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

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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

Use of mobiles for distance education and online narrative
Contribution and collaboration, not just browsing

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.

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

Generic guidance and device-specific peer support

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 mobiles.

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

Desktop view
Mobile view

Module homepage
Study Planner
Forums
Resources

First released: October 2011

Theme design

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

Device Support
Study Planner
Forums
Resources

Module homepage
Latest News
Unread Forums
This Week

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

What next?

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