

Preliminary report on study of user-to-user interaction at The Hive

The purpose of this preliminary report is to provide an overview of the user-to-user interaction study following the conducting of in-depth interviews with Hive frontline staff during April-June 2016.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a unique example of a servicescape that connects the private realms of the University of Worcester with the public community, The Hive is at the centre of this study of user-to user interaction. The report explores the study's findings in relation to perceptions of interactions between and among The Hive users from the perspective of employees, which is a variation on existing research that usually emphasises the customer perspective. Focusing on the well-established concept of customer-to-customer interaction (CCI) in marketing and service management, the researchers started off by gauging The Hive employees' awareness of CCI and their views of its relevance within The Hive via a preliminary workshop. This was followed by conducting some in-depth interviews with the objective of probing employee perceptions of the significance of CCI at The Hive which led to a number of themes emerging; these include the range of CCI occurring in-house, existing means of handling it and potential implications for managing customer expectations and experience, utilising CCI service wisdom and opportunities for staff development. A discussion of the findings offers recommendations to The Hive management, extends academic insights and proposes further research avenues.

INTRODUCTION

This report focuses on how users of The Hive interact with one another. It is based on discussions with senior managers at The Hive, a customer experience workshop with Hive employees, and in-depth interviews with seven customer-facing Hive employees. As such it is an exploratory study. It is also a study which, in marked contrast to most research on CCI, sought to gain an organisational perspective, rather than a customer one. The report has two main purposes. Firstly, it aims to make an overview of the employee perspective on CCI at The Hive and suggest some approaches for developing a managerial approach to CCI. Secondly, it seeks to outline a number of aspects of The Hive which are of interest to academic stakeholders.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The main background context to this study is the identification of The Hive as a service setting where customer-to-customer interaction¹ (CCI) is of relevance. Following a number of short informal discussions with Laura Worsfold, Richard Nicholls met Laura Worsfold (Business Development Manager, The Hive) and Janine Downes (Library Manager, The Hive) to discuss the potential for research collaboration between Worcester Business School and The Hive in the area of customer-to-customer interaction (CCI). The discussions came to a clear conclusion that, in terms of CCI, The Hive has a rich diversity of behaviour and perceptions, both positive and negative. A range of sources, such as user comments; complaints; local press; and employee observations, confirm this.

A useful academic framework² on CCI underlines the likely relevance of CCI to The Hive. This framework outlines seven characteristics of services which are likely to increase the incidence of CCI. These characteristics are:

- Customers in close proximity to each other
- Verbal interaction among customers
- Engagement of customers in numerous and varied activities
- Attraction of a heterogeneous customer mix to the service environment
- The reliance of the core service on customer compatibility
- Customers waiting together for service
- Expectations on customers to share time, space, or service utensils with each other

Services possessing at least one of these characteristics are considered as CCI-relevant, and services having three or more characteristics are considered CCI-intense. As all seven characteristics are demonstrated at The Hive, it should be considered CCI-super intense. The relevance of CCI to The Hive is further underlined by the fact that usually The Hive has many times more customers present than frontline staff.

¹ Customer-to-customer interaction is used interchangeably with user-to-user interaction.

² See: Martin, C.L. and Pranter, C.A. (1989), "Compatibility management: customer-to-customer relationships in service environments", *Journal of Services Marketing*, 3(3), 5-15.

During the second half of 2015 the research team (Dr Richard Nicholls and Dr Marwa Gad Mohsen) had a number of meetings with managers at The Hive. It was decided that a closer understanding of the CCI which is going on in The Hive would be beneficial. Research collaboration would contribute to enhancing systematic and guided thinking about CCI at The Hive. A useful way forward would be to: study various background documentation (such as comments and complaint letters); hold a workshop introducing CCI and considering it in the context of The Hive; and conduct in-depth interviews with selected managers and frontline staff.

It was considered that holding a workshop with Hive employees would be useful both for framing the study and giving the researchers some familiarity with employee perspectives prior to conducting quite time-consuming in-depth interviews. The workshop, which was entitled “The customer experience at The Hive – New perspectives” was attended by 11 Hive employees on 27th January 2016. After brief introductions, the theme of customer-to-customer interaction was introduced through the non-library context of rail travel. Participants quickly identified with CCI when wearing their consumer ‘hats’ as rail users. Then the workshop turned its attention to the notion that conceptually similar interactions also take place between users of The Hive. An extensive exercise was conducted in small teams in which participants initially brainstormed what CCI was occurring at The Hive, and then proceeded to sort these examples into themes. These classifications were presented and discussed in some detail. Then a short feedback survey was completed individually, before a group discussion was held on the relevance of CCI in The Hive.

Following the workshop the interview questions were further refined and some new questions added. This included tailoring them to part-time staff. The workshop confirmed that Hive employees are able to recall ‘critical incidents’, and this points to the usefulness of including a Critical Incident Technique (CIT) aspect to interviews. One particular benefit of a CIT approach is that it delivers a set of incidents which can be used for training purposes.

THE IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

Seven in-depth one-to-one interviews were conducted with Hive employees. The interviews took place at Worcester Business School between April 2016 and June 2016. The duration of the interviews ranged from 40 minutes to 75 minutes. The interviews were loosely structured and explored themes related to: employee awareness and assessment of CCI; employee recall of CCI; employee experiences in handling CCI; employee reflections of their comfort and capability in handling CCI; employee reflections on CCI as part of their job role; and employee reflections on how they have been trained for handling CCI.

Whilst a list of questions had been developed prior to interviews, as the research was very much exploratory, the course of the discussion was influenced by what was said by interviewees. Indeed, a number of ‘off the cuff’ remarks by respondents lead to fresh questions not anticipated prior to the interview. Furthermore, a number of these discussions produced some of the study’s most interesting insights. The interviews were transcribed, coded and then analysed for themes. These themes are presented in the next section.

FINDINGS/THEMES

The interviews with frontline Hive employees generated useful and deep insights into the CCI occurring at The Hive. The main themes are now discussed, together with a number of specific issues which emerged.

Theme 1: Reflections on the relevance of CCI to The Hive

Employees related easily to the concept of CCI – probably aided by their having previously attended a workshop on it – but they also quickly related to CCI and its application to The Hive at the workshop. As the employees interviewed had different frontline roles within The Hive, they tended to vary in their exposure to CCI and in the type and balance of CCI they observed. Employees varied in their views of the relevance of CCI to The Hive.

- Some felt it was ‘relevant, but secondary’
- Other felt it was a ‘regular, daily feature’ and ‘a big part of interaction’

Some respondents placed a lot of emphasis on the relevance of CCI to The Hive. One respondent stated that they were very aware of CCI in The Hive and said “it happens so often and so frequently, it becomes so normal, you do not notice it unless it is very positive or very negative, the normal just passes by”. Indeed, there was plenty of reflection on the ‘purpose of being at the Hive’ being varied for different users and weighing heavily on perceptions of other-customer interactions. The main source of awareness of CCI reported by employees was via observation of what was going on around them.

Theme 2: The range of CCI occurring at The Hive

All the employees interviewed managed to provide illustrations of both positive and negative CCI occurring in The Hive. Employees stressed there was a fair amount of positive interaction going on, such as: showing another customer how to use a system; helping others to find books; handing back an item lost by a customer; reporting to staff when another customer is ill or needs help, and shared interests at events.

Some employees felt that they were more likely to remember negative CCI situations because they were the situations they were responsible for spotting. Situations mentioned included: concern about what another customer was looking at on their computer screen; others taking shoes off in hot weather; groups chatting next to an individual trying to work; noise in silent areas; others listening to music with headphones but loudly; concern about noise from

events; irritated by the smell of another's food; various PDA behaviour; inappropriate approaches; among others.

Several examples of negative CCI provided were particularly interesting because they referred to customer actions which other customers would not know were due to a customer. That is to say, some customer behaviour impacted other customers but was not visible to them as customer behaviour:

- Customer B takes out multiple copies of the same book to ensure that colleagues on his course cannot get access.
- Customer B hides a book to use later.
- Customer B reserves many new books (using family's tickets; to have first pick).
- Customer B makes a racist remark to Customer A (who does not speak English).

Whilst this 'hidden CCI' is certainly of academic interest (see below), it may be of relevance to managers as some customers may attribute blame to The Hive for some of this behaviour. In other words, from a managerial perspective 'hidden CCI' may mean that customer misbehaviour, which is not perceived as such by other customers, makes the organisation look bad.

Employees felt that there was some extremely serious negative CCI occurring (e.g. sexual harassment; physical violence; racism) but on a very small scale. Despite the small scale of such incidents, employees were highly aware of the negative impact of such events on victims, witnesses and on the general image of The Hive.

Theme 3: Handling CCI

Generally employees demonstrated a clear ability to discuss CCI in detail and with an impressive appreciation of the level (or potential level) of complexity of some CCI situations. For example, it was pointed out that, unknown to staff, a hostile CCI situation could be developing on social media between users in The Hive. Employees were also aware that CCI situations had different levels of seriousness and that customers could vary greatly in their sensitivity to CCI. Employee descriptions of handling CCI covered a wide spectrum of interventions: from a "can you just keep your chat down, guys" approach to a hard-line "you need to leave now" approach.

Descriptions of situations included emotional reactions from staff which show empathy towards users and wanting to make things right for them. Some discussion related to the judgement, and sometimes stress, of deciding whether to intervene. This judgement seemed to be quite skilled and challenging, especially taking into account The Hive's inclusive philosophy. Employees seemed to vary in their comfort in dealing with negative CCI. There was reference to the stress which was associated with the unpredictable reaction from customers being cautioned, and also the stress from having to respond live to such reactions,

especially at times when the staff member was alone on a floor without the support of other colleagues. Customers who are asked to stop doing something or to modify their behaviour will react to that request (or demand) in different ways. Some employees mentioned that they engaged in contemplation and reflections after difficult CCI interventions.

A very interesting distinction which emerged from the employee perception of negative CCI situations was the distinction between gradual and sudden situations. Gradual situations are situations where a customer (or group) is behaving in a way that is potentially disturbing but which may be at a level which can be tolerated, or at least given a little longer to see if the behaviour ceases or settles down. In such situations an employee can ask a colleague for advice on whether to intervene and how to intervene. Sudden situations are situations where a customer (or group) is behaving in a way that is disturbing, cannot be tolerated, and requires immediate intervention. In such situations, there is no time to consult a colleague. The training implications of this are: gradual situations can be prepared for with on the job training; sudden situations need prior formal training (and confidence). Moreover, sudden situations are far more demanding on staff emotionally. Moreover, as The Hive has some situations which would not be expected in a traditional academic library, experience in previous jobs outside library work may be helpful.

Employees mentioned that staff intervention styles varied with personality. Some staff considered the implications of intervening more deeply than others. For example, one interviewee mentioned that she was always aware that intervening may lead to a customer feeling not wanted at The Hive, and this was at odds with the inclusivity mission. It was also suggested that new workers, especially younger ones, may have difficulties in intervening. This difficulty might follow from not being sure what the rules are and/or how to gauge the rules; not being sure how to intervene and/or not having the experience to be convincing in an intervention. It certainly seemed that dealing with negative CCI or its fallout can be a source of work stress and possibly an employee retention issue.

Theme 4: CCI as an area for HRD focus

The theme of handling CCI (see above discussion) naturally leads onto the theme of CCI as an area for focusing Human Resource Development (HRD). The interviews and the workshop certainly detected a willingness, even keenness, on the part of employees to develop their skills in terms of handling CCI.

In both the workshop forum and the in-depth interviews, staff gave a clear message of CCI as something to manage and as something which was potentially their responsibility. But this was subject to appropriate actions being identified. One comment on the workshop was that it had been: "Very useful to raise issues & share experiences. Many common themes. Positive to have time to meet as a group and discuss". During the interviews, some employees expressed the desire for more guidance on handling CCI, including greater clarification of the

points at which intervention should occur and the form of that intervention. Some interviewees felt that they were intervening appropriately but would find it reassuring if a staff development event confirmed this. As one interviewee said: “I am happy to deal with certain situations but where I would perhaps like training is in making sure that the way that I’m dealing with a situation is the way that my employer would like me to deal with it”. There was a general feeling that a HRD focus on CCI issues would contribute to the development of a more consistent approach to handling CCI.

One issue that needs clarification is that some of the interviewees highlighted the legal difficulty in sharing incidents, and the fact that some incidents need privacy and should not be shared. The view that sharing incidents among staff is not always possible is something which needs checking with Hive management. Such restriction, if it applies, hinders exchange of ideas about specific incidents and the opportunity to learn from them.

Specific issues

Some issues were quite specific ones and also tended to be mentioned by several interviewees. Three specific issues are discussed below: noise, echo CCI, and views of appropriateness of the activities of others. Noise was the most frequently mentioned issue.

Noise

Noise was one of the most commonly discussed issues in the interviews. It is also a major theme in the literature on user quality perceptions of libraries, where there is much discussion of the complexity of sources, perception and meaning of noise in libraries.

Employees were aware that user perception of noise could vary with context. For example, what constituted an acceptable noise level might depend on the time of day or the user density level. This contrast is captured in one interviewee’s view that:

On a Sunday evening when there is only a handful of people in there noise travels very quickly and then you feel you need to intervene and say ‘can you keep the noise down’. But when it was busy across that floor in the day you wouldn’t actually notice the range of different noises.

Much discussion of noise focused around Level 4 and user dissatisfaction with the noise made by other users. The perception of noise on Level 4 and the expectations surrounding a floor branded as ‘Research, quiet study’ need to be investigated further. It was suggested that those drawn to a silent area might have unrealistically high expectations. One respondent even commented on the irony that Level 4 can become quite noisy “because people are arguing about who is the noisiest person”. Some staff felt it was a small minority who complained about noise. This view would be worth verifying, possibly by inclusion in future user surveys and focus groups.

Echo-CCI

'Echo-CCI' refers to the CCI which occurs when one customer reacts to actions by another customer. That is, it concerns follow-up CCI about the original CCI. The concept is first discussed in Nicholls (2005: 167).

For example: just by the Children's section of The Hive some children aged around 10-12 years had been swearing, and a mother with some young kids told these 'tweens' (*her words*) not to swear in front of her kids. So the original CCI (which upset the mother) was the swearing and the echo-CCI was the mother telling them not to swear. A further echo was the 'tweens' response of not reacting at all to what the mother was saying, they just giggled among themselves. So, conceptually: customer A tries to tell customer B to stop doing something, but customer B 'bites' back.

Staff could recall incidences of customers taking direct action and receiving abuse or being ignored, or being ridiculed. It was suggested that some situations are reported to staff as customers are aware of the possible negative repercussions of dealing directly with a misbehaving customer. Some staff mentioned that they observed users giving hints, such as an occasional cough, in an attempt to influence others whilst avoiding head-on confrontation.

Echo-CCI becomes further complicated if the employee then has to caution A (the victim of the original CCI) for abusive behaviour in their DIY intervention. There were several incidents where employees received sharp comments from customers who they had spoken to about their harsh reactions to an original negative CCI situation. Some CCI situations can have several ricochets of interaction. As such they are more complex than the typically contained dyad of employee-customer interaction.

Views of appropriateness of the activities of others

Besides concern with disruptive behaviour, some users of The Hive have concerns about the type of activity another user is engaged in. Occasionally this concern may relate to the possible legal inappropriateness of an activity, for example, a user reported to staff that someone was looking at guns on the internet. More usually, however, some users are concerned or perturbed by what they consider to be the use of computers for work-inappropriate activities such as being on Facebook, watching football, visiting dating websites. That is, some students are bothered by what (in an intellectual sense) is being done next to them.

One interviewee gave an example of a student being upset by someone next to them being on a dating site and said about the Level: "It should be just people who are there to work and he is not there to work". This seems to be objection to the mere presence of others who are engaged in what Customer A views as 'unproductive activities'. However, it might be interesting to explore these perceptions further, as they may be more complex than that. For example, if 'leisure' users have different postures than 'work' users, this might influence concentration levels.

Some interviewees mentioned situations which suggested that some students considered members of the public as less deserving of service. A clear incidence of this is as follows:

An enquiry desk employee had been helping a student, she thought the student went off to get a book, and a member of the public came and asked something, but then the student showed up again and said, 'She is helping me, it is for my dissertation, I am a student here'.

Likewise, it was mentioned that at certain times of year, such as near exams and assessment deadlines, students complain about others who are using the pcs for games and similar activities. Hence perceptions of time and significance of activities during that time may be a key theme in handling and managing user expectations. This tension and sense of priority may be growing in the higher HE fees context.

ASSESSMENT OF WHERE THE HIVE IS ON CCI

This short section, taking into account the various impulses received by the research team, reflects on where The Hive is with regard to CCI.

CCI is highly relevant to The Hive. Both positive and negative CCI are going on daily. Whilst positive CCI may need something done about it, such as using it to improve the image of The Hive and to encourage more of it, it is negative CCI which more obviously requires something done about it. Moreover, handling negative CCI is far more complex and unpredictable than responding to positive CCI. But The Hive's strong customer-centric culture means that many situations are managed and managed well. Hive frontline employees are alert to situations which develop, and generally try to intervene. The pro-service culture encourages employees to take dealing with CCI situations in their stride. Moreover, the emerging nature of the majority of negative CCI situations means that employees can usually consult colleagues when in doubt as what to do. However, employees are generally managing CCI by drawing on skills imparted in an employee-customer interaction context. They would potentially benefit from developing skills and experience also in a specific CCI context. Employees generally felt confident dealing with much CCI but they also felt it would be useful to have a certain sort of reassurance that they were fulfilling CCI-related interventions in an appropriate way.

MANAGING CCI AT THE HIVE

This section outlines some key areas for consideration in efforts to further enhance the management of CCI at The Hive.

CCI Service Wisdom:

The study demonstrated that Hive employees are a key resource for improving organisational understanding of the CCI occurring at The Hive. Accordingly it is important to consider how can this 'service wisdom' be systematically captured? This requires the review (and creation) of structures to capture staff experience in observing and handling CCI.

One very insightful comment from the workshop was:

“Very useful to raise issues & share experiences. Many common themes. Positive to have time to meet as a group and discuss.”

How can management support a conversation with and between FLEs around handling CCI-related aspects of the service experience? Such conversations would include issues such as:

- How CCI incidents were handled;
- How CCI incidents could be handled;
- How employees felt handling CCI incidents;
- How can ‘service wisdom’ be systematically captured?

CCI Training (employees & customers):

Building on establishing a conversation around CCI, it may be useful to review how staff induction and training could be modified to emphasise CCI aspects of the customer experience. This might involve making CCI a specific training issue rather than sitting under the employee-to-customer dominant umbrella of customer service.

Issues for discussion around this include:

- How could management do more to put CCI ‘on a plate’?
- Why would this be useful?
- What are the benefits of being able to frame CCI?

One argument would be that by having a specific CCI spotlight then CCI episodes can be more consciously spotted and compared. Hive employees saw merit in using CCI as a focus. During the workshop specific CCI situations were discussed, and exchange of experience and practice took place. There was a general appreciation of enabling a team search for solutions in an environment away from the everyday hustle and bustle of the floor. Such highlighting of CCI as a specific issue helps to build a conversation around it.

As CCI intervention skills can differ to employee-to-customer skills, CCI specific training would provide useful guidance and would contribute to consistency of service. For example, one issue raised was: What is the line separating where staff can act and where they should pass it up to a team leader? How can this be made consistent?

In service organisations, it is increasingly realised that the customer also needs to be managed as a human resource. In the context of The Hive and CCI this might extend to:

- Modification of user inductions to increase awareness of The Hive’s atmosphere and its variations (i.e. Levels)
- Greater emphasis on communicating to students that UW would never have had such a big library unless the public had been included.

An issue that came up at various stages of the study was that of communication and signage with regard to raising user awareness of the intended ambiance of each Level. There was a

view that there was a need to intensify communication of the culture of each Level, and to increase awareness of entering different Levels - whether by lift or stairs.

This could include the use of more creative and impacting messages:

- Giving Levels actual names (and/or slogans) which captured their intended ambiance
 - e.g. Level 4: 'tip-toe zone'; 'hear a pin drop' ...
- Using signs or pictures on steps going up to each Level
- Placing messages about the Level's intended sound level on the computer screen where it is seen as people log on. The message would be customised to the level.
- Audio messages linked to buttons in lift (Level 4 – 'welcome to level 4: reserved for silent study')
- Sound-bites of intended noise level for demonstration in user inductions
- The creation of a 'Which floor suits you?' online quiz
- Hold a competition with employees for ways of communicating Level behaviour norms in more creative ways.

User reporting of negative CCI situation:

Some Hive users will suffer a negative CCI situation in silence, putting up with it at the time in order to avoid confrontation. But they may react later stage in the form of a complaint. This is more damaging, especially if it goes on social media, than if resolved there and then. Several incidents in the exploratory study involved users wanting to be able to draw attention to situations in a discrete way.

Accordingly, it is advisable to encouraging Hive users to report live CCI situations which they feel need a response. Management issues to consider here include:

- How can live reporting be supported?
- Specifically, how can a safe and anonymous environment be provided for users reporting CCI?
- How can management encourage live reporting of incidents and its resolution before it stays with the customer and gets out of scope in WOM?
- How can the level at which the customer wants an incident dealt with be gauged so they are not upset that staff are either *over-reacting* and making something more public than they want for it to be, or *underreacting* and not helping them enough?
- Are there some customers who tend to 'over-report' CCI? If so, how can this issue be addressed?

Encouragement of positive behaviours:

All interviewees reported positive CCI behaviours, but many of these behaviours seemed to require no more than a 'thank you' from the employee witnessing them. It does not seem to be a burning problem.

The management of positive CCI behaviours is an area which needs more consideration. A few areas to reflect on are:

- How can The Hive raise the profile of positive CCI behaviours?
 - e.g. a C2C 'Thank you' board
- How can The Hive promote 'good Samaritan' behaviour?
 - E.g. include in student induction some examples of how they might do a good deed (e.g. help another user use book self-checkout)
- Is there potential for capturing employee service wisdom in spotting and responding to positive CCI behaviours? Do some staff do things in this area that others could follow? Could employees who excel in handling positive CCI be rewarded?
- How could The Hive develop more C2C value-driven products (meaning events etc. where meeting others is the main source of value). E.g. networking events such as Business Breakfast.

Avenues for taking the research further

This report has communicated the insights and reflections that have been generated by an exploratory research engagement. There remains the possibility of taking this research further. Areas to consider include a workshop on managing CCI and the collection of data on CCI.

Managing CCI workshop:

The January 2016 workshop focused on introducing the concept of CCI and exploring its relevance to The Hive. A second workshop could focus on managing CCI and discuss issues such as:

- how CCI incidents are/could be handled
- the challenges of handling negative incidents
- how FLEs could be supported (e.g. via induction)
- the opportunities for handling positive CCI

Collection of data:

The study has been exploratory. One direction for going further would be to build up a more comprehensive picture of CCI at The Hive. This would involve the collection of data by The Hive and/or by others. Methods to be considered here include:

- FLE service diaries
- FG/IDIs with Hive users
- Collection of a set of Critical Incidents
 - from employees and/or customers
 - for analysis via Critical Incident Technique
- Observation research
- employee interviews

Some types of CCI situation will be known to be fairly widespread, but for others it may be worth asking: How common is it? How could its scale be measured?

ACADEMIC INSIGHTS

This section briefly outlines how the study has contributed in a number of ways which are probably of interests primarily to the services management and marketing academic community.

The study has generated a number of insights which are of interest from an academic perspective. They may also have some managerial applications. Key issues from the research for academics are:

- The study identified the capacity of employees to provide insights into CCI. The finding that employees can offer insights into some CCI types that customers cannot is very interesting from an academic point of view. This is because CCI studies are overwhelmingly customer-based, and therefore may not be as comprehensive as they claim to be.
- The study also highlights the importance of gaining an employee perspective on the CCI by providing insights into how employees assess negative CCI situations, and how they approach interventions and reflect on these.
- The study proposes a new way of classifying CCI based on the distinction between gradual and sudden negative CCI situations. This distinction has implications for how employees should intervene, and consequently for Human Resource Development needs relating to CCI training.
- A complex, non-traditional and inclusive servicescape has been researched. This has implications for design, innovation and CCI. Moreover, relatively few studies have been conducted in such settings.

The study has also identified a range of topics into which future academic research could usefully be conducted. These include:

- FLE stress associated with dealing with difficult CCI situations.
- How FLEs share their interventions in problematic CCI situations and provide peer-support to one another.
- The role of FLE in dealing with negative CCI as skilled work.

Once the academic paper has been written, and a wide range of literature consulted, it is likely that a wide range of future research topics will have been identified.

CONCLUSION

This report presented an insightful overview of an exploratory study of employee perceptions and views of the presence and significance of CCI at The Hive, how it affects the customer experience, and current means of handling it by staff. Through the data analysis and

discussion, themes emerged that offer a point of departure from where The Hive is at present in relation to CCI onto offering recommendations for the way forward in better managing user-to-user interactions. The overarching aim is to improve the user experience, to align user expectations with The Hive's outstanding ethos and unique offering that adjoins the university and the public community, and to ensure that employees are better equipped in consistently dealing with negative CCI and promoting positive interactions.

Building on a preliminary workshop with employees, this exploratory study used in-depth interviews and proposes opportunities for further research that would employ a variety of other research tools to dig deeper into the themes that emerged whilst bringing in more perspectives (e.g. those of users and managers). The report also highlighted academic insights that can extend the findings beyond internal reporting into opportunities for external publication and dissemination; this would place The Hive as an example of an innovative service setting that endorses agile development and uses research insights to be more responsive in its design, inclusion, and in serving the wider community in Worcester and beyond.

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