

Points of View 2016



Liz Stevens – Programme Committee Member

Venue

You said:

“Always the same venues”

UKNOF response:

- Balance of locations
- Known venues create less issues
- Ease of travel for attendees
- Builds local knowledge
- Growing numbers provide challenges in picking venues
- Donated venues can cause issues

Catering – Marmite topic!



Catering

You said:

“No fizzy drinks, what if we don’t like fruit juice, tea, coffee or water?”

UKNOF response:

- Some venues don’t allow fizzy drinks
- Costly premium



Catering

You said:

“Food wasn’t up to scratch”

UKNOF response:

- Can be very individual
- Try to balance needs
- Budget limitations
- All dietary needs catered for



Catering

You said:

“(Glasgow) Was frustrating to have a venue where drinks (and food) could not be taken into the venue. I had the tail end of a cold and a very sore throat so was suffering without hot liquids. The refreshments were all fine, but only available outside.”

UKNOF response:

- We agree
- Venue hadn't made us aware before the meeting

Organisation



Organisation

You said:

“I think the outcome of the meeting depends on who you know. If you know people there, you can go off and it is more fun. If you come alone you don't really know anybody, then I think an intimidating bunch of people. I always try to say hello to a few people who look a bit lost – I think collectively, more people could do this.”

Organisation

UKNOF response:

- Extroverts – do just fine
- Introverts – might have to step out of comfort zone
- We now have first timer welcomers
- We let you know who can help (red lanyards)
- You can approach the first timers to make them feel welcome (yellow lanyards)
- Volunteers needed to help

Social Activities



You said:

“ Don’t hold another evening social at the meeting venue.”

“A better range of beer would be nice – perhaps get a local brewery to contribute?”

“Shameful “beer” selection at Pints ‘n Packets, and not even available in pint form! Some decent ales next time maybe”

“Drink supply on venue and if that can’t be arranged perhaps coordinate a trip to a nearby bar.”

“Organised social events as a group would be great, not a weakness, but perhaps a group aligned to different interests could go to a certain place such as booking a local curry house.”

Social Activities



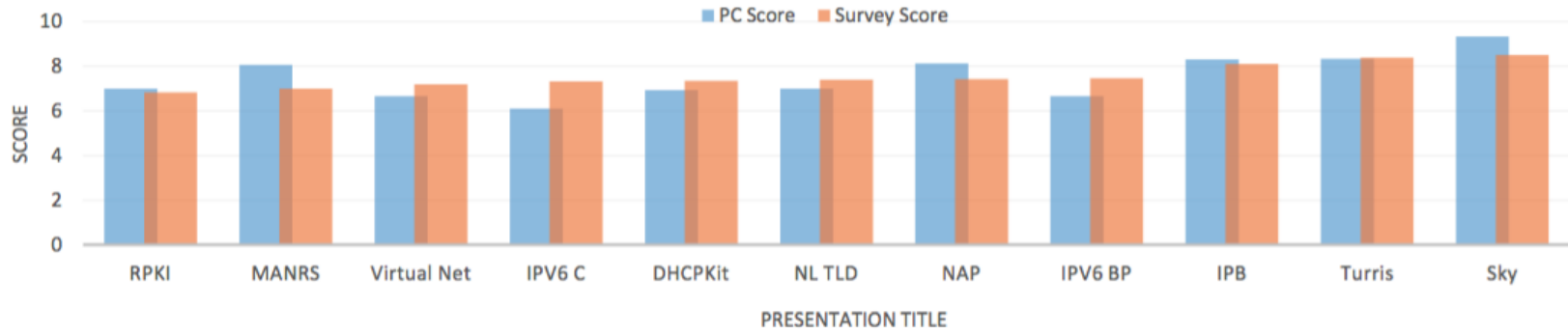
UKNOF response:

- Socials need to be open to all
- Outside socials are hard to organise due to number of attendees 200+
- Beverages are limited by venues and budget
- Venue based socials have advantages to attendees
- Self organisation and volunteers to do this very welcome
- We are grateful to our Pints & Packets sponsors

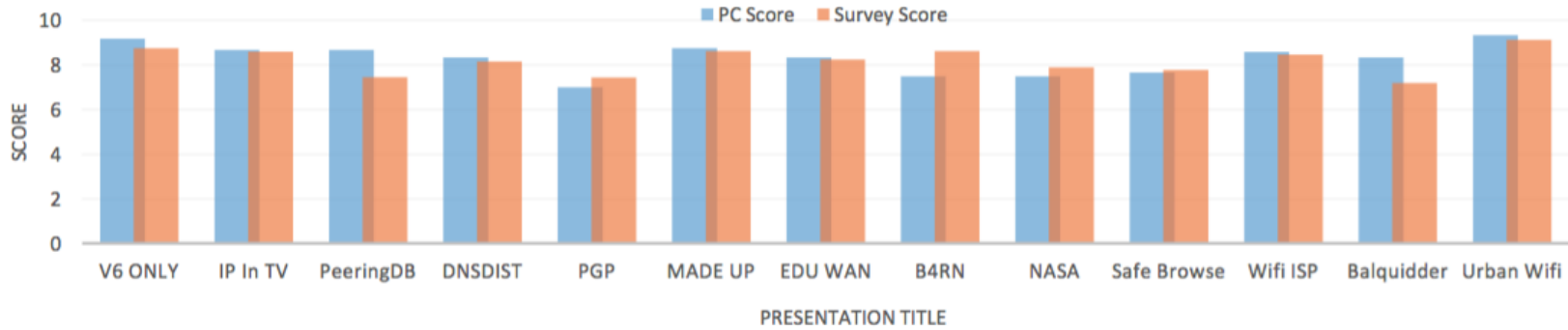
Content – How do we decide?

- Call for presentations – we need you
- Request specific talks based on your survey feedback
- Chase, chase and chase some more
- PC review and rate abstracts
- Range of PC member backgrounds
- We may ask for slides
- Assign a “Shepherd” to help the speaker
- Sponsors talks get rated and reviewed too!
- We can and do reject talks
- No preference based on gender, age, company etc

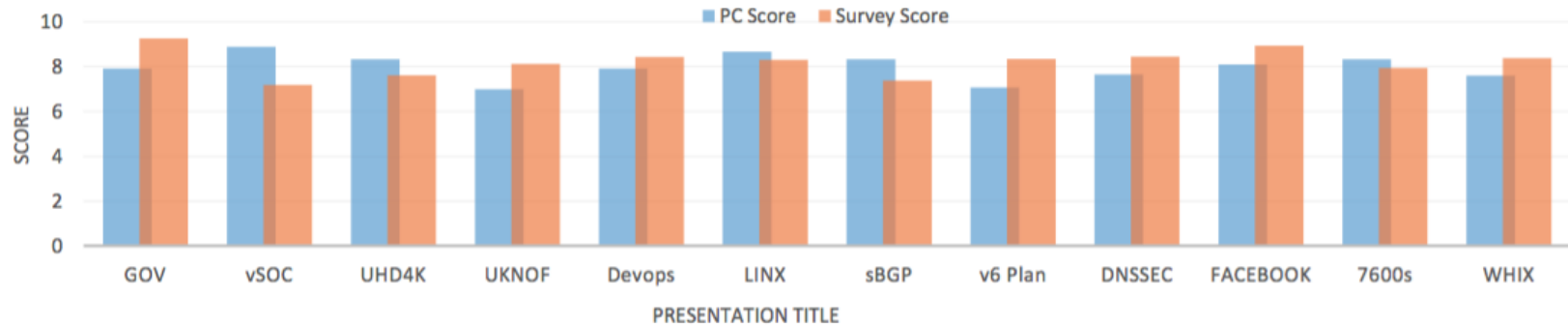
UKNOF33 - London



UKNOF34 - Manchester



UKNOF35 - Glasgow



Content

You said:

“Datacentre networking stories seem to be thin on the ground”

“More NFV and SDN in industry”

“Variety of open source OSS tools”

UKNOF response:

- We ask, we didn't get any response (list, groups and individuals were approached)
- We can't force people to present

Content

You said:

“A lot of the same people give talks and ask questions, even though there are many new members always joining. It would be nice to get more new faces giving talks. Otherwise it seems like a bit of an old boys club, which I don't believe it is”

UKNOF response:

- No preference given any presenters
- We try to avoid repetition but we can't force new speakers
- Speakers who got good feedback get requested by you to come back sometimes

Content



You said:

“Sometimes the presenters don’t have good presentation skills”

UKNOF response:

- We can’t tell from abstracts
- Content can be useful even with a dry delivery
- Auditions might put people off
- ‘Shepherding’ should help

Content

You said:

“Too much from 1 incumbent, need more from the big operators with infrastructure in the ground and wholesale products (TalkTalk, Sky, Virgin/Liberty, Vodafone, EE etc)”

“How much of the UK’s internet traffic is carried by the companies represented (and speaking) at UKNOF? Probably a small percentage only. Would be nice to see more of the larger providers.”

UKNOF response:

- Encourage large telcos to submit but many don’t
- Good that the 1 incumbent is available to talk and come forward with content

Content

You said:

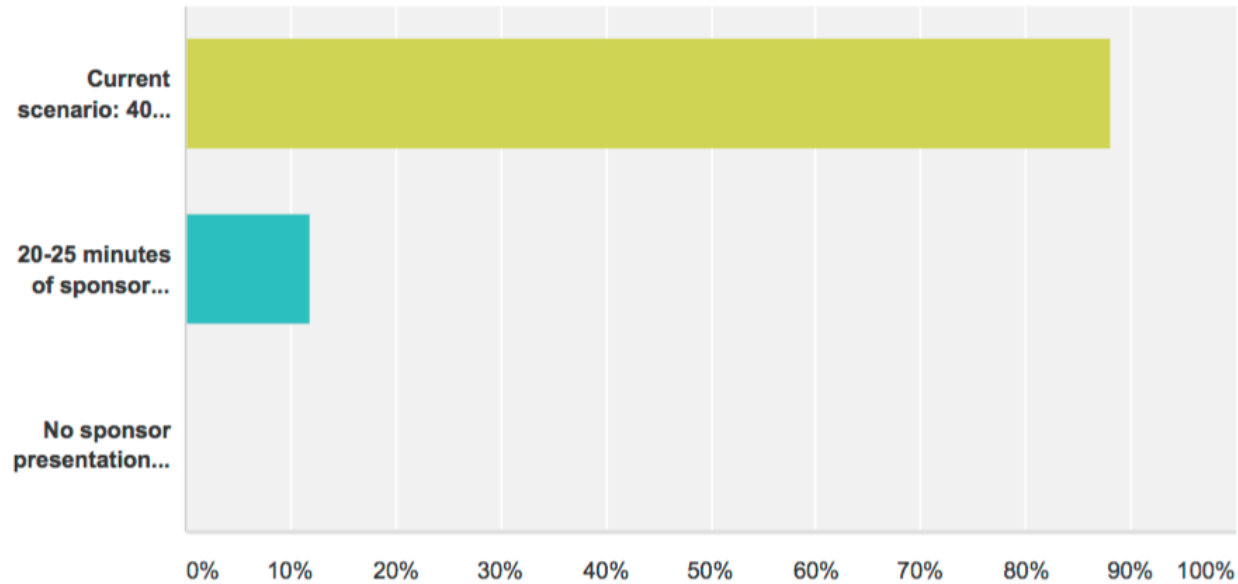
“The lack of visibility of the schedule in advance of the free tickets stopping is a slight annoyance, but I can appreciate why is it that way.”

UKNOF response:

- Agenda out 3 weeks before for the last 3 meetings
- Sometimes we get cancelations
- Relies on submissions and our input

Q10 Which of the following would you prefer, to attend UKNOF?

Answered: 50 Skipped: 0



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| Current scenario: 40-50 minutes of sponsor presentations per 1 day event and no charge during Early Bird | 88.00% 44 |
| 20-25 minutes of sponsor presentations per 1 day event and charging an attendance fee of £50 + VAT during Early Bird | 12.00% 6 |
| No sponsor presentations and charging an attendance fee of £100 + VAT during Early Bird | 0.00% 0 |
| Total | 50 |

Sponsors



You said:

“Necessary evil I am sure but sponsor call outs are a pain. We can see who they are, do we need to be reminded of their names over and over again? (ahem Keith)”

“I wonder if giving the sponsors some advice and training on how to give a UKNOF talk would be a good idea e.g. instead of ‘here’s a hand-wavy pile of stuff we’re trying to sell’ asking them to present ‘here’s a problem we solved’ might be better. This would make the conference better and make the sponsorship reflect much better on the sponsoring organisations.”

Sponsors

The sponsors said:

“Greater appreciation of sponsors by attendees, after all without sponsors delegates would have to pay”

“The unwillingness of some participants to engage with sponsors. This may risk future sponsorship”

“Not enough delegate interaction with sponsors, this wasn't a great session for sponsors to get face time with delegates, which is a potential issue for future sponsorship opportunities”

Sponsors

UKNOF response:

- We now 'shepherd' sponsor talks
- We do reject talks if appropriate
- Ratings have improved
- Encourage them not to focus too much on products
- We can't run UKNOF without our sponsors and their talks – please talk to them and even thank them! You wouldn't be here without them.

Diversity

You said:

“One of the big issues at UKNOF35 was the lack of women speaking. There was one woman in an excellent shared presentation While there can be arguments made about this being an industry issue, I believe that any programme committee should work harder to increase the diversity of their programme, People do what they see and a larger number of women presenting will, hopefully, lead to even more women presenting!”

“Can we get more diversity? 0.5 female speakers.”

“Too many old farts (including me)”

“Lack of younger people”

Diversity

UKNOF response:

- We don't want to work on quotas
- We have women on the committees
- Industry wide issue
- We have a student grant scheme
- Perhaps education of bosses needed?
- You can help by encouraging colleagues
- Do you have ideas for how to improve things?

Our Challenges

- We face new challenges as we get bigger
- We often see a 20% non attendance rate
- Raising sponsorship for increasing costs so we can keep the event free:
£135 per head for Manchester:
 - 34.6% venue rental
 - 28.8% food and drinks
 - 19.6% AV
 - 13.2% Pints & Packets
 - 3.8% misc (badges, lanyards etc)
- Extra costs of hosting services, meeting equipment, insurance, admin etc brings the costs up to.....

£200 per attendee

Individuals or organisations can become 'Patron' sponsors if you want to help us with costs <http://uknof-patron-sponsorship.eventbrite.co.uk>

Thanks to BT and ADVA for helping us by being Patron sponsors in 2017

WE NEED YOU!

- Volunteer to help at meetings
- Submit presentations
- Encourage colleagues to come or submit
- Contact us with suggestions
- Interact with sponsors
- Tell suppliers about us so they can sponsor
- Let us know if you can't come
- Encourage us when you think it's working
- Fill out our surveys
- Keep attending – we like you....most of you :)



Questions?

- Contact us:
- Programme Committee
- pc@uknof.org.uk
- Sponsors or general enquiries
- admin@uknof.org.uk

