

Virtual Meeting on Virtual Meetings

the Rencontres de Moriوند
2021 experience



The spirit of Moriond

- A place where physicists meet
 - students meet senior researchers
 - experimentalists meet theorists
 - participants from all over the world
 - generally same speech duration
- A week of interactions
 - full attendance required
 - lodging, meals and free time in a single place
 - “family conference”

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Needs

- No session in 2020
 - cancellation 2 weeks before start
 - not ready to prepare a virtual meeting
- Meet the solicitations
 - young researchers
 - give them the possibility to present during thesis time
 - usually a good place to prospect future post-docs and collaborations, be seen
 - collaborations
 - expected place and time to presents results
 - maintain the calendar
- Ensure the continuity of the event

3 sessions, 3 experiences

- Gravitation
 - 3 days
 - essentially posters
 - mostly young researchers
 - virtual venue on Gather.town
- Electroweak Interactions and Unified Theories
 - 7 days
 - pre-recorded talks
 - live discussion and young scientists forum talks
 - questions in parallel with Slack
- QCD & High Energy Interactions
 - 7 days
 - classic Moriond format
 - full live on zoom
 - coffee-breaks and after-meeting discussions on Gather.town

Gravitation

- Short format
 - from Tuesday to Thursday, 13h00 to 17h00
- Gather.town
 - 6 sessions (2 per day)
 - 30' plenary introduction to each theme
 - poster session during 1 hour
 - a place where anyone could meet outside conference hours
- Attendance
 - 124 participants (usual number)
 - mostly PhD students and post-docs presenting



Electroweak Interactions

- Week format
 - from Sunday to Saturday, 14h00 to 17h00 except last day (shorter)
- Zoom + Slack + Vimeo
 - pre-recorded 15' talks released D-1 on the website via Vimeo
 - live questions and discussion on each session with Zoom
 - live young scientists forum talks (5' each) with Zoom
 - discussion and questions in parallel with Slack
 - chat was disabled on Zoom to maximise exchanges here
- Attendance
 - 216 participants (50 more than usual)

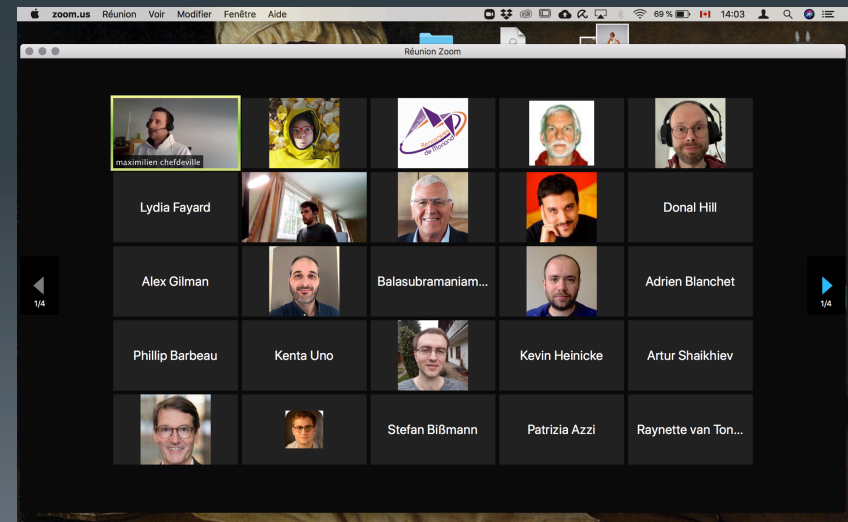
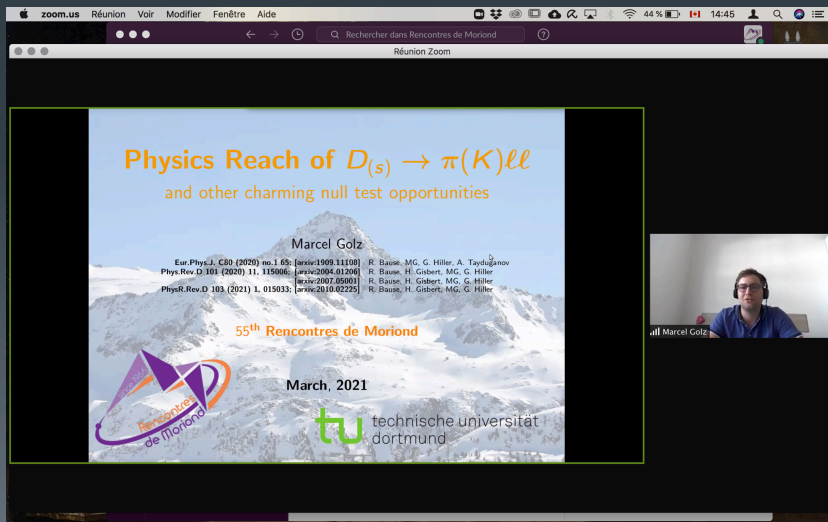
QCD

- Week format
 - from Sunday to Saturday, 14h00 to 20h00 except last day (shorter)
 - 30 minutes break
 - quite similar to the usual agenda
- Talk live on Zoom + breaks on Gather
 - 15' presentations + questions on Zoom
 - breaks on Gather.town (we tried to implement this extra-space, but it did not work : sessions were quite long and intense, people needed a real break!)
- Attendance
 - 120 participants (usual number)



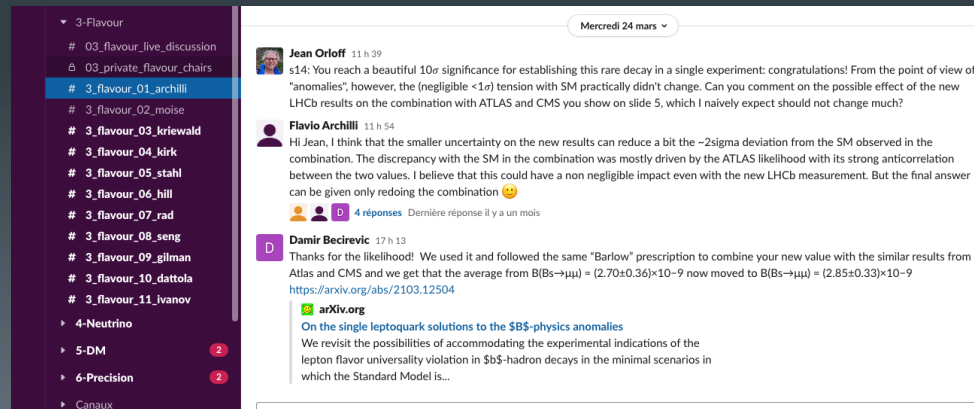
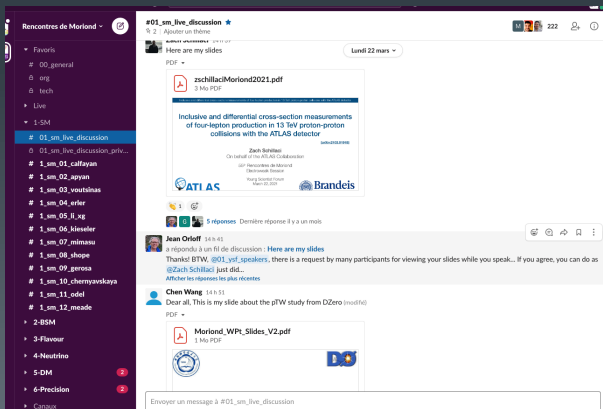
Tools (I)

- Zoom
 - responding to the need
 - easy to use
 - not very interactive
 - can easily slide into a background activity



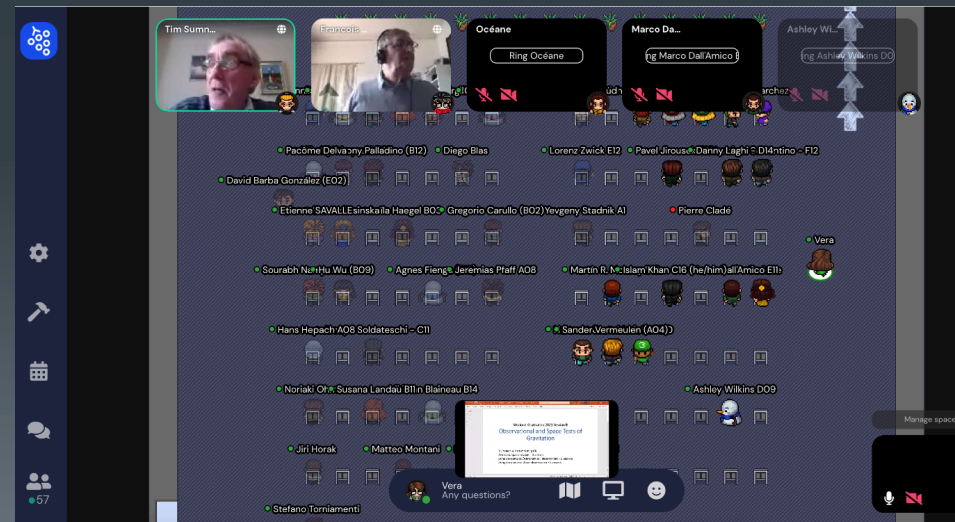
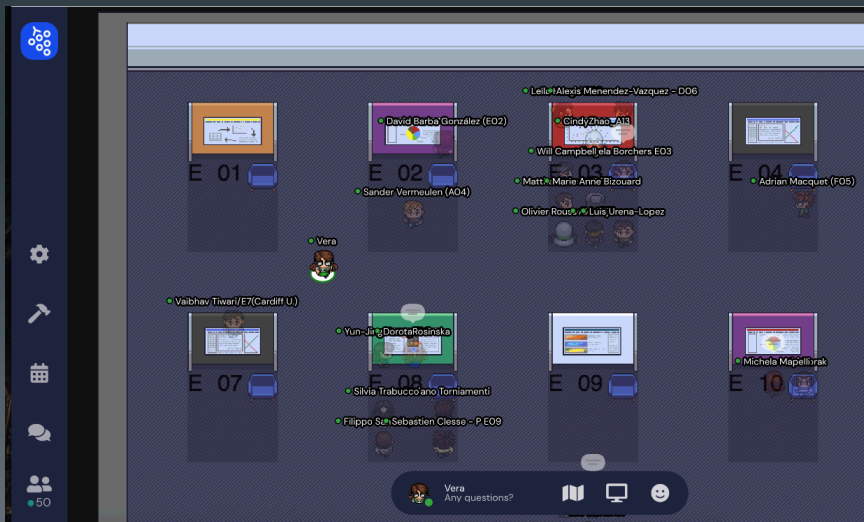
Tools (II)

- Slack
 - efficient, with a peak on 758 daily messages
 - needs some preparation in organising channels
 - easy to use
 - allows people to take the time to read and react
 - can be used beyond conference time for further discussion



Tools (III)

- Gather
 - very interactive
 - easy to use but not completely intuitive for some senior users
 - adaptable to different sizes/configurations
 - needs a good amount of work in design and personalisation



Costs

- Licences
 - all used tools had a special plan for education, that we could benefit from after a few mail exchanges : the reduced price was about 20% of the regular one, which was very affordable
- Secretariat
 - same need as for a in person event
- Computer support
 - no special needs

Fees

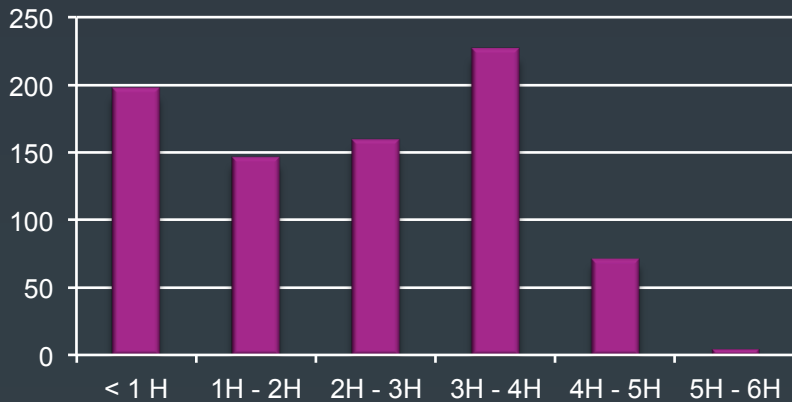
- We chose to charge a fee of 50 euros
 - this amount was thought to be accessible to all
- Contribution to organising expenses
 - did not cover the real costs since we have a permanent secretariat
- Avoid inactive registrations
 - limit paperwork and mail exchanges for a null participation
- Maximise the presence
 - you want to “use” something you paid for

Human Resources

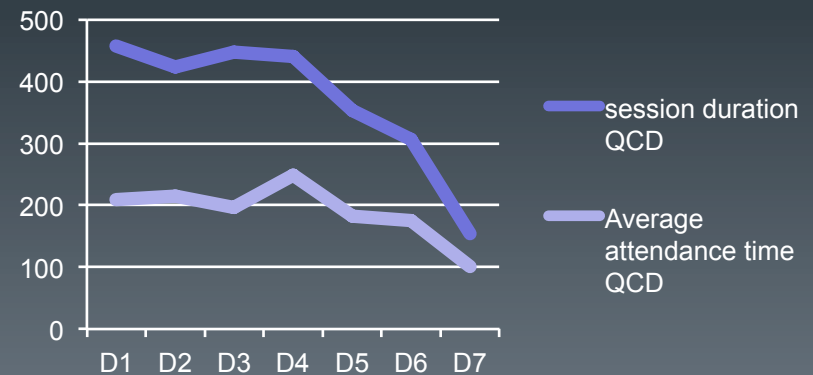
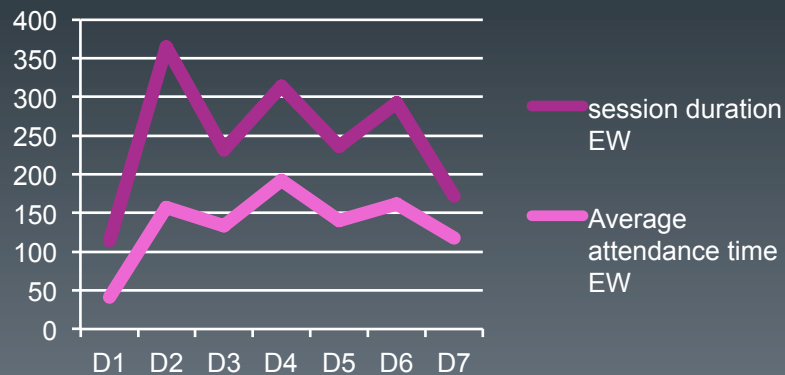
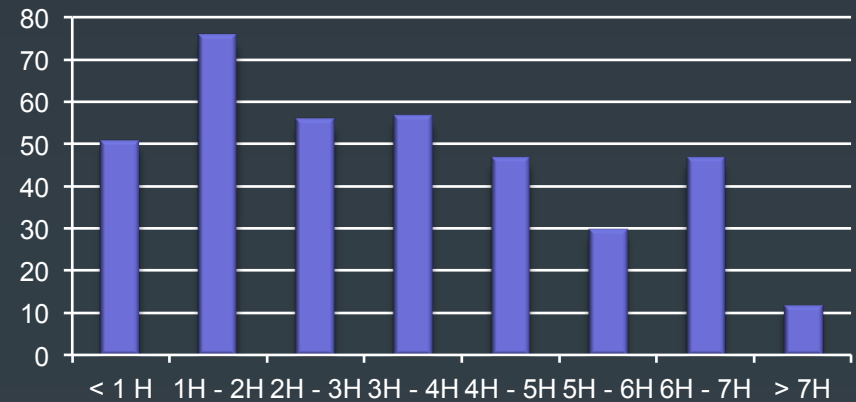
- Much more intervention from the scientific committee
 - chairpersons
 - ensure everything works : each speakers sound, screen sharing and image
 - prepare questions in case nobody asks, avoid silences
 - agitators
 - selected participants previously asked to create the discussion, “start the fire”
 - on live sessions as well as on slack
- Great deal of preparation work from the organising committee
 - create all necessary channels in Slack
 - upload each talk (videos / posters) in time and create all necessary links
 - verify each contribution and respect the display timing
 - adapt every room on Gather.town for the specific needs of each session
- Permanent presence in background
 - make sure everything works : mic and camera surveillance, etc
 - have a “plan B” meeting ready in a different server in case anything fails

Some numbers

Connection duration EW

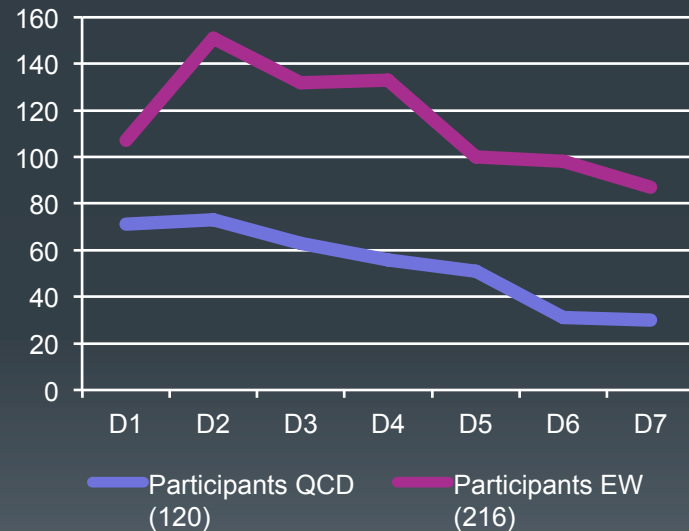


Connection duration QCD



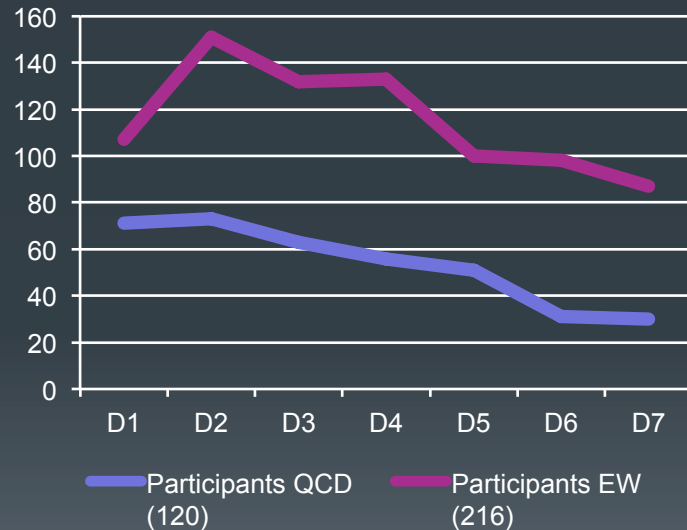
Some more numbers

Daily attendance



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Daily attendance

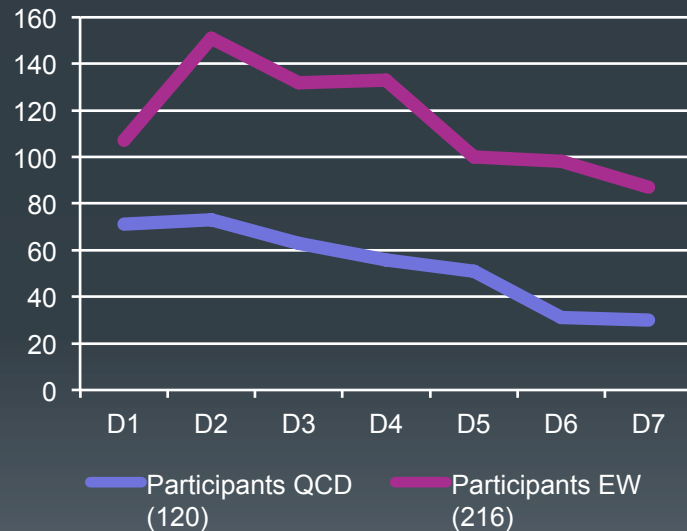


Same tendency, different reasons

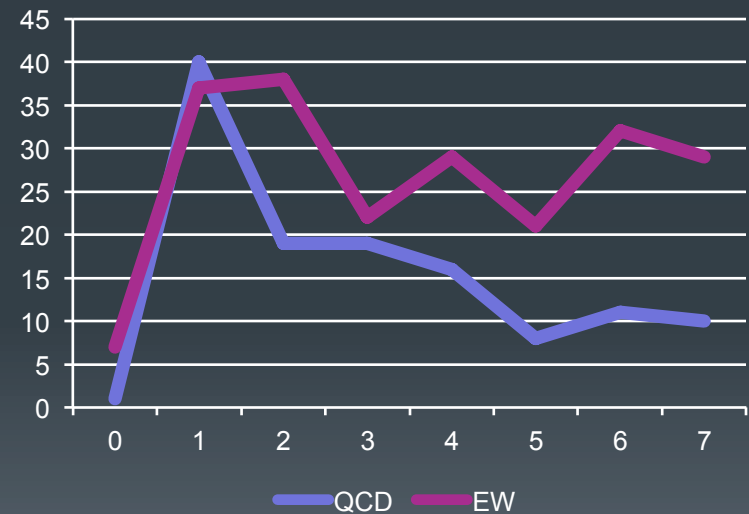


Some more numbers

Daily attendance



Days attended



Lessons Learned

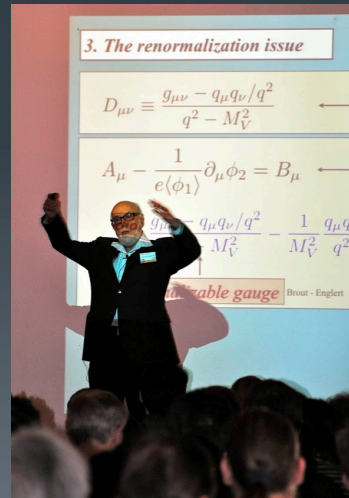
- Very detailed preparation needed
 - otherwise interactions are weak
 - more human presence in the background
- Interactions work based mostly on prior acquaintances
 - discussion relies greatly in the fact that people know each other
 - difficult to create new connections
- Sessions need to be short
 - participants can't make themselves available the whole day
 - no real cut from the home/work background
 - difficult to include all time zones comfortably

Conclusion

- Virtual meetings can work, but can't replace efficiently a real meeting

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- Virtual meetings can work, but can't replace efficiently a real meeting
- Some things can't happen online



Looking forward to 2022



Links

- Rencontres de Moriond
 - <http://moriond.in2p3.fr/2021>
- Gather.town
 - Moriond 2021 virtual venue
 - https://gather.town/app/PVc5C33Q1iwN3aNh/Moriond_Gravitation_2021
 - Password ; TakeALook