

Libraries of the Future

Is the first thought of many of your learners when they are seeking answers is to reach for their nearest Google?

JISC's "Libraries of the Future" initiative seeks to open up, with partner organisations and librarians themselves, a debate about the future of the library. The theme will encompass a variety of activities, events, printed resources, interactive Web 2.0 services, podcast interviews and so on. However, encouraging debate and discussion will be at the heart of all of them.

Questions to be addressed include: in a world of increasing online learning content what about the library's future role as a core learning centre and how can libraries contribute to the development of information literacy?

None of us yet know what our libraries of the future will look like. But one thing is sure: libraries will continue to be essential to academic success and the future of education.

JISC has teamed up with The Guardian in this initiative. One recent product of this alliance has been a comprehensive supplement focusing on future libraries. A micro-site on the issue which will be live for a year and can be accessed at: <http://education.guardian.co.uk/librariesunleashed>.

JISC's own focus on this can be found on their site at:

www.jisc.ac.uk/librariesofthefuture.

For further information or enquiries concerning any of the information in this newsletter please contact: b.stewart@rsc-ni.ac.uk

How Green is your ICT? (continued from page 3)

of manufacturing new equipment (est. 1,500 Kgs of waste per PC).

Virtualisation does offer many other opportunities too, such as; virtualisation of the desktop for delivery of applications to learners, so that rather than having to install all the application everyone may need on every PC, the desktop is delivered when asked for. Applications can be targeted to specific teaching and learning groups, which can also reduce the number of licences of the application you may need to purchase.

There are many sources of further information on Green ICT including:

- The Green Grid – <http://www.thegreengrid.org/home>



- Climate Savers, Smart Computing – <http://www.climatesavers.computing.org/>
- European Union energy reduction projects – <http://re.jrc.ec.europa.eu/energyefficiency/>
Noel Davies (RSC South West)

Usable Security: a Paradox?

There is a long standing stereotype in ICT departments, and network users in general, that security inhibits usability. This need not be the case if colleges adopt different approaches to the design and implementations of their systems and policies.

Educational network environments often require flexibility in the way they are used and secured. Different courses of study and users require various levels of security privileges. The RSCni have recognised this and have been developing a Balanced Security Review service to meet these needs, to provide colleges with the view of their current position and vision on the way forward.

After a long period of piloting and refining this service with a local college, we are pleased to

announce that the service is ready for full delivery. This service will be free of charge to all Northern Ireland Colleges and aims to provide a review and guidance on:

- Security practices, procedures and policies
- Network security
- Desktop security
- Physical security
- Legal issues and compliance

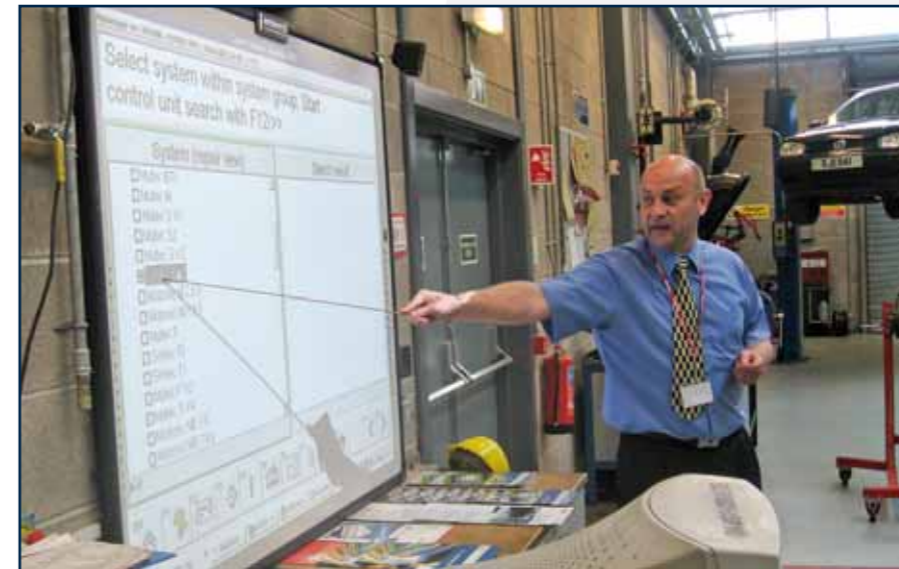
System usability and how above impacts the user experience

The service will be completely confidential and conducted by RSCni technical staff, in association with an external security consultant. To avail of this free service, contact Noel McDaid (n.mcdaid@rsc-ni.ac.uk).

RSC Newsletter

Issue 19 – June 2008

Stimulating and supporting innovation in learning



Train for Success using ILT

The potential for ILT to enhance learning on Training for Success programmes was warmly received by college staff at a workshop on 30th April 08. The workshop, in the Omagh campus of South West College, featured excellent, innovative examples of ILT currently used in a range of TfS programmes in 3 colleges.

Highlights of the day for delegates included:

- Demonstration of excellent e-resources and technologies used at South West College, in Furniture and Motor Vehicle programmes
- ground breaking work in Southern Regional College in using their custom-developed e-portfolio for a range of learners
- Belfast Metropolitan College's effective and enjoyable adaption of Who Wants to be a Millionaire to engage learners through e-tests that are adaptable to any curriculum area and feature simple multimedia techniques.

The workshop, organised by RSCni, featured inputs from the Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) and LSDA NI.

Angela Whiteside (ETI) gave an overview of findings to date in respect of ILT in TfS programmes and pointed to a greater focus on ILT in future work.

Nicola Reilly (LSDA) outlined LSDA's generic support for TfS and noted the range of ILT tools and resources that could provide particular benefits for ICT.

Catherine Gormley (RSCni) emphasised practical ways that the plethora of Web 2.0 Technologies could be used in the delivery and support of TfS programmes, across many skills areas.

Materials from this workshop, the first in a series that continues in the next academic year, are available from c.guy@rsc-ni.ac.uk. To discuss plans using ILT to support TfS in your specific college feel free to contact us at support@rsc-ni.ac.uk

Contents

- 2 ILT Training Needs
- 2 The Excellence Gateway
- 3 What's Happening?
- 3 How Green is your ICT?
- 4 Usable Security: a Paradox?

YOU – Person of the Year

In December 2006, Time magazine's Person of the Year was 'You'. The front cover of the magazine showed a picture of a PC with a mirror in place of the screen, reflecting not only the face of the reader, but also the general feeling that 2006 was the year of the Web in particular Web 2.0 - a new, improved, 'second version', 'user generated' Web. Usually Time Magazine selects a person of the year for its front cover. In choosing the ordinary individual, the magazine underlined the importance in the growth of online user-generated content, the emerging online community and Web 2.0's democratising effects. As educationalists, we need to know what Web 2.0 is and how it can be used in teaching and learning.

What is Web 2.0?

Web 2.0 is a more socially connected Web in which people can contribute as much as they can consume. Collaboration, contribution and community are the order of the day. Common applications/services such as blogs, wikis, tagging and social bookmarking, multi-media file sharing, social networking and podcasting all form part of Web 2.0.

What implications does Web 2.0 have for my students' learning?

Web 2.0 tools can be used to enhance learning. For instance, a class blog can be used by both lecturer and learner to reflect on the learning that has taken place. Wikis can be used to create class glossaries.

RSCni provides training and support for lecturers in integrating Web 2.0 technologies effectively in their teaching. [For more information contact Catherine Gormley at c.gormley@rsc-ni.ac.uk.](#)

ILT Training Needs

Thanks to all college staff who provided information to our ILT Training Needs Analysis (TNA), whose final report was launched by DEL at our Annual Conference, in April 2008.

Based primarily on data from online surveys three broad issues were explored:

- view of adequacy of current ICT resources for job roles;
- ICT/ILT training received so far and its effectiveness; and
- future training needs, general and role-related.

The majority of staff surveyed, from across 6 different roles in colleges:

- generally believe that they have sufficient access to the technologies they require;
- have certified ICT skills, at least at a basic level;
- require further training across a range of areas particular to their jobs; and find that the most effective training and support

uses some form of face-to-face engagement.

Consistent views across staff groups on key influencing factors in moving ILT forward included:

- the fundamental need for a reliable ICT network;
- the belief that more online learning resources will move ILT forward;
- lecturers' strong belief that they need more time to find appropriate e-resources, and to develop e-learning skills covered in training events;
- a wish for more college-based training; and
- a need for more focus on time, skill and support resources rather than new equipment.

Each college has been issued with a summary report of the data collected from its staff. The full report is available to download from the RSCni website at www.rsc-ni.ac.uk.

The Excellence Gateway

The Quality Improvement Agency's Excellence Gateway has resources to support teaching and learning, leadership and management, for use by staff in the FE and skills sector. Incorporating the previously well-known Becta/FERL website there are also examples and case studies of effective practice; teaching and learning materials; and links to suppliers of improvement services.

Individuals can join the Gateway and tailor their own links to

resources and join with others in communities of practice. Though the site is structured along the regions of England (because it receives most of its funding from LSC) teachers from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland can also join and use the resources. Just leave the 'Region' entry blank.

To visit the site and join in, go to: <http://excellence.qia.org.uk/page.aspx?o=nav-home>

What's Happening?

Date	Title	Location
6th June 2008	e-Learning Forum	South West College (Dungannon Campus)
11th June 2008	Technical Forum	South West College (Dungannon Campus)
16th – 18th June 2008	Taming the Macintosh	Belfast Metropolitan College
23rd – 25th June 2008 (nos permitting)	Taming the Macintosh	Belfast Metropolitan College

How Green is your ICT?

Many would recognize that Green and ICT are anomalous subjects, the plastics and rare/contaminant materials that go into the construction, the built-in obsolescence and the difficulties in disposal and recycling of the equipment. So where do you start?

For many colleges the first step is the production of a 'Green Strategy' that encompasses all of the activities of the college. Some considerations for this 'Green strategy' could be:

- Query suppliers to check on their Green credentials
- Power management of devices
 - Reduce number of servers by collecting services together or using virtualisation software
 - Identify under utilization and concentrate on these items
 - Introduce PC power management software if machines are left on overnight for updates
 - If Estates and ICT don't talk about the energy bill, consider moving an element

of the energy budget to ICT so they can see/realise the benefits of capital investment in newer technologies

- Extend the life of equipment but make it fit for purpose by introducing newer technologies such as Terminal Services or Virtual Desktops to deliver modern applications on older PCs.

The technologies available change rapidly, and one of the latest trends is virtualization of servers.

Replacing the current server stock may allow you to reduce your stock by as much as a 1:10 ratio onto new more powerful equipment. There are other advantages of this route for systems teams in that server management can become easier and more resilient.

Pursuing this route costs, but the saving in energy by reducing 40 machines burning 300 watts per hour to a single machine burning 500 watts per hour over the 4 to 5 year life of the equipment should be evident. Clearly, there is also a green argument about keeping old kit running longer rather than generating the production pollution

NWRC Lecturer Commended for ILT

Lecturer Luane Quigley, has been commended by the Professional Association for Catering Education (PACE) at its Awards for Innovation ceremony, held recently in Towcester, England.

Luane, one of three finalists in the Innovative use of Technology Category, lectures in Travel and Tourism in the North West Regional College's Business Services Department. The awards panel paid tribute to her innovative approach to communication technologies such as SMS texting and social networking in the co-ordination of the Foundation Degree programmes in Hospitality and Tourism, and Travel and Tourism Management.

Luane used SMS texting in her co-ordination role to communicate with students about assignment deadlines, tutor interviews and changes of class times/rooms. The social networking tool Bebo was used to help students to get to know each other in the class, where many already had Bebo profiles. It proved a socially cohesive tool as, for instance, students shared photos of their class trip to Amsterdam through Bebo.

Key benefits of the initiative included:

- Improved retention in individual classes and for programme overall
- Students feeling supported and can discuss matters more easily with co-ordinator
- Students have bonded as a group quicker
- Students interact with all class members and not as cliques
- Staff are seen as 'cool' and approachable.

[Congratulations to Luane from RSCni.](#)