

# Summary of findings from the BarnCamp 2017 survey

This survey of everyone who registered or attended BarnCamp was conducted a month after the event and achieved a 42% response rate.



There were many expressions of thanks and satisfaction in the responses to the survey. These have mostly been omitted here in order to focus on suggestions for change, with the exception of things that were mentioned by more than one respondent. Also excluded from this summary are points of self-reflection, jokes, comments on things we can't change (e.g. the scenery) and feedback directed to our hosts at Highbury Farm.

Most people learned about the event through word of mouth. Some newcomers to BarnCamp commented that the pre-event instructions did not meet their expectations for clarity (perhaps because they weren't reading the mailing list), or were not sufficiently simple to enable frictionless registration & payment. Two people asked for a click-through online payment system and one asked for a facility to pay in cryptocurrency. 23 out of 28 responses indicated the process was either pretty easy or dead easy, with 3 reporting it just about usable and 2 impossible.

About a third of us, mostly newcomers, felt that the style of organisation was too vague, and asked for more and clearer information about how the event was organised, both in advance and on-site. Nobody felt that the programme was too prescriptive. There

was dissatisfaction that it was unclear what jobs needed doing, eg. *"Maybe make the daily scheduling process and how to add oneself to it more explicit."*, *"Make it clear what the jobs are, and how things happen"*. Many responses indicated that the participant saw something that needed doing but didn't feel empowered to do it. Some newcomers might not have been to this style of event before and just didn't "get it".

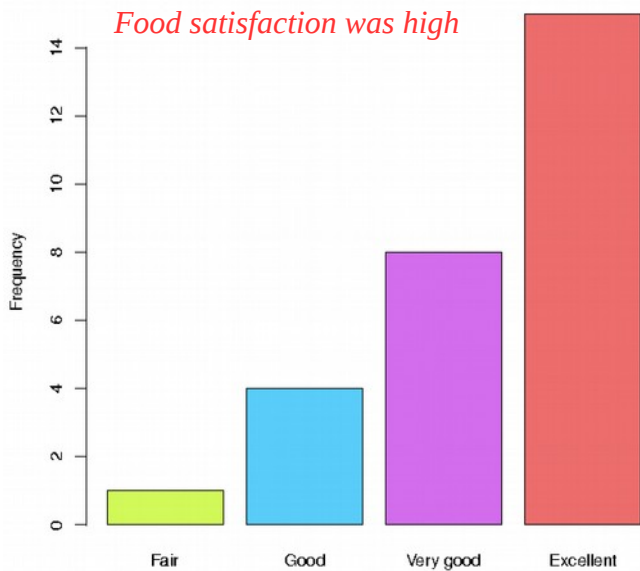
Despite many registrants having indicated on the sign-up form that they would volunteer to help with facilitation, there was a notable lack of people willing to step up and do it on-site. The lack of a production manager for parts of the event, and some people not doing what they committed to do, was a problem.

A number of technical issues were identified that could potentially have been avoided by preparation before arriving on-site. Some people had to spend a lot of time re-making cables and repeatedly adjusting the power and network setup because of changing demands during the event.



Many responses indicated great appreciation of the kitchen when it was operating, with 82% of us rating the food either very good or excellent. Similarly many people noted that having it dismantled and removed part-way through the weekend was a huge problem that had many knock-on effects; *"I was really dismayed that the kitchen packed up on Sunday morning, and there were no facilities for making tea for the rest of the day"*. The departure of the kitchen required re-

configuration of the power network, which broke the ethernet-over-power setup, causing disruption of workshops and creating work for people who should have been doing other things which suffered as a result. Having a partial tat-down happening on Saturday night and Sunday morning killed the vibe and was distracting for some people\*.



Of 27 respondents, 12 people said they had presented a workshop and 7 had presented more than one. Of these 19 presenters, 18 were either satisfied or very satisfied with the facilities. The most highly and frequently praised workshop sessions were Nor's Inkscape session and Marcus's Signal Processing with Python. These and other workshops were praised for their good preparation, relevant content and clear delivery.

The level of technicality was about right for about 2/3rds of us, with the other 1/3rd evenly split between wanting lower or higher levels of technicality. About half of us think the weight of politics in the content was about right, with the other half feeling it is not enough or nowhere near enough (2 people), with nobody expressing that there was too much.

It was suggested that having less technical sessions running alongside more technical ones would have meant there was something for everyone, all the time. There was a significant amount of regret that the material scheduled for Sunday morning didn't

happen, seemingly because of some people staying up too late the night before. There was also some dissatisfaction that some workshops had not run on time, making it difficult to switch between sessions in different spaces.

People reported having a lot of fun, with many mentioning the campfire chats and singing as well as the ceilidh and battledecks. *"General vibe"*, *"The ambience"*, *"it was the tone of the event in general that made it special."*, *"Er.. hanging out at the bar with the elders!"*. By asking a series of questions about how much people cared about different aspects of the event it was possible to produce this list of how much we value them - in descending order:

1	meeting like-minded people
2	thinking about tech politics
3	learning about politically problematic tech
4	thinking about politics generally
5	learning about tech generally
6	building movement/s
7	working on our own DIY tech agenda (not as a response to externals)
8	getting help with a specific tech problem
9	developing our solutions to problematic tech
10	sharing a special insight you've had

For future events, there were suggestions of having a themed event and for specific topics to be covered and perhaps more explicitly political content. Some people requested a round of introductions in future, to make newcomers more welcome.

Almost everyone wants to do it in 2018.

And here is what we want to do:

**Outreach and Promotion:** Emma, Anon, Jon Hyslop, charlie, Mike Dessonq, Yves Conan, Brent, sean, Tom Daley, Rama

**Finances:** Craig, Mark, Tom Lord

**Managing Signups:** Mark, Tom Daley

**Overall Production:** Mike Harris, Ben Green, Anon, Katalin Hausel, Marcus Valentine, Tom Lord, Woodsy, Mike Dessonq, clara, Naomi, Rama

**Workshop planning and scheduling:** Craig, Ben Green, Marcus Valentine, Patrice, clara, sean, Rama

**Food Planning:** Tom Lord

**Entertainment Planning:** Mike Harris, Craig, Ben Green, Rama

**Site Planning:** Anon, Mark, Woodsy, clara

**Site Electrics:** Ben Green, Marcus Valentine

**Site networking and comms:** Ben Green, SB, Marcus Valentine, charlie, Naomi, Tom Daley, Rama

**General comms with attendees:** Emma, Craig, charlie, Mike Dessonq, Patrice

This document and the full 27-page version are available from <https://hacktionlab.org/BC2017survey>

\* Sam started work full time end of March ( after she had agreed to do the kitchen) and had a conference sprung on her three weeks before hand that I had to present at in Edinburgh! No way of getting out of it

*This survey designed and conducted by Mark, Mike and Vale. Thanks to Tom and Emma for piloting it and to everyone who responded.  
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