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

Conference or Workshop Item

How to cite:


For guidance on citations see FAQs.

© 2012 Rhodri Thomas, The Open University

Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher’s website:
http://research.moodle.net

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data policy on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.
OU Mobile VLE: extending the reach of studying through the mobile web

Monitoring usage

- 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.

Student survey feedback

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

Learning analytics

- Current usage levels from viral, peer and self-discovery with no publicity.
- Longitudinal research will add further qualitative data for evaluation.

Theme design

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

Device Support

- General principles:
  - Web-optimisation for device-agnostic BYOD
  - Learning design for distance education and online narrative
  - Contribution and collaboration, not just browsing

What next?

- Extending mobile theme to other access points.
- Realigning subject-based entry points around qualifications.

- 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

Mobile-optimised resources

- Resources
- Forums
- Study Planner
- Module homepage
- General principles
- Device Support
- Mobile view
- Desktop view
- Mobile-optimised smart/touch-phone interface: "Launchpad view"
- 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.

Rhodri Thomas | Mobile Projects Manager, Learning & Teaching Systems | rhodri.thomas@open.ac.uk

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