



Prepared on 30/08/2019 by Siôn Pickering.

# Living Lab project brief: Introducing Virtual Attendance at Public Event.

## Description of the paper

This paper provides a brief overview of a living lab project that could usefully inform the work of the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS), the University of Edinburgh, as well as other higher education institutions.

## Research question

**To develop and manage suitable virtual collaboration systems for a public event run by the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability running in October 2019. To establish which of these systems is most suitable for various types of events in the future.**

## Background

Scope 3 emissions are those emitted indirectly by the University. The majority of Scope 3 emissions at the University are due to travel, of which over 90% of these are from flights. Whereas actions are in place to reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions, Scope 3 emissions are currently less mandated. The growth in Scope 3 emissions means they are becoming a greater proportion of the University's overall emissions. By 2025, it is estimated that emissions from business travel will account for 20 – 25% of University carbon emissions.

It is understood that business travel at the University takes place for a variety of reasons including to attend conferences and meetings. A few years ago it may have been inconceivable to attend a conference in a virtual setting. Today, we are able to communicate virtually in our personal lives, and yet there is slow uptake of these within academia.

By allowing individuals to attend events virtually, this will have a marked reduction in carbon emissions. In addition it also increases accessibility for those that are not able to travel, for example for health reasons, family commitments, financial constraints, or time limitations.

This project looks to use the Visions for Change event on the 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, organised by the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability, as a test bed for trialling a range of virtual participation tools including live-streaming to external audiences, attendance of panellists by virtual means, virtual audience interaction, and networking between physical and virtual participants.

Should this initial event be successful, there is the opportunity to trial systems at a Visions for Change event on the 5<sup>th</sup> November also.

## Objectives

The objectives of this project are to:

- Trial a number of virtual tools to establish what system, or configuration of systems, are most appropriate for specific event formats (e.g. panel discussion, interactive workshops, seminar series)
- Put forward recommendations for how the University could better support virtual elements at future events.

## Timescale

This project will be running from mid-September through to the end of October 2019, with a possible extension to mid-November 2019.

## Success

Should virtual elements be successfully incorporated into the event, success of this project will be measured by the feedback received from online and in-person event attendees. Should it not be possible to arrange suitable virtual elements for the event, this does not mean the project has not been successful. The lessons learned in this instance will guide similar projects at the University and more widely in the future.

## What is required

Participants are expected to attend up to four short meetings with SRS in September and early October. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss possible virtual tools available for the event on the 16<sup>th</sup> October and to source suitable equipment for the purposes of this event.

Participants will be required to work independently as well as part of a group throughout the duration of this project in order to work out the logistics of arranging virtual elements for this event.

Participants are also requested to set up and manage the virtual elements during the event, which runs on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> October (estimated time including setup and close 17:15 – 20:15).

Following the event, participants are asked to write up about their experiences in the form of a blog for use by SRS. In addition, a case study document will be written up in conjunction with the participants and SRS. This case study will be distributed to colleagues within the University of Edinburgh as well as other institutions globally.

Support will be provided throughout the project by Sion Pickering, Project Coordinator at SRS.

## Further Details

For further information on this project, please contact Siôn Pickering, SRS Coordinator:

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