



eduserv



UCISA Award for Excellence 2009

Application Form

University of Oxford

Oxford University Computing Services

Melissa Highton

melissa.highton@oucs.ox.ac.uk



Objective of **Oxford on iTunesU**

The University of Oxford is one of the world's leading universities for education and research. The '**Oxford on iTunesU**' project brings significant new benefits to learners, wider dissemination for researchers and supports the University's mandate by showcasing audio and video about admissions, teaching and learning, research, continuing education, student life, alumni relations and our fundraising Campaign. The work of the OUCS team in collaboration with Public Affairs Directorate and Legal Services Office ensures it does this in a cost-effective and sustainable way.

Description of Oxford on iTunesU



The University's website on iTunes U (<http://itunes.ox.ac.uk>), launched in October 2008, is an easily searchable, attractively designed and free-to-use website that brings the University to life through the use of audio and video, rather than the traditional web media of the written word and photographs. The University would recommend this project as an example of excellence because it has brought together information which is interesting and useful to many audiences in one easy to search, and free to use, website.

All the material offered via iTunesU is free-to-download. The range of audio and video recordings reflects the breadth of high quality teaching and research across the University. The service proved to be very popular, attracting a global audience of the intellectually curious who subscribed to, and downloaded, over 2 million items in just over a year.

The University's mission is to achieve and sustain excellence in every area of its teaching and research, maintain and develop its historical position as a world-class university, and enrich the international, national and regional communities through the fruits of its research, the skills of its alumni, and the publishing of academic and education materials. We recognised the value of online audio and video as modern methods of communicating with our audiences – particularly young people considering applying to the University – and also audiences' growing expectations that world-leading organisations will produce such material. We were determined to create a website which brings the University to life, reflects the great diversity of its membership and its activities, and gives greater exposure to audio and video material than if it was buried on individual departmental or college websites.

The aim of creating an iTunes U website was to bring together audio and video material from across the University's many departments and colleges into one easily searchable showcase that could be enjoyed by internal and external audiences.

We already used audio and video on our own website www.ox.ac.uk and a number of academic departments and colleges were also making podcasts and films for their own websites, but we wanted one site where external audiences – applicants, teachers, parents, alumni, opinion formers including the media, decision makers including donors and politicians, and the education and research sector in general – could find all Oxford material easily on one well-

indexed and attractively designed site without needing to know that Professor X's lecture is on the website of Department Y or College Z.

University of Oxford has taken to licensing learning materials for widespread dissemination and reuse. There is a growing trend amongst educators to see open educational resources (OER) as a cost effective, sustainable and global approach to making high quality digital resources available to support learning and teaching. When material is made available publicly online there are legal processes and procedures that the department and individual contributor must follow to ensure that the material is sensibly recorded, edited and released in a manner that meets the University's legal obligations. Success in this area is dependent on key parallel developments in creative commons licensing. Oxford University Computing Services worked closely with University Legal Services Office to ensure that the institution can be flexible and adept in making materials available for re-use by learners and researchers in the wider community.

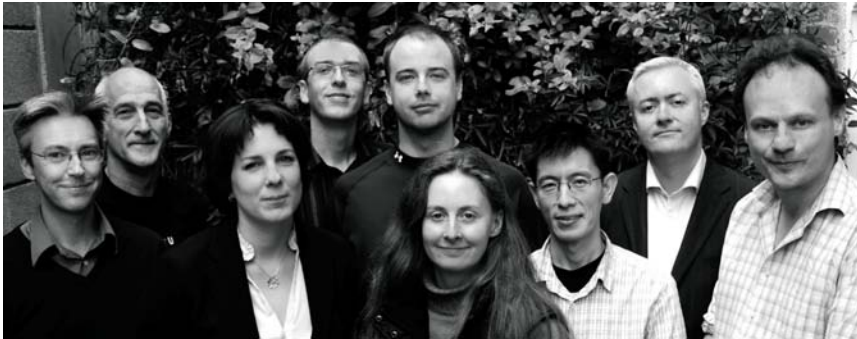
We researched the material that was already available, helped those engaged in strategically important work to create audio and video material, and provided training and best practice sessions to encourage colleagues to produce their own material in the long-term.

The website features a wide range of material about undergraduate admissions, research, the colleges, lectures by Oxford academics and visiting speakers, libraries and archives, university life, our fundraising campaign and our alumni.

The University also produces Undergraduate and Graduate Prospectuses, a Research brochure, an Annual Review, publicity materials for its major fundraising Campaign, an internal news magazine, a termly newsletter for our alumni in parliament, a monthly e-newsletter for alumni and a twice termly e-newsletter for school and college teachers whose students are considering applying to the University.

While we strive to bring the University to life in printed publications through the use of case studies and photography, there is no substitute for seeing and hearing current students, researchers and academics in audio podcasts and video.

Resources



This site was created, and is run, by existing staff. No additional staff were recruited to deliver this project. There was no cost to replicate existing audio and video material from departmental, college and central University sources and reproduce it on the iTunes U site for launch – just staff time to carry this work out.

Some new material was created to fill perceived gaps in content for the new site, but by existing staff. £5,000 was spent on new equipment, including a server and some hand-held digital audio recorders to record some new material just prior to launch. The audio and video free-to-download content material released through iTunes U average around **15-20,000** downloads **per week**.

£300 was spent on publicity leaflets. An ‘album cover’ was created for each podcast (an appropriate image plus the University logo) by existing staff, and nothing was spent on photography for these ‘album covers’ because existing images owned by the University were used.

Building sustainability from the early stages of an podcasting institutional project requires that, in addition to the technical challenges of recording content, producing episodes with metadata, and making them available online, a whole range of social, cultural, communicational, legal and economic aspects have to be managed.. Oxford University is an early pioneer in adapting to this challenge by being one of the first UK institutional adopters of using third-party web services such as iTunes to reach students and a global audience.

The institution has committed a considerable amount of effort to create a devolved model of content creation within the institution where individual departments can decide how much effort they wish to commit to providing public content. This model is considered to be the most economic and most likely to scale into the future relying on a core central team to concentrate on providing a technical architecture for devolved access and building a community network of circa 200 content creators through regular training.

This approach has created a community of podcast people who understand the creation and legal workflow for releasing material. This model is considered to be

sustainable and adept at creating a reliable flow of new material responsive to internal (academic departmental) needs. The current system tracks a podcasting entity from inception, through to delivery; additional work supports administrators to monitor checks and balances to handle the legal and technical processes.

Name of Staff involved in **Oxford on ItunesU**

Carolyne Culver - Head of Strategic Communications,
Christopher Eddie - University Webmaster,
Melissa Highton - Head of Learning Technologies Group,
Barry Cornelius – Programmer Information Services,
Peter Robinson, Manager of Learning Technologies Services,
Stuart Lee – Director of Computing Services,
Carl Marshall- Project officer
Steve Pierce –Podcasting Service Support Officer

Support of Institution UCISA Representative

Name: Stuart Lee – Director of Computing Services

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When completed, e-mail the submission to execsec@ucisa.ac.uk.

Please note that submissions should be limited to 4 sides of A4 but may include appendices containing supporting evidence such as screenshots.