
Feedback on GatherTown: a tool to make virtual conferences more convivial

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Sustainable HEP workshop

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The dilemma

- ◆ Goal : zero net carbon society by 2050 (climate stability)
 - 2 tons of equivalent CO₂/person/year
(assuming we will be able to absorb them...)
- ◆ Traveling for conferences can have huge impact
 - 1-2 tons of eqCO₂ for a transatlantic flight
- ◆ But conferences are invaluable for research
 - Share knowledge, latest developments
Visoconferences (zoom, ...) work pretty well for this
 - Informal discussions (→ new contacts, news ideas)
Usual tools are not appropriate

Tested GatherTown to fit this need
(national conference 30-40 persons)

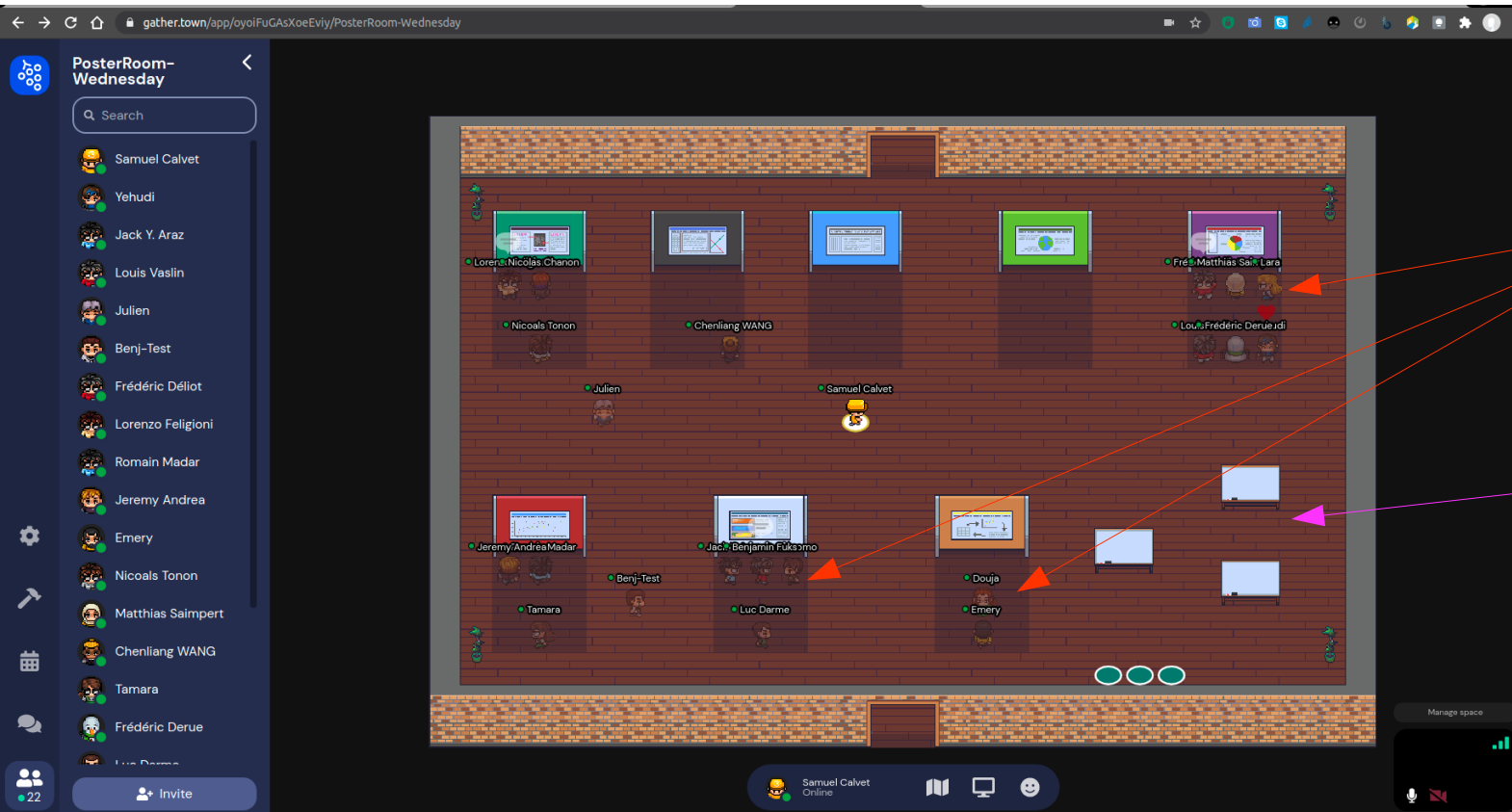
GatherTown @ Top-LHC-France

◆ Top-LHC-France

- Yearly national workshop, friendly atmosphere
- 2021, due to COVID, only on remote

◆ How to keep it friendly ?

- Few plenary talks + 1 round table (zoom)
- 2 poster sessions on GatherTown
- <https://gather.town/app/Sosc0jntaeRcdzzx/PosterRoom-Tuesday>



Participants listening poster presentations or chatting

White boards

Map created by me to fit the needs 40\$/session

Feedback from participants (from anonymous survey)

Poster session: do you have comments or suggestions ?

Répondus: 7

GatherTown fonctionné pretty well. One small comment was that it was not possible "out of the box" to show elements on the pdf while presenting (the pdf appeared but one needed to share its screen to actually change slides).

The GatherTown worked really well - it felt like a real conference. I much preferred it to Zoom - it felt less formal and encouraged more conversation. It was very cool! Thanks!

Gathertown is super cool, even though sometimes there are some sounds bug when we are more than 2 in one room

Could there be something working better than GatherTown?

It worked well, better than I expected. Although the posters were often set of slides, and so the discussion could get lengthy, preventing from seeing all posters in details.

I think it is a good idea to have it especially for young people

1. Showing the title of the poster in the App would help to find the poster one is looking for 2. The local poster area was designed in a way that people could block each other from entering or leaving

Comments, remarks, suggestions....

The good ?

Everything went great, the atmosphere was friendly, especially as a PhD student who isn't very used to present in workshops

Excellent atmosphere, presentations, discussions

Poster season was very good

It is a good idea to have this meeting allowing the french community working on this important topic to meet and be able to share often common interests.

GatherTown was really a good alternative to physical presence. Hopefully next time we won't need it anymore...

Friendly atmosphere goal: achieved!

But some software issues prevent some participants to enjoy it...

The bad ?

Répondus: 3

GatherTown not working for me at the first session, due to a bug with firefox.

Last words

- ◆ Maps can be larger to bigger events
 - Can have several rooms, bigger rooms
 - Can have a free try:
<https://gather.town/app/p4B9DUqB8NAazd3t/DemoConference>
- ◆ GatherTown has some software issues
 - Likely to be improved in near future
 - Other similar/better softwares may exist/appear
- ◆ Are there still good reasons to spend days and CO2 in conference travel ? ;-)