CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VISITOR RESEARCH TO CI AND ICT4D THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Dear reviewers thank you for your feedback, they did help to highlight weaknesses and we are happier with the revised version. We hope you will be too. We will address the issues highlighted below.

Reviewer A:

To strengthen the article for submission to the special issue, it is suggested that the authors undertake the following:

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| Clarify the elements of the Contextual Model of Learning which are highlighted in the discussion. While stated this is the framework being used for the discussion, the practical lessons do not easily map onto the twelve factors and three contexts listed as part of the model in the literature review. Making this more explicit and easy to determine for readers will just strengthen your article. | I have added Table 2 which is a summary of the Findings and Discussion and make the mapping onto the three contexts obvious. The factors that are clearly relevant referred to within the text of the tables and more references to them are added to the text. |
| Correct the year on the Falk, Randol & Dierking reference. In Table 1, the year given for this reference is 2014, but the bibliography states the year for the reference as 2012. | I have checked this, Actually there are many Falk papers and although the Falk, Randol & Dierking paper is referred to elsewhere (with the year 2012) that paper it is not cited in Table 1 - so I think this is not a problem. The reference for in Table 1 is probably the one for Falk, J. H., Needham, M. D., & Dierking, L. D. (2014). International Science Centre Impact Study, 1-45. |
| Double check spelling throughout document. Few errors noted, for example second sentence under Objectives/Problem Statement section: “...ongoing concerned related to...” | This has been done. Careful reading found some other errors. There is a quotation in which “centre” is spelled “center” as this is how it is in the original. Otherwise we have used British spelling (found one or two that needed to change. “ongoing” has been changed to “on-going”; “telecentre” has been left as it is. |

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Reviewer B:

Review of “CONTRIBUTIONS FROM VISITOR RESEARCH TO CI AND ICT4D THEORY AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY”

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| The first is that the authors do not seem to have a grasp on the range of theories and methodologies already used by CI researchers, many of which already draw on constructivist and socio-cultural theoretical frameworks (a statement in para 2, p5 seems to suggest that this is not the case). For example, a number of researchers working in CI have drawn upon the theories of Orlikowski to assist in complex analysis within a constructivist framework in culturally specific situations, while others have used structuration theory, amongst others, in examining the effectiveness of ICT projects in indigenous communities and elsewhere. I am not suggesting that the authors go into any depth on this, but they do need to acknowledge that the range of research undertaken under the broad umbrella of CI is much stronger than they give credit for. | I am dismayed that the impression was given that Community Informatics research was somehow being disrespected. There was no intention to underestimate existing work in Community Informatics; the goal was simply to add to it using a less well-known field of research (that of visitor research, particularly as part of informal science education). Having been sensitised to this unfortunate miscommunication the paper has been re-read to adjust its tone. The second sentence in the first paragraph was rewritten. It now reads as follows “*This case is used to illustrate similarities between Community Informatics and ICT for Development and “Visitor Research” and how research focussing on the free-choice or self-directed learning that takes place at science centres can possibly also be useful within Community Informatics.”*  Para 2, p5 only refers to educational research and points out that constructivist and socio-cultural theoretical frameworks are often used there. This is certainly not meant to imply that these are unknown or not used in either CI or in fact in IS. A sentence has been added at the end of the paragraph: “*This fits well with Community Informatics research much of which uses these same theoretical frameworks.”*  As you say, it is not feasible to list the range of research undertaken under the broad umbrella of CI. However to try to address the problem the final paragraph under “Problem Statement” has been modified as follows:  “*This paper is not proposing one particular “solution” to the problem but to look at possibly useful theories and associated methodology from a branch of educational research in order to add to the rich traditions of theory and practice already emerging in the related disciplines of CI, ICT4D and IS. “* |

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| My main concern with the paper, however, is that it does not do what it sets out to do. From the description, the methodology seems to reduce to some in-depth stakeholder interviews and some rather less-than-in-depth data collected by other means. I think this could be a fairly standard description of many CI case studies. I assume there is more to it, for example in the design of the questionaires and how the data is analysed and related back to broader theories, but these aspects are not brought out because the authors say that they want to focus on the methodology and not the results. I think that is a mistake. | It is true that the sources of data are those used in almost all case study research in almost all disciplines. I am addressing this concern at the same time as addressing a somewhat similar concern by the first reviewer. Please see that response. But I have discussed further changes below. |
| On the whole, I find the paper well-written, but for it to be acceptable it needs to go deeper into the method and to draw out what might be new and useful to the CI community. I think the easiest way to do that is to discuss the actual results and show how they were derived from the process as followed, and what additional, if any, theories or techniques were used in the analysis of the data. Only that sort of in-depth study is going to demonstrate the potential benefits.  From reading the paper, it may be that the problem in doing that is that there was insufficient useful data collected from the visitors to enable that description/analysis. If this is the case, I think that the authors should still attempt to use what data they have – and maybe draw on other examples from the literature to illustrate the sorts of results that have been obtained elsewhere. If not, the paper does little more than to introduce the theory of Visitor Research and illustrate some of the problems in applying it. | The matter of discussing the actual results has elicited contradictory opinions from the two reviewers. Reviewer A says “Additionally, the focus on the research approach and methodology rather than the results is appropriate for inclusion into the special issue.” I have added Table 3 that does look at results under the heading “**Table 3: The Contextual Model of Learning related to the data analysis and findings”** |

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