

DEVELOP Steering Group

11/01 A meeting of the DEVELOP Steering Group was held on Monday 11th July 2011 at 1pm in Room 126J, HumSS Building, Whiteknights Campus

Present:

Dr Martha-Marie Kleinhans - Chair
Ms Maria Papaefthimou - Project Manager
Mr Mike Roch - Director, IT Services
Mr Mark Gamble - External stakeholder
Mr Steve Ryan - External stakeholder
Ms Sarah Sherman - External stakeholder
Ms Jane Adams - Secretary

Mr Guy Pursey - by invitation

Apologies:

Professor Rob Robson - Pro-Vice-Chancellor Teaching and Learning
Dr Julia Phelps - Director, Centre for the Development of T&L
Dr Yota Dimitriadi - Internal academic stakeholder
Dr Karen Ayres - Internal academic stakeholder
Mr Karsten Lundqvist - by invitation
Professor Shirley Williams - by invitation
Mr Edward Bates - Student stakeholder
Mr Aaron Sollesse - Student stakeholder

11/02 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 7th March 2011 were approved.

11/03 Matters Arising

Ms Papaefthimiou reported that following the discussion at the last meeting a reply had been sent to JISC advising there was no cause for concern with the project and that Blackboard was a widely used VLE. To date no reply had been received from JISC.

Ms Papaefthimiou confirmed that discussion with the project team had taken place about whether to reconsider the splitting of the widget functions. It had however been agreed that this could cause potential problems for users and therefore it was best to stick the concept in the original bid. A demonstration of the recommender widget was given by Mr Pursey and general discussion about the piloting and feedback so far on this took place. The group were

positive about the widget and its potential uses both for students and academics however were keen to emphasise the scope of the original project and suggested that further improvements to this could be considered for future projects.

Ms Papaefthimiou confirmed the project team had looked into the legal aspects of the Destinations website regarding the Content widget and had concluded that it would be difficult for Blackboard to access this content due to various technical reasons. Discussion took place about whether it would be more beneficial to add a link to the site from Blackboard or whether to look at linking from a different site. The group suggested the benefit of looking into e-Prints, the possibility of other institutional databases, as well as the numerous possible sites relating to undergraduate research skills.

Action: MCP to discuss with project group which direction to take the content widget and choose a suitable resource

11/04 JISC interim report

Ms Papaefthimiou reported that the JISC report had been kept shorter this time and had referred far more to the blog so that this could be used as a reporting tool in its own right. The hope is that most functions will be completed by the end of August so that piloting can take place during the Autumn term.

11/05 Project Progress

Ms Papaefthimiou reported that the project is currently slightly underspent in line with the original project projections however consideration is being given to employing an extra person to help with the project evaluation and therefore the group should be confident that the project will spend on budget. It was also noted that Blackboard has just been upgraded to version 9.

11/06 Update on the pilots

Mr Pursey advised that out of the 33 academics contacted to pilot the widgets so far only 6 people have confirmed this was in part due to some changes in job roles. Ms Papaefthimiou suggested that perhaps the project could incentivise some staff into participating by offering contributions to their SDAs.

11/07 Evaluation of the project

Ms Papaefthimiou advised that various methods were being considered for evaluating the project which included the pilots, staff and student questionnaires, focus groups, pedagogic benefits and the technical success of the work. Discussion took place about the intensive nature of the methods proposed and the group suggested that case studies could be a useful tool here. It was agreed that only

a few clearly worded questions would be needed for the questionnaires and focus groups as more discussion would be generated on the back of these from those taking part.

Action: MCP to draft some clear questions on which to base the evaluation

Regarding the technical evaluation suggested by JISC, the group agreed that it was not realistic to provide excessive amounts of data and that this hadn't been promised in the original bid. Ms Sherman suggested dropping the code into the OSCELOT community as a useful tool for sharing the project's outputs.

Action: MCP to respond to Sheila at JISC advising the methods proposed for evaluation

11/08 Final report

Dr Kleinhaus advised that this would be discussed at the next meeting

11/09 Sustainability

Ms Papaefthimiou advised that she had been in contact with the Blackboard administrator, Helena Bampton, about the details of the code that she should be aware for future software upgrades. There are plans to demonstrate the widgets at the SeLCS lunches in the next year and at CSTD sessions on Blackboard within the University. The group suggested that it would be useful to include details on the widgets in user induction training and documentation. A paper has also been submitted to the Online Educa. The group thought it was essential to disseminate this project to the wider Blackboard community by participating in conferences and to make a presentation to the Blackboard World conference in 2012.

Action: MCP to submit a paper to Blackboard World Conference 2012.

11/10

The next meeting of the DEVELOP Steering Group will be held on Monday 5th December 2011 at 2pm in Palmer G05, Whiteknights Campus.