

ALT-C 2009: “In dreams begins responsibility” – choice, evidence, and change

8-10 September 2009, Manchester, UK

Call and Guidelines for **Short Papers, Posters, Symposia, Workshops and Demonstrations** – **UPDATED 24/02/09**

Call opens in mid December 2008 and closes at midnight on Monday 2 March 2009

This document can be found at http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/ALTC2009_abstracts.pdf

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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 researcher, writer, or presenter from other fields, please take the time to review this call and guidelines document. With your help we can make the 2009 ALT Conference a truly outstanding, influential, and enjoyable event.

The Association for Learning Technology's annual conference (ALT-C) helps to fulfill three of ALT's aims, namely:

- ◆ facilitating collaboration between practitioners, researchers, and policy makers;
- ◆ spreading good practice in the use of learning technology;
- ◆ raising the profile of research in learning technology.

In line with these aims, ALT, the Conference Co-Chairs, and the ALT-C 2009 Programme Committee call for proposals for inclusion in the ALT-C 2009 programme.

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

A companion document is the call and guidelines for research papers (http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/ALTC2009_research_papers.pdf), which is also accompanied by a research paper template (http://www.alt.ac.uk/docs/ALTC2009_research_paper_template.doc).

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 60 or 90 minute session, comprising approximately 12 minutes presentation and 8 minutes for discussion).
- ◆ Posters.
- ◆ Symposia (90 minutes).
- ◆ Workshops (90 minutes).
- ◆ Demonstrations (30 minutes as part of a 60 or 90 minute session).

Submissions should address one or more of:

- ◆ the five challenges described in section 4 below;
- ◆ any aspect of learning technology; including future directions, in terms both of technologies themselves, and their effect on learning and teaching, organisational structures, and individual roles and responsibilities.

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

In line with the 'choice, evidence, and change' part of the conference title, proposals which describe empirical research and evidence-based practice are particularly welcome. Studies which take account of the learner voice are also strongly encouraged. However, quality, and relevance to the overall focus of ALT-C 2009 remain the overriding criteria.

3 Submission deadline

The deadline for submissions is **midnight on Monday 16th February 2009, U.K. time.**

4 About the conference

The conference title, drawing on WB Yeats, is **"In dreams begins responsibility" - choice, evidence, and change.**

Learning technologies and learning technologists are now at the heart of modern learning, and yet our community still faces many challenges, for example:

- ◆ learning from history to build on past gains and avoid previous mistakes;
- ◆ spreading innovations that are of true value, rather than mere fads;
- ◆ redesigning pedagogy, the curriculum, and assessment methods to secure a substantial positive impact on learning;
- ◆ ensuring cost effectiveness by various means, from working effectively at a large scale, to supporting peer-assisted learning cultures;
- ◆ developing a research culture that informs practice, and a culture of practice that uses research evidence.

To rise to these challenges, we must dream and act on our dreams, but evidence must justify the choices we make. ALT-C 2009 will provide a broad forum for practitioners, researchers and policy-makers from all sectors to explore, reflect, and learn.

5 Publication

Accepted abstracts will appear in print before the conference, and online. The printed collection of abstracts will be identified by an ISBN.

After the conference the abstracts, may, at ALT's discretion, be hosted online in ALT's repository, currently under development.

6 Rules for all abstract submissions

For short papers, posters, 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/tf_F.pdf. (An example is given below.)
- ◆ The abstract text should not contain headings, footnotes, and 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.

¹ This represents a new departure for ALT. As in previous years, all proposals will be reviewed "blind". But 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.

- ◆ 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 2009, 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**.

7 Guidance for different session types

7.1 Short (oral) papers

20 minutes as part of a 60 or 90 minute session, comprising approximately 12 minutes for presentation and 8 minutes for discussion

An abstract for a short paper should analyse either innovative work-in-progress or some other significant contribution to the field of learning technology. The short paper format is suitable, e.g., for reviews of projects, for 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, e.g., 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 Posters

ALT aims to give posters considerable prominence during ALT-C 2009. Posters are a way to share information visually, and it is therefore important that a poster has a substantial graphic component and not just text. The poster serves two functions – as a high level stand-alone description of a topic, and as a focus for a short discussion on the topic with a small number of people in the conference's poster session(s).

For the poster session purposes, presenters may use a self-supplied laptop during discussion if required. Though ALT cannot guarantee that power sockets will be available, Wifi will be available.

Posters need to be described in an abstract which is submitted via the process described in this document. The form of the poster itself is an A0 or A1 poster, preferably in portrait orientation. The poster itself, if accepted, is brought to the conference (i.e. it is not submitted at the same time as the abstract).

A prize will be awarded to the best poster during the conference. See section 10.

As a 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

90 minutes

A symposium involves a panel of presenters who discuss or debate a key theme. Debate is key, so a symposium should **not** be 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.

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, and to describe how participation will be facilitated.

UNFORTUNATELY THIS OPTION HAS BEEN LEFT OUT OF THE ONLINE SUBMISSION SYSTEM. WE WILL BE IN CONTACT AFTER SUBMISSIONS CLOSE TO GATHER THIS INFORMATION

7.4 Workshops

90 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 their practice, including opportunities for dissemination.

(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.

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:** 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, and to describe how participation will be facilitated.

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7.5 Demonstrations

30 minutes as part of a 60 or 90-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 poster 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.

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, and to describe how participation will be facilitated.

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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

Proposals for presentation at the conference will be reviewed according to the following criteria.

- ◆ Relevance to the conference title "*In dreams begins responsibility*" – *choice, evidence, and change*. However, this does not exclude other high-quality contributions (see section 2).
- ◆ Contribution to scholarship and research into the integration of learning technologies into education.
- ◆ Reference to the learner voice.
- ◆ Contribution to practice or to the development of learning technology in education.
- ◆ Links that are made between theory, evidence and practice.
- ◆ Appropriate reflection and evaluation.
- ◆ Clarity and coherence.
- ◆ Innovation and/or creativity.
- ◆ Appropriate alignment between content and the format chosen.
- ◆ For workshops, and symposia, active participation, and for demonstrations, engagement.
- ◆ Usefulness to conference participants.

In the above, education is considered broadly and includes formal and informal learning settings in schools, colleges, universities, the workplace, homes and communities, and 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 editors of the abstract volume will 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, 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. Only when this booking has been made will the paper be accepted for the conference.

Please note that slightly more proposals will 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 2009.***

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, 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 Poster Award

All accepted posters will be eligible for the Best Poster Award, voted for by the conference delegates.

11 The online submission system

The online submission system for ALT-C 2009 will be available at <https://alt.conference-services.net> from mid-December 2008.

- ◆ 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 form will require the following information.

- ◆ Title of your proposed session.
- ◆ A presentation 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, poster, research paper, short paper, symposium, or workshop).

- ◆ 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 what your presentation requirements are, including any required software which will need to be pre-loaded. If your proposal is accepted ALT will endeavour to supply these, and consult with you if the requirements are difficult to meet).
- ◆ Intended audience(s), e.g. practitioners, researchers, policy-makers.
- ◆ Intended outcomes and activities for participants (activities will not be required for research papers, but outcomes will).
- ◆ You will also need to answer other questions regarding registering for the conference etc.

11.2 Tag list

Please write the tags associated with your submission carefully. These will be used to allocate appropriate reviewers and, if your submission is accepted for presentation, to supply information to conference participants, support online searching etc.

The tag list must be in this format.

- ◆ Tags are separated by spaces.
- ◆ Tags start with a small 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: **constructivism** or **socialConstructivism** or **learnerExperience**.
- ◆ Acronyms that normally appear in capitals are retained as such, possibly pluralised,. Only common acronyms can be used, for example: **VLEs PLEs CPD**.

To ensure consistency, ALT may standardise tags across submissions.

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.

- ◆ 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 16th February 2009 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 the Short Papers, Posters, Symposia, Workshops and Demonstrations strand, please contact the Abstracts Editors:

- ◆ Liz Masterman liz.masterman@oucs.ox.ac.uk
- ◆ Haydn Blackey hblackey@glam.ac.uk
- ◆ Amanda Jefferies a.l.jefferies@herts.ac.uk
- ◆ Brian Whalley b.whalley@qub.ac.uk

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