Digitally Ready for the Future

Application for small project funding

- Funding for small projects is available to staff and students under the following themes:
  Work placements; Employability; Enhancing T & L through the use of technology;
  Digital skills and literacies; Staff/student partnerships
- All successful applicants will be expected to
  - o actively disseminate project outputs (e.g. by contributing to relevant T & L events and
    submissions to the Digitally Ready and/or Enhancing Teaching and Learning blogs)
  - o participate in a celebration event in the Spring Term involving all successful applicants
  - o complete a short project report and case study proforma by 31 May 2012
- Project funds will be available until 30 April and all project work should be completed by then.
- An electronic copy of the completed application form must be submitted to **Nadja Guggi**
  (**n.guggi@reading.ac.uk**) by **Monday 3 December 2012.**

Applicant details

Name: Gerry Leonidas ☒ Member of staff ☐ Student
Department: Typography & Graphic Communication
Email: g.leonidas@reading.ac.uk
Telephone: x6397

Project team (Please give details of any other team members)

Rob Banham ☒ Member of staff ☐ Student
Department: Typography & Graphic Communication
Email: r.e.banham@reading.ac.uk
Telephone: x6399

Project theme/s (Please tick all that apply)
☒ Work placements
☒ Employability
☒ Enhancing T & L through the use
   of technology
☒ Digital skills and literacies
☒ Staff/student partnerships

Project Title

Developing a a blog-based platform for students to document work in professional assignments

Project Summary

Describe the proposed project (up to 500 words). Your summary should demonstrate how your project relates to the use of digital technologies and/or the development of digital literacies of staff and/or students, and should include the following:

- *Background*
- *Aims and objectives*
- *Scope*
- *Outcomes and deliverables*
- *Sustainability*
- *Project schedule*

Background

Typography runs a very successful professional practice scheme which allows students to work with external clients on real jobs while supervised in the Department. This is a significant differentiator for our programme in relation to conventional placements, and contributes significantly to the excellent employability of our graduates.

Aims and objectives

We aim to:

- Make our professional practice scheme highly visible, to both prospective students and as a showcase of T&L best practice;
- Improve student experience with online documentation tools, in line with industry practice and trends;
- Combine a work progress monitoring tool with a public aspect suitable to include in an online portfolio; and
- Shift supervision by part-time staff via email-with-attachments (locally stored, difficult to share and trace for External Examiners) onto a more efficient system, where archiving and access is controlled by the Department.

Scope

We have developed a preliminary framework for an online platform for student-led blogs to document, supervise, and publish coursework in a controlled manner. We will be developing this into a fully-functional solution for documenting coursework online, in real-time.

Outcomes and deliverables

We will setup and test a multiple-blog solution through the Wordpress platform. Our framework describes each assignment as as separate mini-blog, with two public pages (the agreed brief, and the final write-up of each project) and controlled-access blog entries for the interim work stages, for comments by supervisors and external clients. (This structure is based on a simplified version of a model we applied for TLDF funding for.)

Sustainability

The funding will buy time for employing two students to set up and customise the Wordpress blog, and supervision and testing time for the project coordinators (Gerry Leonidas and Rob Banham). The Department's intention is to gradually migrate the totality of professional practice documentation on this platform, and explore its use for other modules.

Crucially, we expect the project to feed into our ongoing deliberations on the replacement of workfiles with more reflective documents, a process which is informed by our initiatives in PGT programmes and selected Part 1 modules. We are open to reviewing paper-based documentation of project especially for screen-based assignments, where documentation online is a natural fit.

Project schedule

We expect to roll out a "shell" within the spring term, with test projects uploaded to the blog within the duration of the project. We will roll out the system selectively during the summer term (when some professional assignments continue), then refine the platform for gradually wider roll-out throughout the Department's professional practice scheme from 2013–14.

We estimate the project will occupy around 16 staff hours @ £60 p.h. (£960), and 20 hours at the standard student rate at 13.58 p.h. (£271.60)., for a total project budget of 1,231.60.

To indicate its commitment, **the Department has committed to match fund a successful application to the "Digitally ready for the future" scheme.** We are therefore applying for funding of £615.80.