

UCISA-SSG Masterclass

This is my personal account of a day spent at the UCISA Masterclass on Fresh Ideas for Successful IT Training on 9 December 2009. After a dreary journey from Sheffield, the almost overwhelming opulence of Oxford was tempered by the more down-to-earth, though still labyrinthine, venue at OUCS.

The morning started with a painless registration process and plentiful refreshments. There were always helpers on hand to direct the lost delegate to the next venue. The day had a friendly ambiance and there were a number of networking opportunities, particularly over lunch. The lunch itself was particularly sumptuous and jolly and made the fairly long trek to and from the lunch venue worthwhile.

The first session I attended was A bitesize approach to learning, run by John Scott of UCL and an equally enthusiastic Ruth Brown from across the river in LSBU. This started the day at a cracking pace and had us fizzing with ideas for 'micro' training sessions which would attract even the busiest academics.

My second morning session was Web2Practice with Will Allen and Steve Boneham of Netskills. We were quickly transported from the old-school transmission model of training to a new world of exploring and evangelising Web 2 tools. Will and Steve's guides are themselves well worth exploring:
<http://web2practice.jiscinvolve.org/>

While I've been consuming podcasts, Simon Davis from Leeds University has been busy producing them on a grand scale and gladly shared his experience in the production, distribution and monitoring of a wide range of podcast types. It was very useful to see the range and quality of learning materials that can be produced with relatively simple tools.

Chris Steele demonstrated how LSE are using LogMeIn, normally used as a remote IT support tool, as a 'Just in Time' training tool. At a time when trainers are having to demonstrate ever greater reach and coverage, this was particularly exciting and we are already extending our experimental use of this tool.

By the time we got to the closing plenary we were enthused but tired. Feeding back some of our feedback-sheet adjectives in a public forum did seem a little awkward. The use of voting buttons to give instant feedback was a great idea, particularly as the great mass of us had genuinely enjoyed and profited from the day. I set off back to Sheffield buoyed up with new ideas and enthusiasm.