Fobia / BOOST Site Pilot Studies

Deliverable D.T3.2.3 A report on the training pilots

According to Fobia project plan, the objective of piloting the e-learning modules was to execute one piloting session in each partner country, concerning at least one study module, and one group of piloting students. Two feedback questionnaires were constructed for the pilot studies – one to be filled before piloting, and the other after the studies. Both questionnaires are enclosed in this report (ANNEX 1), and they can also be found in The Boost Site LMS (if you are further interested, please get access and register to LMS at https://boostsite.org/en/).

In the feedback survey, students were asked to reflect on the piloted module, e.g. regarding the following aspects:

- their expectations of the study module (after being introduced to it)
- technical quality of the study materials, and accessibility and usability of the virtual learning environment
- students' interest to the study modules
- usefulness of the learning materials they studied during piloting
- time consumption, preferred time for studies, fitting studies with working hours
- pros and cons of The BOOST Site LMS, how to develop it further

Pilot studies among partners

Due to varying conditions with partners, pilot studies were accomplished in somewhat different ways from one partner to another. It was agreed in a partner meeting that pilots would be conducted by TTS, SE, UHI, and WIT. As a summary of the pilot studies in the respective organisations, a total of 38 students participated in the pilot sessions.

For the **SE's** pilot studies, a group of their members (i.e. harvesting entrepreneurs) participated in a piloting occasion where they were introduced to the **Module 8. Smart contracts and financially sound investments**, created by SE specialists (in Swedish). In the following two paragraphs, Frans Johansson from SE reports the pilot studies among Swedish forest service entrepreneurs.

"Our digital course Economy, Safe agreements and Wise machine business – made with the help of Boost Site, has so far been tested by 22 people. Of these, four have completed the course.
We are rather satisfied with the result, considering that we only really marketed this course a few times via social media and at our annual meeting.

This course was a real test for us, but we can see several uses in the future. Still much to learn about the tool but we think we have cracked the first barrier. Among the comments from the users we can see barriers such as Thinking difficult with e-learning as a tool, and poor Internet connection."

WIT piloted with two groups of students. There were 18 people attending the pilot session, half of them piloted Module 7. **Business models** and the other half tested Module 3. **Effective leadership**. Summary of the feedback on Irish pilots is attached to this report (ANNEX 2). The general observation of the pilot studies is that the students were quite satisfied with the study modules, and they did not have major issues with the virtual learning, though they were substantially younger than forest service entrepreneurs on average. The results of the pilot studies at WIT will be discussed in the Conclusions chapter.

UHI delivered the pilot studies following their own process. First, they contacted roughly 180 contractors, targeted to those that were interviewed and responded to survey. Response rate was low, and as a consequence, 5 contractors participated a workshop, where they were introduced to BOOST Site. Moreover, a group of 13 students familiarised themselves with and piloted BOOST Site. Both groups piloted Module 3. "Effective Leadership", and they filled in the "Expectation Survey questionnaire" during the

workshop. At UHI, the piloting process was completed by Euan Bowditch, Roz Thomas & Sarah Pohlschneider.

Euan Bowditch from UHI presented results of their pilot studies in The Fobia result seminar, held in Vuokatti, Finland on February 4th, 2020. The presentation of Mr Bowditch includes the main results of pilot studies at UHI, and it can be found in ANNEX 3.

TTS did not totally reach its goals with the pilot studies. Nevertheless, Boost Site Portal, together with the virtual learning package were presented in several occasions in Finland. Moreover, the LMS was displayed in articles, newsletters and videos.

BOOST Site was introduced in Joensuu, Kuopio, Oulu, Mikkeli, Lahti, Rovaniemi, Jyväskylä and Tampere within training organised for forest service entrepreneurs (participants in total ca. 70). Further, we introduced BOOST Site in a seminar for Finnish Machine Entrepreneurs Association, with audience of app. 150, in Tampere on 31st January 2020, and a demo was presented also in the final seminar of Fobia (Feb 5th, 2020), for the audience of ca. 120. Moreover, BOOST Site was also demonstrated to a group of 11 spouses of Finnish harvesting entrepreneurs in Vieremä, during a training camp of management training course on October 11-12th, 2019. An article of the training session is included in ANNEX 4.

Despite of our efforts, we managed to get only two pilot students for the Module 4. "Business management" (which is available only in Finnish for the moment). It is likely that we relied too much on entrepreneurs' capabilities and independency to conduct the pilot studies alone. A positive aspect in the introduction sessions was that approximately 350 Finnish forest service entrepreneurs were introduced to BOOST Site, and this group may return to the LMS later (assuming we can maintain and update BOOST Site at TTS in the future).

Conclusions

BOOST Site LMS was piloted by four partners of the Fobia project (WIT, SE, UHI and TTS). Of the pilot sessions conducted, partners managed to get a sufficient number of piloted students, with the exception of TTS, where only two pilot students were recorded. Thus, the conclusions are made based on the pilot studies at WIT, SE and UHI.

Generally, it seems that the BOOST Site was welcomed by students as a useful tool for self-learning among the forest service entrepreneurs. In the LMS, useful information was offered concerning, e.g., Management and leadership, business models, and efficiency of harvesting operations. The technical accessibility of BOOST Site was considered at least "accessible". The learning platform worked well on laptops, but some problems were reported on scalability to mobile phones and tablets.

Most of the students' expectations to study modules were met, and the contents seemed to offer interesting and useful information to them. Despite this, some issues were also brought up about the materials. Some students reported that there were too many long text blocks and too few pictures and other illustrations. More interactive material was hoped for, and the LMS did not satisfy the features of micro learning approach with all the modules and materials delivered.

For the Fobia partners, BOOST Site was a good start with e-learning, teaching us how to create virtual materials, and offering different approaches to be developed further. The future of BOOST Site is still unclear, but we hope to develop the LMS according to the guidelines given by our test students. We have had discussions with Fobia partners, and there is a common view to progress with BOOST Site. The efforts

we have made have been fruitful, and we have a sound basis to progress with the BOOST Site. Some of the key aspects and features we would upgrade in the future with BOOST Site include:

- More extensive virtual training packages, supporting self-learning
- Interactive course implementations
- Logical learning paths with versatile use of e-learning tools supporting efficient learning
- Extensive use of learning analytics
- Versatile experiments with H5P-tool within Moodle
- Clever use of Self-check examinations in Moodle
- Intelligent, well written e-learning experiences; narrative approaches that make learning visible
- Planning and implementing learning, independent of place and time

To summarise, BOOST Site LMS was an educative experiment of e-learning; partners' contribution to LMS proved that there are various ways to create virtual training for forest service entrepreneurs. The diversity of implementations in study modules supported well the innovative approach of BOOST Site training package. There was diversity in execution of the pilot studies as well. For the pilot studies, best results were obtained when students were introduced to LMS in classroom teaching.

As to the objectives of Fobia, more could have been done, but however, the minimum level of project goals was exceeded.

Study modules could have supported better authentic self-learning

The learning process can also be interpreted that we may have been a couple of years ahead with our attempts. Adopting virtual learning is also a matter of generation as a new generation will take the lead in forest businesses in the coming years.

Finally, a comment on the present situation: we did not want coronavirus disease to justify the benefits of distance learning, nevertheless, it certainly did it.

Expectation survey

1) Your occupational status?

☐ Student

☐ Employed

☐ Entrepreneur

2) What is your current job role (and employer? *is this necessary to ask?*)

☐ Machine operator

☐ Forest manager

☐ Supervisor

☐ Entrepreneur

☐ Other…

3) Area of expertise closed, <u>check all that apply</u>

☐ Harvesting

☐ Forest management planning

☐ Silvicultural services

☐ Establishment (entrepreneurship?)

☐ Other forest services (please elaborate)

_____

4) Qualifications achieved (e.g. NC, HNCs, HNDs degrees etc. or field of study) open but with examples.
   This must be modified according to partner countries' classification of degrees.

☐ NC

☐ HNC

☐ HND

☐ Other…

4) What is the length of your working career?

Work experince in total ☐ years, of which in forest services ☐ years.

5) Age group:

☐ - 30

☐ 31 - 40

☐ 41 -50

☐ 51 – 60

☐ 61 -

6) Gender, closed (M, F, other, prefer not to say)

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Prefer not to say

7. What do you hope to gain from this experience/training platform?

> Please elaborate here

8. What are the skills you would most like to develop?

> Please elaborate here

9. Specifically, what are you expecting or wanting to learn from an <u>effective leadership</u> course (a part from the broadly obvious – "*leadership*")?

> Please elaborate here

10. Do you anticipate any issues with online learning?

    a. I'm not willing to study online <u>independently</u> and/or I find it difficult to start the

    b. Too difficult to use e-learning / practise online learning

    c. Lack of time

    d. Poor network connection / insufficient IT equipment

    e. I feel don't get enough benefit of online learning

    f. Any other issue, please elaborate

    g. I don't see any difficulties / obstacles in online learning

11. What time of day and week are you most likely to engage with the platform?

Preferred day(s) of week

Apt(?) time slot (e.g., 7-9 pm)

12. Considering the entire module, how much time are you planning to spend with the studies?

- ☐ 1 hour or less

☐ 1 – 2 hours

☐ 2 – 4 hours

☐ 4 hours or more

12. Any other information you would like to offer on subject?

Please elaborate here

Experience survey / BOOST Site

1) What is your occupational status? Check option(s) that match

☐ Student

☐ Employed

☐ Entrepreneur

2) Your current job role and employer?

☐ Machine operator

☐ Forest manager

☐ Supervisor

☐ Entrepreneur

☐ Other…

3) What are your areas of expertise? Check all options that apply.

☐ Harvesting

☐ Forest management planning

☐ Silvicultural services

☐ Establishment (entrepreneurship?)

☐ Other forest services (please elaborate)

4) What is the length of your working career?

Work experince in total ⬚ years, of which in forest services ⬚ years.

5) What is your age group?

☐ - 30

☐ 31 - 40

☐ 41 -50
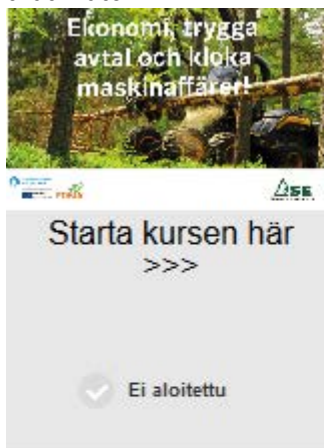
☐ 51 – 60

☐ 61 -

6) Your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

☐ Other

☐ Prefer not to say

6,5) What specific study modules in BOOST site did you familiarize yourself with? Check all options that match
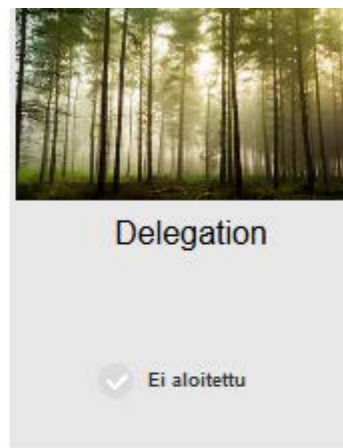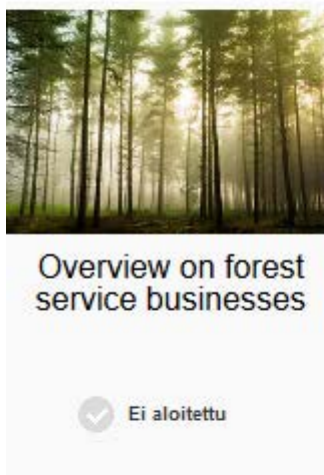
Starta kursen här >>>	Introduction to studies	Delegation
Ei aloitettu	Ei aloitettu	Ei aloitettu
Overview on forest service businesses	Effective Leadership	Business Management
Ei aloitettu	Ei aloitettu	Kesken
Operational Productivity	Risk management and juristics	Business models
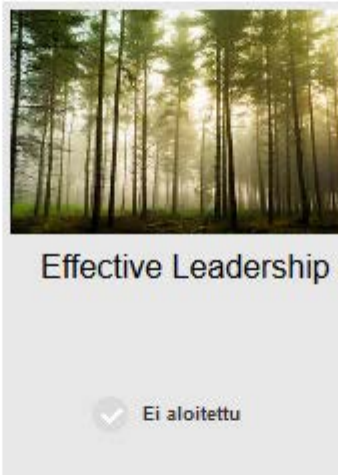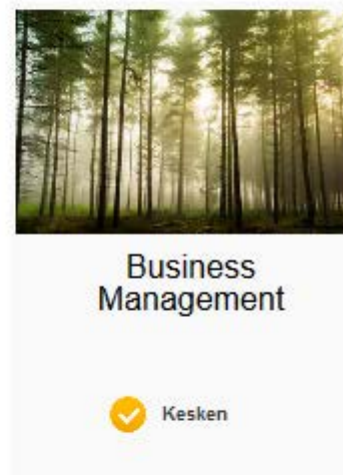
7) How likely is that you will recommend this platform to other contractors / machine operators?

Not at all likely   Not very likely   Somewhat likely   Very likely   Extremely likely

◀ ||| ▶

    If you would recommend this platform to other contractors / machine operators, please state the reasons why.

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8) How likely is that you will continue to use this platform?

Not at all likely   Not very likely   Somewhat likely   Very likely   Extremely likely

◀ ||| ▶

9) What particular modules will interest you in the future, why? Please state here.

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10) What were the worst / most impractical features in the platform?

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11) Could you rate the user-friendliness of the platform? (Tick the box between 1 – 5)

☐   Very accessible and easy-to-use

☐   Rather accessible and easy-to-use

☐   Cannot say

☐   Somewhat inaccessible and difficult to use

☐   Very inaccessible and difficult to use

12) Could you rate the accessibility and use on your devices (Desktop, Laptop, Tablet or Mobile)?

☐   Very usable and accessible

☐   Rather usable and accessible

☐   Cannot say

☐   Somewhat unusable and inaccessible

☐   Very unusable and inaccessible

13) Considering the entire module, how much time did you spend with the studies?

☐   2 hours or less

☐   2 – 5 hours

☐   5 – 8 hours

☐   8 hours or more

14) How easy was it to fit the studies around your regular work schedule? (1-5)

Very difficult	Quite difficult	Neutral	Quite easy	Very easy

◄ ||| ►

15) When did you use it the most – what time of day/week?

Platform was used most: day(s) of week   [   ]

Most used time slot(s) (e.g., 7-9 pm):   [   ]

16) Did you ever use it on-site or in remote areas (if yes, did it work)?

17) How would you improve this platform?

18) How well did the study module meet your expectations?

Very well	Quite well	Neutral	Not so well	Not at all

◄ ||| ►

19) Will it change your thinking / activities in your profession? If yes, please elaborate how. If no, please state why not.

20) Would this be more useful if it provided an accredited qualification? If yes, please state why?

21) Any other comments on BOOST Site?

ANNEX 2. Report on pilot studies conducted by WIT

BOOST Site LMS / Module testing results

1. Students: 11
   Both students and employed: 7
2. Current job: Harvesting contractor, Sawmill, Forwarder operator, Security supervisor, Groundman for a tree surgery company, Chainsaw Operator.
3. Area of expertise:
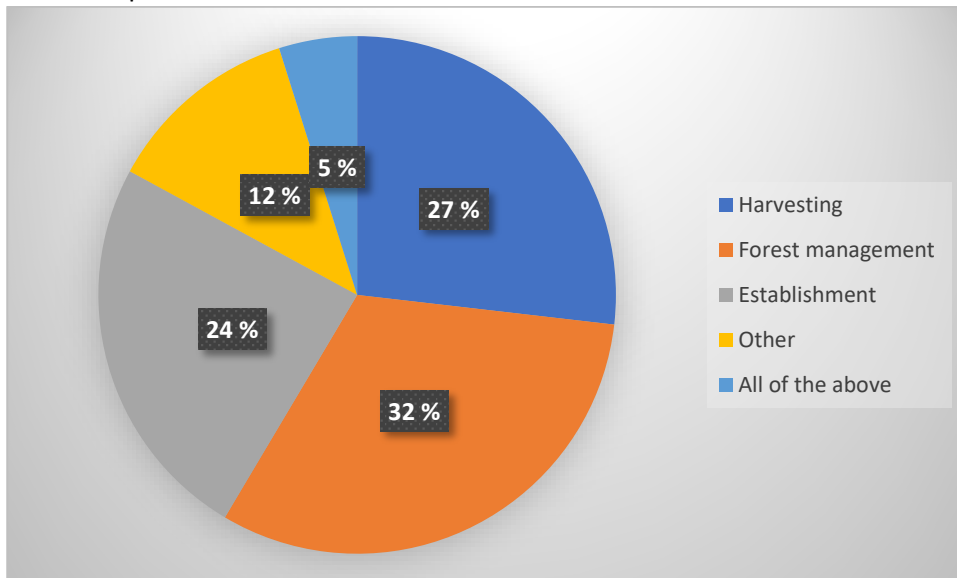
4. Age group

5. Gender
All male

6. Qualifications achieved
All Level 7

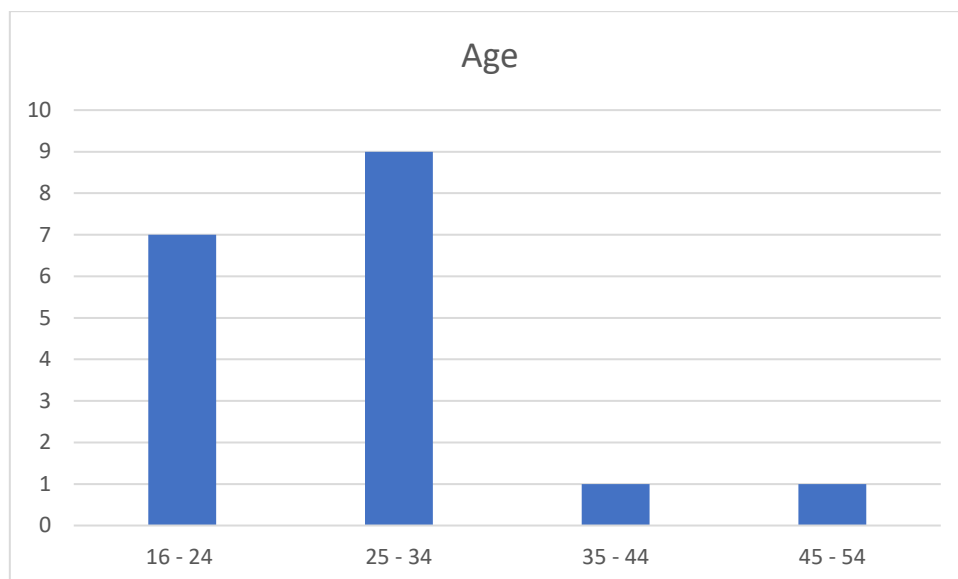7. Module tried (number of respondents)
Business models: 9
Effective leadership: 9

8. Would you recommend this platform to other contractors? (Please state the reasons why)

Business models: Yes = 7 ; No =2

Additional comments:

- it makes for interesting reading
- good standard info on slides
- There is some useful information on how a business works and develops..
- It provides a good initial understanding of the factors which influence how effectively a business operates.
- It isn't interesting.
- Needs to be more interactive and make you think about the topic.

Effective leadership: Yes = 7; No = 2

Additional comments:

- Good information and ideas.
- it highlights skills that a lot of people don't carry out.
- very useful for smaller companies who do not have the budget to send staff on expensive training courses.
- it is full of good information that is of great value to a person who is looking to better their business or start a business
- good leadership can help you make more profit.
- too much text. Not engaging enough. Needs more interactive exercises.
- not concise enough to be useful to small business owners, a lot of the module only applies to managing large teams.

9. Will you continue to use this platform? (any modules in particular and why?)
Business models: Yes =5; Maybe = 2; No= 2

Additional comments:

- there is valuable information on these slides.
- as the project develops I would enjoy reading this insight into different facets of the forestry sector and what influences them. I've only done the business model module, however, based on this I see great potential for this service to be used as a continuous upskilling tool.
- Yes, if the college has it for access.
- No, hard to follow.

Effective leadership Yes = 5 ; Maybe = , No = 4

Additional comments:

- Yes, help manage a business successfully
- Yes, Operational productivity
- No, too much reading
- No, blocks of text make it inaccessible for me

10. What were the best/most useful features/information?

Business models
- The power points
- Charts.
- Tables.
- Company roles.
- Pictures and diagrams.
- Business model value proposition.
- The human factors which can hinder/influence company development were of most interest to me. Many 'oldschool' frames of mind focus solely on the mechanical/business end of things. I think its important to factor in human interaction within a company. Nobody always knows best and adaptability is key for the continued survival of a company.

Effective leadership
- Topic 1, shape test.
- Bullet points.
- Delegation and leadership.
- The quizzes within the module.
- The more interactive sections.
- Useful information and scenarios.
- The interactive activity for separating leadership and management.
- Information on the differences between leaders and managers.
- The practical links that engaged me to look up things and do things.

11. What were the worst/most impractical features?

Business models
- Some of the presentations are too long
- Some of the info was repetitive
- Too much writing
- Power Points 1 and 2
- The self-assessment section of the Business model was unclear/unfinished.

Effective leadership
- Too much reading
- Too many slides
- A lot of reading which can be time consuming , points and ideas being a little longer than needed
- The poor quality images and unedited text (Rich Text editor is needed)
- as long videos and external links which could have been placed in a reference/bibliography

12. Could you rate the user-friendliness? (Between 1 – 5. 1 being very accessible and 5 being very inaccessible)

Business Model Module
User-friendliness (1 very accessible - 5 very inaccessible)

Effective Leadership Module
User-friendliness (1 very accessible - 5 very inaccessible)
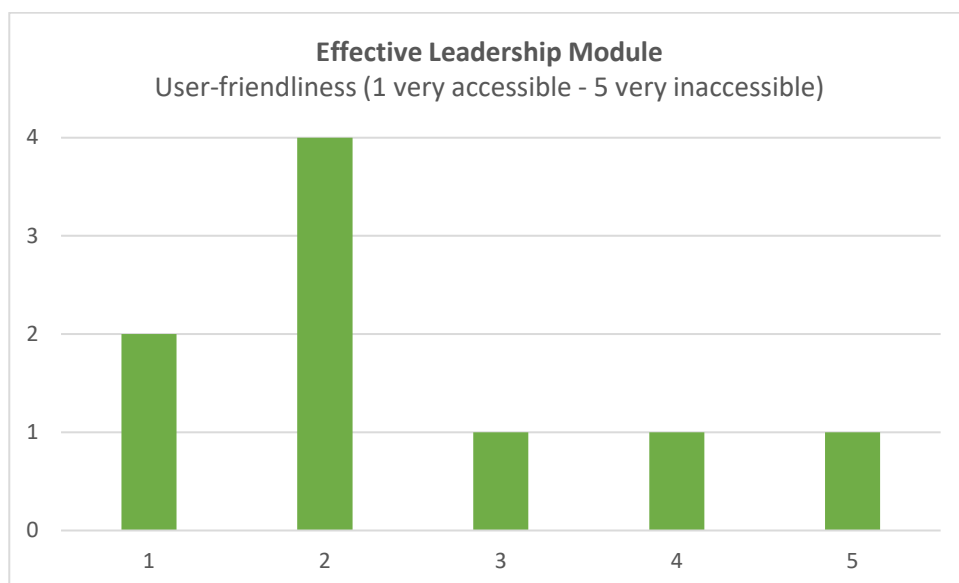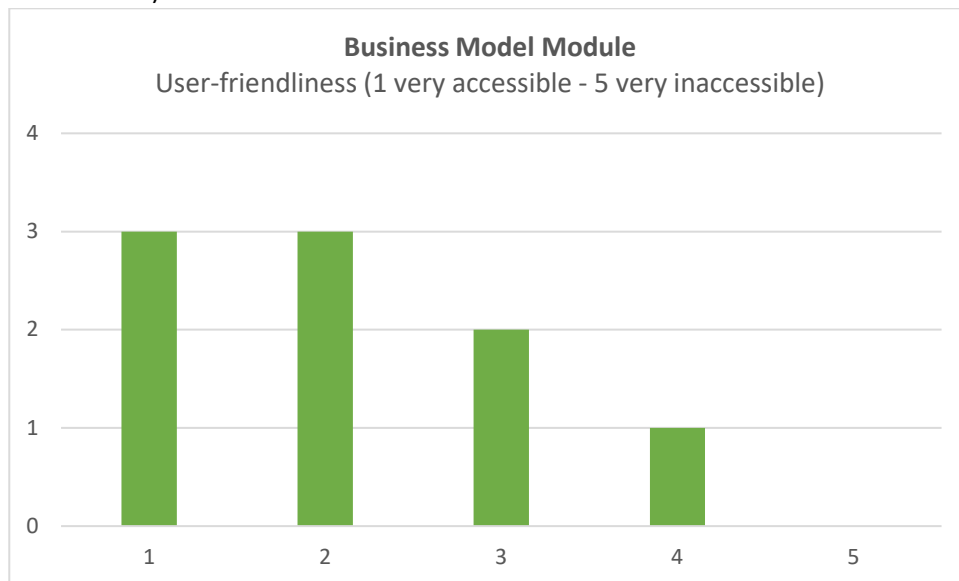
Response no 5: "Inaccessible to the target audience, as assumptions seem to have been made about IT skills of users"

13. Could you rate the accessibility and use on your devices?

    Desktop/Laptop very easy to use, one respondent stated that there was too much text for mobile.

14. How much time commitment was the module and did it fit around your work schedule?

    Between 40 min to 2 hours.

15. When did you use it the most – what time of day/week?

The respondents used the platform on Friday afternoon.
16. Did you ever use it on-site or in remote areas (Did it work)

The platform was used on an IT lab at WIT, and it was not tested in remote areas

17. How would you improve this platform?
- Shorten the slides
- More pictures and diagrams
- More interactive
- Less writing juts input key points
- More of an introduction
- Perhaps a voiceover/video element. Some people absorb information more effectively through different mediums.
- More interactive exercises
- More practical aspects.

18. Did it meet expectations?
   Yes = 11 ; No = 6 ; No answer = 1
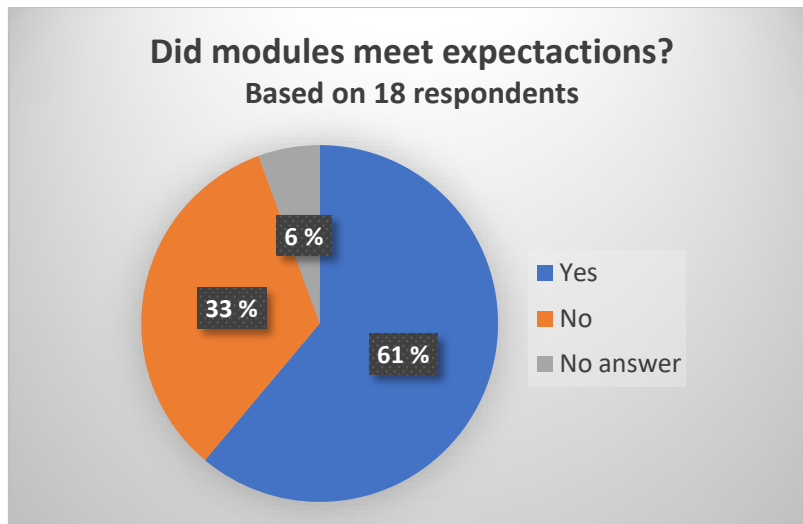
19. Would this be more useful if it provided an accredited qualification?
   Yes = 16 ; No = 2

Would this be more useful if it provided an accredited qualification?
Based on 18 respondents

11 %
89 %
Yes No

20. Any other comments?
- Good idea and if improved will help a lot of people greatly
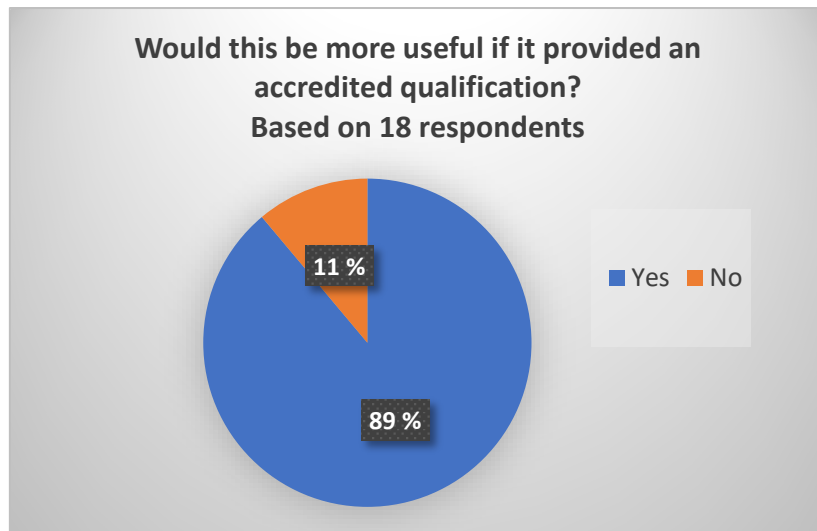- it could be made more engaging. It can be tough to use a learning platform such as this with no human interaction so it needs to be able to grab your attention.
- Good model, learned lots would love more (about the BM module).
- On Effective leadership module:
  o Setting Language to English doesn't translate all parts of the website.
  o Plain text and unformatted block text un-interactive - Rich text formatting needed.
  o Next page button unclear.
  o Images need improving (stock image library).
  o Links to external PDF's should be at the end for further reading if wanted not put in slide.
  o Embedded video too long to be useful again include at the end.
  o Make recap interactive.
  o 68 slides is too many if you are aiming for a short course online.

FOBIA Boost – Pilot

Does it work?

Euan Bowditch, Roz Thomas & Sarah Pohlschneider
(University of the Highlands & Islands, Inverness College)

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FOBIA - Recruitment

- Contacted roughly 180 contractors
- Targeted those that were interviewed and responded to survey
- Response was low

"Not enough time"

"Sorry, too busy"

"Cannot see anyone using this"

"Feels too much like school, I just finished"

"Machines had issues and needed to repair"

"Does interest me – don't need it"

- 5 contractors (Workshop)
- 13 Forestry students

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Workshop structure

- Introduction to FOBIA
- Bacon rolls and coffee
- Introduction to the '*Effective leadership*' module
- Expectation survey
- Log-in credentials and set-up
- Discussion and questions

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Expectation survey

- What the contractors expected, anticipated and hoped from the module:
- Business skills to improve:
  - People management
  - New company start-up
  - Job quality assurance
  - Conflict resolution
- Data collection and use
- "*I have no idea*"
- Negotiation and business planning
- Network development

Client expectations

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Experience survey

- Would recommend to other contractors
- Business management was the other module people most wanted to explore
- "Leading or Managing", "Delegation", "Decision Making" and "Managing Conflict"
- Opinions split between video use

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Feedback - Learning materials

- Videos could find a balance – contextualise and draw-out key messages
- Learning cards as field prompts
- Additional material – accessible online resources

BRACE YOURSELF

FEEDBACK IS COMING

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Feedback – Accessibility

- 6 – 12 hours to complete the module (including taking notes and participating in the tasks)
- Terminology: language was sometimes considered inappropriate
- Division between the relevance for target audience of SME's as there is a wide-range of capacity
  - Begin with start-ups to larger businesses
  - Signposting of relevant material
  - Lessons transferable

Bad news

- Not compatible for mobiles
- Did not operate well in remote areas – bad wifi even in cities- depends on infrastructure
- Students had issues with logging-on

Improvements

- Mentoring
  - Bringing the human element and contextualising the
- Accreditation
  - Motivation
- Accounting
  - Identifying suitable contracts
- Communication
  - With your team
- Marketing
  - Change contractors attitudes

YES YESSS

YOUR SKILLS ARE IMPROVING.

What the contractors say

"Module is useful and even includes material that I was not expecting, which was also useful"
"Not sure whether the platform would get any traction unless it had some qualification or recognition, and would not pay anything unless I knew there were explicit and reviewed benefits"
"Not sure how this would play out with younger machine operators – whether there is the interest"
"I think this might be useful for me but I am too busy on the machine right now"
"Module is useful and even includes material that I was not expecting, which was also useful"
"Will be difficult to get the word out and people to engage – will need support"

Recommendations

- FCA and social media networking
- Peer-to-peer learning
- Online mentoring
- Ability to print in booklet format
- Accreditation
- Mobile and tablet compatibility
- Remote operation – comms
- Integration of operational software

Discussion

- Where do we go from here?
- Long-term vision and sustainability?
- Keeping the platform relevant?
- Integrating with educational curriculum?
- Continued professional development (points)
- Develop into a living platform
- Translation?

FOBIAs

- Hylophobia:
  - **Fear of forests**
- Dendrophobia:
  - **Fear of trees**
- Nyctohphobia:
  - **Fear of dark forests or forests during the night**
- Xylophobia:
  - **Fear of wooden objects**

Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia:
Fear of long words

Educating and enjoyable weekend at Ponsse

The first Finnish pilot group of Fobia BOOST Site was launched in a training camp held at Ponsse locations on 11th and 12th October. We met there the **Ponsse Ladies** – a group of 12 active and skilful members of family enterprises in harvesting business – hosted by Mrs Tiina Nissinen from Ponsse.

We started our day one with a through training package on the new Ponsse Manager application. Ponsse Manager is an operations management system for forest machine entrepreneurs. Being StanForD2010 compatible, Ponsse Manager contributes to fleet management and performance development of harvesting enterprises. The application enables also handling and transfer of machine data for various purposes.

Next, we were guided to the machine testing lab. Esko Havimäki, the experienced Ponsse trainer, introduced us to test our skills in identification of harvester parts. Circulating around the brand new Ponsse Cobra, even the two foresters from TTS were pondering the questions with their heads put together.

On day two, we focused on business management of harvesting enterprises. Pertti Hourunranta from TTS guided us to financial statement analysis, and its applications to timber harvesting business. From that on, I gave the Ladies a lecture of measuring, analysing, and developing productivity in logging and forwarding operations.

Finally, we came to introduction of BOOST Site, and connected to that, did a few exercises on effects of some parameters of productivity on the site-level profitability of harvesting. As with the pilots, the Ladies promised to familiarize themselves with a study module **Business Management** and give feedback of their studies to TTS trainers. That promise really was an enjoyable ending for an educating training session.

Text: Arto Kettunen, BOOST Site Trainer, TTS