

CAS CONFERENCE (BHAM) 2017 REPORT

Date: June 17th Venue: University of Birmingham

"An essential conference to attend as a computing teacher - the most useful professional development activity I do all year!"

"Thank you for a great day - superb organisation - a really inspirational day!"

"I love this conference, always inspirational!"

With 394 registrations, 44 workshop sessions and 5 plenaries the 9th National CAS Conference was the biggest to date. The University of Birmingham team were fabulous (again) and ensured the conference ran smoothly. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive for the conference day itself. The format and objectives are appreciated and there is no need to change this but there are always things that can be done better. This document summarises the attendee feedback and provides recommendations for 2017.

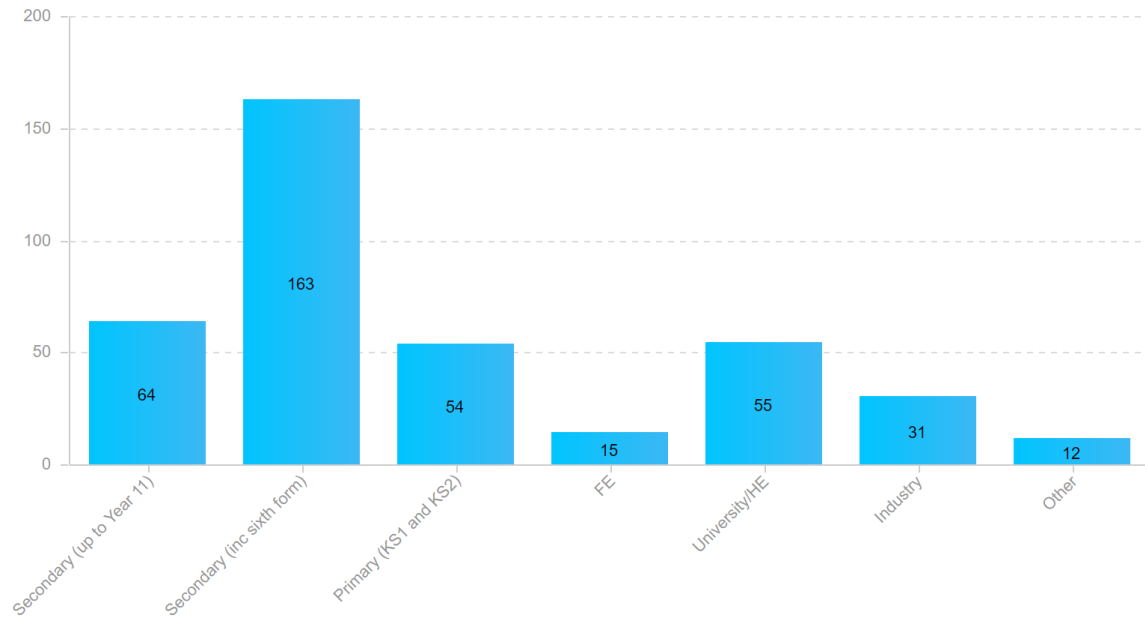
ATTENDEE PROFILE SUMMARY

- 21% of attendees were not members of CAS
- 45% had not attended the Birmingham conference before

Attendee profile:

- 11% HE
- 16% secondary (up to year 11)
- 41% secondary inc. sixth form
- 14% primary (KS1 and KS2)
- 8% industry
- 4% FE
- 3% Other

Please select one of the following to indicate the age group of your students/learners?

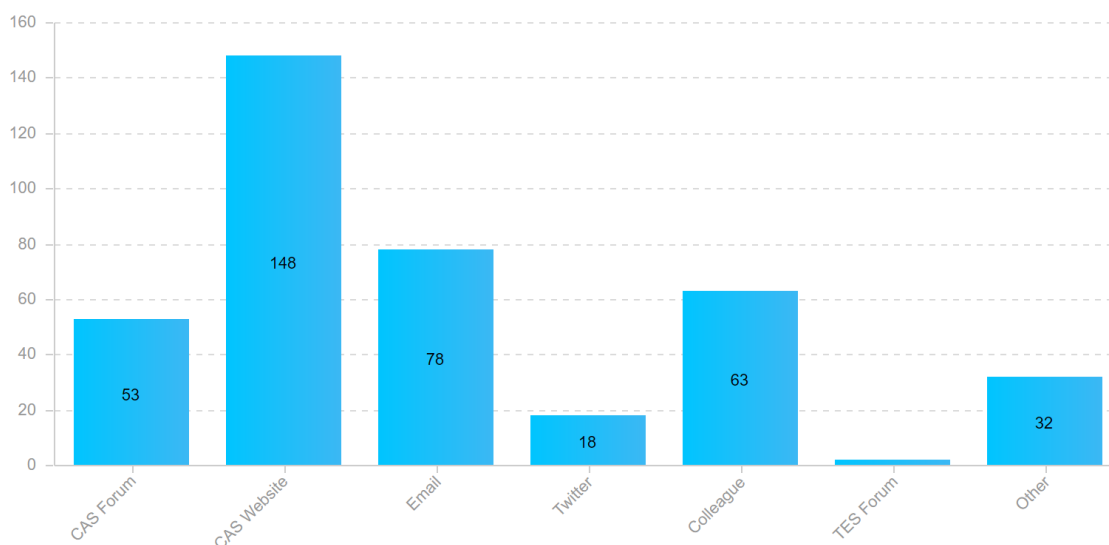


These figures are largely unchanged from previous years attendee breakdown

They had heard about the conference from:

- 13% CAS Forum
- 38% CAS Website
- 16% Colleague
- 20% email
- 5% Twitter
- 8% Other

How did you hear about the CAS Summer Conference?



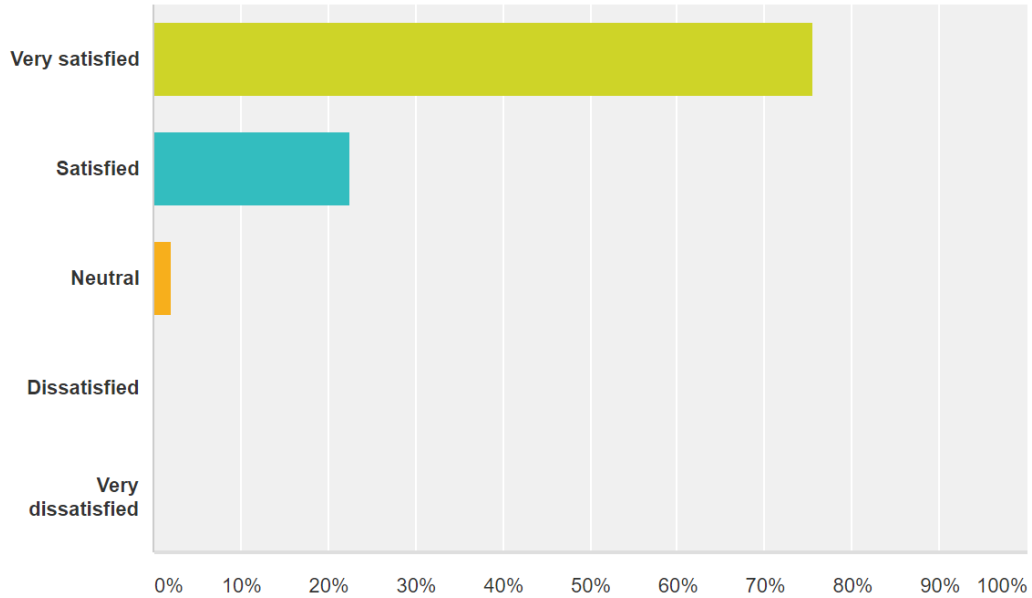
ADMINISTRATION FEEDBACK

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Very Poor	Total
Booking Conference Ticket	75.51% 74	22.45% 22	2.04% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	98
Registration (on the day)	80.41% 78	18.56% 18	1.03% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	97
Conference Venue	66.33% 65	24.49% 24	8.16% 8	1.02% 1	0.00% 0	98
Accommodation	52.11% 37	18.31% 13	26.76% 19	2.82% 2	0.00% 0	71
Catering	51.55% 50	35.05% 34	12.37% 12	1.03% 1	0.00% 0	97

As noted in previous conference reports the support provided by the University of Birmingham is invaluable, especially as they gift the facilities and staff to CAS for the conference enabling us to keep the attendance fee very low. The facilities are not designed for conferences and the Birmingham team do an incredible job making it work this way and under 3% regarding the facilities as poor is testament to their hard work and ability. As the following chart shows the overwhelming majority were well pleased:

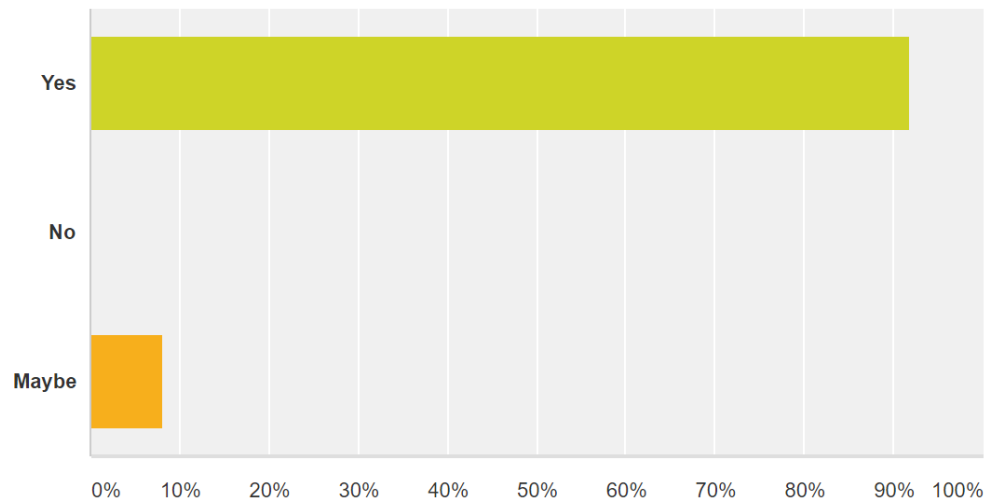
Please rate your overall experience of the CAS Conference (Bham)

Answered: 98 Skipped: 0



Would you return again next year?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 0



The following sections summarise the free form responses to the remainder of the questions asked in the feedback form.

WHAT DID YOU HOPE TO GAIN FROM THE CONFERENCE?

As ever a variety of needs and reasons why people attended, including:

- Network with colleagues
- Ideas and insight into data / demographic of typical CS students
- Ideas on how to deliver it differently
- To encourage girls to the subject both of which I gained.
- Get classroom material for all key stages
- Find out more about CAS
- To improve their teaching
- An insight into current developments that help deliver the computer science curriculum.
- Insight into the latest in CS education research and practice

WHAT WAS GOOD ABOUT THE CONFERENCE?

Several respondents highlighted the speed geek on Friday evening as being a good way of getting a quick overview of many ideas and on going projects. This set the tone for the rest of the conference. Many respondents commented on the friendliness and welcome from both organisers and other colleagues, citing the 'great buzz!!', 'passion' and 'enthusiasm'. Speakers were frequently commented as 'very helpful', 'high quality' and 'approachable' with particular mentions for Mark Guzdial, Centre for Cyber Security. Linda Liukas struck the right note and received most mentions in the feedback for her inspiring talk at the end of the day. The catering was complimented several times, though one detractor thought fruit would have been preferable to doughnuts. Some were appreciative that the speakers were teachers and not 'professional speakers'. It is particularly pleasing to see the CAS ethos of 'an open and friendly atmosphere' being referred to several times e.g. "The sense of community, warmth from delegates and presenters". Many commented on the range of workshops so that there was something for everyone including e.g. teacher trainers.

WHAT COULD HAVE BEEN IMPROVED?

Usually most respondents cite the catering when answering this question, but not this year! This year it was the lack of air conditioning in the lecture theatre.

Several respondents: + wanted the workshops to be longer and to be more "hands on" + education phase of attendees on badges + summary of workshops needs to be clearer and not focused enough on a particular key stage + varied quality of the workshops with the suggestion of less but higher quality

WHAT MIGHT YOU DO DIFFERENTLY, IN YOUR CLASSROOM, AS A RESULT OF WHAT YOU HEARD IN THE CONFERENCE?

As expected a variety of different responses dependent on what the attendees heard but e.g.

- using parsons problems and sub-goal Labelling
- build in some of the resources suggested by the presenters, such as the problem solving rubric.
- Try out some new coding apps (Michael O’Kane) and focus on design in programming (Jane Waite).
- Look again at the progression pathways and our planning to ensure progression
- unplugged approaches
- Not panic so much about the NEA
- Use Quantum for some assessments
- use Computational Thinking in my lessons. In stead of learning tools

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE EVENTS/CONFERENCES ORGANISED BY CAS?

Some particular mentions aimed at future improvements and enhancements included:

- Needs based talks: Identify in advance what possible attendees want to learn about, and target the talks specifically at these needs. The talks were a mishmash of different qualities and interests, but it would be great if they could be more ‘solving needs’ focussed. Regional CAS leaders meet and greet - have a time specifically aimed at meeting CAS regional leaders.
- Having primary/ secondary and region on badges would be useful.
- More coding workshops, and lets actually build something.
- have the conference over two days?
- Set up a transparent programme committee, and invite applications to present workshops.

But there were several who said e.g. “It is really good - each year exceeds expectations so I don’t really know what to suggest.””

NEXT YEAR

Next year will be the 10th annual CAS conference so perhaps a chance to celebrate in a different way. Delegates were asked for their suggestions which included:

- Giveaways (Pi Zero, Arduino clones) or a raffle, with a prize for everyone, no matter how small the prize is
- Have cake and eat it. Include some kind of rerun of some of the best things / most positive suggestions from last 10 years.
- Maybe a prize for best practise? Teacher of the year?
- Opened by Royal Family/Parliament minister?
- Maybe a historic keynote on the backstage stories of how it got started, the dead ends, the frustrations and the successes. Maybe also a critical look on how achievable and realistic the new curriculum is.
- Sack off one of the final plenaries and have a drinks reception in the senior common room.
- Should we have students there showing off the best of what is being done in schools and telling us what we can do better?
- Competition throughout the day with a 10 things to find or do. 10 ways to improve your teaching for each key stage. 10 new ideas for you (have lots more than 10 and get people to use something like google forms to record the 10 they like which may provide useful data for year after..
- Isn't that the 2nd National conference? or have I become somewhat overly obsessed with binary? ;)
- Lecture on internet of things and security / ethical issues related to automation and hourglass economy. Perhaps try and get Jaron Lanier or Yuval Harari to give a talk?
- Celebrate the incredible work teachers are doing