Celtic Knot 2020 survey summary

Background

The Celtic Knot Conference took place on 9th and 10th July 2020. A survey was circulated to attendees, speakers, and moderators to assess how people perceived the event. The survey was hosted on Wikimedia UK's SurveyMonkey account and was 10 questions long. It was issued at the end of the conference on 10 July and shared via Telegram and Eventbrite. There were 33 responses in total, most of which were submitted within the first 24 hours. Most of the responses were from speakers and attendees, while moderators and organisers documented their experience of the conference in a separate document.
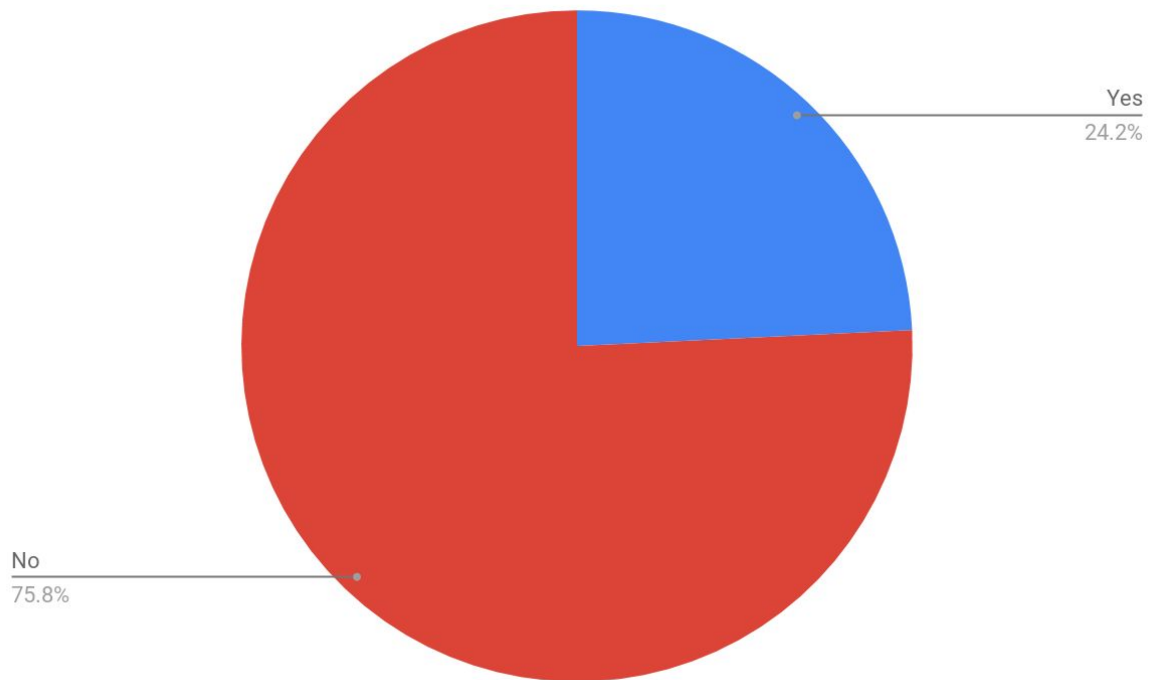The questions are listed below and the answers summarised. The tenth question asked people to submit their postal address if they wanted to receive a thank you gift for taking part in the event and as such the results are not detailed here.
We also gathered some information about the 115 participants through the registration form. This showed that attendees were located in a range of different time zones (46% in UTC+1, 20% in UTC+2).We asked if there were any accessibility issues organisers should be aware of, and the most significant issues was the suggestion to use subtitles. Most attendees highlighted Wikidata and language technology as an area of interest, with significant interest in empowering wiki communities, cultural institutions, and Wikimedia in education.
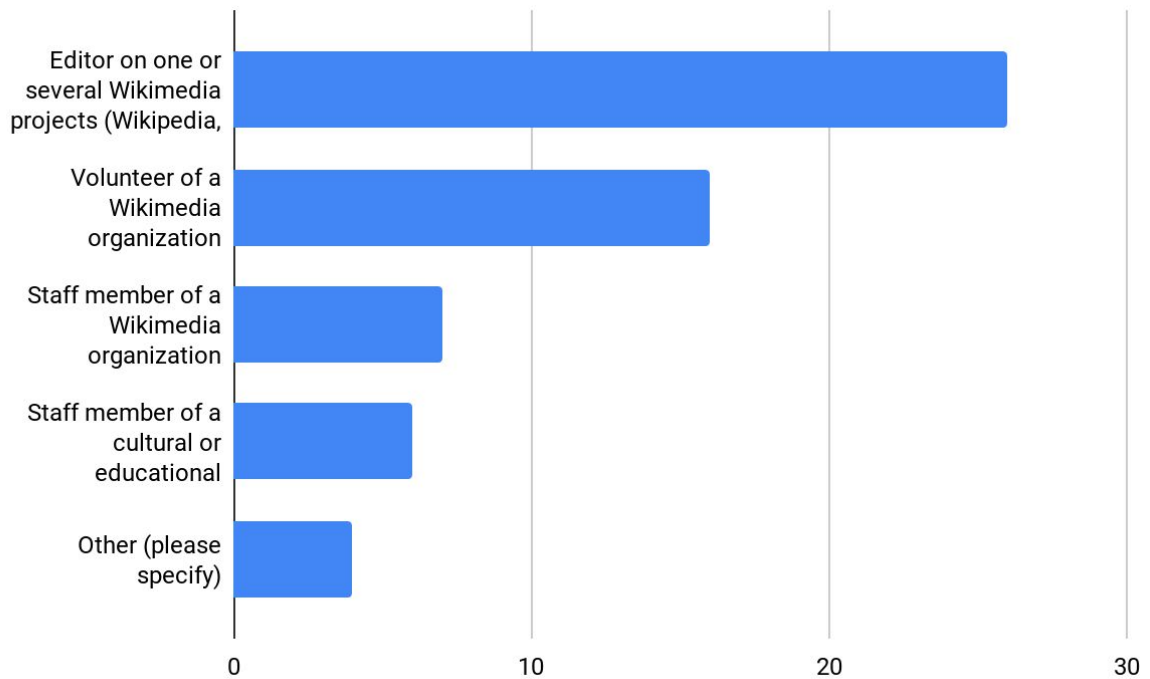
Responses

1. Did you attend any of the previous Celtic Knot conferences (Edinburgh, Aberystwyth, Falmouth)?

33 responses in total

Yes
24.2%

No
75.8%

2. What is your background?

33 responses in total

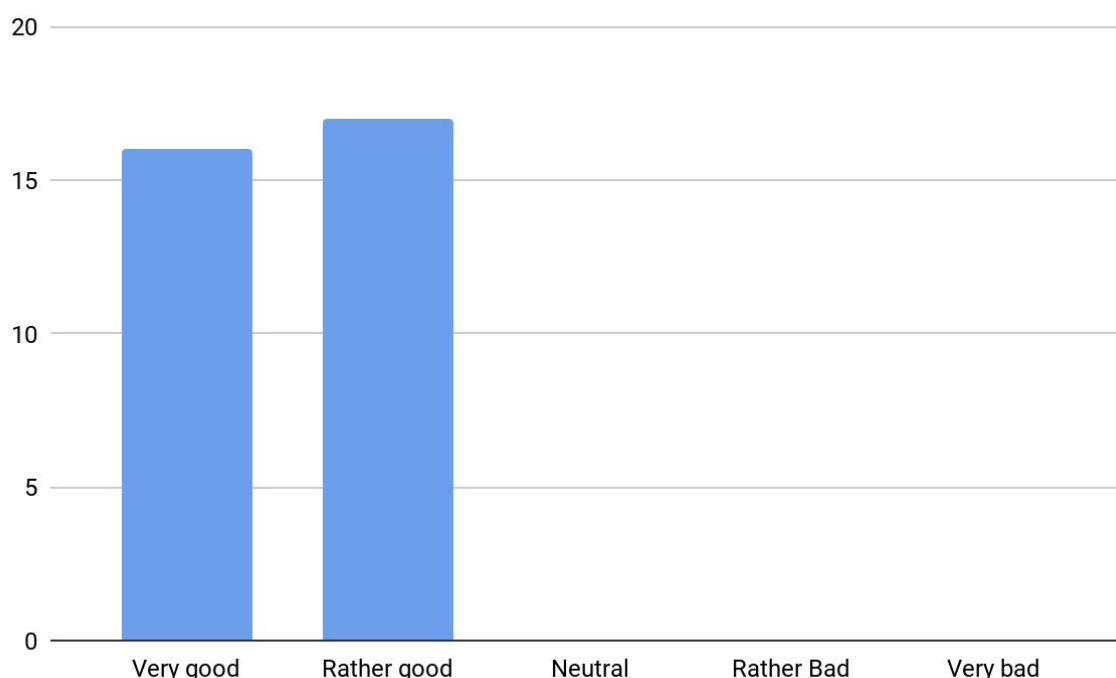| Background	Count
Editor on one or several Wikimedia projects (Wikipedia,	26
Volunteer of a Wikimedia organization	16
Staff member of a Wikimedia organization	7
Staff member of a cultural or educational	6
Other (please specify)	4

Under 'other' four people answered 'general Secretary Kesva an Taves Kernewek', 'administrator of a local wikipedia', 'board member of a Wikimedia organization and member of another', and 'Wikipedia reader and Irish language learner'.

3. This year's Celtic Knot was our first experiment on turning the event remote. How was your experience with the online formats (livestream, videos, text channels, moderation, online social interactions…)?

33 responses in total

4. Could you tell us a bit about your experiences of the synchronous elements of the conference? (e.g. live stream on YouTube). How about asynchronous elements? (pre-recorded videos, social messaging channels)

32 responses in total. Responses were favourable to both the live content and the pre-recorded content. Having particiaptns based in several time zones was a challenge, with a few people noting that it meant a very early start or late finish for some attendees. Balanced against this was the fact that the format allowed people to experience the content on their own terms at times that suited them. Several people noted this with one person preferring it to in-person conferences as it gave them greater flexibility.

Largely, the platforms were positively received and YouTube provided a reliable experience. The variable audio quality was sometimes noted, but this seems not to have greatly affected the overall experience.

Telegram and the live chat were mentioned often in the feedback and largely favourably. For at least one respondent the volume of messages on Telegram made it hard to keep track of conversations, especially without threading. Discussions around conference sessions was more successful around the live sessions compared to the pre-recorded talks; such an approach could benefit from more active stewarding in future events. Fragmenting

discussion made it harder for some speakers and attendees to follow all discussions; having a single venue may have been easier.

5. What has the online format enabled you to do, that would be very hard if it was on-site, offline? (This could be anything! We are curious to hear what opportunities has this online format generated for you)

31 responses in total. Overwhelmingly, people responded that the online conference format allowed them to fit the event around other commitments. Participants were also able to replay parts if they missed something. Several people also noted that had the event been in-person they would have struggled to attend as it would have been difficult to find the time and money. Remote participation went some way to removing physical barriers to participation and allowed people to continue child-caring at home which otherwise would have been another demand on resources.

The use of the Etherpads for note taking and asking questions also allowed for more in-depth discussion of talks than is often possible at in-person events. For many people this was the first time they had attended the Celtic Knot, and at least one person said that the online format meant they were able to take part on a speculative basis, whereas the cost of attending an in-person event would have pushed it down the list of priorities.
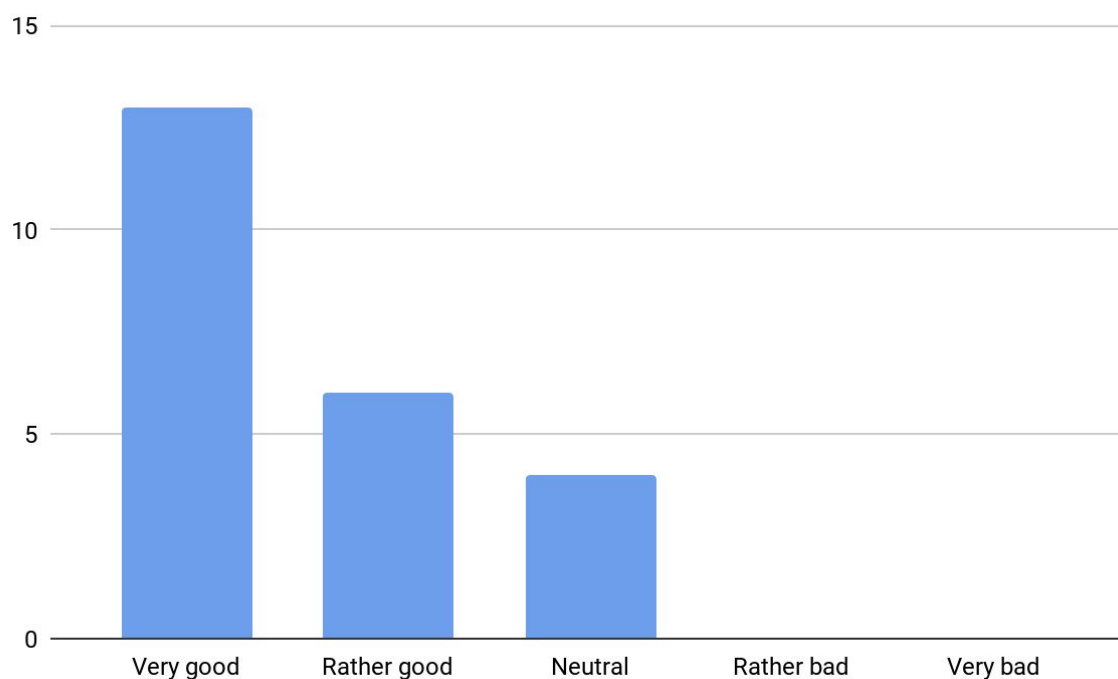
6. Anything else you would like to add regarding the organisational part of the conference? What worked, what could be improved, anything you missed?

25 responses in total. Responses generally provided positive comments, though there were suggestions that more interactive elements and a platform for live discussions rather than comments would have been useful. Several people noted that the timing was confusing and that audio quality was sometimes poor for the live talks.

Additional suggestions including not using Telegram (though the reason was not given) and promoting the event more heavily beforehand.

7. How would you rate the content of the sessions?

33 responses in total

8. Could you elaborate a bit?

30 responses in total. The response was generally favourable on the quality of the talks and the variety of topics, including looking beyond Wikipedia to other projects. Some people noted that while elements of the content were relevant to them, other parts weren't and that for people new to this area it was a bit overwhelming. Several people were very positive about the Wikidata elements.

9. Anything else you'd like to add for the organisers before completing this form?

25 responses in total. This question was mostly used to thank the organisers and leave positive comments about the conference. There is certainly an appetite for a follow up, and while the online format was successful people want to meet people at an in-person event. Other comments suggested that some people had been inspired to become more involved with Wikimedia, and others felt it was positive that the event was open to people beyond the Wikimedia movement.