

Title: **A Journey to an Innovative, User-Centred Learning Technologies Provision - from VLE to Cloud Computing**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Be aware of issues involved in choosing and implementing an institutional learning technologies provision that meets changing expectations of learners and teachers;
- Understand the challenges posed by the changing learning technologies landscape introduced through social networking technologies;
- Situate our institutional case study of a VLE review and implementation to their own context by reflecting on the lessons that we have learnt through our journey so far.

Session Outline

Key issues to be addressed are:

Key words: emerging technology, harnessing technology, virtual learning environment, social networking software, student-centred learning

Over the past two years, our institution took part in the HEA e-learning benchmarking exercise followed by an institutional review of the virtual learning environment (VLE) with the aim of replacing the outdated VLE with a learning technologies provision to cater the expectations of students and staff. This much needed shift has been highlighted by a review of the 2005 HEFCE e-Learning Strategy (HEFCE, 2009) and findings from the HEA e-learning benchmarking exercise (HEA, 2009). For instance, whilst the strategy is perceived as a successful reference document; there is a concern that the subsequent plans focus on technological innovation disregarding actual institutional needs and requirements (Glenaffric, 2008:13-14). Moreover, there is concern from respondents identifying inconsistencies between funding for technological development and the consolidation of the changes in the actual practice (Glenaffric, 2008:15).

The paper will reflect on some of the challenges we encountered on our journey from a virtual learning environment with an underlying instructivist pedagogic model to an evolving social constructivist learning technologies provision. The discussion will explore four aspects:

1. User requirements and expectations (teaching staff and students);
2. Institutional strategic objectives as drivers for the learning technologies use and provision;
3. The national and international context (JISC, 2008a, 2008b; BECTA, 2008; Browne et. al., 2008 UCISA; Johnson, Levine and Smith, 2009 Horizon);
4. Changes in ICT that impact on how users learn and teach with technologies and therefore what may constitute a modern virtual learning environment.

The presentation will close by projecting a roadmap of implementing a dynamic system of learning technologies provision based on a quasi-bespoke learning management system moving from an all-in-one toolbox type of VLE to concepts influenced by personalised learning systems and cloud computing such as Google Apps (2009).

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

Please provide an indication of how the session will be structured and how activities and discussion will be facilitated. For discussion papers please include a few indicative questions which will focus the discussion element.

The session will be structured as follows:

- Brainstorming activity to define the current learning technologies provision in participants' context (5 min)
- Short presentation of the findings of our VLE review (10 min)
- Group activity identifying which specific learning technologies participants use and how (15 min)
- Summary presentation of group activity (5 min)
- Discussion and questions (10 min).

References

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