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The bimonthly newsletter from UCISA

UPDATE

Technology enhanced learning survey results published

Peter Tinson – UCISA

The results from the survey on Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL), undertaken by members of the Learning and Teaching Working Group of UCISA's Teaching, Learning and Information Group (TLIG) have been published on the UCISA website. The survey, carried out with support from the JISC, builds upon similar surveys conducted in 2001, 2003 and 2005.

In the Survey TEL was defined as *any online facility or system that directly supports learning and teaching. This may include a formal VLE, an institutional intranet that has a learning and teaching component, a system that has been developed in-house or a particular suite of specific individual tools.*

The previous survey was carried out in 2005, the same year as both the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) published their e-learning strategies. Clearly e-learning was on the Government's national agenda then and continues to be, judging by John Denham's comments at the UUK conference in September. Since 2005 there have been other major developments including the HEA e-learning benchmarking programme and the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies. However, e-learning remains a concern for IT Directors, ranking 2nd in the 2006/07 Top Concerns survey. So what has changed since 2005?

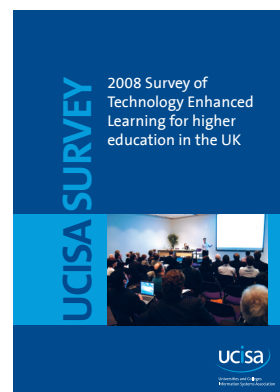
The Survey found that *learning and teaching activities* continue to be the primary driver for considering using TEL, although *meeting student expectations* is now a close second. Although strategies are becoming much more embedded, with e-learning strategies now more prominent, the presence of a *committed local champion* continues to be the strongest influence on the

rate at which TEL is developed and processes promoted within an institution. Blackboard continues as the most used enterprise or institutional VLE but, when all use of VLEs within an institution is considered,

Moodle is now the most used with a significant take up since 2005. Overall, there is a vastly reduced range of VLEs in use since 2005.

Unsurprisingly, the use of Web 2.0 tools has increased significantly but tools for e-portfolios and e-assessment have also increased in prominence. The emergence of Web 2.0 tools, streaming media and mobile computing are regarded as likely to have the greatest impact on the ability to provide support with the need to maintain staff skills the biggest challenge. Outsourcing is being increasingly evaluated for the hosting of systems, although the survey found no evidence that it is, as yet, widely employed for major, strategic institutional delivery. There continue to be subtle but clearly identifiable differences discernible between pre-92 and post-92 universities.

The full report is available at www.ucisa.ac.uk/publications/tel_survey.aspx.



UCISA represents the whole higher education sector in the provision and development of academic, management and administrative information systems providing a network of contacts and a powerful lobbying voice.

For any comments, suggestions or content submission, please email us at: update@ucisa.ac.uk

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Khipu deploy one of the largest NAC deployments in Europe

Matt Ashma – Khipu Networks

September 2008 – Education focussed networking and security integrator Khipu Networks announce that the University of Nottingham, a leading UK university, is deploying network access control (NAC) across its entire campus and halls of residence networks to secure all connected devices. After its initial success on the University's halls of residence network, the NAC solution is now being extended to cover 50,000 wired ports across the whole network, making it one of the largest NAC rollouts in Europe.

After evaluating the University's requirements and current infrastructure, Khipu proposed the NAC solution, which is based on the Bradford Networks *Campus Manager* solution, to secure the University of Nottingham Student Network Service (SNS). Initially rolled out to 6,000 then 8,000 students in halls of residence, the solution provides network access control and identity management, allowing the University to control and manage student access to the network and enforce Acceptable Use Policies which include operating system, antivirus, and anti-spyware .version control on its own equipment and on student owned devices.

Campus Manager ensures that all students register their computers, which then allows the University to enforce automatic security checks. This, coupled with the ability to now authorise access to the network appropriately, means the University can quarantine any non-compliant devices and provide students with downloadable links to the required virus protection updates and security patches. Not only does this help secure the entire network and better protect student PCs, it also minimises the need for helpdesk intervention, which frees up IT staff time to focus on more strategic activities.

This has virtually eliminated the University's past problems with high numbers of infected or improperly secured devices connecting to the SNS every year at the start of term. Furthermore, when intrusions previously occurred on the network, IT staff had to physically check the ports to locate the problem, which could take up a considerable amount of time.

The detailed information provided by the NAC solution for the Campus Network gives the University's IT staff visibility of all devices on the network, ensuring unauthorised devices attempting to connect are rapidly identified and blocked. It also enables IT staff to monitor when a device was last connected to the network, providing an audit trail and making it far easier to locate devices. This also allows the University to better manage its IP addresses by keeping an up to date register of those in use on the system. IP addresses can now be tracked and easily reassigned. In the past, this had not been possible and consequently of the 40,000 devices registered, half were no longer connected to the University network.

"Before the NAC deployment, infected devices were not only seriously impairing the performance and availability of the network, they were also taking up a lot of time and resources to track and clean up. We were so impressed with the success of Khipu's solution to protect our Residential Network, that it made perfect sense to deploy the technology across the whole campus," said Phil Harrison, Network Team Leader.

"This will massively increase the visibility of all devices across the entire network and will help us ensure that staffs as well as student PCs enjoy a secure and reliable connection."

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Births, deaths and marriages!

In this new section we will be giving a round up of news of staff changes within the sector.

- Geoff Bouch has recently been confirmed as Head of ICT at the University of Plymouth. Geoff is also Chair of the UCISA Infrastructure Group.
- Andrew Trimble has taken over as Director of Information Services at the University of Ulster from Nigel McCartney who retired in April.
- A former Chair of UCISA, David Sweeney, who was Vice-Principal (Planning and Resources) at Royal Holloway has moved to HEFCE as Director of Research. *Poacher turned game keeper??*
- Iain Stinson, our very own UCISA Treasurer has stepped down as Director of Computing Services at Liverpool and moved to Sussex to become Director of IT Services.
- Graham Hill, former Head of MIS has been promoted to Director of IT Services at the University of Bradford. Graham is also Chair of the UCISA Annual Conference Committee.
- Mark Toole has moved from Brighton to become Director of Information Services at the University of Stirling.
- Terry Hanson (ex Chichester) will become Acting Director of Information Services at the University of Brighton.
- And finally, UCISA's own Publications Officer, Sam Westwood, gave birth on 18 September to an 8lb baby boy named Jake.

Executive Committee report

Peter Tinson – UCISA Executive Secretary

The summer months have continued to be busy for UCISA with activity on a number of fronts.

The Executive has continued to lobby the JISC on the provision of support for implementation of federated access management. The discussions have been positive and JISC have announced that the JANET helpdesk will be the first port of call for support issues. The helpdesk will have access to a network of secondary support services should they need to refer calls. Training is available through both JANET and Netskills. JISC has also confirmed a further three years of funding for service provider support, continuing the work of the Access Management Team and JISC Collections to bring publishers and other service providers into the UK Access Management Federation.

There has also been progress in the discussions with the UK Border Authority (UKBA) on the implementation of the points based immigration system. Although the detail of the process institutions will have to follow during the application process to ensure that their students have the appropriate paperwork has yet to be established, it was clear from the meeting that UKBA

had taken on a number of the points raised in earlier meetings. A proposed timetable for the introduction for the service was discussed at the meeting and it is anticipated that a further meeting will be held in the near future to define the process, confirm the timetable and clarify the software requirements.

The first meeting of the MIAP (Managing Information Across Partners) HE Advisory Group was held in September. The programme has been established to “streamline the collection, handling and sharing of information on learning and achievement for education and training organisations”. The Unique Learner Number and Register of Learning Providers are two outputs from the programme; a centrally held Learner Record is another. The Advisory Group agreed to establish a technical working group to identify technical issues as they arise. UCISA is well represented on the Advisory Group; updates on this activity will be issued via the website and email bulletins.

Microsoft technology queries?

Join the community that’s dedicated to helping you find the answer, and share your experiences of utilising Microsoft products in an academic environment.

IT professionals from over 200 institutions in the UK have joined the community at www.EduCoMS.net. Membership of the site is completely free and signing up is easy. What’s more, for a limited time you can win a book token worth up to £25 for every item you post.

Featuring document libraries, forums, wiki pages and news on a wide range of tools such as Sharepoint, Exchange, Windows Server and more, anyone looking for support, shared wisdom and experiences of building IT solutions based on Microsoft products should make EduCoMS their first port of call.

The site was built by EduserV with support from Microsoft, UCISA and the Education Support Centre. EduserV recently announced that it has delivered £1 million in savings to universities and colleges through the Microsoft Campus Agreement. For more information visit www.eduserV.org.uk.

Infrastructure Group news

Geoff Bouch – University of Plymouth

The Group has recently been seeking case study materials in the infrastructure deployment and management area. We have now published the first of these on the UCISA website (many thanks to the authors), so please do take the time to visit www.ucisa.ac.uk/groups/ig/Case%20Studies.aspx.

This is hopefully the start of a useful library of resources. We are keen to build

on this, so please do consider writing up your own infrastructure developments to share with the community. The link above has areas of interest (for example are you planning a Vista rollout) and also a case study template. However, if you have an interesting development that is not on this list, please consider writing it up – just drop me an email.

We are also planning a couple of events

around technical/integration issues for outsourced student email/storage, and also on developments in the in-sourced provision, management, backup and archive of storage. Lookout for more details soon.

Finally, don’t forget the UCISA–IG JISCmail discussion list, sign up at www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/UCISA–IG.html or email geoff.bouch@plymouth.ac.uk.

Top concerns survey underway

The 2008/9 Top Concerns survey is underway with the first phase, where service directors are invited to submit suggestions for candidate concerns, is now complete. A working group formed from members of the Executive and a number of other Directors will then consider the submitted concerns to produce a consolidated list for directors to vote on. This second phase will establish lists of top concerns from four different perspectives and an overall set of top concerns.

The output from the exercise will be used in a number of different ways. Firstly, UCISA wants to know what matters are of concern to IT/Computing Service Directors and their institutions to enable us to develop our programme of events to better meet these and so offer better value from UCISA membership. The results will be forwarded to the senior executives at the JISC, JANET (UK) and

other agencies so that they can get a view of the concerns of the sector and consider these in developing their programmes. The results will also be forwarded to our corporate members so that they can understand the issues service departments are facing and to give them a focus for their exhibition stands at the Management Conference. Finally, each institution can benefit individually from understanding the broad consensus on these matters, and perhaps using this in developing their own IT/IS services.

The results from the survey will be published in the New Year.

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Improved administration and traceability of network connected devices has also helped to reduce calls for IT support. Fewer additional helpline staff are needed at start of term, and more calls can now be resolved at the frontline.

Khipu's support and efficiency in the deployment of the initial phase in 2005 (which was installed and ready to use in two weeks) along with its extensive experience in the education sector meant that the Company was the natural choice for the network wide rollout this summer. The campus wide solution will be deployed in a phased approach, being rolled out to one department at a time. Khipu will begin the rollout in October, with completion due by the summer of 2009.

The University of Nottingham has future plans to extend Network Admission Control to its extensive wireless LAN to further enhance network access to its entire student community to give users greater flexibility across the campus. For further information, please go to www.khipu-networks.com.

Events calendar



January 2009

20 **CISG Electronic Document and Records Management Seminar**
Warwick

27–28 **Directors' Forum: Leadership**
Radisson SAS Hotel, Manchester Airport

March

11–13 **UCISA 2009 Annual Conference**
BT Convention Centre, Liverpool

July

7–8 **Advisory Services and IT Support Staff 2009 Symposium**
Aston Business School, Birmingham

Other events of interest

2009

4–6 **March**
IUISC
Galway, Ireland

24 **March**
JISC Conference
Edinburgh