

Foundation Centre: Pre-Arrival

Enhancing Student Learning from Day One

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To Cover

- **The Idea**
- **The Funding**
- **Materials to Include**
- **Making Movies**
- **The Website**
- **What the Students Think**
- **Conclusion & Future Plans**

“At the heart of successful retention and success is a strong sense of belonging in HE for all students. This is most effectively nurtured through mainstream activities that all students participate in.”

Student belonging is achieved through:

- Supportive peer relations
- Meaningful interaction between staff and students
- Developing knowledge, confidence and identity as successful HE learners
- An HE experience relevant to students’ interests and future goals

Findings of 2012 HEA Study into Student Retention

Focus Group With New Students

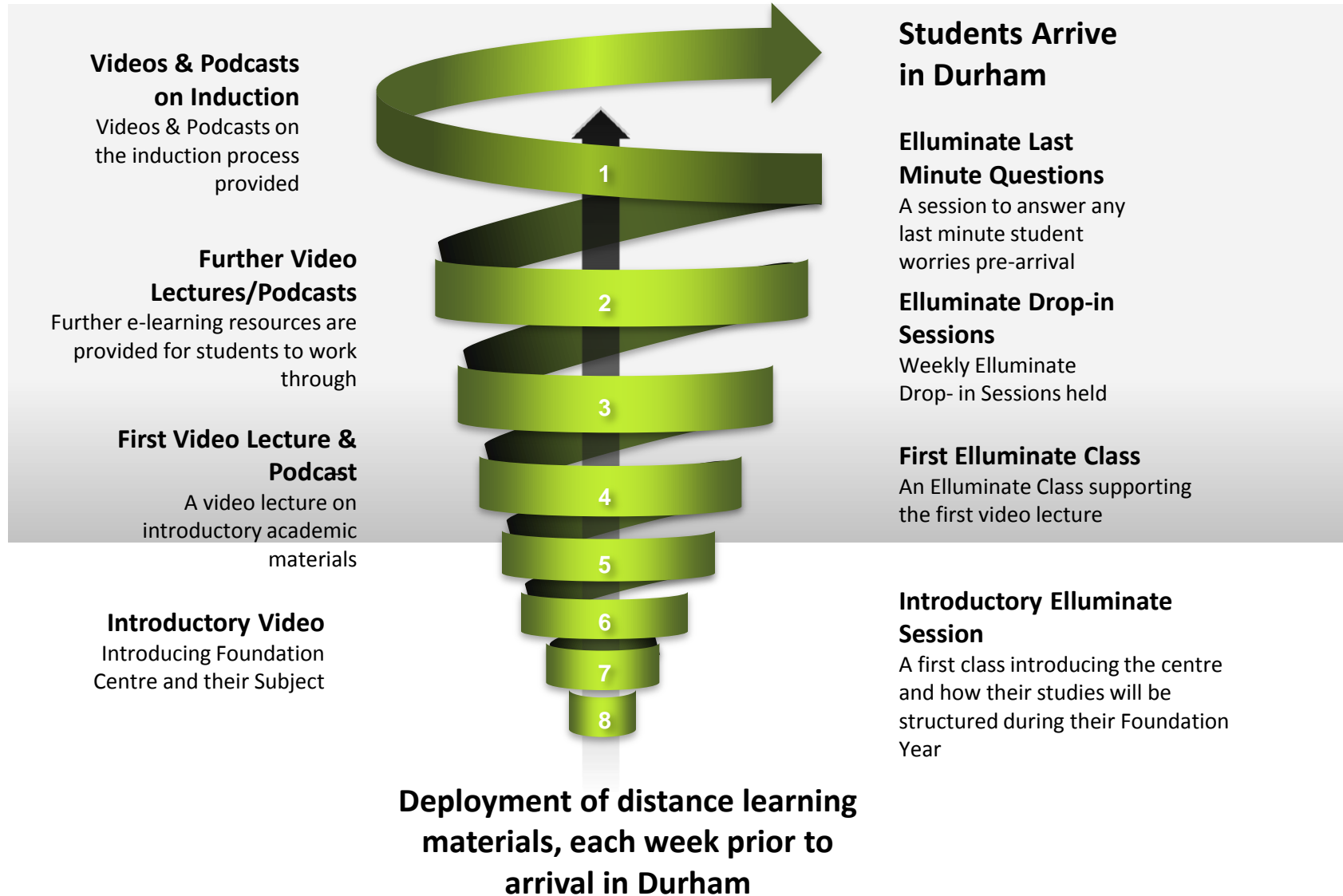


- **Every student (local and international) wanted more contact pre-arrival**
- **They wanted:**
 - More information about their classes
 - Reading materials
 - Logistical information about Durham
- **Looked at good practice elsewhere, e.g. earlier DUBBU meetings:**
 - “Opening Doors Early to Academic Integrity – aiding the transition to and managing expectations of academic practice at University”, J Thompson (Geography) & J Jurowska (LTT), Durham, 2012
 - “Delivering Transition Support Through the VLE”, S Davis (LTT), York, 2011

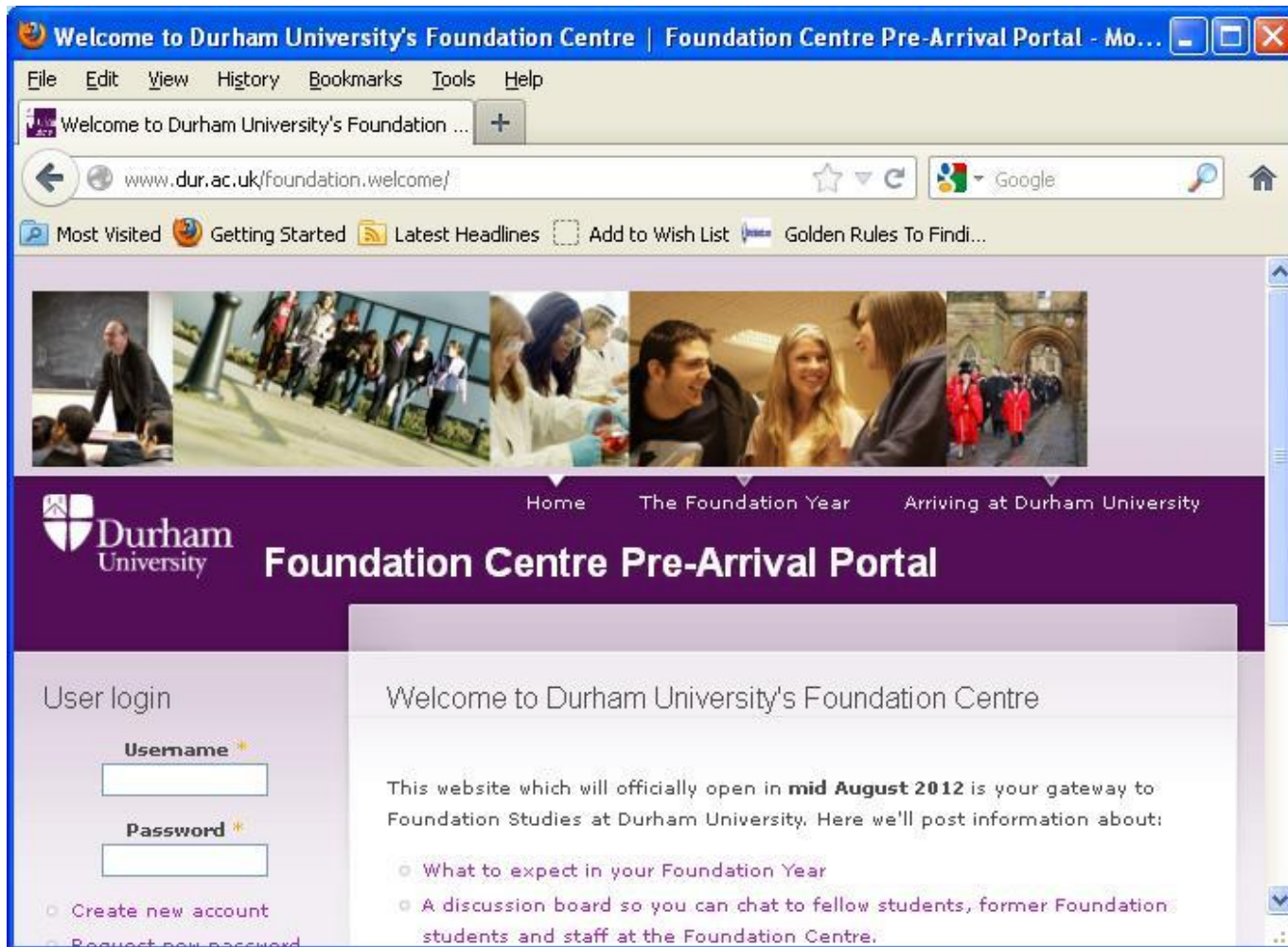
- **The Foundation Centre offers direct progression to all Durham University departments after a year of study for:**
 - Local Mature Students
 - International Students
- **The diversity of the cohort is a strength, but for this study each student group has its own issues**
 - Local Mature Students
 - Often little formal education in their recent experience
 - International Students
 - Learning in a second language
- **Both have somewhat of a culture shock**

- **We received funding from the Enhancing the Student Learning Experience Awards (£5K) to:**
 - Develop for incoming science students a web-based resource of introductory teaching materials which can be used at distance
 - Use distance learning tools to support an online community of learners prior to their arrival in Durham
- **Funding used to:**
 - Pay Summer Student
 - Buy video equipment
 - Buy editing software

Building Up During Aug/Sept



Pre-Arrival Website



Welcome to Durham University's Foundation Centre | Foundation Centre Pre-Arrival Portal - Mo...


File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

Welcome to Durham University's Foundation ...

www.dur.ac.uk/foundation.welcome/

Most Visited Getting Started Latest Headlines Add to Wish List Golden Rules To Findi...

Home The Foundation Year Arriving at Durham University

 Durham University

Foundation Centre Pre-Arrival Portal

User login

Username *

Password *

[Create new account](#)

[Request new password](#)

Welcome to Durham University's Foundation Centre

This website which will officially open in **mid August 2012** is your gateway to Foundation Studies at Durham University. Here we'll post information about:

- What to expect in your Foundation Year
- A discussion board so you can chat to fellow students, former Foundation students and staff at the Foundation Centre.

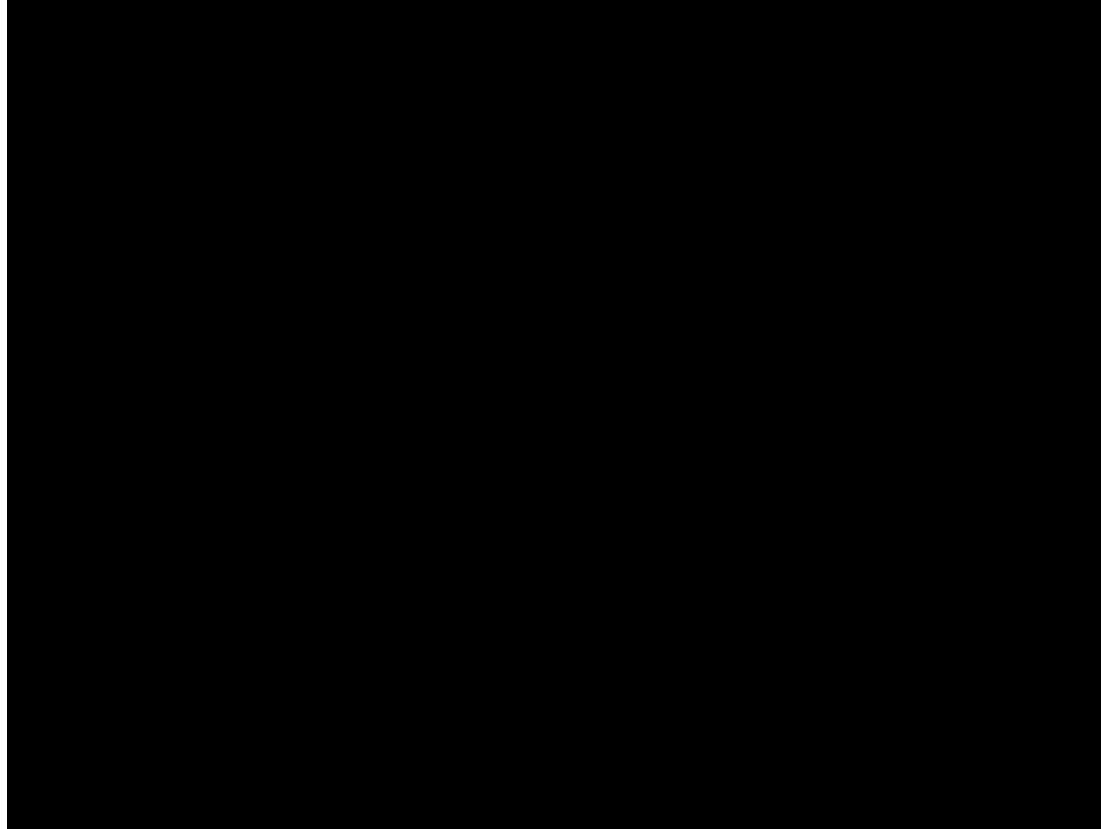
What do Students Get

- **All Students:**
 - Website <http://www.dur.ac.uk/foundation.welcome>
 - Discussion Board
 - Access to Video Interviews with Former Students
 - Access to Live & Recorded Webchats
 - Information on Induction and TB1 Timetables
- **Science Students (others in future years):**
 - Introductory Videos from all their TB1 Modules
 - Short Video & Audio Preparatory Lectures
 - Quizzes
 - Access to other learning tools (e.g. Virtual Experiments)

Examples of Content - Videos

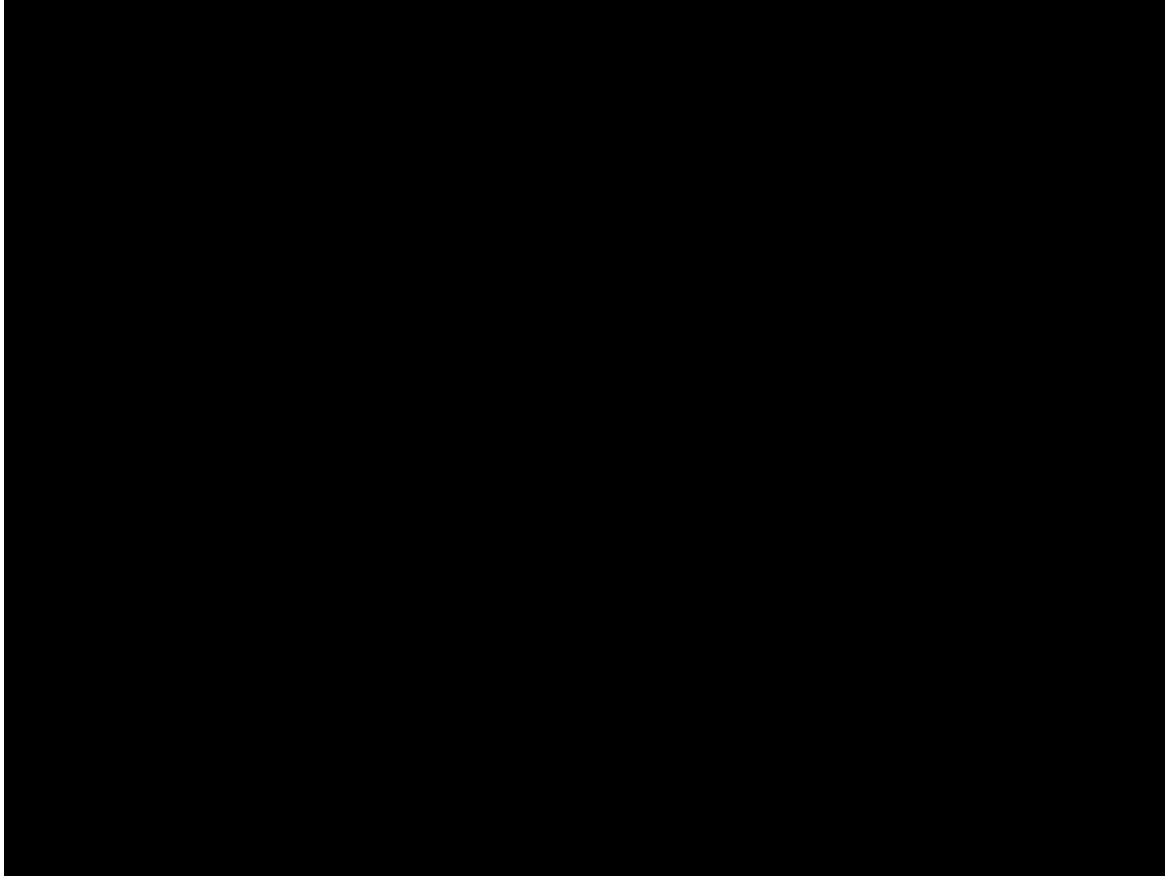
- **We shot a series of short (up to 5 minute) ‘talking-head’ videos using standard amateur video equipment:**
 - Camera (£400)
 - Lighting (£200)
 - Microphone (£200)
 - Video Editing Software (£150)
- **Shot against a white screen, to provide clean-polished finish, with possibility to project additional images onto background.**

Example 1 – Student Interviews



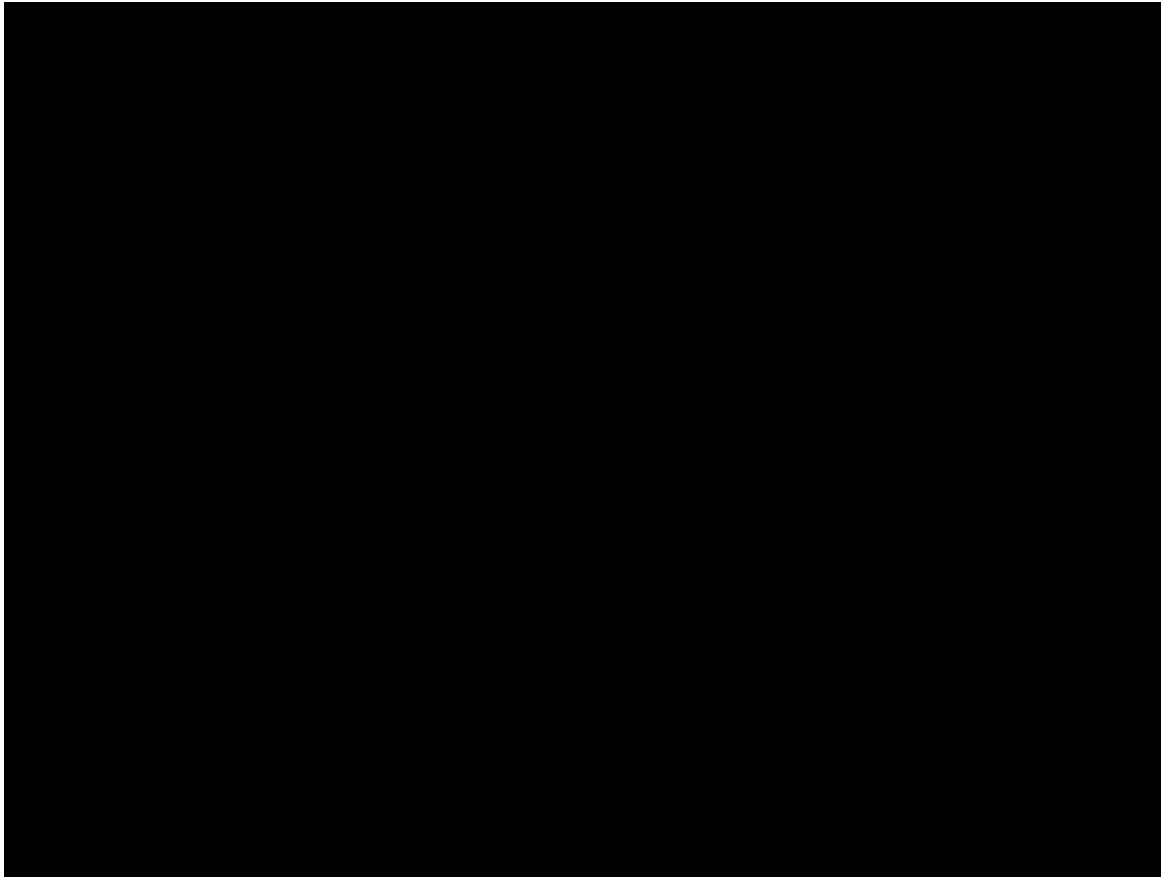
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEJ4nS6zvlo>

Example 2 – Module Introductions



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBGWm2VodXI>

Example 3 – Simple Lessons



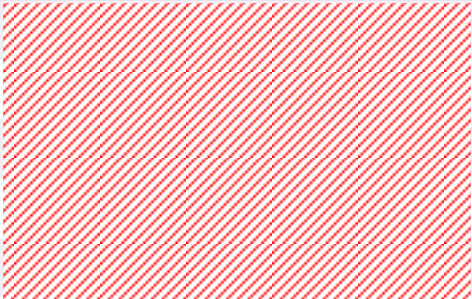



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2ktY2E30PI>

Examples of Content – Discussion Boards

Most Popular Items

Discussion Board

- Student Led, Staff Monitored Discussions
- Chance to talk to other students in same situation
- Eases tensions on arrival at Durham

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last post
 General discussion	3	128	
 Arts and Humanities Students	2	3	
 Biology, Medicine & Biomedical Science Students	2	20	
 Business & Economics Students	1	4	
 Physical/Computer Science & Engineering Students	1	15	
 Social Science Students	0	0	n/a
 Primary Education Students	0	0	n/a

Discussion Board

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Example Posts

- “I'm a little nervous, because I couldn't afford visiting the UK for open campuses, thus I don't know what Durham Uni's atmosphere is like, but I got the feeling that this was one of my biggest and hopefully right decisions to choose this university. Has anyone of you visited Durham Uni? How was it like?”
- We replied to help assure the student, as did other new students, e.g.:
- “Hi and welcome. Whereabouts in the world are you traveling from? I don't know what Durham Uni itself is like but I was born and raised in Durham so I can assure you, we are a very friendly bunch :-) ..”

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Example Posts

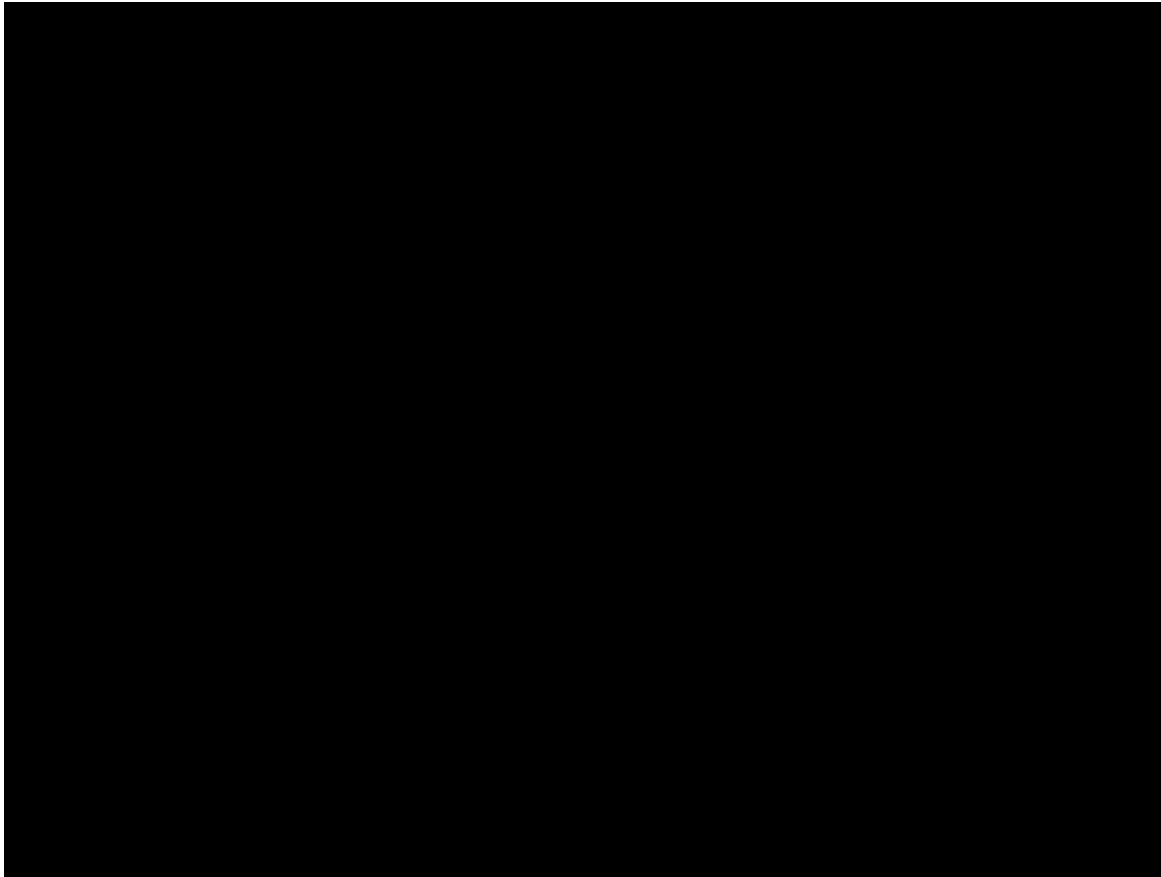
- “Thought I'd join in the discussion and say congrats to everyone that has a place! Is anyone else doing Geology with foundation?
Well I'm just one big bundle of excitement and apprehension at the minute! Can't wait to get started - but a bit nervous. I'm also a mature student (30 next years). I have three young children.
The website is great too. I've been having a look at the activities and mini lectures - very helpful”

Examples of Content – Web Chats

Most Popular Items

- **To maintain momentum we used Elluminate to run weekly web based chats throughout September where we could pass information on to students and they could chat with each other. These were titled:**
 - Welcome to Durham and Its Virtual Learning Environment
 - What to expect from Durham University College Life
 - What to expect from your Foundation Classes
 - Induction & Any Last Minute Questions
- **Students were informed they were being recorded, so that those not able to attend could watch recordings.**
- **Typically ~20 students attended, but ~70 watched recordings within 24 hrs.**

Online Webchats

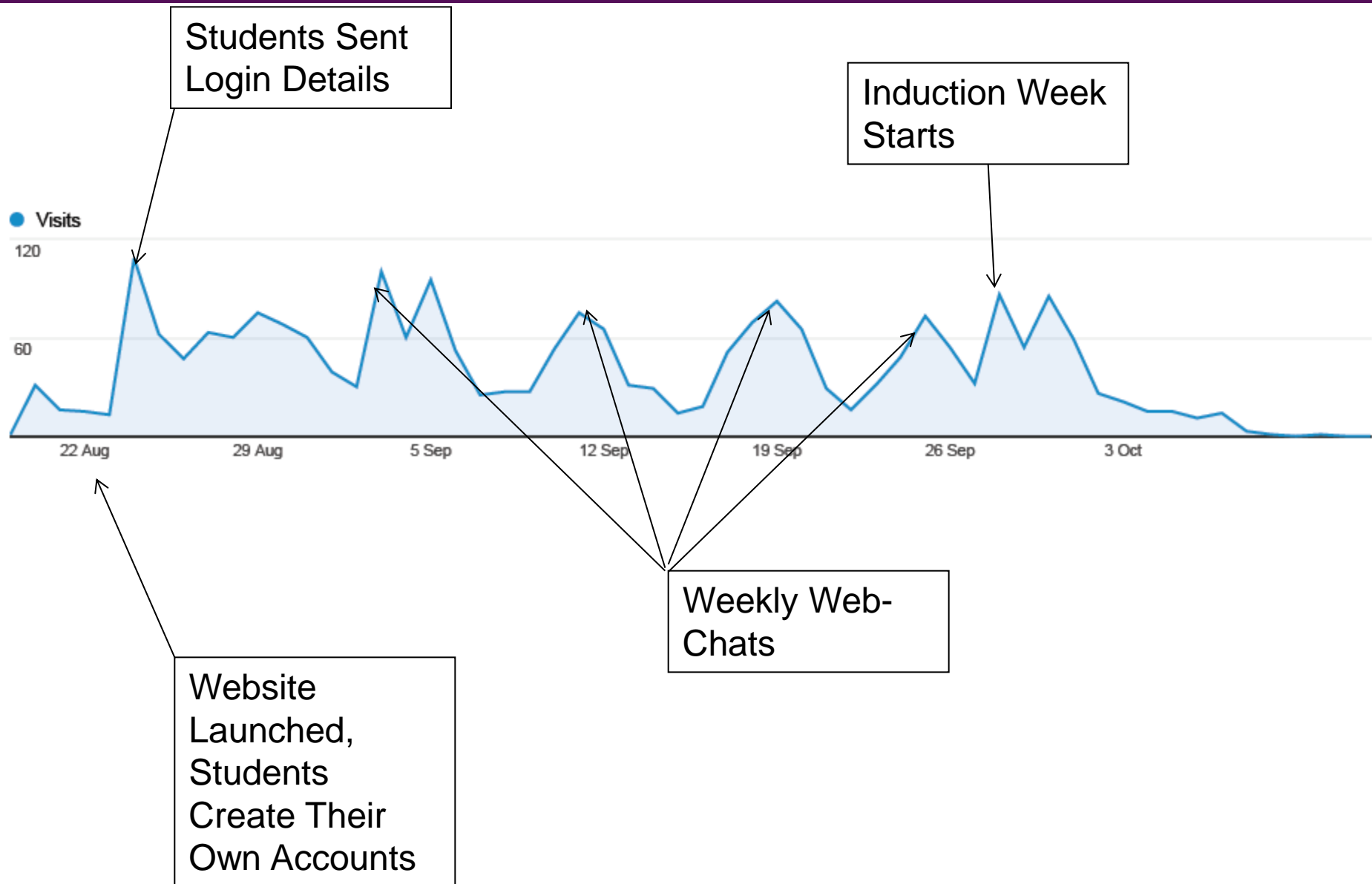


<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pi4iUSDoAh0>

Do The Students Use It ?

- **Site use data is stored (students are advised of this)**
- **Each student gets their own personal account so we could track individual usage (we don't)**
- **We look at bulk usage to see what is working and what is not**
- **Key statistics between launch and end of October:**
 - 190 registered users
 - 339 unique visits (~30 look like random hits)
 - 75% laptops/desktops, 25% mobiles/tablets

Timeline of Use



Location of Use

Week 1



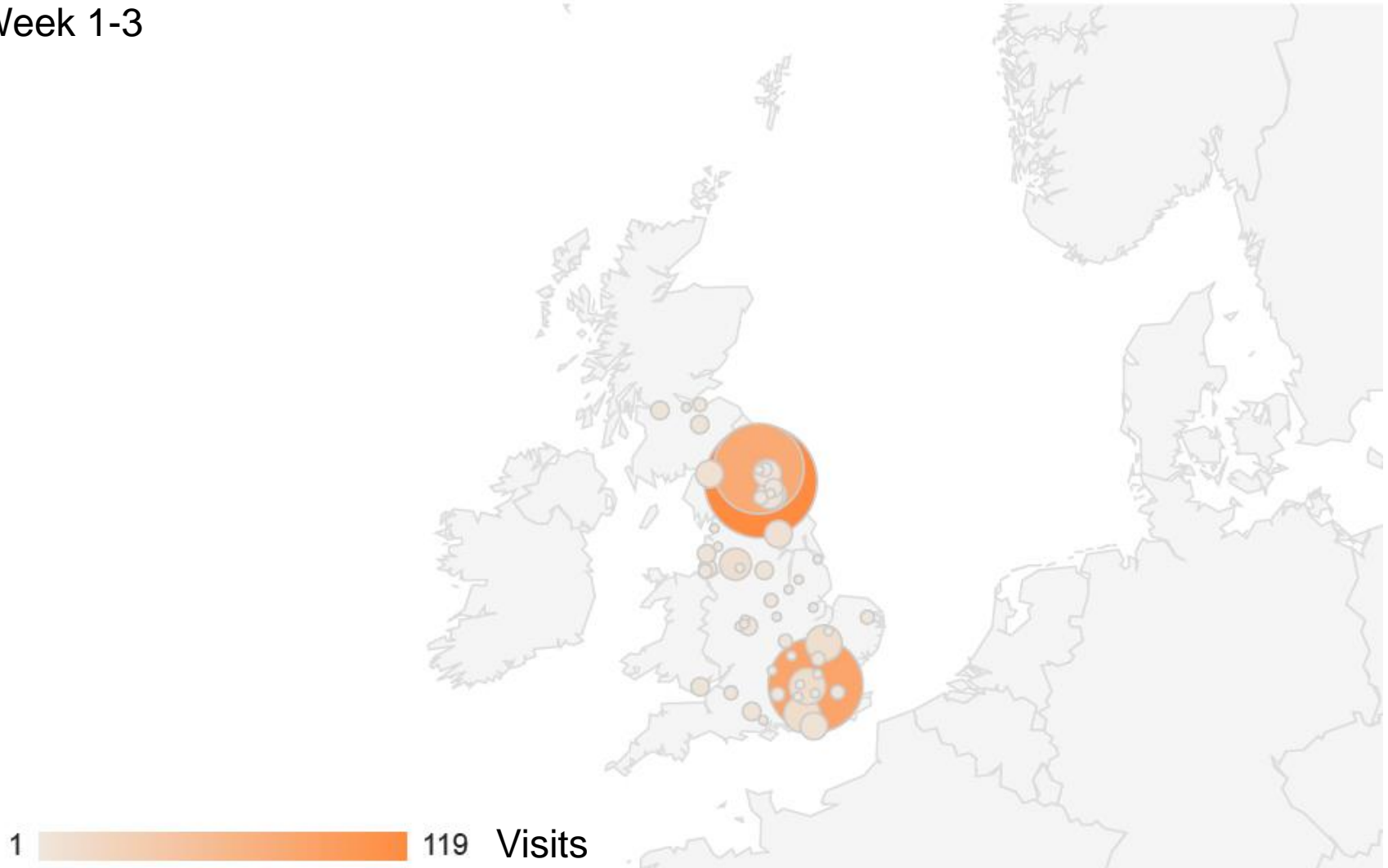
Location of Use

Week 1-2



Location of Use

Week 1-3

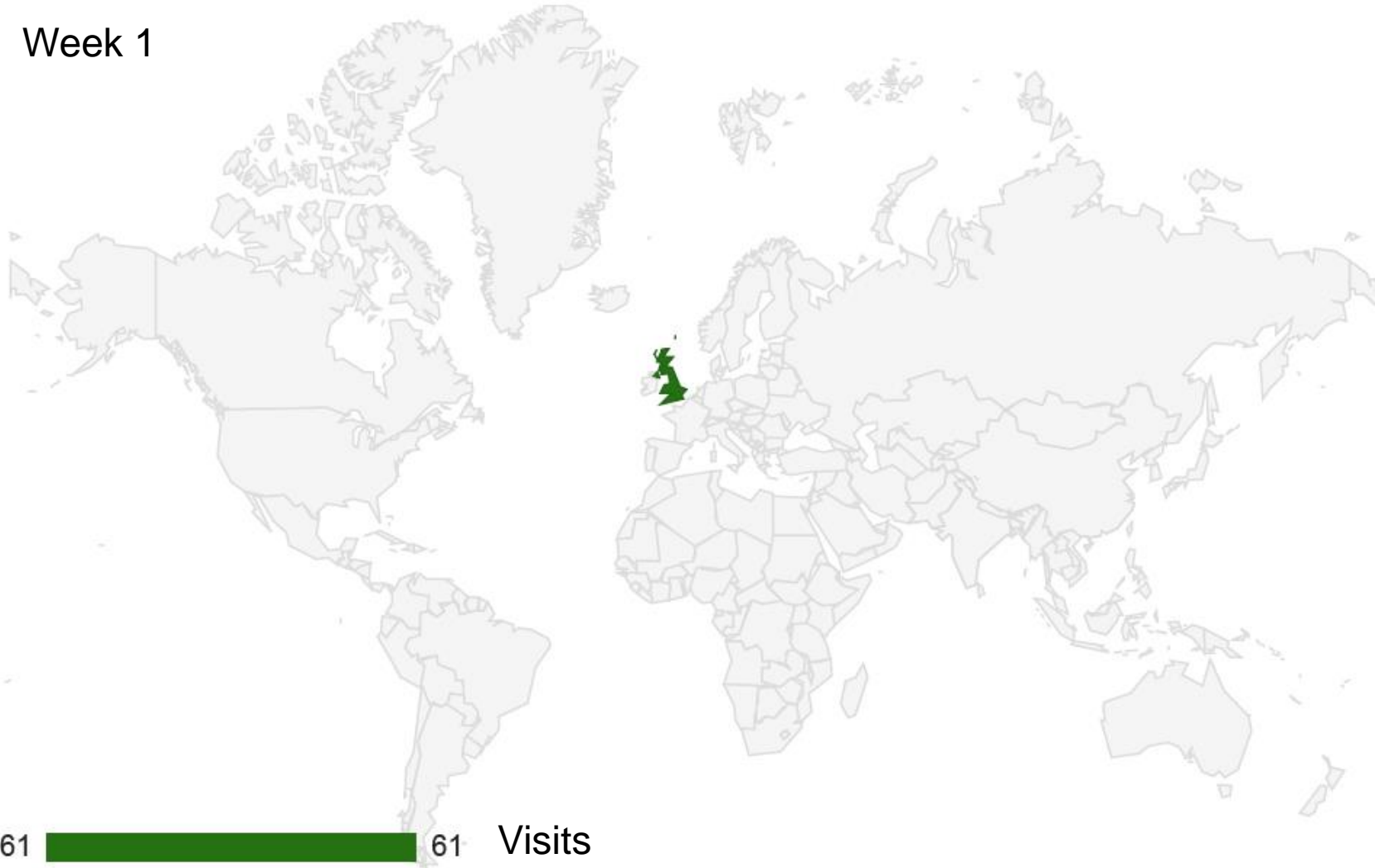


Location of Use

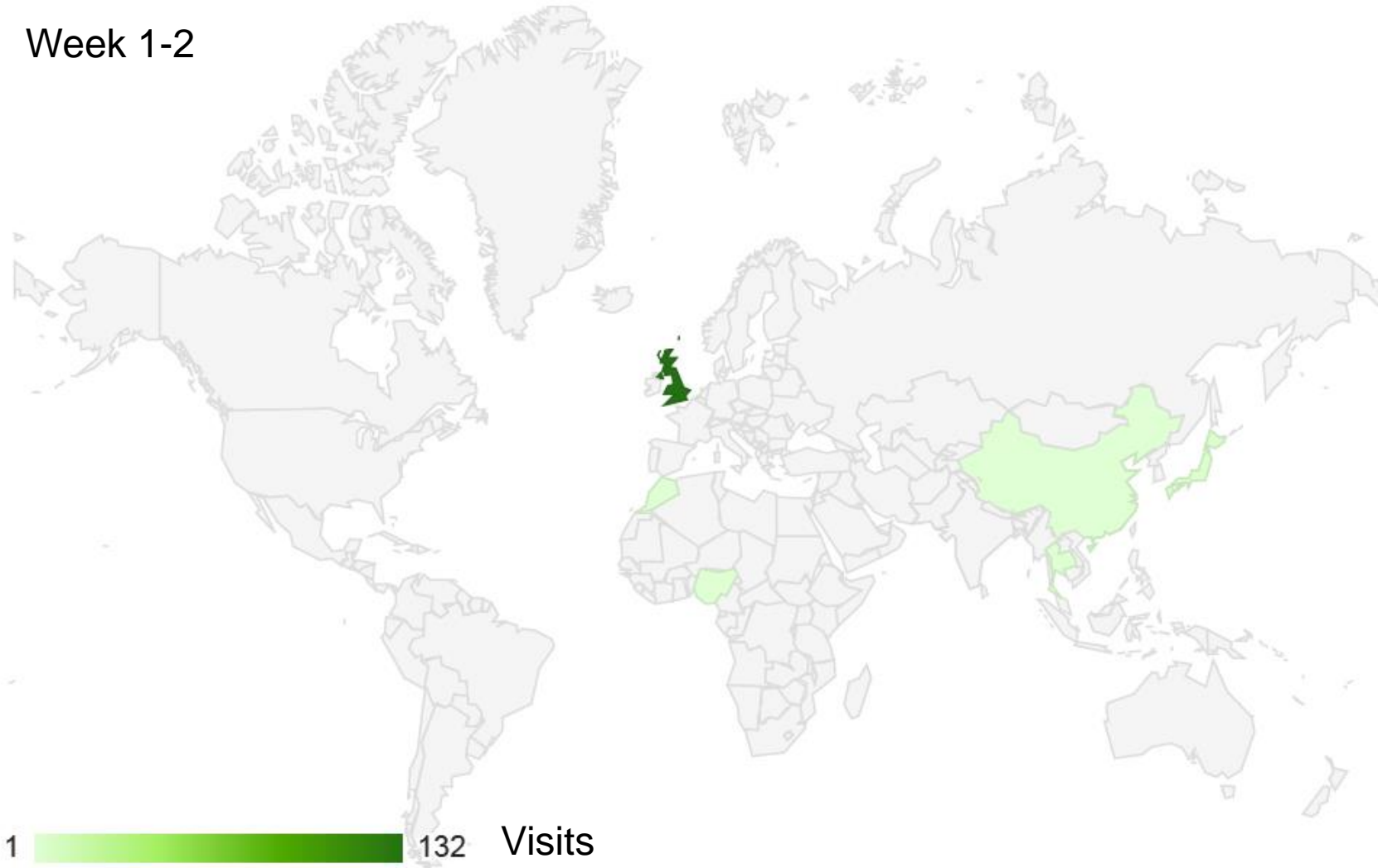
Week 1-8



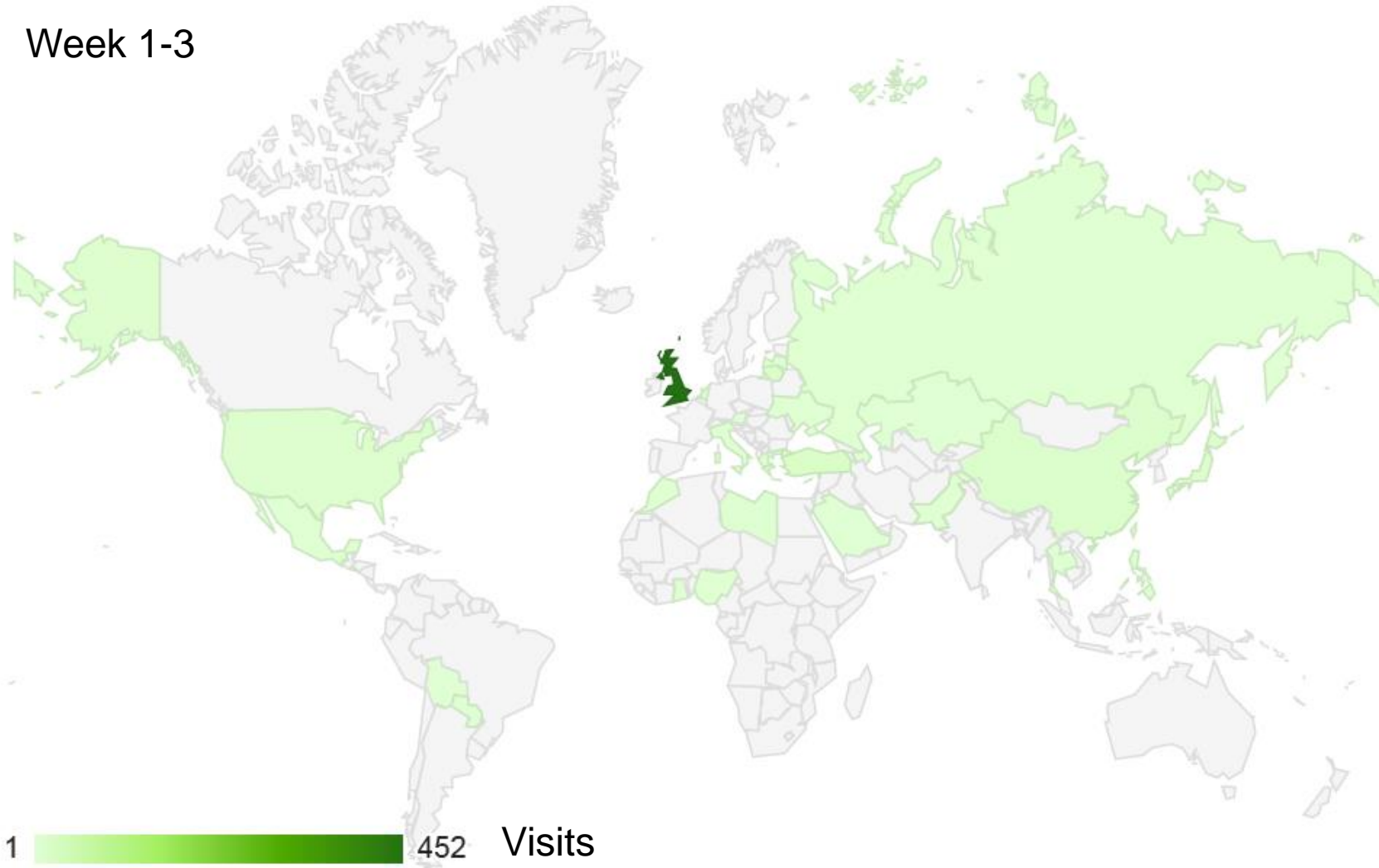
Week 1



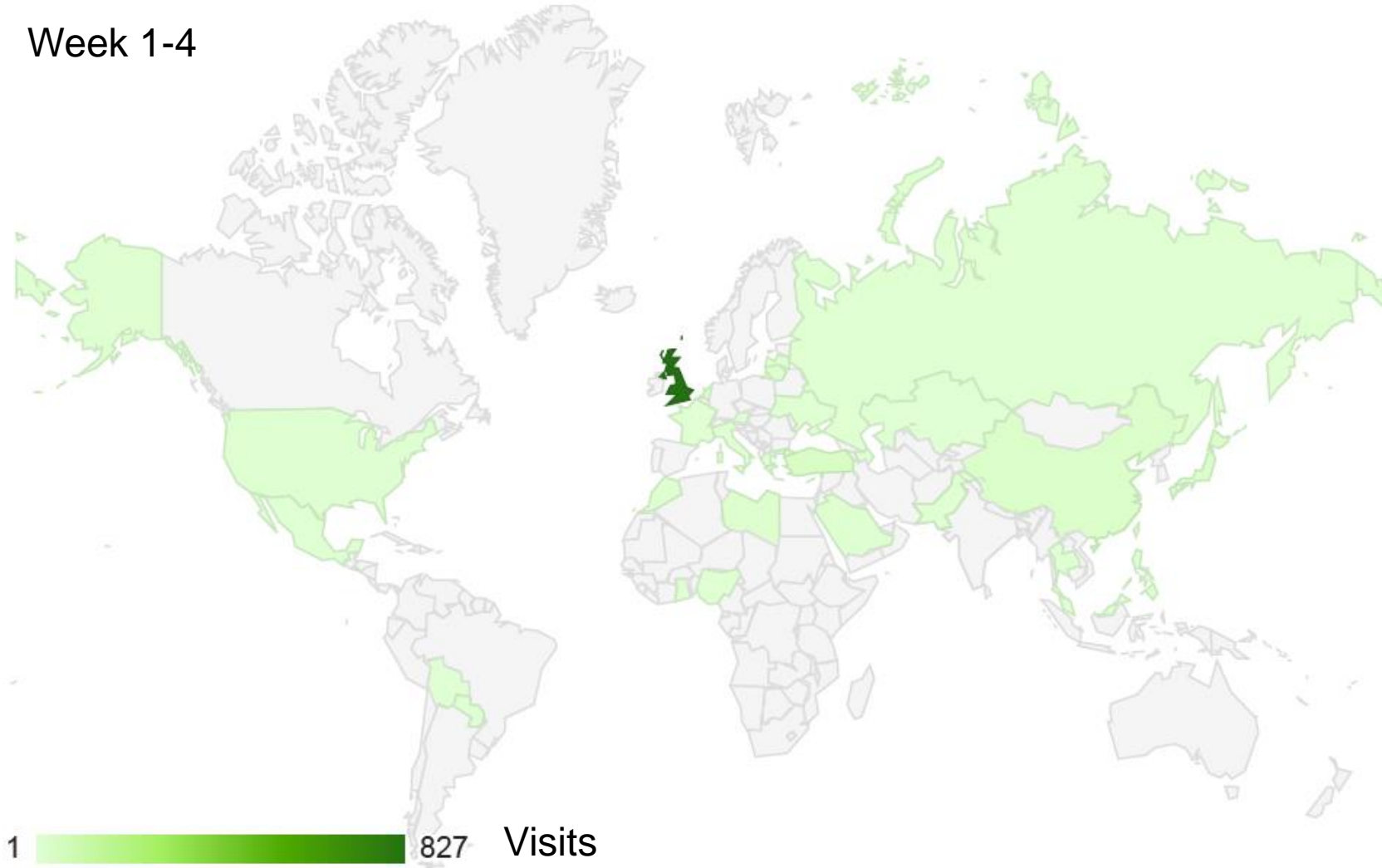
Week 1-2



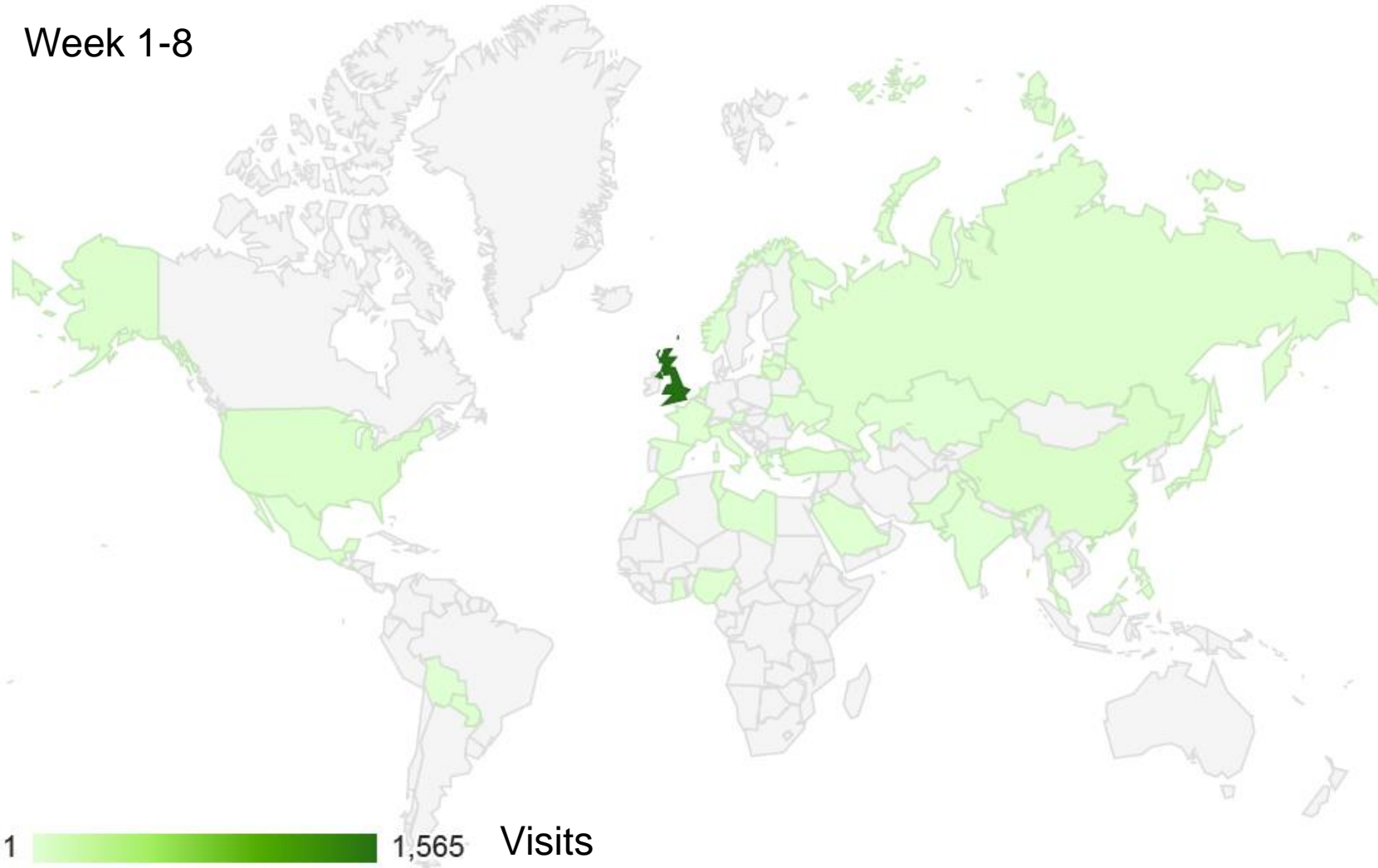
Week 1-3



Week 1-4



Week 1-8



What did it Cost ?

- **To develop site:**
 - 3 days of SJN to create site and the majority of its written content
 - 8 weeks of summer student (at £250/week) to shoot and edit video elements
 - 0.5 days x 4 Members of Teaching Staff to Produce Materials
 - £1K Equipment Cost
- **To maintain site:**
 - 2 days of SJN to deal with student queries through site and to run 4 additional online webchats
- **Total**
 - 1.5 weeks of staff time
 - 8 weeks of summer student (~£2k)
 - £1k equipment cost

Conclusions

- **Pre-Arrival/Landing Website has been relatively successful in its first year.**
- **Student Focus groups planned**
- **Plans to:**
 - Increase Content
 - Cover more subjects