



Delivering online learning at scale – the Open University model

Changing Learning, Changing Lives

David Wilson
Director of Media
Learning and Teaching Solutions
The Open University



Changing Learning, Changing Lives

- Context and overview: the OU and LTS
- Products
- Processes
- Online learning
- Sustaining success



Context: the OU



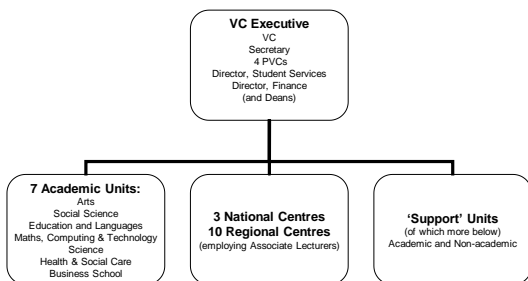


Facts and figures

- Approx. 220,000 students at any one time
- 6000 f/t staff; 7500 p/t associate lecturers
- Nearly 400,000 students have studied using the VLE
- 125,000 unique visitors in June; up to 50,000 visits per day
- 600,000 packs of materials dispatched per year
- 500,000 items dispatched for international delivery per year
- OpenLearn – nearly 13 million visits; 10 million visitors
- iTunesU – over 20 million downloads in 2 years



OU Structure – simplified





Key 'support' units

- Student Services
- Learning and Teaching Solutions
- Academic and Administrative Computing Services
- Institute of Educational Technology
- Marketing and Communications
- Library
- Knowledge Media Institute
- Learning Innovation Office



collaboration is the key





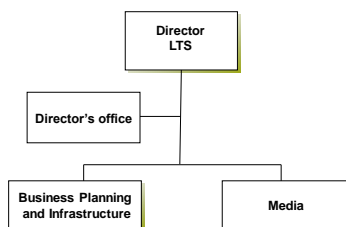
Overview of LTS



LTS is the University's production, development and delivery centre



LTS Structure





Business Planning and Infrastructure

- Finance Planning and Control
- Licensing and Acquisitions
- eProduction Systems – ECM
- Storage and Distribution
- Operational service and support teams for online learning and teaching systems including:
 - Technical Testing
 - Computing Helpdesk



Infrastructure



Acquisitions and Licensing



Storage and Distribution



Computing Helpdesk



Media

- Account management
- Project management
- Learning media design
- Media development
- Flexible resources for agile response
- Learning and Teaching systems development – VLE



A broad range of media





Blended learning – then and now

- TV and radio – ‘the university of the air’
- Texts – ‘lectures in print’ (but so much more)
- Lab materials, rocks, keyboards ...
- Face to face – tutorials and residential schools
- Computing – from mainframe to DVDs
- Computing – forums (CoSy to Moodle via FirstClass); quizzes (OpenMark on discs to Moodle online)
- Virtual Learning Environment



Where are we now?

- Spine of course modules is online
- Standard website provision for (nearly) all courses
- Content – digital production and delivery
 - but main text content delivered in books too
- Content – browser accessible
 - but some delivery of video on DVD
- Virtual versions of the physical
 - but face to face contact still important



Products

- [Environment: journeys through a changing world](#)
 - level 1 / year 1 module; 60 points
- [Living political ideas](#)
 - level 3 / year 3 module; 60 points
- [‘Counting in clay’](#) – the iTunesU cut
 - from Mathematical Modelling, level 2 module
 - one of twelve 2 minute (or less) clips

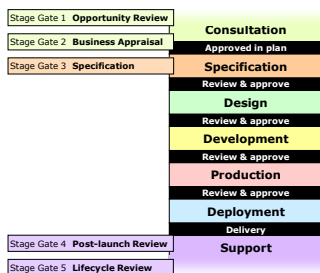


Processes

- Stage gate and specification



The OU process



Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production



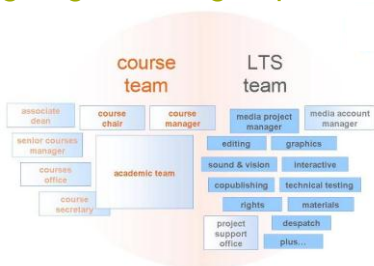


collaboration is the key





Designing Learning Experiences



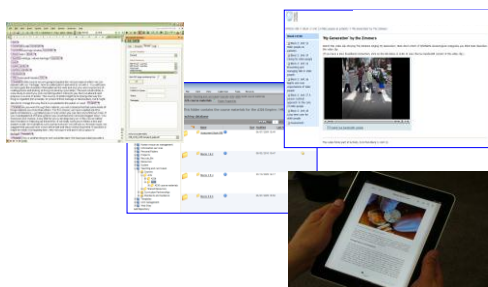


Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction

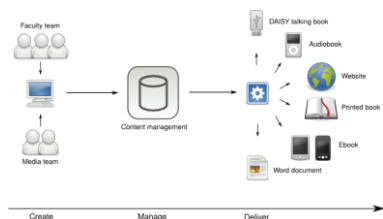


Produce – Store – Render





eProduction





Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction
- Structured Content



Structured Content





Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction
- Structured Content
- Learning and Teaching system development



Managing the VLE: development

- During 1990s various online elements emerged
- In 2001 a first, simple VLE 'portal' widely adopted
- VLE Programme chose Moodle – implemented from 2005
 - easier to integrate with existing systems
- Since 2008 – quarterly development, testing and release
- Rigorous code freeze and release timetable
- Functional, usability and accessibility testing routine



Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction
- Structured Content
- Learning and Teaching system development ...
enhancement ...



Managing the VLE: enhancement

- Ongoing requirements gathering from:
 - academics, associate lecturers, students, administrators
- Mainstream and innovation work:
 - Google, mobile devices, eportfolios
- Special group needs: offenders, students with disabilities
- Steering group, management group and special interest groups oversee activities



Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction
- Structured Content
- Learning and Teaching system development ...
enhancement ...
adoption



Managing the VLE: adoption

- Champions via OU elearning community
- Making it easy: service and content set up semi-automated
- Standard site models in place – for *students'* benefit
- Optimising feature use for:
 - authentic learning: wiki; formative and summative quizzes, with feedback; portfolios for work-based learning
 - personal learning: alternative formats; planning tools
- Associate Lecturer training and support in place
- Helpdesk hours matched to demand, plus self-help



Processes

- Stage gate and specification
- Collaboration in course/module production
- eProduction
- Structured Content
- Learning and Teaching systems development ...
enhancement ...
adoption ...

and we've been successful BUT sustaining this ...?

as you know ...
collaboration is the key



Sustaining success

- Organisational boundaries – 'online' challenges them all



Remember the 'support' units

- Student Services
- Learning and Teaching Solutions
- Academic and Administrative Computing Services
- Institute of Educational Technology
- Marketing and Communications
- Library
- Knowledge Media Institute
- Learning Innovation Office





... and the academics

- 7 Faculties/Schools
- 13 nations and regions

and

- Students
- OUSA
- Associate Lecturers



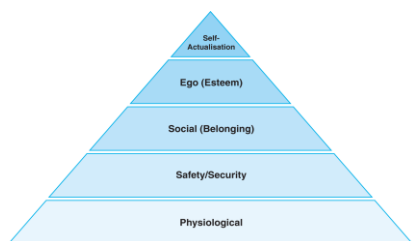
Success increases the challenge

- Organisational boundaries – 'online' challenges them all
- Role boundaries – course teams and associate lecturers; user generated content from students – it's hard to let go of control
- Content and service boundaries
- Home grown and found content – ownership
- 'Online' is now mission critical
- This imperative puts the user at the centre

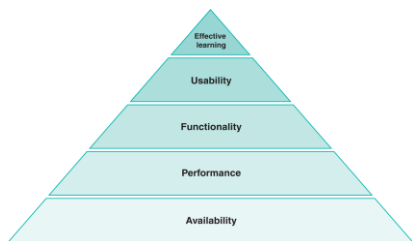


Maslow's 'hierarchy of human needs'

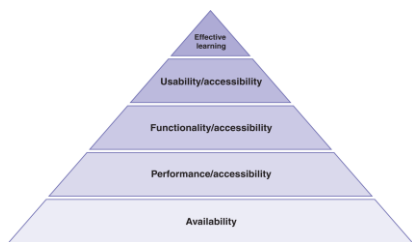
(A Theory of Human Motivation, 1943)



'Hierarchy of IT needs'



'Hierarchy of IT needs'





Next steps

- Greater focus on learning and teaching systems needs
- Proactive monitoring of performance from user viewpoint
- Feature and app development
- Design and testing for increased personalisation
- Integration of administrative and learning environments
- Flexible use and reuse of existing and new content
- Standards for content, wherever created
- Willingness to reuse



internal partnerships



