

Collaborative Tools Project

Project Report

This project was created to help provide tools and improve support for collaboration for all staff at the University of York and beyond. It will offer everyone the means to easily create content, work on project bids, discuss research and share resources with their colleagues and collaborators. The requirements gathering exercise identified the four *Use Cases*...

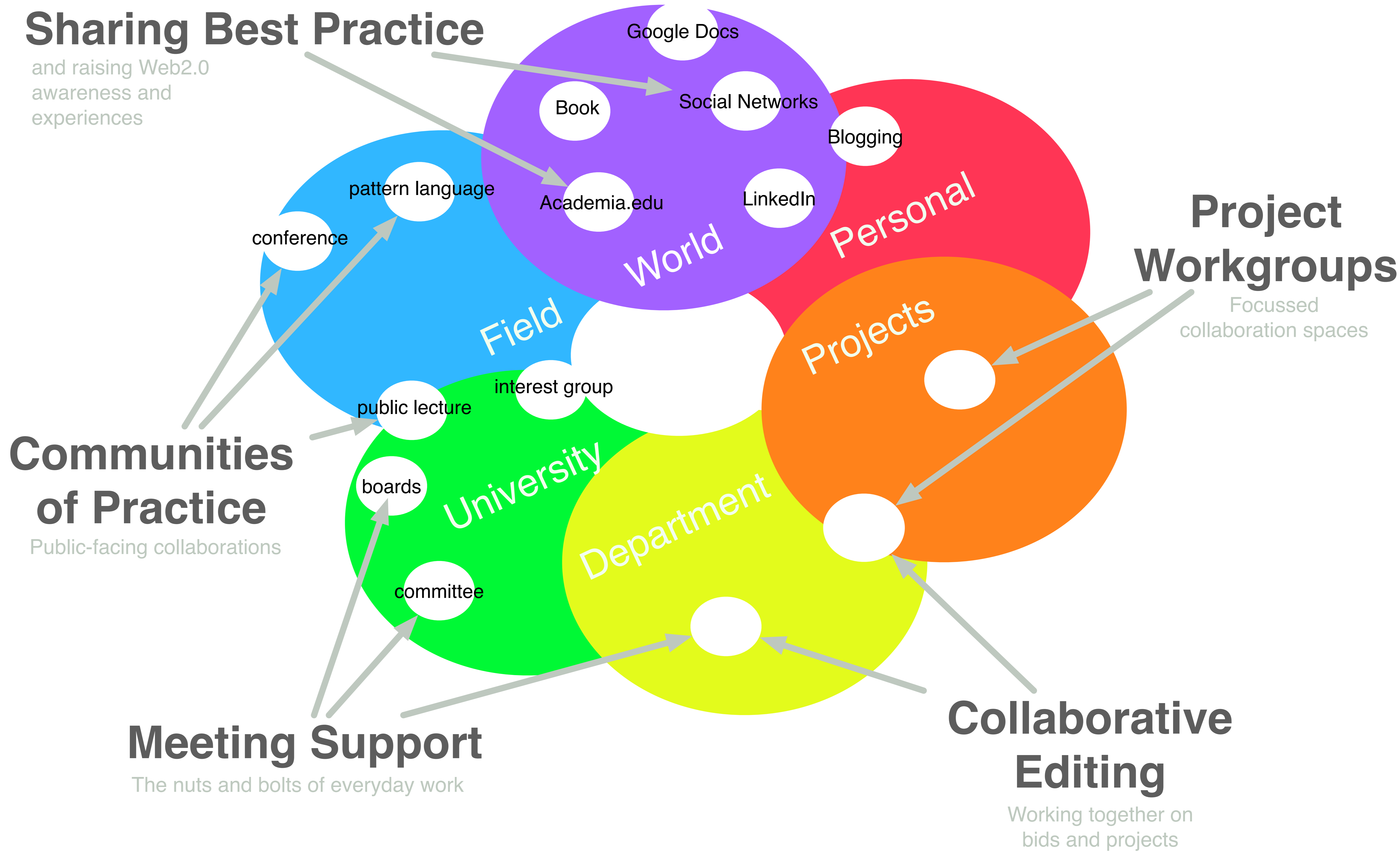
1. Project Workgroup
2. Community of Practice
3. Meeting Support
4. Collaborative Editing

The core tools to support these activities will include Blogging, Wikis, File sharing, Forums, Twitter-like status messages and Instant Messaging. With these simple tools almost anything can be achieved quickly. The core themes of the project are that where possible, access to information should be open to all, creation of working groups should be self-service and that external collaborators should be inevitable by York staff. A fifth Use Case of Sharing Best Practise has been added which aims to disseminate the advantages of working online, raising awareness of the new outlining the possibilities coupled with one-to-one hands-on support.

If you would like to find out more or to get involved, contact Tom Smith tas509@york.ac.uk, 01904 43 3847 or drop by room VC/011 for a chat.

Sharing Best Practice

and raising Web2.0 awareness and experiences



Communities of Practice

Public-facing collaborations

Meeting Support

The nuts and bolts of everyday work

Collaborative Editing

Working together on bids and projects

Project Workgroups

Focused collaboration spaces

So far..

The project began by exploring the tools outlined in Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Collaborative Tools which evaluates a huge number of products and services. Having weeded out those with a poor fit for the university, such as Customer Relationship Management or those that solely ran in the "Cloud" we assembled ten teams of people willing to work with a tool and willing to help evaluate its abilities.

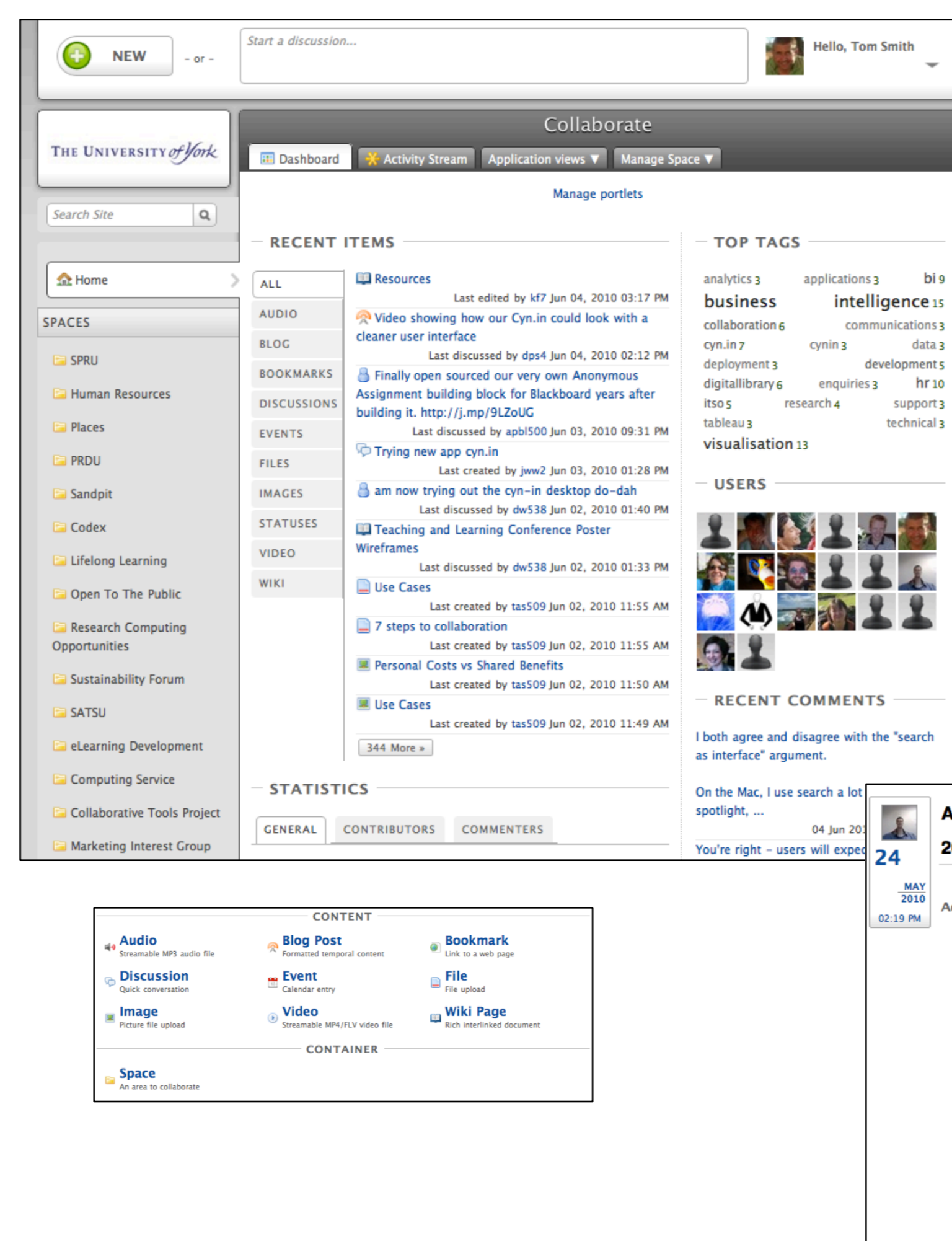
The tools we trialled were:



The team

- Tom Smith, Collaborative Software Specialist
- Jo Casey, Information Officer
- Gustav Delius, Mathematical physicist with an interest in dynamic and stochastic networks
- Arthur Clune, IT Security Specialist
- Jing Wood, External Relations
- Anthony Leonard, System Integrator
- Max Spicer, Web Systems Administrator/Developer
- John Cooper, Web Systems Administrator/Developer
- Dan Wiggle, Web Content Officer

Currently...



The tool we are currently investigating in depth is called Cyn.in and includes Blogs, Wikis, Files, Bookmarks, Events, Discussions, Comments, Voting, TagClouds and Status Messages. Cyn.in is built on Plone, a mature platform which has a long and distinguished history of being used within education. Cyn.in is open source.

The project is now trialling a tool with over 200 members, continuing the gathering of requirements as we evolve and adapting the tool to better fit our collective needs.

Next...

The current priorities are learning how to make Cyn.in fast, robust and secure whilst still collecting members feedback about how to make the interface easier to use. We are exploring how to better integrate Cyn.in with other systems and have, on a test server, added OpenStreetMap maps and RSS feeds. This more involved development work is ongoing.

The Collaborative Tools Project dovetails with a JISC project to create an Amazon-like "If you like this person you may also be interested in this person..." interface for staff at the university. Small explorations have been made into how to use semantic information to link people together to provide a means of browsing people via meaningful keywords



<http://collaborate.york.ac.uk>

Comment on this diagram at ... <http://bit.ly/cxhmGv>