation without reflection, evaluation or linking to theory and research are unlikely to be accepted.

8.2 Review and selection

Proposals will be blind reviewed by two anonymous reviewers, and the four abstracts editors then work with members of the conference Programme Committee to select papers for the conference.

Some proposals may be selected on the condition that changes are made, including changes to format of presentation or timings, and the authors will be given feedback from the reviewers/editors that specifies the nature of the changes required. The revised, resubmitted proposals will then be reviewed by the editors to assess whether the reviewer/editor comments have been addressed satisfactorily.

8.3 Full acceptance

After selection for inclusion in the conference, at least one presenter **must** book to attend the conference by a deadline date that will be notified at the time of provisional acceptance. Only when this booking has been made will the paper be fully accepted for the conference.

Please note that slightly more proposals may be selected in the review process than can be accommodated at the conference. ALT will operate a “first-come, first-served” system in relation to a) revisions (where these have been requested) and b) bookings. Therefore:

- ***if you have been asked to revise your abstract, make the changes and resubmit the abstract as quickly possible;***
- ***whether or not you have had to revise your abstract, ensure that at least one presenter books a place at the conference as soon as possible after the conference opens for bookings in May 2011.***

If so desired, ALT will on request swiftly refund any payment made by a potential presenter who books to attend the conference and whose paper is not, for any reason, subsequently accepted.

9 Presentation at the conference

You will have the time mentioned above for your presentation, according to presentation type (see section 2 for times). Guidance on presenting will be provided on the conference web site or by email closer to the conference.

Please keep ALT updated on any changes to the presenter(s) for an accepted paper via admin@alt.ac.uk.

10 Best Short Presentation (ePoster) Awards

All accepted posters will be eligible for an Award. There are two awards, one voted for by the conference delegates, who may have seen any presentation. The other will be based on votes both at the conference and remotely, based on the actual electronic artifacts.

11 The online submission system

The online submission system for ALT-C 2011 will be available at <https://alt.conference-services.net/> from mid-December 2010.

- Anyone submitting a potential contribution to the conference must create an account on the online system. If you are submitting more than one proposal you can use the same account for each submission.
- You can alter a submission that you yourself have made at any time up to the deadline.
- The submission system uses pop-up windows. If you have problems submitting your proposal, please temporarily allow pop-up windows for this site on your browser.

11.1 Information required from submitters

The submission system will require the following information.

- Title of your proposed session.
- An abstract of up to 350 words, in both full and anonymised forms.
- Name(s) of presenter(s), and their affiliations, in the order you wish them to appear in the programme.
- Session type (choose from the selection of demonstration, research paper, short paper, short presentation (ePoster), symposium, or workshop).

- Indicative timings in the case of workshops, symposia and demonstrations
- A set of author-generated tags to help in assigning reviewers, and to help people who are considering attending the session to understand its focus. Please choose these tags carefully before you start the submission process, and read carefully the tag specification in section 11.2.
- Audio-visual and IT needs (you should describe fully any special requirements for your presentation, including any required software which will need to be pre-loaded. ALT does not guarantee to meet requests but will endeavour to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided)
- Intended audience(s), e.g. practitioners, researchers, policy-makers.
- Intended outcomes and activities for participants.
- You will also need to answer other questions regarding registering for the conference etc.

11.2 Tag list

Please give the tags associated with your submission carefully. These will be used to allocate appropriate reviewers and, if your paper is accepted, to help us group papers suitably, and to supply information to conference participants, support searching etc.

You can choose any tags that you wish but you may find that the inclusion of some from the lists below will enable easier and more relevant assignment of both reviewers and session and make it more likely that you will attract a reasonable audience.

Your tag list must be in this format.

- Tags are separated by spaces and start with a small (lower case) letter.
- Tags which are constructed from multiple words are elided with second, third, etc word initially capitalized, with a similar treatment for numbers, for example: **learnerExperience** or **web2.0**.
- The plural form is used for tags describing physical objects, for example: **tabletPCs** or **eBooks**.
- The singular form is used for concepts and approaches, for example: **costBenefit** or **socialConstructivism** or **learnerExperience**.
- Acronyms that normally appear in capitals are retained as such, possibly pluralised. Only common acronyms can be used, for example: **LT** or **VLEs** or **JISC** or **CPD**.

Possible tags to include that could help demonstrate alignment with the themes are – this list is not exhaustive:

marshallingEvidence, effectiveness, design, planning, implementation, mitigatingRisk, collaboration, scavenging, sharing, problemSolving, savingMoney, costBenefit, professionalDevelopment, futureRoles, educatingTeachers, CMALT, ALT, futureproofing, funding, rigour, institutionalProblems, expectationsOfInstitutions, convincingSceptics,changingLearnerExpectations, organisationalLandscape, respondingToChange, productivity, scalability, reducedFunding, earlyResearch, thoughtpiece, challengesForTheFuture, longTermValue, international, movingLearnersBetweenSectors, movingLearnersBetweenCountries, mainstreaming, replacingNationalCentralServices, extendingLife, sharedServices, convincingInstitutions, efficiency, mobileLearning, earlyAnnouncement

Other common tags could include – this list is not exhaustive:

evaluation, evidence, learnerVoice, immersiveLearning, disciplineBased, VLEs, CPD, OER, training, experience, futureLibraries, web2.0, learningDesign, methodology, research, ethnographic, languages, technology, informalLearning, transfer, savings, quality, benefits, repositories, openSource, privateProviders, enterpriseArchitecture, uptake, caseStudy, tools, preservation, digitization, DFE, BIS, JISC, HEA, subjectCentres, HEFCE, LSIS, learningObjects, reusability, HEARs, transcripts, recordingAchievement, assessment, mobileDevices, peerSupport, support, mentoring, staffDevelopment, socialNetworking, podcasting, evaluation, onlineTutoring, onlineCommunities, learningPlatforms, handheldDevices, learnerAcceptance, schools, FE, workBasedLearning, distanceLearning, openAccess, openContent, OER, openEducationalPractices, onLineLearning, simplification, selfDirectedLearning, cloudServices

11.3 The submission process

Here are some hints for submitters.

- Log in to the submission system when you have prepared your abstract. Enter your email address and the password you chose when you registered with the system.
- You will be taken to a screen on which the submission process starts. Please read the instructions on this screen carefully. If you want to submit a new proposal, select the link that says “Click here to submit a new proposal”.
- Submitting a proposal is a multi-step process. Each step asks several questions. Some questions are marked “required” and you will not be able to complete your submission until these questions have been answered.
- If you have to stop part-way through the process, your submission will be stored until you return later and complete all the questions. For example, when you log in again you can click on an incomplete abstract and resume submission.

11.4 Amending a submission

If you wish to change your submission, you can do this at any time up to the deadline of midnight GMT on 2 March 2011 (*extended deadline*).

- Log in to the submission system.
- You will see a list of the proposals that you have submitted. Select the proposal that you wish to change.
- Amending a proposal is just the same as the original submission process except that the online form will be automatically filled in with the answers that you gave previously. You don’t have to change an answer if you don’t want to.
- When you reach the final step and press “Finish” you will be sent an email confirming that your proposal has been amended.
- Once submissions close on the 2 March 2011 (*extended deadline*) you will no longer have access to your paper until after the Programme Committee reaches decisions on the programme.
- Once your submission has been accepted for inclusion into the programme, with any amendments that are required, we intend that users will be “locked out” from access to the system to give us a free run at preparing the abstracts for publication.

11.5 Queries about the submission process

If you have any queries about the submission process or you want to withdraw from the process please contact a conference administrator at: publications@alt.ac.uk

12 Further information

If you have any queries related to Short Papers, Short Presentations (ePosters), Symposia, Workshops and Demonstrations, please contact one of the following Abstracts Editors:

- Mark Johnson hmwj1@bolton.ac.uk
- Laurence Habib laurence.habib@hio.no

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