



Tiree Tech Wave

14-18 March 2013

<http://tireetechwave.org/>

This was the fifth Tiree Tech Wave, and the biggest to date with 34 full attendees, and one past attendee who timed a family holiday to coincide so he could drop in.

The Tech Wave has dual aims:

- to create an environment where those interested in technology and its impact (including technologists, artists, social scientists, and designers) can gather in an open environment, and with an open agenda to enhance creative insight and establish new connections.
- to bring expertise to the island for the benefit of the islanders as digital technology is surely central to the future social and economic sustainability of the islands.

In some cases these aims run separately, for example one group at this TTW worked on a re-envisioning of an early piece of cybernetic art, and another helped a local boy and his father with a Raspberry Pi, which had been a present.

In other cases both aims meet in the same mini-project. One participant, who creates digitally augmented ceramics, wished to geocache small statuettes and partnered with a local youth leader to create a trail for Duke of Edinburgh Award activities. Another example, is work on a projected touch table, installed in the rural centre, which is planned to be used for tourist information and meeting support, both a practical service to the community and an opportunity to study public-display interactions.

It was particularly good also that a number of children attended (supervised by parents/carers) for portions of the non-school days. There were no specific activities aimed at them, but they simply soaked up the atmosphere, chatted to different attendees, and made mechanisms with Lego Technic. We have subsequently heard how this has changed their perceptions of technology and technologists and that they have reported back very positively to their school friends!

One of the few fixed points in the Tiree Tech Wave schedule was the launch event of Frasan, the Tiree Mobile Heritage App funded by the Nesta Scottish Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture. This gave the Tech Wave participants a chance to meet a wider group of local residents and also gave them a chance to show off the projected touch table.

The spirit of Tiree Tech Wave is not to have predefined goals or outcomes. This is in the expectation that by not establishing fixed goals, exciting things happen, which then do lead to concrete outcomes far better than any you would have pre-planned. Previous Tech Waves have led to academic outcomes including publications, grant proposals and internships, and practical ones such as a communication system for the Tiree Youth worker. These things take time to work through, however, it was amazing to see that even during the Tech Wave weekend some things were beginning to take shape: the Catalyst team took home concrete ideas for the next stage of their autism project; there were plans for seminar visits between sites; and a collaboration between Cardiff School of Art and Design, Highwire at Lancaster and MRL and Nottingham are planning a mini-FabLab event in mid-Wales to coincide with my Wales walk.

The date for the next Tiree Tech Wave is 24-28 October 2013 – put it in your diary now!

TTW5 – Breakdown of participants by country and institution:

Scotland (13):

Glasgow University	6
St Andrews	1
Herriot Watt	1
Stirling University	2
independent practitioners	3

Wales (8):

Cardiff Metropolitan University	8
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England (13):

Lancaster University	8
Brunel University	1
Nottingham University	1
University of Birmingham	1
independent IT practitioners	2