

UK MoodleMoot 2015 – Thoughts on Community and Openness

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Two weeks ago, I attended the UK MoodleMoot in Dublin. This was around the twelfth MoodleMoot I have participated in, most of which I have actively presented in as well as attended. **I always find the Moots' spirit of community so energizing**, and this one was no exception.

Attending a MoodleMoot gets me back in the community and its sub-communities – developers, educators, users and partners. It reminds me why I do what I do, and makes me happy to be part of the engine that makes Moodle go. A Moot is a reunion of sorts, where I connect with people who I see “virtually” every week, but only physically meet with in geographically far-off places every couple of years. And as a reunion, it makes me review my history.

I began my Moodle connection in 2003, with my first “moodle.org” post on November 27, 2003 contributing my ideas for “Moodle groups” that was being worked on for Moodle 1.1. That same discussion included **three colleagues who went on to start their own Moodle Partner businesses – Sean Keogh, Bryan Williams and Tom Murdock. Eventually, Sean, Bryan and I merged our three Moodle Partner companies into one. Tom Murdock co-founded Moodlerooms**, which just recently acquired our UK division. Sean and I were both there at the recent Moot.

In February 2004, I released my first module – questionnaire. **Questionnaire remains one of the top plugin downloads in the Moodle plugin database**, usually sitting in second or third spot.

In June of 2005, I attended my first MoodleMoot at what was then the Governor Dummer Academy near Boston. There I met Martin Dougiamas for the first time in person, as well as Michelle Moore, who I would later work with as well. Both were there at the Moot.

Over the next decade, I continued Moodle development, formed my own Moodle Partner company, attended and presented many more Moots, attended various developer conferences and hackfests, wrote **a book on Moodle plugin development** and I believe contributed to Moodle's success. Some of the developers I've attended the developer gatherings with were there as well: Dan Poltawski, David Mudrak, Davo Smith, Bas Brands among others.

Now, arriving at Dublin for the 2015 UK Moot, I still found myself **amazed by the spirit of collaboration this experiment of Martin Dougiamas has created**. I was there to present our latest releases of plug-ins designed to help Office365 users integrate with Moodle, and front a workshop to help learn how to setup and use these plugins. The workshop was attended by new faces as well as known collaborators. When I ran into trouble, someone in the room was there to help me out. I received valuable feedback that will go back into the plugin development.

Likewise the various sessions demonstrated the Moodle community energy. No presenter felt alone, and I think all left with as many new ideas as they provided. You just know, more good ideas will end up available to us all as a result. I personally, have already contacted a couple of the presenters to see if I can get more involved in their projects.

And of course the impromptu meetups in the social times generated many great discussions on Moodle, learning and the industry in general. Many of these went well into the night and well into the Guinness kegs. My personal discussions involved educators, Moodle users and administrators, developers and other partners. I found all of these talks led to positive ideas of how we can improve Moodle, learning and our "product".

My hats off to Gavin Henrick, another colleague and past co-worker, for organizing a successful Moot that so celebrated and promoted the spirit of openness the Moodle community brings. I love being a part of this community and its innovative energy. Looking forward to the next one.