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

**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

**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.

**Mobile-optimised resources**
- 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.

**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

**Learning analytics**
- 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.

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

**Theme design**
- Mobile-optimised smart/touch-phone interface: 'Launchpad view'

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

**Mobile-optimised resources**
- Forum threading & posting
- Online 'structured content'
- Wiki read-only view (on handheld)
- Simple quiz question types
- Blog commenting

**Current VLE platform**
- Legacy VLE platform

**Monitoring usage**
- Establishing a test case of reporting on curriculum use of mobiles.

**Thin-client/HTML5 apps**
- 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

**Generic guidance and device-specific peer support**

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