

What is an unconference?

It's called an unconference because, unlike a traditional conference, there is no fixed agenda, no-one has selected the speakers before the event, no-one has decided what is an 'important topic' to cover and no-one has been paid to deliver a 'death by PowerPoint' keynote speech!

At an unconference everyone has equal opportunity to speak and equal space to collaborate and share what matters to them. [This link to Wikipedia gives some more background](#) to what an unconference is all about.

Are there any rules for an unconference?

We don't like the word 'rules', but there are some guidelines around which an unconference works best. They really are quite informal.

- 1) The people who come are the best people who could have come.
- 2) We all take a share in making the day run smoothly and steering our own path of learning through the day.
- 3) Whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened.
- 4) It starts when it starts.
- 5) It's over when it's over.
- 6) There is no agenda until individuals pitch session titles and ideas. (This will develop on a board on a wall in the plenary room). You don't need all the answers to 'pitch' a session, indeed an 'I don't know the answer to this ...' pitch often produces the best discussions!
- 7) Each session will be given a colour relating to the space it will be held in and a starting time slot. We will try to start sessions on time, but Rule 5 applies, so if you have exhausted the conversation after 30 minutes and just want to network (or talk about kittens & biscuits instead) that's fine.
- 8) There is a 'Law of Two Feet' i.e. if you don't feel you are learning, a session isn't quite what you expected or not relevant to you, feel free to visit another discussion. Just move on quietly and with respect, but don't feel trapped. You can come and go as you please.
- 9) If you pitch a session, you must be there at the stated time to start the discussion flowing. However, this doesn't mean that you have to lead the session or even steer the discussion. We are all learning. You can ask questions or talk about your work, but try not to make it too sales-y.
- 10) Participants are encouraged to take notes, tweet and even blog about each session to feed back to others, including those not present at VCSS Camp.