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THU: Sharing Ideas for OU Live Digital Teaching Materials We have the tools and ideas, how do we implement sharing? (Marshal B. Anderson)

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[Dr Simon Ball](#)

5 February 2014

The Open University is making more and more use of OU Live as an important part of its blended learning approach to creating accessible and flexible courses. That puts it in the vanguard of synchronous learning system users world-wide and, like other institutions, it faces a journey into this new and exciting territory with a limited fund of expertise and research simply because it is all so new.

Associate lecturers (ALs) are the people who take the OU's materials and turn them into a practical learning experience for students. For many ALs this process had involved designing on-line tutorials delivered via OU Live since 2008 which means there is a growing fund of experience being built up at a speed which the institution simply can not absorb and process into formal professional development programmes. However, the existing network of forums, wikis and other shared digital spaces, whilst still in a state of some flux, affords the associate lecturer community the means with which to short-circuit that formal process. The question is; how can we make best use of this resource?

This presentation will draw on both published research and first-hand experiences to show some of the barriers to the informal collaborative development of digital learning materials by Open University tutors using OU Live. It will show an example of the meta-process involved when two good ideas connect and produce an outcome that benefits an exponentially larger group of tutors and students as well as giving rise to many new potential tools and materials. It will also identify the major barriers to this kind of co-operation.

The presentation addresses some of the challenges faced by associate lecturers, staff tutors and course teams when trying to get the most out of the huge pool of talent that associate lecturers represent. It looks at the extent to which technology is a problem and addresses the softer barriers which include ALs' levels of confidence in their own work, their comfort zones in terms of using materials created by other ALs rather than 'official' materials produced by a course team, the loss of ownership of materials they have created, their reluctance to mash-up materials and the problem of 'content-creep'.

These issues have been chosen because they are the ones that are most within the ALs purview to change. With each issue mitigated, ALs will benefit from the practical sharing of ideas which can lead to a substantial reduction in their workload by avoiding the huge

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duplication of effort materials development can entail, but more than this, the crowd-sourcing of innovation can improve the university's ability to recruit and retain students; more than ever, the core issue affecting everyone.

Extra content

This is a post-conference version on Slideshare to fulfil part 4 of the EMA but also to let anyone using it as an example get at it more conveniently than via OU Live.

<http://www.slideshare.net/Grumbletweezer/marshal-press-powerpointfinalnogaps>



[Marshal Anderson](#)

18:27 on 28 February 2014

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Embedded Content

Final; version of the animation as used in the conference.

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[Jo Jacob](#)

4:49pm 7 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

I love the dog of doubt Marshall! The dog of doubt hounds me wherever I go (pun intended). Looking forward to your presentation.



[Nicola Morris](#)

10:36pm 11 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Spent today debating some of these issues in another establishment. This is a very real issue not just in academia but also in large training departments. Yammer was suggested as one way for us to capture and share the knowledge. . Look forward to seeing your ideas
Nicola

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[Jonathan Vernon](#)

6:05am 12 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

I am guilty of saying this about every presentation, but it is genuine - 'fascinating'. With six OU modules under my belt, five MA ODE and one MBA and a year working at the OU Business School my personal and inhouse experience convinces me that, for all its foubles, Elluminate before and OU Live are vital tools - they can give you some of that residential scholol/tutorial feel but CRUCIALLY they are an often well needed injection of 'humanity' if I can put it that way: humour, friendship, sharing and even tesm building and committment. My very best experiences of the MA ODE have been during and after such sessions - I wonder therefore if I go back through my student blog I can identify a 'bounce in my tone' coming out of them. There may be stats that if nothing else coming into and leaving a Live session increases activity and improves motivation - even works in favour of commitment and seeing it through? Sometimes the appeal of the Elluminate sessions was so great that we'd meet up in Google Hangouts ... the most memorable, and 'clean, open and honest' in an OU student way, wad the 'pyjama party' we had. A laugh and worthy as a 'memory making' experience - and this with people across several time zones. So yes, a crucial ingredient that persnally I feel should ve right at the stwrt of any module. Hear a person laugh or sneeze, get a sense of who we all are and buy into that natural inclination amingst us to want to learn together, help each other out and feel we belong to a thing. To add to my experience of this I will keep signing up to things so it is about time I wrote this up ... doing a traditional, on campus MA is an extraordinary contrast. I really feel that it had might as well be the 1960s: long reading lists, back to back lectures (i fall asleep in the afternoon) and picking an essay title every couple of months for assessment ... but you chat over coffee and share a sandwich in the canteen and slowly form a bond, even if its as if we are fellow galley slaves a to graduate will require two years of rowing! And come to think of it, one of the impromptu 'hang outs' we did in an MA ODE module included food and drink ... I will listen watch and join in with great personal and professional interest.



[Cara Saul](#)

4:48pm 12 February 2014 (Edited 4:49pm 12 February 2014) [Permalink](#)

Whilst I like sychronous learning - i think it is a challenge to achieve and many students choose distance learning because it allows flexibility.

I also wonder if the immediate nature of the medium makes it difficult for the student if tecnology fails. Suppose i am in the 'use it sparingly camp' because it may (sometimes) be a barrier to inclusion



[Dr Simon Ball](#)

6:41pm 13 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

Following the live presentations, we asked each speaker to respond to questions posed by audience members. In the short time available, it was not possible to put all of the questions submitted to the speaker for a response. We asked all speakers if they would respond to the unanswered questions here on Cloudworks. Here are all of the questions asked during the session:

- ▶ Wonder if the immediate nature of the medium makes it difficult for the student if tecnology fails. Suppose i am in the 'use it sparingly camp' because it may (sometimes) be a barrier to inclusion

- ▶ The penny just dropped Marshall having followed this for the last couple of months. Go see 'Activity Theory'. The 'magic' that appears between, in the work of Engestrom between two organisations or institutions, but which I believe can represent two different people who are far more complex than any organisation.
- ▶ The dog of doubt should we be supporting people to use technology or supporting them to get over their fears or support people in both using technology and overcoming their fears?
- ▶ Maybe we are focussing too much on the technology and not enough on the personal emotions?
- ▶ Should we be matching colleagues together to learn how to use technology rather than working with individuals?



[Marshal Anderson](#)

4:07pm 28 February 2014 [Permalink](#)

FWIW - you won't see the animations AT ALL on the .mp4 version of the recording and the Blackboard recording requires you to press the play button as it appears fro each vid. My guess is (anyone care to confirm) that some of those attending live didn't realise this (I didn't) and missed the animations.

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