

Title: **CloudEngine: creating networks for professional development and research**

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Abstract:

Session Learning Outcomes

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

- Understand the aims of the OULDI project, CloudEngine and Cloudworks,
- Understand what functionality CloudEngine offers,
- Understand how CloudEngine may benefit you and your organization,
- Understand how to login to a CloudEngine site, create a cloud and find resources.

Session Outline

Social and participatory technologies - with their emphasis on sharing and user production - seem to offer great potential for educators in supporting their professional development and in sharing best practice; however a recent review of the use of these technologies in an educational context leads to a bleak conclusion:

“..even though ‘Web 2.0’ tools seem to have the right mix of affordances to facilitate sharing and discussion of educational ideas, this is not happening spontaneously across the broad educational community, nor is it happening at scale where the real macro benefits of the collective intelligence affordances (Lévy, 1997) and sheer scale of the web comes into effect” Conole (2010)

This paper focuses on an output of the JISC-funded Open University Learning Design Initiative (<http://ouldi.open.ac.uk>) which aims to address this mismatch: ‘**CloudEngine**’ (<http://getcloudengine.org>), social web software, centred on social objects – Clouds and Cloudscapes.

The CloudEngine code has been developed using design-based research (DBR), adopting an iterative cycle of rapid prototyping, user testing and adaptation. Development of the prototype site ‘**Cloudworks**’ began in 2007. Cloudworks is a specialised social networking site for sharing, debating and co-creating ideas, designs and resources for teaching, learning and scholarship in education. Cloudworks has ca.4000 registered users and visitors from 165 countries (Feb 2011). The site is hosted by the Open University but open to all. The CloudEngine code was released under an open-source license in October 2010 and can be used by any community interested in sharing ideas.

This paper will review our most recent evaluation work on the impact of Cloudworks in supporting open ‘communities of enquiry’, collaborative knowledge building, and shared

assets (e.g. interests, goals, ideas, see Alexander, 2008; Anderson, 2007; Downes, 2005). It will suggest wider applications of the CloudEngine code. There will be a structured opportunity to explore Cloudworks and CloudEngine.

Session Activities and Approximate Timings

- Presentation – 15 minutes,
- Mini-workshop – 20 minutes,
- Questions and discussion – 10 minutes.

Mini-workshop

Pre-requisites:

- A laptop (or tablet – basic usage of Cloudworks/CloudEngine is possible with an iPad),
- It is desirable, but not essential to create an account on Cloudworks (<http://cloudworks.ac.uk>) before the event.

Those without a laptop or tablet are of course welcome to observe.

Activities:

1. Check WiFi connectivity,
2. Create an account on Cloudworks,
3. Create a cloud,
4. Find resources using search and tags (keywords).

References

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