

A. Focus On The People, Then The Event – Allen Gunn	119
B. The MozFest Program: Shared By Design – Sarah Allen, Erika Drushka	131

MozFest was forged by the event design and facilitation principles of Aspiration's Allen "Gunner" Gunn. His guidelines for creating participatory events provided a blueprint and complemented our open ethos for the festival.

Through his mentorship, we attempted to grow and replicate his model, originally conceived for 10-250 participants, and scale it to 2000 participants. We introduced a new facilitation layer, inviting Wranglers to effectively co-design and host participatory, themed Spaces within the festival. These volunteer Wranglers recruit, curate, and support hundreds of Facilitators who are designing sessions for thousands of festival participants. This, in turn, results in a sense of shared ownership of the festival.

It's a testament to the resilience of Gunner's model, and to Michelle Thorne's thoughtful implementation, that the festival's federated design could incorporate this new model of facilitation to accommodate growth while still maintaining such highly interactive and self-determined experiences.

We felt it was important to first introduce Gunner's principles to highlight the foundational design principles of how we create MozFest, then share how we build upon them to share ownership of the festival with our network, as part of this evolutionary model.

Focus On The People, Then The Event

Part of the essay, *Creating Participatory Events*, by Allen Gunn of Aspiration, and one of the Founding MozFest Organisers. Written for The Shuttleworth Foundation in 2008.

What Is the Problem, and What Is the Opportunity?

Live, in-person convenings still hold a unique and essential place in the knitted fabric of community and collaboration. The trust and familiarity engendered by face-to-face time are unique and lasting, more visceral and immediate; relationships forged or strengthened in person are cut from a fundamentally different cloth than those existing exclusively online.

But given their unique potential for connecting like minds and catalysing relationships, live events are frequently non-collaborative affairs, employing dichotomous formats such as keynotes, slideware presentations, and panels to let one or several speakers relate across a veritable moat to silent and largely passive audiences.

“Expertness” is rewarded with control over submissive listeners, rather than placed in a position to more interactively address and service the needs of participants. Chat rooms and other participant back channels further dissipate the live energy, as attendees focus on glowing laptop screens and the time-honoured art of multitasking. Surprise and serendipity are often lacking in such sessions, more often taking place in the hallways between workshops.

“Participatory events” refer to gatherings where many of the above norms are inverted, with the aim to maximize participant interaction during sessions and drive richer, more sustainable event outcomes.

The distinction between “participant” and “speaker” or “expert” is thoroughly blurred, with focus placed on peer-to-peer knowledge sharing instead of large group listening.

...Live events are frequently non-collaborative affairs, employing dichotomous formats such as keynotes, slideware presentations, and panels to let one or several speakers relate across a veritable moat to silent and largely passive audiences.

The underlying philosophy that drives such events centres on an alternate vision of how community and capacity building occur.

Participatory event organizing is founded on the premise that fully-engaged, fully-present participants catalyse stronger, more sustainable post-event collaboration and relationships.

Traditional events generally employ didactic formats that mirror scholastic experiences; teacher/class differentials are the norm and session formats too often take a one size fits all approach to audience needs and interests. Part of the value in participatory events lies in parallelism, as smaller groups of participants do focused peer transfer of knowledge, ideas, and issues. Such sessions provide opportunities to identify and discuss shared needs, and engender motivation to pay attention.

Participatory event organizing is founded on the premise that fully-engaged, fully-present participants catalyse stronger, more sustainable post-event collaboration and relationships. Given “control of their destiny”, attendees steer session content directly at their needs and passions. A guiding truth in participatory events is that organizers don't always know what will come out the other side, other than strengthened communities of practice. In this new era of distributed collaboration, in-person events are costly and time-intensive when compared to various forms of online meetings.

120

But the benefits of live convening can be powerful and generate long-lasting return on investment at key points in the evolution of a project or community. At times when identity and vision are being forged, when trust relationships are being catalysed to sustain ongoing cooperation, there is no substitute for face-to-face collaboration and socializing.

What Does It Take to Make an Event Participatory?

There is an often-followed sequence of steps in creating a successful participatory event:

Cast a vision: Identify event goals and outcomes that will tap the passion and needs of participants; work over time to “tease out the mandate” from the target audience.

Spread the word: Reach out to prospective participants, communicating the event vision and evolving it based on their feedback. A fundamental question to pose in shaping a collaborative event is “what will make it worth your time to be there?”

Share ownership of the event: Create pre-event opportunities for participants to communicate with each other and collectively build the agenda. Give public credit to contributors early and often.

Find Facilitators in the group: Identify participants with an inclination towards facilitation and supporting their peers; this is often communicated through strong sharing ethics. Ideally all participants will have some facilitative responsibility during the event, but approximately 20% of the group will need to be encouraged to take facilitation leadership. Engage each Facilitator in shaping specific parts of the agenda and goals.

Convene the gathering: bring participants together in time and space, taking care to review and stay focused on event goals while conveying a fun and festive tone. Get everyone's voice active in the dialogue as quickly as possible, and let those voices guide the course of the event. Balance structured and unstructured time, and use intuition in equal measure with timekeeping to pace the proceedings.

Evolve the agenda: Listen to participant feedback on how the event is meeting their needs, and reflect those inputs as much as possible in enhancing, pruning, and resequencing discussions.

Aim for coherent closure: Through the course of the event, track progress against desired outcomes and work to refine goals based on that progress, steering towards demonstrable milestones and follow-up plans by the end of the in-person meeting.

Facilitate follow-up: collaborative live events can catalyze plans for projects and follow-up, but post-event reality often intervenes in the form of overflowing in boxes and other externalities. Using mailing lists and other online venues to narrate post-event progress while inviting others to share outcomes can sustain the group ethos and collaboration.

Organizing a Participant-Driven, Collaborative Event

Successful realization of participant-driven events comes down to striking the balance between yielding substantial control of proceedings while maintaining quality of experience for all participants. Traditional event organizers feel the imperative and burden to deliver quality to attendees, rather than letting it emerge from within the participant community. Agendas are carefully choreographed streams of key-notes, panels, and presentations delivered to identically match the pre-published agenda, and the role of most participants is minimal and passive.

Traditional event organizers feel the imperative and burden to deliver quality to attendees, rather than letting it emerge from within the participant community.

Build From a Solid But Flexible Frame

Agendas for participant-driven events function more like scaffolding than script; they provide structure onto which participants can attach their ideas, interests and goals before and during the event. These agendas start from a narrative of goals; for a three-day event, the initial narrative can be as simple as:

- Successful facilitation of such events involves understanding participant motivations and focusing energy and priority on those that are constructive.
- A simple but useful generalization is to model participant behaviour in terms of “community instincts” versus “control instincts”.
- Some participants intrinsically want to serve the best interests of the group, trying to let all voices be heard and keeping the dialogue on track towards stated goals; others have a vested interest in advancing an agenda or steering conversations to their own end. By letting individuals with community-building motivations facilitate discussions, and discouraging control-oriented behaviour both explicitly and implicitly, a comfortable and collaborative ethos emerges.

Subvert the Status-Quo.

Another core trait of participatory events involves upsetting physical and spatial norms: when put in unfamiliar contexts participants pay more attention and are more invested in the proceedings. Two very different aspects in this regard are the physical layout of meeting spaces, and the role of “expertise” in the proceedings. In traditional conferences, room layouts usually “face the front”, with rows of chairs and possibly, tables.

Seating participants in circles provides substantial enhancement of experience; participants all face each other as they speak, increasing the transfer of human energy. With regard to expertise, the fundamental shift is from celebration of expertise to employment of experience and wisdom.

“Experts” and “stars” who sit on panels and deliver keynotes usually play out rote roles, re-employing slideware decks and speaking at, not with, audience participants; they stand apart from the rest of the room.

“Experts” and “stars” who sit on panels and deliver keynotes usually play out rote roles, re-employing slideware decks and speaking at, not with, audience participants; they stand apart from the rest of the room.

In participatory formats, these experts are shifted from speakers to listeners, encouraged to focus on what other participants are seeking to learn or achieve, and to talk primarily in response to questions and in an effort to grow

the understanding and capacity of the group. A beautiful consequence of this model is that the “experts” often enjoy substantial new learnings as they articulate their knowledge and experience in new and creative fashions.

It is important to note that some participants will feel uncomfortable in these unfamiliar settings. Sitting in circular arrangements, not able to hide behind laptops, divorced from conventional “expertise hierarchies” and unsure of what comes next. This is best done by acknowledging the newness of the process, explaining how the agenda will play out, and strongly encouraging questions and inviting concerns to be shared at anytime. Encourage trust in the process. Often the most sceptical and initially disoriented participants can be converted into the most passionate contributors with proper support and guidance.

Interact on Planes of Peer Respect and Equality

Letting participants actively drive the agenda requires establishing a fundamental set of expectations and guidelines to encourage co-equal behaviour. At the heart of such guidelines are three tenets of peer interaction: respect, listening, and inclusion.

Respect manifests in several forms: not speaking while others are speaking, honouring the schedule of the event so that collaboration flows smoothly, and acknowledging the diverse backgrounds and needs of other participants.

Active listening is the art of hearing and comprehending what others are trying to say and realize, rather than waiting impatiently for a turn to speak.

Active listening is the art of hearing and comprehending what others are trying to say and realize, rather than waiting impatiently for a turn to speak. And inclusion is both about seeing that all participants get to speak and weigh in, while making sure that the language of the discourse is accessible to all and that questions are encouraged and honoured.

A critical expectation to convey is that all participants must participate full-time; individuals who “parachute in” part-time, or take a session off to do “real work”, undermine the collaborative momentum and co-equal ethic.

Guide Rather than Direct

Group facilitation in participatory gatherings is the art of doing less. Success is indicated by drawing out collective energy when participants meet as a large group, and then providing guidance to establish small, focused groups of collaboration and interaction where participants drive. Three essential threads of responsibility underpin such facilitation: sustaining the narrative of the event, capturing proceedings, and tracking the mood and behaviour of participants.

Narrative is required on complementary levels: first to track the overall arc of the agenda, and correlate it to progress against stated goals whenever the group meets as a whole,



and second to make sure outcomes from each small-group session are reported back to the larger group so that an overall sense of community awareness is maintained. Because session content is not pre-authored, note-taking and capture of session outcomes takes on heightened importance, and assuring conversations are recorded and saved is an ongoing challenge.

Three essential threads of responsibility underpin such facilitation: sustaining the narrative of the event, capturing proceedings, and tracking the mood and behaviour of participants.

Mood-watching is both about sensing the overall group tone — and adapting the pace and focus of the event accordingly — while also identifying individuals who are working against the event goals by failing to respect participant guidelines.

Thus the role of lead Facilitators in a participatory event is to monitor and shape the group energy, guiding the agenda flow by applying small but tactical interventions where they are needed, while also making sure that documentation processes are followed.

Follow the Emergent Leaders

126

In each participatory event, a subset of participants quickly and steadily emerge as committed to seeing the format and the convening succeed. These are individuals who understand the community dynamics in play, and strive to see the needs of fellow participants served. This can be through offering to facilitate sessions that have been requested, by mediating and de-escalating disagreements and tensions, or by communicating to event organizers concerns or feedback they have observed. Put in the vernacular, these emergent leaders are the participants who most readily and passionately “bring the love” to the group as a whole. They are leaders in the cohort by example.

These Facilitators form an essential middle level in the event structure, helping event organizers to realize their goals by addressing the needs of participants. They become the eyes and ears of the event, listening to feedback, tracking the mood in their small groups, and helping to propagate awareness of interpersonal dynamics that are shaping the tone and outcomes of the gathering.

Keep Things Cosy, Comfortable and Well-Fuelled

Breaks should be frequent and not short, both to allow freestyle interactions, and to let participants check in with external realities so they can turn full attention to subsequent sessions.

Not to be overlooked in participatory events is the essential nature of “little logistics”.

Meeting rooms should be well-lit and comfortable, with adequate space for participants to sit in a single large circle, and good sound dynamics to assure that even the most soft-spoken individuals are heard.

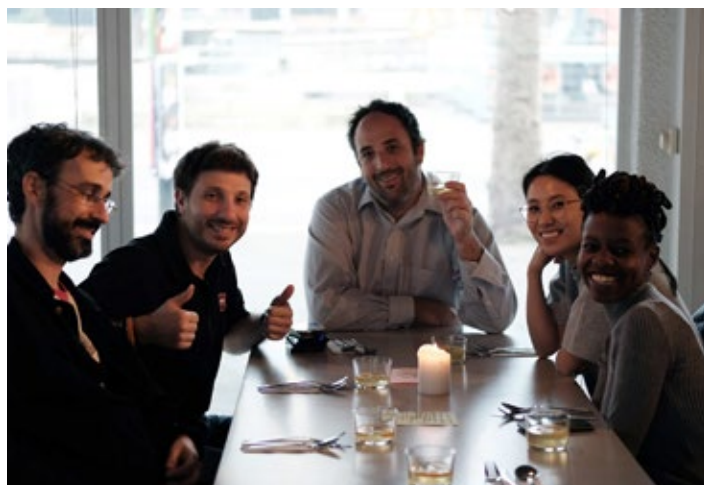
Proper name tags that emphasize first names and de-emphasize last names, titles and affiliations are a powerful lubricant for ad-hoc interactions. And food sourcing is critical: good food (with particular care to individual dietary needs) leads to productive moods, and an ongoing supply of beverages that includes a bottomless pot of coffee keeps people fuelled, hydrated, and ready to fully focus on the proceedings. Breaks should be frequent and not short, both to allow freestyle interactions, and to let participants check in with external realities so they can turn full attention to subsequent sessions.

127

What Can Go Wrong?

While participatory events can yield a bounty of substantial and serendipitous outcomes, the model is not without risk. Operating in an environment of less structure and more real-time improvisation, there is always the potential for things to go less than well.

Perhaps the greatest risk to successful event delivery is the establishment of poorly-defined or overly ambitious goals for the convening; participatory agendas are designed to achieve stated outcomes, and poorly conceived goals lead to fragmented and frustrating agendas. Event goals should be concrete and phrased in language accessible to all participants; desired outcomes should be achievable in the time frame of the event, and should avoid being couched in “vision” terms. For example, declaring the goal of an event to be “Ending World Hunger” is no goal at all, it is a vision in which an event could potentially have a role, but offers little or nothing in terms of how the event might actually play out. But phrasing an event goal as “Each participant should leave with concrete ideas and action items on how they can



have a positive impact on the world hunger situation” is more concrete, more believable, and certainly more achievable.

A second critical risk factor is over facilitation. Participatory events succeed by letting participants collaborate; if Facilitators spend too much time talking, or prioritize process over productivity, the group experience suffers. Too often, event organizers feel pressure to deliver an experience, but participatory events thrive when participants create their own experiences within a well-defined framework of participation. A specific challenge lies in not rushing the schedule; collaboration evolves along its own timeline, and Facilitators who rush participants in order to track to stated agenda time slots undermine the effectiveness of the sessions themselves. Event organizers and Facilitators should trust the process, and position themselves to be effective through understated but attentive support of the participants' needs.

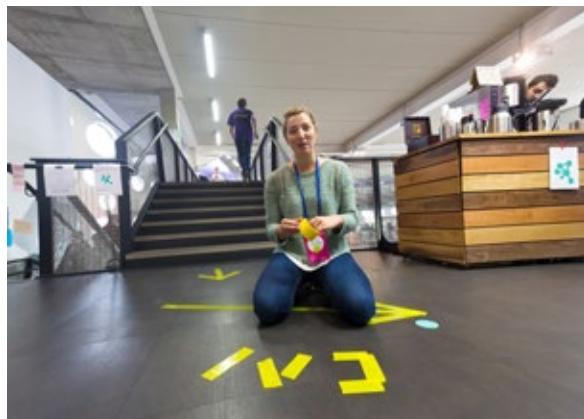
Another critical ingredient in participatory events is a strong cadre of experienced Facilitators. While participants should be free to collaborate as they desire, leadership is still required to keep conversations and collaborations coherent and tracking towards goals. Knowing who these Facilitators are before the event starts, and melding their efforts with those of the “emergent leaders” discussed above, yields an optimal “middle layer” of facilitative support and guidance.

Perhaps the hardest risk to model for is the presence of “problem participants”. Participatory events are predicated on ethics of peer sharing and co-equality, but there will always be those inattendance who do not embrace such principles, and who seek to steer the circumstances to their own ends.

Trust your judgement
in the moment, and
make decisions
based on sustaining a
friendly, collaborative
environment.

In the End, Trust Your Judgement

All the above are guidelines to be utilized and applied in response to specific event conditions and desired outcomes. Participatory event design and facilitation is about using less to achieve more: believing in the power of simple dialogue and sharing, while taking care to assure that such interactions hold together along a coherent and well-managed agenda. Trust your judgement in the moment, and make decisions based on sustaining a friendly, collaborative environment.



The MozFest Program: Shared By Design

Written by
Sarah Allen and
Erika Drushka

Crowd-sourcing a team

Each January, our MozFest journey begins with a question to our network: who should help us design this year's festival? We ask staff, former Wranglers, partners, and allies to raise up members of their communities who are doing inspiring work. These might be technologists or artists, policy-makers or educators; we are open to anyone advancing the principles of a safe, open, and accessible web. We look for Facilitators from previous MozFests, and from other events, who led great sessions or have indicated a drive to be more involved, but we seek out new faces, too – folks we've never met, who may have never heard of the festival and will challenge our approach.

We look for Facilitators from previous MozFests, and from other events, who led great sessions or have indicated a drive to be more involved, but we seek out new faces, too – folks we've never met, who may have never heard of the festival and will challenge our approach.

At the end of this nomination process, we'll have a list of 100+ strong candidates that we review through a number of lenses. Though every year's team of co-designers is a different blend of people, we strive for variety in diversity of expertise, geographic location, gender identity, language, and culture. We aim for a mix of Staff and community members, with an emphasis on the latter.

With a shortlist in hand, we send out invitations. Our ask is a big one, and we try to make that clear from the start: we are looking for volunteers to commit to five months of designing the festival with us, culminating in hosting and supporting session Facilitators at MozFest and MozFest House. Those who accept are invited to convene in late spring to participate in the first major convening to kick off the design stage: MozRetreat.

Handing over the keys

Held in a different city each year, MozRetreat is a critical step in the development of the annual program. Thoughtful consideration goes into choosing host locations for the retreat. We ask ourselves what is the bigger story we're trying to tell, and how these places can help us tell this story, historically and culturally. MozRetreats have been held in a tiny coastal fishing village in Scotland, and in Tallinn, Berlin, Eindhoven, and Barcelona.

We ask ourselves what is the bigger story we're trying to tell, and how these places can help us tell this story, historically and culturally.

The retreat has three stages: grounding participants in the history of MozFest and the current state of the web; collaboratively deciding where to make changes, additions, and improvements; committing to doing the required work and mapping out the practical steps needed to achieve our goals.

In the grounding stage, we present Mozilla's focus in relation to timely opportunities and challenges facing the web, as well as the overarching frame or theme for that year's festival programming. Since some retreat participants know very little about the festival before they arrive, it's important that we share some context. To do this, we celebrate prior achievements of the festival and acknowledge the hard work of others not in the room. And of course, the best part of this initial phase is bonding with one another. MozRetreat is the only time that this group will be together in person until the week of the festival. After the event, everyone will return to their different corners of the globe and subsequent connections happen via video and conference calls, so it's vital that trusting relationships are forged.

Stage two of the retreat is about defining the evolution of MozFest by acknowledging parts of the event that are stale and could use revamping, or that represent exciting new territory we've never approached. We ask participants to define where they see their own work fitting in, what they are passionate about working on, and who else should be part of the conversation. It is here that roles begin to take shape, and the individuals who will lead the festival's Spaces and experiences emerge: these are the MozFest Wranglers.

Wranglers have a deep history and play a critical role. They design and host the Spaces, experiences, and connections

within the festival where others can participate and thrive. It is at the Wrangler level that the co-ownership of MozFest exists most profoundly. At MozRetreat, we give Wranglers driving lessons, then hand them the keys to the car.

Not everyone at the retreat chooses to become a Wrangler and there are many other ways one can contribute to MozFest's design and delivery. The agenda gives space and opportunity so folks can change their minds, move around programmatically, form teams, and bring other ideas to the table. If Wrangler teams are not gelling, we step in to help. If someone becomes lost in the swirl of ideas, we guide them to find a focus that feels right.

The final stage of MozRetreat is about making commitments to do the work required and clarifying next steps, like writing the call for proposals. Co-designing a participatory festival is no small task. Combined, the team will dedicate thousands of volunteer hours so it's critical that the work is distributed as evenly as possible, and that everyone has an opportunity to contribute. This is where the festival production team brings more structure to the process by setting milestones for the curation of sessions, the allocation of travel stipends, and the physical design of festival Spaces and experiences. We outline how the work in these areas is coordinated across various roles, what we expect of the Wranglers, and how we support them in return.

We trust these Wranglers to create something personal that is also an accessible, engaging inroad for MozFest attendees to contribute to a healthy web that matters in their communities.

MozRetreat is an exhilarating, empowering, and highly productive week. It is a key moment in the co-ownership and co-design of the festival: we present a desired outcome and hand the reins to this group to design how we get there. We trust these Wranglers to create something personal that is also an accessible, engaging inroad for MozFest attendees to contribute to a healthy web that matters in their communities.

Planning across time zones

Post-retreat, Wranglers work together in teams to curate proposals, support Facilitators, design the Space, and schedule the sessions. With many moving pieces to coordinate, we convene in a weekly call, an important

mechanism to stay connected, share design updates, raise issues, request peer assists, and ask questions. Documentation is important here, and we capture notes in a central document, record calls for viewing at a later time, and send update emails and task lists that explain the procedures.

During the months between the retreat and the festival, the production team governs the federated design process and keeps the work moving to meet the deadlines necessary to produce the festival. Access to our team is paramount, whether at the end of Wrangler calls, in smaller groups, or 1:1. We regularly ask for input on our process and iterate as necessary according to the feedback.

On-site

Wranglers will spend five months preparing for MozFest. It is their vision and their creativity that brings life to Ravensbourne University once the festival weekend arrives. It is their support and guidance that allows the hundreds of Session Facilitators to successfully engage participants. By creating an accessible environment where people of all types can collaborate and flourish, Wranglers nurture a vibrant, welcoming atmosphere.

134

In many ways, the Spaces that Wranglers design function as mini-festivals. Within each Space, participants can find everything they need: sessions, inspiring talks, art installations, and community. Multiple activities are scheduled at any one time so that even within a Space, attendees can choose their own adventure. MozFest and Ravensbourne are the scaffolding that contain and connect these Spaces.

During the festival weekend, the focus of the production team is to ensure the frame of the event holds and that the Wranglers are fully supported. We are fully present throughout the building to manage issues that arise – technical or human. If our job is done right, people will wonder what we ever did.

Post-festival, the Wrangler feedback meeting is one of the most important moments in the annual MozFest cycle. It represents a celebratory closing of the current year, offers critical space for reflection, and sets the stage for the next



festival. It is a face-to-face, tired but honest conversation about what worked in our design that we should replicate, who emerged as exceptional participants that we might reach out to for deeper engagement moving forward, and, operationally, what challenges or pitfalls to avoid or solve for in the next year. The outputs from this conversation directly shape our thoughts in the spring, when festival planning begins anew.

The Co-Drivers

When we think of MozFest's federated design, Wranglers are undoubtedly a critical piece of the puzzle. Equally important are Facilitators – the hosts of the hundreds of individual sessions, experiences, and interactions that attendees engage with over the weekend. Much as the production team supports the Wranglers, the Wranglers support the Facilitators.

Facilitators enter the MozFest journey through the call for proposals. This open request for Sessions is launched each year in July and thousands of people from around the world respond. Expectations are stated clearly in the open call: all Sessions must be collaborative and generative, with a pre-planned way to continue the work post festival. Straightforward presentations are discouraged, unless Facilitators are asking attendees to openly collaborate on their work.

Once the call for proposals closes and Wranglers have completed their curation, we typically end up with more than 500 individual Facilitators. Wranglers manage the Facilitator relationship by sending emails, hosting open calls, and providing 1:1 guidance as needed. Oftentimes, veteran Facilitators are invited to share their experience and advice.

Federated Design in action

Again, documentation plays an important role in setting up Facilitators to succeed as festival co-owners. We wrote a Facilitator Handbook to help newbies navigate the very

Expectations are stated clearly in the open call: all sessions must be collaborative and generative, with a pre-planned way to continue the work post festival.

unique MozFest experience, and to guide everyone in the planning and delivery of a great Session. It shares many practical details like where nursing mothers can feed their infants, what dietary restrictions we can accommodate, and the location of the prayer room.

We also host a half-day Facilitator Orientation on the Friday of the festival weekend. The central goal of this mandatory convening is to establish an ethos of shared ownership of the festival across the diverse range of Wranglers and Facilitators present, and to invite each and every one of them to see themselves as ambassadors of MozFest and the community, spreading goodwill while remaining cognizant of anything that limits others' ability to enjoy the event.

Facilitators are encouraged to provide feedback directly to their Wranglers, and also to production Staff. With 500+ Facilitators, this generates a fantastic range of responses that guide the program design the following year.

Arrive with an idea, leave with a community

When discussing shared ownership of MozFest, we cannot forget the participants. Our invitation is an explicit call to shape the future of the web and attendees arrive ready to share ideas and get their hands dirty – whether that means writing code, designing games, teaching others, or any of the countless ways to connect and collaborate.

Our invitation is an explicit call to shape the future of the web and attendees arrive ready to share ideas and get their hands dirty – whether that means writing code, designing games, teaching others, or any of the countless ways to connect and collaborate.

With more than 600 activities taking place over the festival weekend, participants cannot possibly attend every Session, visit every interaction, or take in every talk. Immediately following the opening plenary, attendees disperse to all corners of the building, a highly personal migration that invites each individual person to design their own journey and set their own pace. Those who dash from Session to Session, committed to seeing as much as humanly possible, create a playful, frenetic energy, while those who settle

in to long conversations in Ravensbourne's many cozy corners remind us that serendipitous connections are one of the festival's greatest rewards.

A third of our participants are also Facilitators who are hosting their own activity as some point during the weekend, meaning a huge portion of the audience are bringing their expertise and support to others' sessions. The continuous exchange of knowledge between attendees – demonstrated in acts of kindness and empathy – underpins MozFest's most enduring tagline:

Arrive with an idea, leave with a community.

We have created multiple pathways for participants to grow into Facilitators and later into Wranglers. Our aim is to encourage deeper participation year upon year, not only in the festival but in the internet health movement, and allow attendees to invest in co-ownership of MozFest at a pace that reflects their own personal growth.

Lasting impacts

Meeting in person is an essential element of sustaining a community, and MozFest is the gathering place for those dedicated to creating a better, healthier internet. The web is made strong by the contributions of many, and the same can be said of the festival. Inviting people to personally invest in the ownership of MozFest has allowed us to expand the festival in ways we never imagined. More voices, more passion, and more participation have fueled the movement and built capacity to scale the event, not just in size, but in creative scope. MozFest has expanded ideas, seeded long-term, cross-continental collaborations, and connected a global community through a shared experience.