

# Blog/vlog posts on F. MacNeill's Professional Blog

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March 30, 2021 / [Fiona](#) / [Inclusive Spaces](#), [learning technologies](#), [reflection](#), [UI](#), [UX](#)  
Fiona MacNeill Blog  
[Link to live blog post](#)

## Vlog 1: introducing a personal challenge

### What does an inclusive and successful online event look like? Setting a personal challenge

[The short version rather than the 4min vlog]

[Link to vlog on YouTube](#)

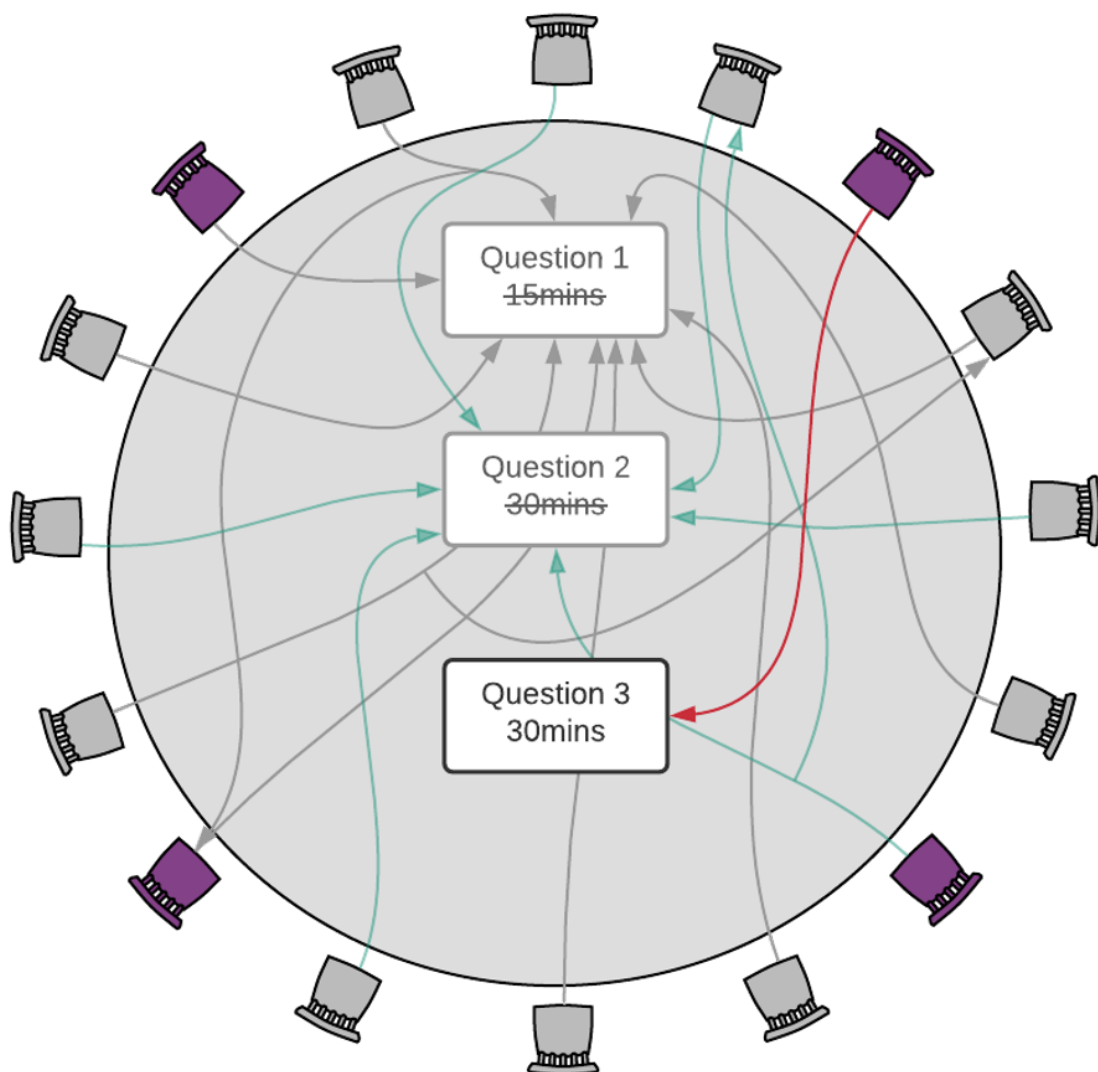
I work as a Learning Technologist, which means that I help academic staff at a university think about how to use technology to facilitate and augment their teaching and the students' experience of learning. During the covid-19 pandemic, within the space of days my role as part of a team, was crucial to maintaining delivery of teaching and learning. This has given me the opportunity to experience and continually reflect on the use of online spaces for teaching and learning. Prior to this I have worked with Webinar technologies for 10 years. I have also organised and chaired a range of local and national online events as well as experiencing many as an attendee. Based on all this, I now have a critical mass of experience. From this position, I feel that I can reflect and because my practice is user experience focused, I want to set myself a challenge. To identify the optimal elements when creating inclusive and successful online events. The following factors will be key to this challenge:

1. How power and control function in the virtual space.
2. How to provide space and time for consumption of knowledge.
3. How to provide space and time for collaboration (see also, White, 2021).
4. How to provide space and time for discussion, while actively considering and disrupting the structures of power and privilege that stand in the way of inclusion in online spaces.

As part of this reflective challenge, I want to consider what a user experience design process looks like for an online event. I'll base this on the Design Council's (2015) Double-Diamond which is based on four key design principles:

- "putting people first"
- "communicate visually and inclusively"
- "collaborate and co-create"
- and "iterate, iterate, iterate"

I anticipate that this challenge will take a while to explore on this blog. Sometimes, that exploration will take the form of vlogs, sometimes short podcasts, sometimes blog posts, and sometimes drawing. Furthermore, sometimes I will look at the big picture, or conversely a micro-interaction. This is about reflecting based on depth of experience and about capturing observations as and when they happen.



A virtual event space plan inspired by White (2021). This was used as part of introductory slides for an online event. The illustrations of virtual space, as we imagined it, were designed to structure discussion and to minimise any perceived power and hierarchy. The great thing about virtual rooms is that your table and room

can be larger than in real-life! If you can imagine it and draw it, you can draw your audience into that space.

## References:

Design Council (2015) 'What is the framework for innovation? Design Council's evolved Double Diamond', *Design Council*. Available at: <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/news-opinion/what-framework-innovation-design-councils-evolved-double-diamond> (Accessed: 13 March 2021).

White, D. (2021) 'Spatial collaboration: how to escape the webcam', *David White*, 1 February. Available at: <http://daveowhite.com/spatial/> (Accessed: 13 March 2021).

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## Vlog 2: But what about the subtitles?

April 15, 2021 / [Fiona](#) / [Inclusive Spaces](#), [learning technologies](#), [reflection](#), [UI](#), [UX](#)  
Fiona MacNeill Blog  
[Link to live blog post](#)

[Link to vlog on YouTube](#)

*I'm starting to get into the swing of my new vlog!*

### Edited vlog transcript

Hello again so it has been a little while since I last vlogged but that's because I have been working on things and reflecting on my practice. This feels like the right time to come back. I have been thinking very actively about inclusive online spaces. Specifically, I have been thinking about Watch Parties. So, watch parties aren't a new concept, we could think back to VHS tape, where you say... "*I own a video and I would like to watch it with other people how about you come and watch it with me?*".

How that translates to Higher Education is that there's been some really interesting use of the notion of a watch party as an alternative format instead of a traditional lecture format. So how that's been working during Covid is that people would structure a session around lecture recordings rather than live lecturing over a webinar tool. They would record say 20-minute segments of a lecture and then have discussions in between those segments. Potentially have activities for students, but the idea is that the instructor would be watching alongside the students and there could be this active dialogue going on in the background with chat.

Why am I thinking about these [Watch Parties]? Well it goes back to January when there was a really good guide released by someone called Emily Nordmann at the University of Glasgow, [Emily released a guide just outlining their key tips for running Watch Parties](#). It occurred to me that there was one thing that needed to be refined technically with watch parties and [I wrote a blog about this which I will link to](#) and that is how do we share that video effectively. So, if I think about Microsoft Teams which is the main teaching tool that I use on a day-to-day basis it has some really great

screen sharing options, but they are exactly that they are screen sharing options. So, if I'm playing a video on my computer and I want to share that with other people my only option is to play that video on my computer and share it out to all of the people who are watching my session. You might be like well "*yeah, everyone could just play press play at the same time on their own computers*" and yes essentially that is what we are doing at the moment, but it sort of means that you're not watching synchronously together and that's part of the value proposition. There's something really magical about watching other people watch things and watching things simultaneously with other people.

[Link to YouTube video for illustration purposes](#)

*Paranormal Activity – Sherry Lancing Theatre Reactions*

So, I'm a huge movie fan and the thing I miss the most right now is being able to go into a cinema and watch a scary movie. It's the way you can feel the atmosphere in the room, and you can feel how other people are responding to the content that you're all watching together at the same time. As of yet with online tools we don't really have a great way of doing that. So, in Microsoft Teams if you play a video and you want everyone to watch it at more or less the same time your only option is to screen share that video but the number one issue with that is that for the people watching on the other end there's potentially artifacting issues, there's quality issues, there's potentially broadband issues. It's not it's not a great experience really. If you need subtitles or you need to adjust the video in some way, you can't do that because essentially what you're seeing is a kind of frozen stream of that video, it's not interactive you can't turn on the subtitles. It is just my view of that video being shared with you.

"If you need subtitles or you need to adjust the video in some way, you can't do that because essentially what you're seeing is a kind of frozen stream of that video, it's not interactive..."

I thought well there must be a better way of doing this. There must be some tools out there to do this and I did find some tools that are genuinely promising but the thing that really struck me was that almost everyone was overlooking subtitles and subtitles to me are part and parcel of the video itself like subtitles should be considered as part of every video interface. You'd build in theory, a tool, that allows you to embed a video and allows you to set a date and time for that video to play. I think the thing that got me was that you'd go to all of this effort putting in all this functionality and then you put in a user interface that overlaps the subtitles so for a whole bunch of people who could be enjoying this video with you, they can't actually use the video. Or for me where I rely on subtitles to help decipher meaning or help me to process information it's like I'd be missing half of the message. I just found it really interesting so yeah that was one of my main observations. If you build a video tool don't overlook the subtitles because that's so important and especially if you're just letting people embed something like YouTube or Vimeo like all that subtitle functionality is already there so don't build something that goes over the top of it so people can't use it. Your frame should not interfere with that video, that video is its own object, and it needs to be viewed as an interaction tool in some way and not just as media, it's an **interaction**. So that that was a key observation I've had over the last few weeks Another thing is that I did actually run a watch party yesterday and it

was just so much fun.

[Comment: you will need to wait until the next post for more on this].

I must try and get all of this collated into a written blog because there's lots of cool useful bits, I probably need to share thanks for watching!