

### EtherPad works in really real-time.

When multiple people edit the same document simultaneously, any changes are instantly reflected on everyone's screen. The result is a new and productive way to collaborate on text documents, useful for meeting notes, drafting sessions, education, team programming, and more. Check it out at <http://etherpad.com>

### AccessApps is now EduApps

Following award-winning success at the IMS Global Learning Conference in Barcelona in May, the AccessApps software packs for accessibility have now been expanded into **EduApps** – an initiative developed by the JISC Regional Support Centre Scotland North & East. EduApps extends the AccessApps philosophy of free portable software in your pocket to include two bundles of applications – one specifically designed for teachers '**TeachApps**' and the other for learners '**LearnApps**'.

Currently the RSC in Edinburgh hosts over 90 open source and freeware software applications which can be entirely used from a USB stick on a Windows computer. If you would like to get your hands on this very useful tool, you can download it onto your own USB from <http://www.eduapps.org/>.

### a.nnotate

a.nnotate is a free online service that lets you attach private or shared notes to documents and images using a web browser. You can use it individually to store and index documents. There are many applications including reviewing draft documents, compiling corrections for future revisions, selecting passages for future reference and general document management.

Use the following link to find out more: <http://a.annote.com>

## RSCni bites the Apple!

For a while now the RSCni has been sceptical about the merits of Apple's iPhone for both business and teaching uses. The 'wow' factor of the phone was lost on us with all the reviews promoting gains to be had in teaching and learning but was this all media noise or did Apple have a serious device that can deliver business and pedagogy value?

The opportunity arrived recently when our mobile contract was up for renewal and we began testing different devices from firstly a business aspect and secondly teaching aspects. The iPhone came

top of a long list of business handsets for marks on business organisational value, ease of use and range of applications to extend its use.

The team will explore these uses in the coming months and provide advice, guidance and demonstrations into how colleges can gain advantage from the iPhone device. We will also be providing space on our website where we can provide reviews and pointers for teaching and business uses.



## New ITIL course...New way to learning

Effective IT service management is the goal of anyone responsible for delivery of IT services with our organisations, especially as NI Colleges have undergone major growth and change due to the mergers. Effective IT service management can lead to an efficient service, proactive management and resilient services, and ultimately, happier customers.

The Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework, which is geared towards effective IT management, has undergone an extensive redevelopment and reorganising of structure and accreditation in version 3. Most will agree that the ITIL framework is the basis for effective IT service management and a course and certification worth perusing for business IT service gains.

The main barriers to adopting the ITIL framework within our sector has been cost of courses, time to complete and

long onerous courses that are geared to certification. The RSCni are working with our training providers to develop a blended learning approach to this course to ensure effective learning of the material over a longer period. This will be achieved by a mix of online teaching, VLE delivery of material, peer/teacher support and pre-certification face to face preparation workshops.

The RSCni are hopeful that if demand is sufficient we will commence delivery of the ITIL version3 foundation course over a number of months using a collaboration tool and our Virtual Learning Environment.

If you would like to know more about the ITIL framework and / or this ITILv3 foundation course please get in touch with our E-Learning Advisor (Technical) - Noel McDaid at: [n.mcdaid@rsc-ni.ac.uk](mailto:n.mcdaid@rsc-ni.ac.uk)



# RSC Newsletter

Issue 22 – June 2009

Stimulating and supporting innovation in learning

## Open Source Software – Free for All



RSCni held a very successful workshop attended by more than 30 delegates at the Portadown Campus of Southern Regional College on 15th May 2009. Speakers Ross Gardler from JISC OSS Watch, Jonathan Heggarty from Belfast Metropolitan College and Daniel Bled – director of the OSS Centre at the host college – provided a very useful and practical tour of the OSS landscape.

For those less familiar with the concept, OSS is software that is free to use and whose technical innards are visible to those who have an interest in and the skill to make further improvements. In contrast, commercial suppliers of software, as well as charging fees for their products, keep the programming details secret and control the pace and direction of change.

The OSS materials on offer to users

range from the operating systems themselves with packages such as LINUX; to office software such as OpenOffice; software for website creation; blogging software and packages for making sound and video recordings.

A recent report from OSS Watch suggests that around 10% of FE/HE institutions intend to switch from 'closed' packages to OSS on their desktops and a similar number will use open and closed on equal terms. There are also signs that FE colleges are catching up on the lead set by HE in its use of OSS.

The main obstacle perceived by FE colleges is difficulty in using and developing it – and a need for more resources and highly skilled staff. The OSS workshop has gone a little way to break down those barriers. If you want to learn more, go to <http://www.oss-watch.ac.uk/about/>.

## Contents

- 1 Open Source Software – Free for All
- 2 RSCni welcomes our new e-Learning Advisor
- 2 How to Demonstrate Your Transformation to Embedded
- 2 Making Sense of Inclusion in e-Learning
- 3 What's Happening?
- 3 Bidding and Winning
- 3 RSCni Support for new ict essential skills qualification
- 4 EtherPad works in really real-time.
- 4 RSCni bites the Apple!
- 4 New ITIL course...New way to learning



## RSCni welcomes our new e-Learning Advisor



Audrey Graham has over 20 years' experience working in the Further and Higher Education Sector. Her roles have included Computing Lecturer, Staff Tutor and College Assessor for the PGCFHE in the Northern Regional College, Education Lecturer and e-Tutor in the University of Ulster, e-Assessment Project Manager for Ofqual and more recently, managing Research and Development Funds in the Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Information and Computer Sciences.

Audrey has, in addition to general curriculum support, special responsibility for Accessibility issues.

## How to Demonstrate Your Transformation to Embedded

The deadline for the DEL policy objective for colleges to reach the 'Embedded' stage of the Demonstrating Transformation framework of the IQ:RS inspection regime was recently adjusted to 2011. The ETI has been working on an updated version of the DT framework that brings it into line with the new version of IQ:RS and this will come into operation in the coming months.

Alongside the existing DT grid, RSCni provides colleges with a guide to the interpretation of the DT descriptors in the form of an interactive document that allows college staff to navigate to indicative illustrations of the elements of the framework. This helps everyone to see the practicalities of the elements of the grid and particularly those that relate to 'Embedded'.

But RSCni wants to go one step better and to provide college staff and the managers among them with a tool that will actively assist the planning and review processes involved in the journey. So – we are currently working on a web-based tool that will link up the DT grid, the guidance descriptors, and those actions that all college staff involved in getting to 'Embedded' will be taking individually and collectively. The tool will link upwards and downwards from the work going on in course teams, in libraries and learning centres, in staff development, in MIS, and in network support and development to the overview of the college's status on the journey towards 2011. Details will be available in the early summer.

## Making Sense of Inclusion in e-Learning

This all day event was organised by the RSCs Scotland South West and North East. Participants included JISC TechDis, AbilityNet, Microsoft, Concept Northern, Crick Software, Humanware, iansyst, ITtools, textHELP and POSTURITE.

The keynote speaker E.A. Draffen outlined the JISC funded LexDis Project. This exciting project, with the help of students, aims to explore successful 'e-skills' and supporting strategies, including the use of assistive technologies, in a world of complex computer-based interactions introduced by e-learning and on-line social networks. To find out further information and access useful guides, hints and tips visit the website: <http://www.lexdis.org/project/>

Other speakers included Simon Ball and John Sewell from JISC TechDis who gave a talk on 'Maximising

Inclusion with the Use of Mobile Technologies', Jackie Milne and Jason Miles-Campbell (JISC Legal) on the 'Legal aspects of Inclusive e-Learning' and Alison Cox (The BRITE Initiative) on 'The Beattie Report, 10 Years On'. For more information on some of the technologies visit <http://www.web2access.org.uk/>, a useful site which aims to help those making decisions about their use of freely available Web 2.0 interactive and collaborative e-learning tools.

Workshops were available in using Xerte, an application for creating accessible content, AccessApps (free technologies for inclusion available on a USB stick), CALM (Creating Accessible Learning Materials), online support resources for Positive Mental Health and accessibility issues from A Deaf User's Perspective and A Visually Impaired User's Perspective.

## What's Happening?

Keep your ear to the ground for forthcoming news on RSC events for 2009-2010: below is a small sample of events that we are planning to run but there will be more.

Check out our website [www.rsc-ni.ac.uk](http://www.rsc-ni.ac.uk) when you return to college after the summer holidays for more event information, there will be something for everyone.

Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
JISC Funding workshop – How to write a successful funding bid	ILT Staff Development Forum	ILT Strategy Development
Accessibility and Inclusion - How to make your teaching inclusive for all	E-Learning Forum	Bespoke workshops – Multimedia enhancing your lessons
Open Source Software - OSS within teaching and learning	Technical Forum	
ITIL Network Management Course	LR Forum	
	Senior Manager Briefing	
	Web 2.0 Technologies: how they assist teaching and Learning	
	Disaster Recovery Workshop	

## Bidding and Winning

Project bids are time-consuming and should not be undertaken lightly. To address this issue RSCni, in conjunction with ALT, will be running a 1-day workshop on 20th October 2009.

This workshop will give tips on how to avoid wasted effort and dashed hopes. Three experienced learning technology project managers, who have run projects with funds from the JISC and other sources, and who have judged bids written by others, will share their perspectives on writing convincing bids for funds.

### Topics to be covered:

- When to bid and when not;
- Timescales;
- Getting your team together;
- Partnerships;
- Presenting your bid;
- Learning from failure.

### Expected outcomes

Participants will have a clearer understanding of the real cost of constructing bids, the choices and pitfalls involved in selecting partners and constructing bid consortia, the important things to remember when writing bids, and issues to consider when looking to create projects intended to have "a life beyond the project".

### Who should attend?

Anyone who plans to bid for funds from national or international sources for learning technology projects, including project managers, learning technologists, teachers, lecturers and senior managers.

For more information please contact Catherine Gormley at [c.gormley@rsc-ni.ac.uk](mailto:c.gormley@rsc-ni.ac.uk).



## RSCni: Support for New ICT Essential Skills Qualification

RSCni has worked as part of the Essential Skills ICT Steering Group on the development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Essential Skill since 2006. Other partners included DEL, Eti, CCEA RA, CCEA, City and Guilds and LSDA. The primary objective was to ensure that learners develop a broad range of independent and transferable ICT skills underpinned by a quality programme in teaching and learning.

The new ICT Essential Skills qualification will be in place from August 2009 and the Department has notified Further Education (FE) colleges that as of 1st August 2009 Key Skills in ICT at levels 1 and 2 will no longer be eligible for funding within the FE funding mechanism. (<http://www.delni.gov.uk/es-circular-0109>)

RSCni have provided a key role throughout the pilot in supporting the professional development needs of tutors particularly in introducing them to new technology and incorporating this in their teaching.

- One of the main ways has been through the provision of the Moodle VLE website as a support tool for tutors'. This has enabled and enhanced curriculum and technical support and facilitated tutors' participation in on-line discussion and encouraged the sharing of good practice. Over 150 active users are now registered on Moodle.
- All tutors have undertaken or are undertaking training sessions in using still and moving images (*PhotoStory and Movie Maker*), using online surveys (*Survey Monkey*) Web 2 technologies such as blogging, and using social software such as social bookmarking tools.

For more information on this support, contact Catherine Gormley at [c.gormley@rsc-ni.ac.uk](mailto:c.gormley@rsc-ni.ac.uk)