

Ten Rules for your Basho's Barcamp

In this learning resource, I mod *Ten Simple Rules for Organizing an Unconference* outlined in this paper:

Budd A, Dinkel H, Corpas M, Fuller JC, Rubinat L, Devos DP, et al. (2015) Ten Simple Rules for Organizing an Unconference. *PLoS Comput Biol* 11(1): e1003905. doi:10.1371/journal.pcbi.1003905

Keywords

Unconference, a definition:

“an unconference is a participant-oriented meeting where the attendees decide on the agenda, discussion topics, workshops, and, often, even the time and venues.” (Budd et al. 2015: 2)

Unconference Formats:

Unconferences take many different formats. Budd et al. trace these back to 1985 and list the following:

Open Space Technology

Foo Camp

BarCamp

Birds of a Feather

EdCamp

ScienceOnline

So, a **BarCamp** is an **Unconference Format**:

BarCamp = informal and flexible program that allows

- participants to present their own Open Toolkits
 - learners to choose sessions accordingly
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Ten Rules > Your Assignment

Mapping Budd et al. onto your assignment for this course:

Each Basho Programmes its own BarCamp

Working collectively in your Basho to design and organise the BarCamp *for* your Basho gives you, as “participants experience in working together”. (Budd et al. 2015: 2)

Your Basho’s BarCamp Programme needs an **Overarching Goal** = prioritise interaction over presentation

No Platform = there is no ‘front of the room’ in a BarCamp; all the participants have an equally important role to play.

Focus of each Basho is relevant since the focus is decided by the Basho.

No Lurkers – contributions must be made – *in the form of a 20min Open Toolkit* – by every CAT student in your Basho

Rule 1: This is an unconference

This will be an **unconference format**, thus it is:

“suited to promoting interactions and networking between attendees”

“works particularly well when [...] groups are relatively small”

focused on “involvement and interactions amongst participants”

(Budd et al. 2015: 2)

Rule 2: Clarify the Unconference Format

Your Basho’s **BarCamp** will take the form of a **Curated Unconference** : this means that you must publish what each participant is doing *in advance*

Your Basho’s **BarCamp Programme** will be published as a post and pinned to the landing page of blogs.ed.ac.uk/macat

Time limits are **fixed** = 20mins per participant / **per Open Toolkit**

Each **Open Toolkit** must be designed to run x2 times (a total of 40mins).

This means your Basho need to plan the timings like so:

- 10mins to gather Participants and explain the format
- **Open Toolkit** Run 1 (20mins) 7-8 Toolkits running simultaneously
- 5mins break to allow Participants to move between Toolkits
- **Open Toolkit** Run 2 (20mins) 7-8 Toolkits running simultaneously

Total runtime of 1hr for each Basho



Possible format of Barcamp at ESW (Neil Mulholland)

Rule 3: Create a Clear Mission for your Basho's BarCamp

Your Basho must create a clear and visible mission statement that 'unites' the contributions from each participant in their group.

The mission statement will be the first thing that Participants see – they encounter it before they see each of the individual Open Toolkit contributions offered by your Basho's BarCamp.

This mission statement should focus "the expectations of participants" and manage their expectations accordingly:

- what can Participants expect?
 - what should Participants NOT expect?
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Rule 4: No Lectures

Ensure that “content comes from the shared experiences and expertise of all participants” so that “Every voice is valued” (Budd et al. 2015: 2).

You need to create Open Toolkits that encourage participation – do *not* lecture.

Rule 5: Involve all members of your Basho in Planning and Coordinating your Basho's BarCamp

“Participant-centric thinking” (Budd et al. 2015: 3) is vital. Your Basho are collectively responsible for the logistical organisation of your BarCamp.

Infrastructure Planning

Collectively planning your infrastructure means “paying attention to details such as required equipment, venue, network connectivity, power outlets, and catering”. (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

What infrastructure will *your Basho* need to ensure is in place?

e.g.

Black/Whiteboards

posters ([link](#))

materials

tools

tables

chairs

etc.

These things will NOT be provided for you. You need to work

with your Basho to make arrangements to ensure they are available if required.

Health & Safety Planning

Tools & Materials: remember that you cannot use tools or materials that would pose any danger or risk to your participants.

This means no exposed flames, no 'sharps', no power tools. (Yes, this means you **cannot** run an Open Toolkit if it is not safe).

Information Planning

Participant Info: include all essential information such as the Title of your Open Toolkit, your contact information and (if you have one) your website URL.

Information Planning has to include a clear **BarCamp Programme**. Since this is a **Curated Unconference** you will need to publish what each of you are doing *in advance*.

Your Basho's **BarCamp Programme** needs to be made available on-site. This can be in the format of a poster, a hand-out, or both. You need to clearly show Participants

what is happening (title: synopsis)

where it is happening (location)

when it is happening (times)

Rule 6: Provide an Open, Relaxed Atmosphere

"To promote a relaxed atmosphere, think carefully about the layout of the venue." (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

Your Basho's BarCamp will take place at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop in the Sculpture Yard where you first encountered Artist's Toolkits. This space has to be carefully organised and planned so that all members of your Basho have the space and resources they need to run their own Open Toolkit.

Create an environment at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop that is "conducive to valuable and appropriate learning", and that

“facilitates interaction and communication.” (Budd et al. 2015: 4) It should be “relaxed, open, friendly, and fun. This will ensure that all participants, especially those joining for the first time, feel welcome and respected.” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

How will your Basho create such an environment?

Figure out how you can ensure you “interact actively in smaller, more intimate groups”. (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

This will involve **limiting how many people can take part** in each Open Toolkit at any given time. How will you make that clear to participants? How will you manage the ‘crowd’?

(Each BarCamp will feature 7-8 Open Toolkits running simultaneously – your ‘audience’ will be comprised on 16 CATs, 30+ Year 3 BA Fine Art Students and anyone else you invite.

Rule 7: Trust Your Community

Your Community is your *Basho*.

Placing trust in your Basho to organise the BarCamp at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop is *enabling*:

“trusting in the community makes it easier and less risky to experiment with novel formats” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

Your own Open Toolkit will be a success only if “responsibility for the success of the event is more equally distributed across all participants.” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

Rule 8: Communication Is Key to Your Event; Make it As Easy, Unambiguous, and Transparent As Possible

“Engaging in communication is one of the reasons why people choose to come together for any meeting” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

Comms for: Participants

How are you going to communicate the content of your Basho's BarCamp to Participants on the day? See Rule 2 and Rule 5 for details.

Comms for: Infrastructure & Information Planning

How are you going to handle this as a Basho?

What tool(s) can you use to organise yourselves as a Basho?

Consider that you need an organisational tool that is:

“very helpful in giving participants the chance to get involved in the organization of the event in advance” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

a “collaborative real-time editor [...] to conceptualize thoughts and to track discussions [...] can be edited by multiple people in parallel” (Budd et al. 2015: 4)

Would it make sense to use **Miro** here? Or should we use **MS Notebook** within MS Teams? We can discuss this in your Basho and decide which tool is easiest to write copy with.

Rule 9: The Journey is as important as the destination

This is good advice to follow when designing your Open Toolkit:

“encourage participants to identify and work together towards a common goal, and to document how they attempted to get there” (Budd et al. 2015: 6)

Here is more good advice – each Open Toolkit will run for only 20mins! The journey might be more important than a clear ‘outcome’....

“Any given event will rarely provide the time needed to take a goal or project from beginning to end” (Budd et al. 2015: 6)

You do have to document your own Open Toolkit. Consider if there's a way of doing so that includes your Participants in

the process of documenting what's happening. Is there some way you can continue the process beyond the 20mins you have for each iteration of your Open Toolkit?

"Documenting content can be an effective way to engage people and also to further the legacy of the unconference session"
(Budd et al. 2015: 6)

Rule 10: No contribution is too trivial

"Do not rule out anything when it is first suggested because brainstorming becomes the most productive when any idea that comes to mind is communicated without prior judgment of its value. One person's unusual idea may spark the way forward."
(Budd et al. 2015: 4)

This is a good rule of thumb to follow when you are planning your Basho's BarCamp.

Equally, this applies to you running your own Open Toolkit during your Basho's BarCamp.

Return to Learning Sprint 4 Barcamp

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