Social networking and open educational resources: updating quality assurance for e-learning excellence

Conference or Workshop Item

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Strand: Quality Assurance in e-Learning

Abstract

Quality assurance approaches in higher education are well-established, but it is important to develop methods which are applicable to the domain of e-learning. The E-xcellence methodology (EADTU, 2009a) was therefore designed to assess the quality of e-learning in distance learning and blended learning contexts. The methodology is based around a set of benchmarks, supported by a practitioner handbook and a web-based 'QuickScan' self-evaluation tool. Experience shows that the E-xcellence methodology is particularly valuable for the process of improvement through collaborative internal review.

E-learning has evolved since the E-xcellence methodology was first developed. In particular, there is increasing awareness and use of open education resources (OERs) and social networking. However, these aspects were not explicit in the original E-xcellence resources. The E-xcellence Next project was therefore established to update the resources, incorporating these developments. To begin this process, a consultation was carried out among E-xcellence Next project members, followed by a participatory workshop on the themes of social networking and OERs. The E-xcellence resources were also used in a series of self-evaluation seminars held at European higher education institutions. Experience and feedback from these activities has been used to update the manual, the benchmarks and the QuickScan tool. The result is a set of quality assurance resources which encompass social networking, OERs and other recent developments in e-learning.

Keywords: e-learning, quality assurance, OER, social networking

Introduction

E-xcellence Next (http://www.eadtu.eu/e-xcellencenext.html) is the third in a series of projects, funded by the EU Lifelong Learning programme and managed by EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities). The purpose of the *E-xcellence* suite of projects is to develop, use and evaluate resources for the quality assessment of e-learning in higher education. A methodology, handbook and resource materials were developed in the early stages of the projects, and have been used by a range of European higher education institutions. A major aim of the Excellence Next project was to review, update and improve the manual and associated resources. In particular, the manual update needed to include additional material to acknowledge: the emergence of open educational resources (OER); and developments in the educational use of social networking.

The E-xcellence manual (EADTU 2009b) and resources are structured into six sections:

1. *Strategic Management*: a high level view of how the institution plans its e-learning

2. *Curriculum Design*: how e-learning is used across a whole programme of study

3. *Course Design*: how e-learning is used in the design and operation of individual courses

4. *Course Delivery*: the technical and practical aspects of e-learning delivery

5. *Staff Support*: the support and training provided to staff

6. *Student Support*: the support, information and guidance provided to students.

Within each of these sections the manual provides: guidance on best practice; a set of benchmarks; and associated performance criteria, some of which are positioned at the more advanced 'excellence' level. Further detailed advice is offered in an associated document presented as *Guidance for Assessors*.

A particularly useful resource is the online, interactive *Quickscan* tool. For each of the six topics listed above, the Quickscan presents the benchmarks, together with some brief introductory text. The tool enables users to score their performance against each benchmark, and add comments. The Quickscan has been used as the basis for a series of two-day quality assessment events (described as *local seminars)* at various universities. Before the local seminar, the Quickscan is used by a team of the university's staff to carry out a self-assessment of the university's e-learning (typically based on a selection of relevant programmes of study). At the local seminar the university team is joined by two e-learning experts from the core team of the E-xcellence project. The results of the self-assessment are then reviewed and discussed. During the course of the E-xcellence Next project, local seminars took place at six universities, as follows:

- Russia   MESI University, Moscow
- Lithuania   Kaunas University of Technology
- Poland   Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza, Krakow
- Cyprus   Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia
- Latvia   Riga Technical University
- Portugal   Universidade Aberta, Lisbon
- Greece   Hellenic Open University, Patras.

The outcome of each local seminar is a 'roadmap' for the improvement of the university's e-learning offering. In addition, the university team provides feedback on the E-xcellence resources (Quickscan, manual and Assessor's Guide). This feedback has been used in the process of improving and updating the resources.

Other sources of feedback on the resources include:

- Comments on the previous set of benchmarks, elicited from E-xcellence Next project partners
- Inputs from participants at a workshop on OER and social networking, held as part of the 'European seminar on QA in e-learning', UNESCO, Paris, 17th June 2011
- Comments on a draft version of the updated manual from participants at an Excellence Next external stakeholders' meeting (12th June, 2012)
- Comments from representatives of the EADTU Student Council
- Comments from the EADTU Library Task Force.

In the remainder of this paper we present an overview of the major enhancements made to the manual and resources. These enhancements were primarily to cover the topics of open educational resources and social networking. The sections below discuss these topics in turn, in each case summarising the changes made to the E-xcellence manual.

Open Educational Resources

Taking inspiration from the open source software movement, the last decade has seen the emergence of a range of Open Educational Resources (OER). The term OER is an elastic one, but the OECD (2007) definition can be taken as a starting point: 'digitised materials offered freely and openly for educators, students and self-learners to use and reuse for teaching, learning and research'. There are now many repositories of educational material which can be freely used by either individual learners or other institutions. Although the OECD definition puts the focus on open content, there are other aspects such as licences and software tools that are associated with OER. There is also an emerging culture of Open Educational Practice which draws in other ideas such as Web 2.0 technologies, social networking, and the co-construction of knowledge (OPAL, 2011) to stress the social praxis of OER.

The stakeholders associated with the OER movement are varied, ranging from government policy makers, funders, institutions and teachers to learners. Some stakeholders have multiple roles, for example, teachers as *consumers* of OER material and as *producers*. The motivations of these different stakeholders are similarly varied (OECD, 2007, pp. 11-12), but a common thread is the potential for improved quality.

The ways in which OER can be used are also very varied. Some possible use-cases, of increasingly large scale, are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Possible OER use-cases (Rosewell & Ferreira, 2011)

- An individual life-long learner finds material for independent study
- A teacher obtains images and videos to use in their own teaching material
- A course includes podcasts from iTunes U
- A course uses a complete 10-hour unit from OpenLearn or similar repository
- An entire 100-hour module is reused, with new summative assessment
- A consortium of institutions develop new material for their own use but makes it freely available

This broad range of type of content, intended use, and stakeholders means that there are many ways in which OER can be used in learning and thus impinge on quality assurance. One reaction to this would be to take the position that quality assurance should simply assess the e-learning as experienced by the student, without regard to the provenance of the material. This approach would fit with the general approach of the E-xcellence Next project which has, as far as possible, avoided a focus on the specifics of the technologies used. However, this would ignore the potential for making some assertion about the quality associated with OER components.

For example, a teacher contemplating the use of OER is most likely to consider resources available from an existing repository. Figure 1 shows how, in practice, quality measures can arise in several ways around a repository. The repository may function analogously to conventional academic publishing, with peer review acting as a quality check on submission to the repository. In other cases, there may be no gatekeeper: anyone may upload material but user reviews and voting act as a recommendation system for other users. Additionally, the provenance of the material from individual author or institution carries with it an associated reputation or 'brand'. Thus a user of an item from an OER repository may form judgements on its quality from several perspectives.

checking

Provenance
Reputation
Brand

OER
repository

creation

use

peer review

user recommendation
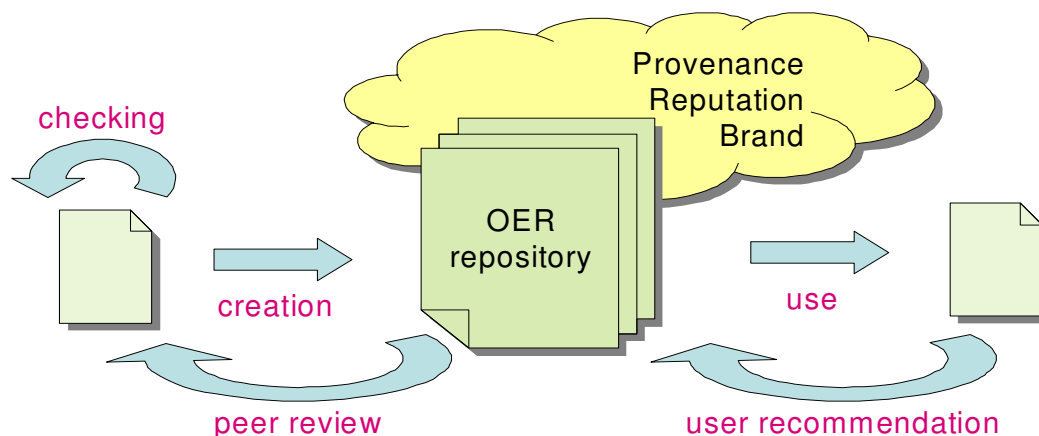
Figure 1 OER repositories and quality measures

Some quality dimensions of individual OER items would be largely familiar to any educator. These can be summarised (Rosewell & Ferreira, 2011, derived from MERLOT (n.d.)) as:

- **Content**: Accuracy, currency, relevance
- **Pedagogical effectiveness**: Learning outcomes, pre-requisites, learning design, learning styles, assessment
- **Ease of use**: Clarity, visually attractive, engaging, clear navigation, functional

However, OER resources have other specific dimensions that do not arise in conventional materials: those of reusability and openness. An overriding concern is the intellectual property rights associated with OER material. OER are by definition 'open' and permit re-use but usually some rights are reserved and must be respected. The Creative Commons licences (creativecommons.org) provide a widely used and readily understood spectrum of licences. Common in the OER realm are licences that require attribution, share-alike terms, non-commercial use and, more rarely, no-derivatives. Beyond licensing, however, there are other aspects that impact on the extent to which an OER can be reused (Table 2).

Table 2 Quality dimensions: reusability and openness (Rosewell & Ferreira, 2011)

- Format: conformance to standards and file formats
- Localisation: ease of adaptation to other languages, cultures, or contexts
- Discoverability: metadata, tagging
- Technological barriers: bandwidth, software requirements
- Interoperability: ease of reuse in different software environments
- Accessibility: to users with special needs
- Digital preservation: likelihood of continuing access over the long-term

These dimensions would not be surfaced by an evaluation from a learner point of view but emerge when the OER item is considered as a reusable learning object: the educational quality of the material may be high but restricted reusability and openness would reduce its value as an OER item. These dimensions are particularly important concerns for those involved with the creation of new OER material.

As noted above, an underlying motivation behind the OER movement is to increase quality and capability through the interchange of resources. For this reason, an institution can expect to be both

an importer and an exporter of resources and its QA processes should cater for both. Work undertaken by the OPAL project (oer-quality.org) presents a capability-maturity model that envisions a progression from exploratory engagement with OER through widespread use to creation of new OER, accompanied by an increased embedding in institutional policy (OPAL, 2011).

Revisions to E-xcellence manual, benchmarks and indicators for OER

The earlier versions of the E-xcellence manual and benchmarks (2006 & 2009) had made no mention of OER. Given the proliferation of OER repositories and the publicity generated by the OER movement, we expect the quality assurance community to meet increasing use of OER in the future. Accordingly, we have revised the E-xcellence benchmarks and performance indicators to accommodate the use of OER, and given further background information and cross-referencing in the manual. Our preferred approach, however, has been to retain the generality and 'agnosticism' of the current benchmarks, wherever possible casting them in a form which is neutral to the technologies used. Below we highlight the changes that relate specifically to OER in each section of the E-xcellence manual.

Strategic Management

The 2006 manual and benchmarks already acknowledged that a move to e-learning could entail significant infrastructure and developmental costs and require skills that may not be available within the institution. Collaboration with other institutions or use of external services was recognised as a way of mitigating these issues, and benchmarks and commentary in the section on 'Strategic management' addressed such collaborative ventures. We have taken the view that use and creation of OER can be seen as a less formal approach to collaborative ventures, and that institutional policy on OER could be part of a general approach to collaboration with external partners. For the revision, we have therefore generalised the most appropriate benchmark, including specific mention of OER, and added new indicator statements (Table 3). The accompanying discussion in the manual provides some context for the indicators. In addition, it discusses the possibility of an institution either maintaining its own or a consortium repository. However, it was not felt appropriate to include this as a performance indicator for e-learning institutions.

Table 3 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Strategic management' to encompass OER

Strategic management
Benchmark statement
5 When e-learning involves activities or resources beyond the institution (for example, virtual mobility of students, institutional partnerships or development of Open Educational Resources), the roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, communicated to those concerned, and controlled by operational agreements where appropriate.
Indicators
• Staff are supported in the rights issues associated with use of imported OER and implications of publishing their teaching materials as OER.
• The institution has processes for managing rights in the development and use of OER associated with any institutional managed repository or consortium.

Curriculum Design

No changes related to OER were made to the section on 'Curriculum design'.

Course Design

When considering the possible use-cases for OER, feedback indicated that OER would most commonly be used in the form of relatively small-scale assets, resources and e-learning activities that would be incorporated with in-house materials in the creation of a course. The section of the E-xcellence manual on 'Course design' is thus the focus of most revisions related to OER.

The guidelines note that the increasing availability of OER provides an alternative to the creation of new materials. Background context is provided in a new sub-section, including a definition of OER, information about intellectual property rights, and aspects of quality assurance associated with repositories. Attention is drawn to the additional quality dimensions associated with reuse discussed above. OER are also highlighted as possible independent learning materials. Finally, the benefit to the academic community of being able to update and return improved material to the OER community is noted.

One additional benchmark has been added (benchmark 14, Table 4). This draws attention to the use of OER components and the possibility of reversioning; however, it stresses that OER materials should be subject to the same review as other course materials. Several new indicators have been added that deal specifically with OER (Table 4), including one at excellence level on contributing OER to repositories. One indicator worth noting is:

- There is a principled approach to judging the quality of material obtained from an OER repository.

This follows the style of other E-xcellence next indicators, which are generally written in broad terms and avoid over-specifying details in order to allow wide applicability to different institutional practices. The accompanying guidance provides background to suggest an approach if an institution needs to develop their ability to meet this indicator.

Table 4 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Course design' to encompass OER

Course design
 	
Benchmark statement
14 OER material is selected with regard to learning outcome, tailored if necessary for fit to the learning context, and integrated with other learning materials. OER materials are subject to the same review processes as other course materials.
 	
Indicators
  • The institution has a policy for use of independent learning materials from a number of quality assured sources, including OER.
  • Course materials obtained from OER are judged fit for purpose by students and external assessors.
  • There is a principled approach to judging the quality of material obtained from an OER repository.
  • There is a process for tracking intellectual property rights associated with e-learning components.
At excellence level
  • E-learning components are contributed to repositories as OER.

Course Delivery

The 'Course delivery' section of the E-xcellence manual deals with those aspects that are commonly provided by a virtual learning environment (VLE). From this perspective, OER are not much different from other, in-house e-learning components. Accordingly, there has been little revision of the contents specifically to address OER.

An existing indicator addressed intellectual property rights in third-party materials and applies equally to tracking rights in OER components; this has therefore been left unchanged.

One indicator has been added at excellence level which recognises reuse and sharing of materials both within the institution and in the OER community (Table 5).

Table 5 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Course delivery' to encompass OER

Course delivery
Indicators: *At excellence level*   • The institution has in place policies for internal reuse of materials and is active in the OER movement facilitating the sharing of materials between institutions and individual learners.

Staff Support

The section on 'Staff support' has received some minor additions with respect to the use of OER. A typical use-case for OER is that individual teachers obtain assets or e-learning activities from an OER repository and incorporate them in their own teaching material. Two indicators (one at excellence level) capture the need for staff to have support in locating and evaluating existing online resources. The accompanying guidance again highlights the need for care in tracking intellectual property rights.

Table 6 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Staff support' to encompass OER

Staff support
Indicators: • Support is available for course design staff in locating and evaluating online resources for student use.   *At excellence level:*   • Development teams are routinely able to access previously developed materials and OER, and consider their potential for re-use.

Student Support

No changes related to OER were made to the section on 'Student support'.

Social networking

The term 'social networking' can be interpreted broadly to encompass a range of online communication activities and technologies (e.g. forums, blogs, wikis). It can also be interpreted more narrowly, to focus on social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). On either basis, social networking has two primary purposes in an educational context: supporting learning; and building community.

Social theories of learning emphasise the importance of communication among learners, and between learners and teachers. Communication helps to build trust and openness, which are necessary for effective learning and teaching. Ideas of social learning have led to the concept of a learning community, and this concept can be extended to encompass learning communities supported via online communication tools (Palloff & Pratt, 2007). For many e-learning students, participation in an online learning community helps them to remain motivated and to make progress.

Social technologies enable collaborative work to be carried out at a distance, using online tools to supplement or replace face-to-face meetings. The technologies also support new forms of assessment such as peer-assessment or the assessment of the collaborative process in group projects (Kear, 2010).

A range of social technologies can be used to support the interaction and collaboration that is needed for learning. For example:

- Forums can be used for discussion and debate
- Wikis can facilitate co-creation of resources
- Blogs can be used for reflection, sharing and feedback.

Some online communication tools are asynchronous: there is no need for participants to be online at the same time. Asynchronous tools can provide flexibility of time as well as place, which is important when learners have work or family commitments. Asynchronous tools include forums, blogs, wikis and social networking sites. Some communication tools are synchronous - where all participants need to be online together. Synchronous tools can contribute to participants' social presence - the sense that they are communicating with real people (Short at al., 1976). Synchronous tools include real-time chat, instant messaging and web conferencing. Deciding on an appropriate combination of asynchronous and synchronous tools is important for e-learning.

Social networking in education has a long history, particularly in the distance learning sector. A number of educators used early online communication tools, described as bulletin boards or computer conferencing systems, with their students (Mason & Kaye, 1989). The aim was to enable students to discuss course topics and gain support from each other and from their teachers, even if they rarely met face-to-face. As a result of this long experience, knowledge of best practice in the use of online learning communities has been developed and shared. With the increasing use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) in higher education, this knowledge will be of value to the majority of higher education institutions. VLEs offer a number of tools which can be used to support online learning communities. The most widely used are discussion forums (which are similar to the early tools mentioned above) but VLEs typically also offer wikis, blogs and real-time communication tools.

Many educators are keen to use social networking sites with their students, beyond the boundary of an institutional VLE. This is partly driven by the concept of the 'digital native' Prensky (2001). Prensky and others have argued that there is a generation of students who use digital technologies daily, and who expect their use in education. However, more recent research counteracts the idea of

a homogeneous generation of digital natives (Jones et al., 2010). Sites such as Facebook and Twitter can support connections among students and between students and teachers (Lampe et al., 2011; Kassens-Noor, 2012). The benefits of using social networking sites for learning are similar to the benefits of any online communication tool: possibilities for increased sharing, collaboration and community-building. The potential problems of using these sites include; privacy issues; lack of control; and blurring of boundaries between social and academic life.

Revisions to E-xcellence manual, benchmarks and indicators for social networking

The earlier editions of the E-xcellence manual and benchmarks had included a reasonable amount of guidance related to developing academic communities, both face-to-face and online. However, the increasing use of online communication in higher education, together with recent interest in the educational potential of public social networking sites, meant that it was important to review and update these topics in the manual. Social networking (in its broadest sense) can be used to enhance the experience of online learning and to contribute to learning outcomes, but this must be done with thought and care to achieve the highest quality standards and to avoid potential problems. We therefore revised the E-xcellence benchmarks and performance indicators to conform with best practice in this domain, and to encourage e-learning practitioners to use social networking for assessed work, in addition to formative learning activities. We aimed to provide general guidance for building academic community online and using online communication for learning, rather than advocating particular techniques or technologies.

Below we highlight the changes to benchmarks and performance indicators that relate specifically to social networking in each section of the E-xcellence manual.

Strategic Management

In this section of the manual the main changes relate to the potential use of public social networking sites and/or public social software tools. There are a number of issues of concern when using online environments and tools which are outside the control of the educational institution. Consideration must be given to the privacy and security of students and staff; there are also matters of usability and accessibility for disabled users; a third issue is whether students and staff wish to have the boundaries between their academic life and their social life blurred. These issues were discussed briefly in the new manual text for this section. In addition, a new performance indicator was added, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7 Revisions to indicators on 'Strategic management' to encompass social networking

Strategic management
Indicator   • Any use of social media takes account of accessibility and privacy issues.

Curriculum Design

This section of the manual already included material on building academic communities. However this was written when most online activities (where used) were carried out via discussion forums. There is now increasing interest in using synchronous (real-time) communication tools such as instant messaging and desktop audio/ video-conferencing. The text of the manual was therefore changed to acknowledge and raise awareness of synchronous tools.

A further change was to increase the focus on using online communication tools as part of course assessment, rather than just for learning activities. Part of the motivation for including online communication tasks in assessment is to encourage students to take part. There is also the benefit of the permanent record of online activities (e.g. forum transcripts and the 'history' of wiki interactions) which can be used to assess students' contributions to the process of collaborative work.

Finally, a summary was included of the benefits and issues of using online communication in educational settings (Kear, 2010). The benchmarks and performance indicators relating to social networking in the 'Curriculum design' section of the manual are shown in Table 8.

Table 8 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Curriculum design' to encompass social networking

Curriculum design

Benchmark statement

10 Curricula are designed to enable participation in academic communities via online social networking tools. These online communities provide opportunities for collaborative learning, contact with external professionals and involvement in research and professional activities.

Indicators
- There are institutional policies relating to the provision of online community spaces for student-student and student-teacher interactions.
- Curriculum designers specify clearly the educational role that student-student interaction plays in their programmes.
- Criteria for the assessment of student online collaboration exist and are applied consistently across programmes and courses.

At excellence level:
- Teaching staff are supported by formal and informal staff development activity in the use of online tools for community building.
- The institution works closely with professional bodies in the development of online professional communities.
- Innovative assessment approaches, such as online collaborative work, peer assessment and self-assessment, form a part of the institution's practice in this area.

Course Design

Because social networking was discussed in detail in the previous section of the manual (in relation to curriculum design) there was no need to make extensive updates to the 'Course design' section. However, in this section social networking was specifically identified as a method for facilitating collaborative and dialogue-centred learning. One of the benchmarks was modified to stress the importance of student-to-student interactions, and the performance level indicators emphasised the role of student-tutor contact online (see Table 9).

Table 9 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Course design' to encompass social networking

> **Course design**
>
> *Benchmark statement*
> 15 E-learning materials have sufficient interactivity (student-to-content or student-to-student) to encourage active engagement and enable students to test their knowledge, understanding and skills. Independent learning materials provide learners with regular feedback through self-assessment activities or tests.
>
> *Indicators*
> • Tutors are able to use a variety of means (e-mail, telephone, forums etc.) to interact with learners both individually and in groups.
>
> *At excellence level*
> • Tutor-learner and learner-learner interaction is integral to the educational design
> • Where a Virtual Learning Environment is deployed, this fully supports the range of interactions needed, including individual and group interactions.
> • The importance of appropriate interaction (synchronous or asynchronous) between learners and with tutors is reflected in the design of the course.

Course Delivery

This section is concerned with the delivery of e-learning via hardware and software (e.g. a VLE), so there was no need for in-depth discussion of social networking. As in the 'Strategic management' section, the emphasis was on issues raised when considering the use of public social networking tools and technologies. The guidance in this section was changed to stress that e-learning institutions need to consider whether to use public tools, and if so, how they relate to the institution's VLE. The question of boundaries between institutional online spaces and personal online spaces needs consideration.

In this section there were no changes to benchmarks or performance indicators in relation to social networking.

Staff Support

This section is focused on the support that staff need to perform their jobs well. In relation to teaching staff, it is important that they receive training and support for the activities they are expected to carry out and the technologies they need to use. This is a generic requirement, which also applies to the use of social networking for teaching and learning. Teaching staff need training and support in both the educational and technical aspects of online communication.

In this section there were no changes to benchmarks or performance indicators in relation to social networking.

Student Support

This section was modified to emphasise the value of student support via online communities, whether hosted within an institution's VLE or via public social networking technologies. The section stressed the opportunities for using synchronous tools (e.g. web conferencing) as well as asynchronous tools (e.g. forums). The need for monitoring online communities of students and

teachers was highlighted, and also for handling any problems which might arise. Benchmarks and performance indicators were added or modified to cover these points (Table 10).

Table 10 Revisions to benchmarks and indicators on 'Student support' to encompass social networking.

Student support

Benchmark statements

32 Online social networking opportunities are provided in order to build and support student communities. This may be achieved using the institution's VLE or through external social networking sites, as appropriate.

34 Students have access to learning resources, including:

- identified contacts who will provide constructive and timely feedback on academic performance and progression

- support for the development of key skills (including support for e-learning skills, collaborative working online and contributing to online communities)

- online library access.

Indicators
- The institution is committed to enabling the establishment and proper functioning of communities of e-learning students via its VLE or other online communication environments.
- This functioning supports:
  o learning interaction between individuals and within groups;
  o social interaction between students;
  o feedback on students' experiences of their programme.

At excellence level:
- To support communities of learners the institution makes appropriate use of asynchronous tools (e.g. discussion forums, wikis, blogs, social networking sites) and synchronous tools (e.g. video-conferencing, real-time chat).

Other changes to the manual

In addition to the changes and additions discussed above, the following aspects of the manual were improved, based on review and feedback.

- The language was simplified and clarified so that the manual would be more accessible to those whose first language is not English. The terminology was made more consistent, and a comprehensive glossary was included defining any terms whose meaning might not be clear from the context. These changes also improved the manual for native English speakers.
- A stronger focus was placed on the role of university libraries in e-learning provision. This was based on feedback from the EADTU Library Task Force, together with awareness by the authors of the key contributions made to e-learning by information scientists.
- Acknowledgement was made of developments in mobile learning. E-learning institutions need to be aware that students are using a range of mobile technologies to access learning resources and to keep in touch with fellow students (and staff).
- The guidance on using the Quickscan tool was strengthened to emphasis the value of a team approach to this activity.

Summary

In this paper we have provided an overview of the E-xcellence Next project activities, with a focus on enhancements made to the project resources, primarily the E-xcellence manual. These enhancements were required in order to incorporate new developments in open educational resources and increasing awareness of social networking for learning.

The process of enhancement based on review, use of the resources at local seminars, and feedback has resulted in a self-assessment tool which is up-to-date and broad in its coverage. The manual and associated resources will be applicable and valuable to higher education institutions which use blended learning, as well as to distance learning institutions which have made the move into e-learning.

Acknowledgements

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