

JISC Developing Digital Literacies programme

Case studies

Title	Blogging for Teaching and Learning
Subject area	Biological Sciences (Plant Sciences)
Scope and context	The development of public blog posts as a formative and summative learning exercise
Rationale and aims	A student project to create a unique public digital record of the seasonal variation on campus and making others aware of its diversity.
Digital literacies addressed	Create timely and accurate content Digital photography Categorising for SEO
Overview	Sixty undergraduate and MSc students have contributed to the blog, gaining skills such as creating timely content which includes digital photography to add visual interest. Linked out to other blogs and communications channels such as Facebook and Twitter to bring traffic to the blog
Digital resources and know-how used	Students have been encouraged to work through the 'This is Me' exercises and reflect on their digital development. Published blogs evidence their grasp of copyright and IPR issues e.g. http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/tropical-biodiversity/2013/01/tea-stained-history/
Benefits and impacts	It gives students the chance to develop a portfolio of online publishing It gives Alastair marvellous examples of study to show prospective students.. The outcome is in daily use both internally and externally. The two blogs have gained over 33000 hits since they were established The quality of student written material has improved enormously since they realised their work would become public. Engagement has been high.
Conclusions or lessons learned	Content is useless if your audience can't find it, 'Writing a blog is like writing an essay except that it's read by the world, not just the student and the academic who marks it.'
Links and further information	www.blogs.reading.ac.uk/whiteknightsbiodiversity www.blogs.reading.ac.uk/tropical-biodiversity www.blogs.reading.ac.uk/crg
Further opportunities	Alastair has now extended his blog repertoire –MSc and Phd students are now actively engaged with the Culham Research and Tropical Biodiversity blogs Student blogging as an assessment tool is based around student engagement. The modules that have now adopted the approach will continue to use it as feedback has been positive. It is likely more modules will begin to use this approach in future.
Contact details for further information	Only include these if you have permission from the person involved. Include the option for case studies to be anonymous.