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

On-line and on course: a UKeU success

Kevin Donovan interviews Ellen Roberts and Jane Lund

The demise of the UKeU in 2004 damaged e-learning progress, as well as the reputations of some of those involved. However, at least one initiative generated by the UKeU has subsequently gone from strength to strength. ALT-N interviewed Ellen Roberts and Jane Lund who run the University of York's completely on-line Masters in Public Policy and Management, one of the UKeU's first and only courses. This article examines the reasons for the course's success and attempts to analyse the pros and cons of involvement with what turned out to be an (albeit well-intentioned) e-learning debacle.

Conference review

Bruce Schneier – Chief Technology Officer, BT Counterpane, addresses the Conference

Photo courtesy of Gardner Campbell

Educause 2007

Mark Toole

Mark Toole gives his perspective on the recent Educause conference in Seattle. One of the key themes of the conference was exploring the extent to which students' prior experience, expectations and aspirations are changing and how this is likely to affect learning, teaching and student support services in the future. A debate has started in earnest about the implications and practice of managing a mix of institutionally hosted tools and services and externally hosted 'free' services to support learners and teachers.

Editorial

Morag Munro

Welcome to the first edition of ALT-N for 2008! Thank you to everyone who responded to the ALT-N survey in the previous edition. You can view a summary of the results at **http://tinyurl.com/2tb57d**. In response to your feedback, we have included our first editorial and book review in the current edition.

Look out for other new features, including a 'Meet the members' section in future editions.

In this edition

Most commentary on the collapse of the UKeU has been unfavourable. Yet in interview with Ellen Roberts and Jane Lund, ALT-N's Kevin Donovan discovers that one of the UKeU's only online courses, the University of York's online Masters in Public Policy and Management, is going from strength to strength.

Social networking sites such as Bebo, Facebook and MySpace play a pivotal role in many students' social lives. But how might educators exploit the popularity of such sites for educational purposes? Mike Thewall examines the results of a study on the use of MySpace and considers the implications for education. Although digital gaming is also an integral part of the Bebo generation's culture, games-based learning has been slow to become accepted as a legitimate pedagogical approach. John Helmer examines why the recent growth in virtual worlds, such as Second Life, has prompted a change in attitude towards the use of gaming in the curriculum.

Also in this edition: Graham McElearney reviews the recent SEDA publication: e-Teaching: Engaging Learners Through Technology; David Sugden provides an update on the MoleNET project; and Mark Toole reflects on the recent Educause conference in Seattle.

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Chief Executive's report

News from Seb Schmoller

Rhonda Riachi: A farewell dinner was held in January for Rhonda in Oxford, with several founder members present alongside current and past trustees and staff as well as a video link to our colleague in ASCILITE, ALT's sister organisation in Australasia. We presented Rhonda with a bound book of thank-you messages, one of the specially made paperweights that are generally only given to retiring trustees, and a pair of lightweight Leica binoculars. Thanks to the many people who contributed to the collection and who sent in messages.

ALT-C 2008 – Rethinking the Digital Divide: The conference programme committee held the first of its two face-to-face meetings and the first call for submissions of papers and abstracts for our 2008 conference was issued in mid December, with a closing date of 29 February 2008. Full details at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008.**

Consultation responses: Since the last issue, ALT has responded to the Welsh Funding Council's consultation 'Enhancing Learning and Teaching Through Technology: A Strategy for Higher Education in Wales'. ALT responses are currently being prepared on post-2008 RAE, and on the merger of two FE sector bodies with whom we work closely: the Quality Improvement Agency and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership. All our consultation responses are published at **www.alt.ac.uk/documents.html**

Early warnings: In the next three months several calls will be issued by ALT. Please keep an eye out for these.

- 2008 Learning Technologist of the Year Award;
- Opportunities to express an interest in membership of ALT's operational committees;
- Call for nominations for elections for Trustees of ALT, and as Vice Chair of the Association (open only to those who were individual members of ALT on 1 September 2007).

Tax relief on ALT individual membership subscriptions: Some individual members or holders of Certified Membership (CMALT) may not be aware that you can claim tax relief on your annual membership subscription, which depending on the rate at which you pay tax cuts the net cost of membership by as much as 40%.

sschmoller@brookes.ac.uk   14/1/2008

Reports

Educators Lead the Charge in Virtual World Learning - Who's getting serious about games?

John Helmer

A more positive attitude is developing towards game-based learning, although this has been slow to gain momentum within the more general acceptance of e-learning. This may be explained by the high costs of development and nervousness about using a medium with its roots in teen subculture. But the emergence of virtual world learning has energised the games industry and there has been a gradual shift in cultural attitudes in its favour. Games are increasingly being considered as having real potential for teaching and learning.

MySpace, Facebook, Bebo & the Socially Networked Student

Mike Thelwall

Social networking sites like Facebook, MySpace and Bebo are now integrated into many students' lives. But are they a welcome source of emotional support or a time-wasting distraction? Who are the typical users of social networking sites and how are they used? This article reports some results from a study of MySpace, for example that women are most sought after as friends and suggests some potential uses of social networking in education.

Project update

MoleNET

David Sugden

Learners in the English Further Education sector are having their learning and assessment opportunities enhanced by mobile devices. The Mobile Learning Network project (**www.molenet.org.uk**), MoleNET, is the result of a £7.2m initiative funded by contributions from the Learning and Skills Council and participating institutions, managed and supported by the Learning and Skills Network. This update provides an outline of MoleNET's unique collaborative approach to encouraging, supporting, expanding and promoting mobile learning. A range of mobile and handheld devices, including mobile phones, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs); Mp3 players; handheld games and Ultra-Mobile PCs (UMPCs), are to be used to support learning in many different curriculum areas.

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

NEWS AND REVIEWS

Book review

e-Teaching: Engaging Learners Through Technology

Graham McElearney

Stephen Bostock's new book, "e-Teaching: Engaging Learners Through Technology" provides an overview of the increasingly diverse fields of e-learning and learning technologies. Full of useful practical advice and guidance, the book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of learning technologies, ranging from the overhead projector to the latest developments in Web 2.0 technologies. Rather than organising technologies by 'type', the book is structured pedagogically in terms of teacher and student activity and interaction. In so doing, it provides an excellent introduction to those new to the field.

JISC News

Conference proceedings available online

Ros Smith

E-Books from the JISC Online Conference – Innovating e-Learning 2007: Institutional Transformation and Supporting Lifelong Learning can be downloaded from **www.jisc.ac.uk/elp_conference07**. Each e-book starts with general user guidance and provides a valuable insight into the activities and debates from the conference and a rich resource for future reference.

The e-books are not intended to replace the energy and immediacy of online debate or the unique experience of participating in an international event of this kind. Make 2008 the year you take part in the JISC Online Conference to experience it for yourself! Full details of the programme and presenters will be available in March.

Register your interest in Innovating e-Learning 2008 today. Please email **info@jisc.ac.uk**.

Conferences

Call for bookings for CMALT workshop

**28th February 12.00 – 15.00
at The London Knowledge Lab**

CMALT is a peer-based accreditation scheme for learning technologists and for people with learning technology as an important part of their role. This workshop is aimed at ALT members and non-members, wherever they are employed, who are thinking about doing CMALT and want to find out more, or who have made a start on their application and want support.

The workshop will be run on open, participative lines, with plenty of opportunity for questions and discussion. There is no charge for attending, but places are limited so please book early to avoid disappointment. Full details and online booking at: **www.alt.ac.uk/events.php.**

ALT-C 2008 - submission deadlines approaching

Submissions for all papers and sessions will close on 29 February

This is ALT's 15th annual conference and will be held at University of Leeds from 9-11th September 2008.

Conference themes and guidelines and an online form for submissions can be found on the ALT-C website at: **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008/**

Please help us to spread the word by circulating details to relevant colleagues.

Would you like to contribute to ALT-N?

The ALT-N team welcomes articles that reflect the fast-changing field of learning technologies, including case studies demonstrating good practice, reviews of software, project updates and conference reviews.

ALT-N is published quarterly online. This print edition contains summaries of the online articles and is distributed to all ALT members via postal mail. For further information and guidelines for authors, please contact the Editor, Morag Munro: **morag.munro@dcu.ie.**

EVENTS

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, 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 and 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.

Submitters are asked to select up to three from the following list of conference dimensions: Global or Local; Institution or Individual; Pedagogy or Technology; Access or Exclusion; Access or Exclusion; Open or Proprietary; Private or Public; For the Learner or by the Learner; or Other aspects of the digital divide. Full explanations of each can be found at **www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008.**

Key dates

Submissions close: 29 February

Early bird registration deadline: 30 June

Presenters' registration deadline: 6 June

Registrations close: 15 August

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, please contact Hayley Willis, Events Administrator, on **hayley.willis@alt.ac.uk**

www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008

Workshops

Lab Group Open Day Event

20 February 2008, 10.45 – 16.15

Oracle's City of London Building

The Lab Group (**www.labgroup.org.uk**) is an Association for Learning Technology supported collaboration between labs which undertake research and development in learning mediated by technology.

The aims of this event are to:

- enable around a dozen member labs to showcase some of their work, discuss the concepts that lie behind it, answer questions about it, and get feedback on it from other labs;
- give participants from policy-making and funding bodies to keep abreast of develop- ments, and improve their understanding of what is going on in the development and research community.

To book a place to attend this free event, please visit: **www.alt.ac.uk/events.php**

Second Life: education beyond the hype

17 April 2008, 09.30 – 16.00

National College for School Leadership (NCSL), Nottingham

This ALT workshop is being led by Steven Warburton of King's College, London. It aims to provide an introduction to immersive 3D environments from a practical perspective and to stimulate critical inquiry into the possibilities that massive multi-user virtual environments (MUVEs) offer to learning and teaching practice.

For further information and to book a place to attend, please visit: **www.alt.ac.uk/events.php**

Association for Learning Technology

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Annual ALT subscriptions:

Individual UK	£54
Reduced rate (student, retired, unemployed)	£26
Individual non-UK	£67

For organisational membership and other details go to
www.alt.ac.uk/membership.html

www.alt.ac.uk

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