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## Does personality affect our participation with the open environment?

### Student Dissertation

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## MON: Does personality affect our participation with the open environment? (Debbie Meakin)

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[Dr Simon Ball](#)  
13 February 2014

### Abstract

The characteristics of a person, or their behaviour may present barriers to accessing the online or open environment and this may also affect inclusion. Behaviour can also be referred to as 'expression of personality' which can be studied systematically through the five-factor model (FFM). A number of studies related to behaviour have been undertaken using FFM. FFM or the Big five have a psychological basis and are agreed as stable by researchers (McCrea and John, 1992). The Big 5 traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience.

The Big five exist on a scale, eg for extroversion there are different levels so that introversion is at the other end of the scale. A series of questions can be used to identify a 'dimension' of personality and where on each of the five scales a person might be.

Studies which have investigated personality when working online include internet usage (Tsao 2013; Blumer and Doering, 2012) and shyness and anxiety (Scealy *et al*, 2002). The findings show that behaviour online does change, eg four of the personality dimensions were affected less when being online (or using computers) than offline (Blumer and Doering, 2012). Tsao (2013) found that openness is a positive factor online for entertainment, social relationships and communication.

Some of these situations studied for working online are similar to the open environment. In this study the FFM or Big five personality model is considered in relation to working in an open environment.

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## Extra content

### 'Big 5' Personality Test Websites

Here are some of the websites that can give an online report of your Big 5 personality domains. You can give these a try, they all have slightly different questions and have different approaches.

This site asks you to answer the questions by comparing your answers someone you know well would give: [www.outofservice.com/bigfive](http://www.outofservice.com/bigfive)

This website gives a graph to compare your reading with: [personality-testing.info/tests/BIG5.php](http://personality-testing.info/tests/BIG5.php)

This website uses slightly different terms to the usual ones for the Big 5, but they are still there (Inquisitiveness (Openness), Orderliness (Conscientiousness), Accommodation (Agreeableness), Emotional stability (Neuroticism). Extroversion is still the same: [similarminds.com](http://similarminds.com)

This website asks about 50 questions – its probably the same number as the other sites, but they are given a page at a time. You do get a sense of the scale (1 to 5) for the answers: [psychcentral.com/personality-test](http://psychcentral.com/personality-test)

All the tests give a percentile reading, which means that your scores can be compared with others who have taken the questionnaire.



[Deborah Meakin](#)

22:30 on 18 February 2014

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[Michelle Bourgein](#)

2:18pm 16 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Hi Debbie, looking forward to your presentation. It is a really interesting topic and a subject I would like to learn more about. Good luck tomorrow



[Avril sweeney](#)

5:10pm 16 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Hi Debbie,

Your abstract is intriguing. I am interested in your presentation. I am looking forward to finding out more and finding out how - The characteristics of a person, or their behaviour may present barriers to accessing the online or open environment and this may also affect inclusion.

I think your abstract/presentation could be implemented in different work environments and could be useful guides for colleagues to compare themselves against the ...

Big 5 traits are extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience.

Avril



[Clem Wilkinson](#)

6:53am 18 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

McHarg et al. (2012) may be of interest here, considering how people fit within Belbin team roles. I wonder, does assesment criteria recognise and value the roles people have? Not just with regard to online study but within online working environment?

McHarg J, Kay E J, Coombes L R (2012) 'Students' engagement with their group in a problem-based learning curriculum.', European journal of dental education : official journal of the Association for Dental Education in Europe, 16(1), pp. e106-10  
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.libezproxy.open.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/j.1600-0579.2011.00682.x/pdf>



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

9:23pm 18 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Following the live presentations, we asked each speaker to respond to questions posed by audience members. In the short time available, it was not possible to put all of the questions submitted to the speaker for a response. We asked all speakers if they would respond to the unanswered questions here on Cloudworks. Here are all of the questions asked during the session:

- ▶ Does personality and participation change with age? or experience?

- ▶ Do see Dr William Kelly's work on Virtual Worlds In Japan - this ethnographic research produced so extraordinary findings, not least on how many 'quiet' people as defined in the real world took on outrageous persona's online.
- ▶ What about avatars and alternate on-line personalities?
- ▶ My Mum, who is every inch the quiet shy grandmother in real life, is a top player in an online violent crime/gang game. The other players have no idea who she 'really' is.
- ▶ What is the URL of personality testing website?
- ▶ a greatly missed OU module 'Creativity, Innovation and Change' looked at these personality types in business - they have a role to play in particular in building teams, you need a mix, not all the same ... and certain 'types' don't get along with anyone ...
- ▶ Do you adopt an online personality or is it a hidden part of your real personality already?
- ▶ and does it then become part of your personality?
- ▶ is there are similar book to help extroverts cope in quieter situation? (I've had students that described 'quiet' as being life changing, I wonder if there is an opposite out there)
- ▶ Vic Lally is two years into a three year research programme on using virtual worlds with teenagers with behavioural problems.
- ▶ On last course someone had used QR codes to allow autistic people to practice interactions before entering places



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

9:27pm 18 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Hi Debbie

The paper and book chapter I referred to that I co-authored "Inclusion Benefits and Barriers of 'Once-removed' Participation" can be found in these places:

- ▶ [http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NWEJLzLJNkgC&lpq=PA47&ots=HKFEALkWUa&dq=ball pearce virtual worlds once-removed&pg=PA47#v=onepage&q=ball pearce virtual worlds once-removed&f=false](http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=NWEJLzLJNkgC&lpq=PA47&ots=HKFEALkWUa&dq=ball+pearce+virtual+worlds+once-removed&pg=PA47#v=onepage&q=ball+pearce+virtual+worlds+once-removed&f=false)
- ▶ [http://www2.open.ac.uk/relive08/documents/ReLIVE08\\_conference\\_proceedings\\_Lo.pdf](http://www2.open.ac.uk/relive08/documents/ReLIVE08_conference_proceedings_Lo.pdf)

Best wishes

Simon



[Susan Hobbs](#)

7:30pm 19 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

I was really interested in your presentation and made me think whether personality played a part in engagement with the topic of my own presentation. I think this is a direction I need to explore further so I may well be citing your work in a future version of my own.

Thank you for the inspiration.



[John Sumpter](#)

7:07pm 21 February 2014 (Edited 7:10pm 21 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Hi Deborah,

Well done with your presentation on Monday.

You mentioned learning styles and my presentation entitled "Curriculum design in online open education, does it take into account learning styles and contribute to inclusion". I have been largely unclear on my final artifact, and the form it would take, but I am now developing the idea of creating a guide or best practice advice, helping others when developing learning.

I found your findings are very interesting and I can see a relationship between our projects. Maybe a collaborative element could be developed within or after the EMA drawing on both sides?

Or perhaps you see a specific element being shared / drawn upon?

Your thoughts welcome,

Regards

John



[Deborah Meakin](#)

1:51pm 23 February 2014 (Edited 4:52pm 23 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

I have organised the questions and comments to make it easier to respond to.

Q: Does personality and participation change with age? or experience?

A: There are general opinions from experts that personality has developed by the time someone is in their 20s. Then it can alter but with age and perhaps this might be about experience? I'm not sure that this is definitive though as experts do vary especially in the light of new work. There is also an acknowledgment that there can be some variance based on day to day experiences, so it is suggested that testing results are verified, perhaps by doing tests a few times to see what is most consistent.

As far as participation alteration with age or experience goes this is not something that I was looking at in relation to this study specifically, but it's a good question given the information in the Digital Cookbook study (Cara ). I will look at this to see if there is work done as this may have an effect on participation which may or may not be linked to personality.

Qs: I have put the following two questions together as they are similar:

What about avatars and alternate on-line personalities?

Do you adopt an online personality or is it a hidden part of your real personality already?

and does it then become part of your personality?

A: This study has been about someone's usual personality in an online or open environment. The alternatives, avatars, and any effect of an online personality was something that I was thinking might come out of the study or to be considered afterwards. I can see from these questions that there seems to be a level of awareness of this so I might need to see if it can be included for clarity.

There is the possibility that someone might adopt a personality online, just as in any situation. One of the suggestions from those who do the testing sites is to do a number of tests over a period of time to find out what is most consistent.

Q: What is the URL of personality testing website?

A: I have put some links for online testing in the additional information above. Try them and let me know what your think.

Q: Is there are similar book to help extroverts cope in quieter situation? (I've had students that described 'quiet' as being life changing, I wonder if there is an opposite out there)

A: The stand point of the book is that human interaction in most situations is led by the extrovert type rather than the other way around. However, the book is written for an audience of both types and while it does suggest strategies for those who do see themselves as 'Quiet', it equally gives insight for those who do not.

Do see Dr William Kelly's work on Virtual Worlds In Japan - this ethnographic research produced so extraordinary findings, not least on how many 'quiet' people as defined in the real world took on outrageous persona's online.

A: I will, this sounds very interesting.

My Mum, who is every inch the quiet shy grandmother in real life, is a top player in an online violent crime/gang game. The other players have no idea who she 'really' is.

A: Potentially a useful approach if you do want to use a different personality in certain situations. I know of people who have a similar outgoing change when they are behind the wheel of a car, perhaps not to the same effect. I think being able to consciously use personas is potentially useful for an individual.

a greatly missed OU module 'Creativity, Innovation and Change' looked at these personality types in business - they have a role to play in particular in building teams, you need a mix, not all the same ... and certain 'types' don't get along with anyone ...

A: I remember coming across Belbin types in groups of workers and teams. Understanding of how the different personality team members contribute can be critical in their success in working together.

Vic Lally is two years into a three year research programme on using virtual worlds with teenagers with behavioural problems.

A: This sounds interesting work and something to follow up to compare with this study.

On last course someone had used QR codes to allow autistic people to practice interactions before entering places.

A: Also sounds like something I need to follow up.

Many thanks to you all for the questions and comments. These have given me more food for thought and additional lines of enquiry.

I hope the responses are helpful, please leave more comments and questions as they arise. Thank you for your interest.

Debbie

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