ALT-C 2007: "the best so far…"?

Julie Voce and Rhonda Riachi

Over 600 delegates joined us in Nottingham for ALT's 15th international conference. We enjoyed a bumper programme of ten parallel sessions, seven international keynotes and theme speakers, five pre- and post-conference workshops and a lot of hectic socialising and networking in Nottingham's leafy main campus. The conference theme of "Beyond control…" did not inspire any unruly behaviour (other than on the dance-floor at the ceilidh on Tuesday night). Delegates rated this year's conference very highly, and one seasoned ALT-C delegate called it the "best, most interesting and useful ALT-C so far."

In the online article (**newsletter.alt.ac.uk**) you can read the summaries by our four theme speakers – Marion Miller, Hans-Peter Baumeister, Frank Rennie and Tim Rudd. Keynote sessions can be viewed online using Elluminate from the web page - **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2007/** - and audio versions will also be made available to accompany their slides. Brief details of the winning entries for the 2007 Learning Technologist of the Year Award are overleaf and more information has been mailed to you with this newsletter. The winners of the Learning Object Competition can be found at **www. intrallect.com/index.php/intrallect/news_events**.
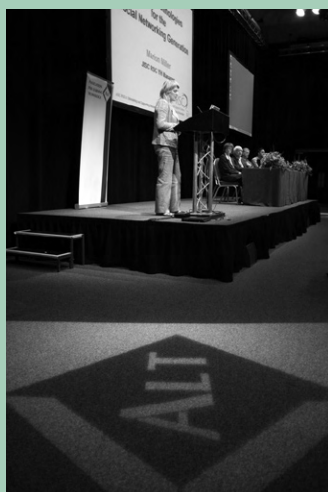
Marion Miller introduces the social network generation theme on Tuesday morning

Dylan Wiliam presented a wealth of research data in his keynote on Tuesday

Hannah Whaley Joint Winner of the 2007 Learning Technologist of the Year Award, presented by Peter Norvig, Google, and Gilly Salmon, University of Leicester

Case studies

Education: a revolutionary process @ Djanogly City Academy

Sonny Sharma

Djanogly City Academy sits in the heart of Nottingham and is one of the UK's only specialist ICT Academies. The Academy has an international reputation for its use of ICT across the curriculum, both to drive daily processes and to transform teaching and learning. Through the introduction of a new and innovative curriculum for all year 7 students - the New Basics - the Academy is harnessing the power of ICT in order to create a well-rounded future generation, equipped with the tools necessary for surviving in the 21st century.

Binoculars and sandpits: a strategy for e-learning

John Fothergill

Strategies are about planning how to achieve a goal. But e-learning strategies are difficult because the goalposts are constantly changing, and predicting the future of e-learning is difficult. This article argues that e-learning is useful, not just because it is a beneficial methodology for learning, but also because it is naturally aligned with how students will work after graduation in a digital 21st century. Thus in order to strategise e-learning it is necessary to apply today's technologies efficaciously, to play (in the digital sandpits) with possible technology for tomorrow and to scan the horizon for new developments with a powerful pair of virtual binoculars.

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Chief Executive's report

News from Seb Schmoller

Rhonda Riachi: On the final day of the ALT Conference, Rhonda Riachi, ALT Director, announced that she will be leaving ALT at the end of this year, having been employed by ALT since it was founded in 1993. Linda Creanor, incoming ALT President, was able to pay public tribute to Rhonda's outstanding contribution to the development of ALT over the last 14 years. ALT's elected Trustees are now deciding on how to respond to Rhonda's departure. A formal send-off for Rhonda will take place in Oxford during the evening of 8 January 2008, Details will be publicised using the "ALT-ANNOUNCE" Jiscmail list.

CMALT: Teresa Prochazka, ALT Projects Manager moved to a new job at the beginning of September, and we wish her well. One of Teresa's roles was as Certification Manager for our Certified Membership Scheme, CMALT. Until Teresa has been replaced we are grateful to Dr Jay Dempster for agreeing to cover the role on a part-time consultancy basis. Jay's email address is jay.dempster@alt.ac.uk. A new version of the CMALT Prospectus, and revised guidelines for applicants and assessors have been published. Both are available for download, along with other supporting material from the **www.alt.ac.uk/cmalt**.

Inaugural Learning Technologist of the Year Award: This year we organised the inaugural Learning Technologist of the Year Award, which was presented at the ALT Conference by Dr Peter Norvig, Research Director of Google. The joint winners were Philip Cosson of the School of Health and Social Care at the University of Teesside, and Hannah Whaley, from the Learning Centre at the University of Dundee . The runner up was the PebblePad Development Team from Pebble Learning Ltd, in Wolverhampton. A two page document describing the winning and short-listed entries in full is on the ALT web site at **www.alt.ac.uk/docs/learning_technologist_of_the_year_award_2007.pdf**.

ALT Annual General Meeting: The AGM on 5/9/2007 approved the 2006/2007 Accounts, and the Annual Report, which summarises ALT's activities over the past 12 months. The AGM also unanimously approved some important changes to the ALT Constitution. All three documents are on the ALT web site at **www.alt.ac.uk/documents.html**. At the AGM, Jane Seale, retiring ALT President presented Terry Mayes, Emeritus Professor at Glasgow Caledonian University, and long-standing member of ALT, with Honorary Life Membership of the Association. The 2008 call for nominations for Honorary Life Membership will be issued next spring.

JISC Learning and Teaching Committee: The JISC Learning and Teaching Committee is "responsible for supporting the learning and teaching community by helping institutions to promote innovation in the use of ICT to benefit learning and teaching, research and the management of institutions". I represent ALT on the committee, alongside Lawrence Hamburg from the HE Academy, Stuart Jones from Becta, and John McLaughlin from the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills. Representatives on JISC committees are required to report briefly in writing to their organisations: ALT and JISC have agreed that a suitable vehicle for this is through this quarterly column in the extended web-based version of the ALT Newsletter, where key points from the committee's 18 September 2007 can be found.

sschmoller@brookes.ac.uk   2/10/2007

Case Studies

Introducing e-portfolios across a paper dominated university

Federica Oradini and Gunter Saunders

The use of an e-portfolio approach to supporting learning across a range of subject areas is described and evaluated. Views of undergraduate students on the effectiveness and value of e-portfolios were sought via a questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. The evaluation addressed student attitudes towards the use of multimedia, considered students' perceptions of the value of making e-portfolios and examined the impact of working electronically on individual development and achievement. The study found that a significant number of students stated that making an e-portfolio helped them to think more about what they had learned and achieved.

Towards maturity in e-learning: Lessons from the e-skills UK research

Howard Hills

In 2006 the Skills for Business Network commissioned e-skills UK to conduct some detailed research amongst commercial organisations on the 'ingredients' for successful e-learning. The study of over 200 employers and 1,000 learners allows a comparison between the education sector and commercial sectors to be made. Despite providing more support to learners and placing more emphasis on collaborative learning, overall the Education sector still achieves less business impact than other sectors. There are exceptions, however: this article describes examples where business impact is being delivered by the education sector, for example at Walsall College Hair and Beauty School.

Academics and publishers advance e-learning: a view from the USA

Jim Farmer

In the USA publishers now provide e-learning materials and online services to academics for use by their students at no cost to the institution. Jim Farmer reports on how the costs of these "supplementary materials" are increasingly included in the rapidly rising price that students pay for textbooks. He argues that this student

For full versions of all the articles here go to the ALT Online Newsletter at **newsletter.alt.ac.uk**

financing of course materials has emerged without consideration of the impact it may have on students and faculty. The UK may face a similar situation if our government and institutions fail to find alternative methods of financing authoring and distributing e-learning materials.

Conference reviews

e-learning: making it work

FE practitioner's conference, Nottingham

Kevin Donovan

A brief report on this popular conference, organised by ALT and the QIA and held at the NSCL in Nottingham on 11 October, is available on the newsletter web site at **newsletter.alt.ac.uk**. Handouts from each of the 20 workshop sessions will be collated and published on the ALT and QIA web sites later this year.

Becta's Harnessing technology research forum

Bob Banks

This forum explored the current state of research in learning technologies as applied to practice. It also provided an insight into Becta's review of the national "Harnessing Technology" strategy for education, which will proceed during this autumn and winter. The sessions covered:

- Learner voice - what learners say about technology and learning.
- Realising benefit: educational business processes - how technology can help enable more efficient system processes.
- Technology and educational reform: towards a demand led system - how our education system can be more responsive.
- Trends and developments: future technologies for learning - mobile technologies, e-portfolios, and Web 2.0.

Director's report

News from Rhonda Riachi

My last column... This will be my last column for ALT-N. In December I will leave ALT after 14 1/2 years. I have decided to take a short break before finding something new. It has been a privilege to work with so many members, committee members and colleagues who have freely given their time and expertise to ALT to make it the leading learning technology association in the UK, with influence on developments outside the UK as well. I have been assisted by many staff along the way – particularly Marion, Hayley, Sue, Melanie and Seb – and I pay tribute to their dedication, professionalism and sheer hard work, often beyond the call of duty. I hope to keep in touch with the many friends I have made, and I know that I leave ALT in good hands and with a promising future.

ALT-C 2007: a joint effort and a great success: Many thanks to the programme committee, session chairs, our sponsors and exhibitors, the ALT staff, conference helpers, staff at Nottingham University and all the presenters who made ALT-C 2007 an inspiring and enjoyable event. The keynote and theme speakers' presentation slides can be found at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2007** and the keynote presentations can be viewed using Elluminate. Audio files of the keynote speakers will also be added shortly. Other presentation files are being uploaded to the web site by authors, and you can search for these at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2007/timetable.html**.

ALT-C 2008 keynotes announced: We are delighted to confirm that our keynote speakers will be: **David Cavallo**, Chief Learning Architect for One Laptop per Child; **Dr Itiel Dror**, Senior Lecturer in Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Southampton; **Hans Rosling**, Professor of International Health, Karolinska Institute, Sweden. Go to **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008**.

Note the new deadlines for ALT-C 2008, with a combined date for research papers and other submissions: all submissions close **29 February** • presenters' registration closes **6 June** • earlybird registration closes **30 June** • registrations close **15 August**.

Tangible Benefits of E-learning report: As we go to press this report is about to be published, after a hectic summer to collect 37 case studies from 16 universities. The project was funded by the JISC Learning and Teaching Committee and was a partnership of JISCinfonet, ALT and the Higher Education Academy, including eight Subject Centres. The executive summary is online at **www.jisc.ac.uk/camelbelt**.

CAMEL ELIDA: ALT is a partner in the CAMEL eLIDA project, concerning tools and systems to support design for learning using Moodle, LAMS and RELOAD: **dfl.cetis.ac.uk/wiki/index.php/ELIDA_CAMEL**. This project, which includes a secondary school as well as FE and HE institutions, will draw to a close in December and a report will be published on the findings shortly afterward.

AGM news: Congratulations to **Steve Ryan** (London School of Economics) who was elected unopposed to the Vice-Chair of ALT at the Annual General Meeting in Nottingham. **Cathy Ellis** (Becta) is now Chair of ALT and **Linda Creanor** (Glasgow Caledonian University) is President for 2007-2008. Also joining the Committee are **Dick Moore** (Ufi learndirect) and **John Phelps** (Goldsmiths University). We gave our thanks to **Jane Seale** who retired as President in September. Following the AGM, the Central Executive Committee made these appointments to committee chairs: Chair of FE Committee - **Fred Pickering**; Chair of Membership Services: - **John Phelps**; Chair of Publications - **Paul Bacsich**; Chair of Research - **Robin Mason**.

rriachi@brookes.ac.uk

Publication

What the learners say

A new publication from the JISC e-Learning Programme, In Their Own Words, opens up a window on learners' beliefs, intentions and motivations when using technology in their learning. The publication was launched at ALT-C 2007 in Nottingham and is based on outputs from Phase 1 of the Learners' Experiences of e-Learning theme, funded under the JISC e-Learning Programme. Key among these outputs are two studies – the LEX and LXP reports – which were based on qualitative and quantitative research with e-learners in further, higher and adult education. Copies of In Their Own Words may be ordered from publications@jisc.ac.uk or downloaded from **www.jisc.ac.uk/intheirownwords**.

Conference

ALT-C 2008:
Rethinking the digital divide

9-11 September 2008, Leeds, UK

Keynote speakers:

- **David Cavallo**, Chief Learning Architect for One Laptop per Child and Head of the Future of Learning Research Group at MIT Media Lab
- **Dr Itiel Dror**, Senior Lecturer in Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Southampton
- **Hans Rosling**, Professor of International Health, Karolinska Institute, Sweden, and Director of the Gapminder Foundation

Programme Co-Chairs

Dr Jill Jameson, University of Greenwich
Dr John Sandars, University of Leeds

Further information is available from the conference web site:

www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008

The conference is for practitioners, researchers and policy makers from all sectors involved in the application of technology to teaching and learning, as well as for those new to the field.

Key dates

Submissions open: 14 December 2007
Submissions close: 28 February 2008
Presenters' registration deadline: 6 June 2008
Early bird registration deadline: 30 June 2008
Registrations close: 15 August 2008

Organisations considering sponsoring ALT-C 2008 should contact Seb Schmoller, Chief Executive of ALT, on **seb.schmoller@alt.ac.uk**
To book an exhibition space at ALT-C 2008 contact Hayley Willis, Events Administrator, on **hayley.willis@alt.ac.uk**

www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008

Association for Learning Technology