OU Mobile VLE: extending the reach of studying through the mobile web

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:


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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher’s website:
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OU Mobile VLE: extending the reach of studying through the mobile web

Monitoring usage

- Use of ‘dead time’, mobile use also includes that on sofa
- Mobile phone contracts predominate [from current user sample]
- Usage: Touch phones (up) Smart phone (down), changing bi-yearly
- Assessment [scores] remain a key driver
- More frequent visits via mobile over the 2010 period
- Reading updates and forums are the most completed activity
- Accessing different parts of Study Planner important
- Switching view or mode depending on requirement
- Downloadable resources preferred in standard formats
- OU app for adding multimedia rather than 3rd party/intermediates
- Self-help, FAQ-based and crowd-source online support sufficient for device-specifics

Survey taken in October 2010 with n=557 responses, followed up by ongoing feedback

Student survey feedback

Building on prior longer-term logging of mobile usage on student portals.

- Working with comScore to interrogate device usage breakdown, comparing trends across different services.

Establishing a test case of reporting on curriculum use of mobile.

- Thin-client/HTML5 apps in prototype, including:
  - Tokenised (easier) sign-in, with 2-tier authentication
  - Cached content packages – incl. multimedia and eBooks
  - Mobile services for distance and blended learning
  - Rich media contribution and collaboration

Current usage levels from viral, peer and self-discovery with no publicity.

- Longitudinal research will add further qualitative data for evaluation.

Extending mobile theme to other access points.

- Realigning subject-based entry points around qualifications.

What next?

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Generic guidance and device-specific peer support

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with thanks to the Mobile VLE team and practitioners at the OU www.open.ac.uk/mobisite

Desktop and mobile themes redesigned in parallel around the central study planner structure, and progress ‘tick boxes’. Usability and Accessibility tested with students.

Activities optimised for smaller screens, concentrating on key and usable functions. Navigation and optional features separated out. Signposting to activities in planner, sub-pages and embedded throughout. Tool development for mobile now mainstreamed. Some constraint on text entry in first release.

Mobile-optimised resources

- Forum threading & posting
- Online narrative ‘structured content’
- Wiki read-only view (on handheld)
- Simple quiz question types
- Blog commenting

First released: October 2011

Current VLE platform

Legacy VLE platform

Student Home portal

Desktop view

Mobile view

Study Planner

Module homepage

Resources

Forums

Device Support

General principles • Web optimisation for device agnostic BYOD

Learning design for distance education and online narrative

Contribution and collaboration, not just browsing

Device Support

- Legacy devices [read-only launchpad]
- Smart/touch phone tabbed view
- Tablets and option to switch theme

Mobile-optimised smart/touch-phone interface: ‘Launchpad view’

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