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

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

Student survey 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
- 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.

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.

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.

Desktop view

Mobile 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.

Mobile-optimised resources

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

What next?

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

Learning analytics

Current VLE platform

Legacy VLE platform

Student Home portal

First released: October 2011

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/mobsite