ASSOCIATION FOR LEARNING TECHNOLOGY

Communications and Publications Committee

Minutes

Minutes from the meeting on 20th October 2015.

1 Welcome and apologies

Chair: Neil Morris
Present: Sandra Huskinson, Anne Hole, James Little, Santanu Vasant (remote), Lesley Diack, Colin Loughlin, Martin Hawksey (ALT)
Apologies received from: Ros Walker, Elaine Garcia, Peter Reed, Carlo Perrotta, Kathy-Ann Daniel-Gittens, Katharine Jewitt

2 AoB

No other business added.

3 Welcome new members

Neil Morris welcomed James Little, Santanu Vasant, Lesley Diack, Colin Loughlin and Katharine Jewitt to the Communications and Publications Committee.

4 Approve minutes

Minutes from 4th June 2015 were reviewed and approved with no changes. All the actions were noted as complete.

5 Update CPX Terms of Reference

MH outlined that given operational changes including staffing, renaming of the ALT Online Newsletter to the #ALTC Blog, and removal of print edition of RLT the Committee's Terms of Reference needed updating. It was noted that this was an interim refresh and the ToR would be reviewed in detail for the next ALT strategy. The committee reviewed the new ToR wording and approved with no changes.
Action: ToR Approved. MH to upload revised version to the ALT website.

6 Journal

NM gave an overview of the status of the Journal, it's place in the sector and how it was operated. On the later it was noted that there was no senior editor and NM was being deferred to for final decisions. It was suggested that more guidance from the Committee to the editors would be useful. It was noted that there was some support from the ALT office to address some of the administration. JL highlighted that the direction of the Journal needs to be informed by any current gaps in the marketplace which may inform particular article types the Journal should be encouraging.

NM suggested that RLT struggles as it is not REFable and as such finding a niche aligned to evidence based practice, the type that would not be found in other journals like BJET.
NM commented that appealing to a non-REFable audience was a potential niche space.

CL highlighted that not all staff are required to submit REF and queried what other aims the Journal trying to achieve such as number of citations and whether the long term aim was to move it up the rankings.

SH highlighted that to encourage more submissions it would be good to make the process less scary. It was suggested that mentorship as part of the publication process. It was noted that the conference provides a degree of feedback on submissions. Using the #ALTC Blog as a publication route was discussed AH noting that a post highlighting an #altc paper was due to be published. It was also noted by AH that as Peter Reed was an editor on both the Journal and Blog he was able to be a bridge.

The committee would like to review the reason the Journal didn't receive an impact factor and use this to inform decisions about the direction of the Journal. It was agreed that the best way forward was to find a niche for the Journal with an eye on making REFable in the future. The Committee agreed that it shouldn't erode the ability for learning technologists to have a publication route.

Action: MH to circulate impact factor feedback to CPX.

6.1 Editorial update
NM updated the committee on the Journal staffing welcoming Peter Reed and Carlo Perrotta as incoming editors. As previously agreed the existing editor Meg O'Reilly was finishing her term and the Committee noted thanks to Meg for all her work as editor. The level of staffing was discussed and it was recommended that the Journal would benefit from an additional editor. In the first instance it was agreed that the existing list of people who noted interest in becoming a journal editor was looked at.

Recommendation: To recruit an additional editor for the Journal using the existing shortlist of editors who expressed interest.

6.2 Journal Strategy
NM presented the Journal Strategy to the Committee for approval. MH gave some context to the development of the strategy noting how concerns with 'Article Processing Fees' had been addressed. NM noted the strategy provided an outline of the direction of the journal but the next level of detail is required. In particular improving the editorial guidance and articulating the publication routes.

The question of how research in the Journal was presented was also discussed. JL queried if the journal could be opened up to more interactive mechanisms such as interactive data exploration techniques. NM also noted the possibility of the use of video.

Action: NM to discuss with Peter Reed ways to create publication routes guidance document to help editors.

Action: NM, SH, JL and the Journal editors to undertake a desk study of alternative publication mediums used in other journals.

Recommendation: The Committee approves the new Journal Strategy.

7 Events Report
MH presented the Events Report prepared by Anna Davidge. It was noted by the Committee that the conference was well organised and the news of increased numbers for attendance and participation was a positive development. The Committee discussed it's role at the conference and in particular

opportunities to promote channels such as the Journal and Blog. It was agreed that a 'how to get published' session should be included in next year's conference. Opportunities for the Blog at the conference were also discussed. AH noted that several posts had been written as a result of activity at the conference. Other opportunities for extending the communication impact of the conference were discussed NM suggesting that keynotes should be asked to produce a short video describing their session which could be used in conference publicity. SH also highlighted the opportunity to do 'vox pop' interviews with delegates. To enable this it was noted that identifying people willing to be interviewed at the point of registration would make this easier.

MH highlighted upcoming events including the 'ALT Community Calls' and the ALT Winter Online Conference.

Action: MH and SH to discuss 'vox pops' for the next conference.

Action: MH to provide committee feedback to Anna Davidge about the inclusion of media permissions on the event booking form

8 Communications Report

MH provided an overview of the Communications report highlighting the Twitter strategy used at this year's Annual Conference. In particular it was noted that having a greater presence using ALT's official Twitter account gave better exposure. The Committee discussed how this exposure could be extended throughout the year. One area discussed was introduction of tweetchats like #LTHEChat. It was noted that with the #altc hashtag this would occasionally happen organically as part of webinars and other events. It was noted that this type of participation was very variable and very dependent on who was watching. Piggybacking other tweetchats such as Bett was also discussed.

9 #ALTC Blog (formerly the ALT Online Newsletter)

AH gave a verbal update regarding the Blog highlighting that 62 articles had been published in the previous year, noting that the publication rate was very variable from 3 to 8 posts per month. The editors are monitoring trends and event reports are currently are popular submissions from the community. AH also reported that they have started to explore new topics and have started doing app review case studies. Conscious of the workloads of other editors AH recently co-opted Teresa Mackinnon as a result of conversations at the Annual Conference. Other committee members were invited to join the Blog's editorial team and as a result SV volunteered to join [subsequent to the meeting AH has also recruited Rachel Challen from the FE/Skills Committee].

Other ways to gather content for the Blog were discussed including reblogging more from ALT Members. Some of the practicalities of this were discussed including whether this should be part on the main blog or as a members section.

AH noted that other contributions to the Blog such as commenting remain low. Using existing schemes such as badging as a reward mechanisms and integration with CMALT were briefly discussed.

Action: MH to issue an open call for additional Blog editors

10 Priorities

The following CPX priorities were identified and agreed by the committee:

Journal
Improve editorial guidance and articulate publication routes. Making a clearer journey for publication via conference. Small group to look at more interactive publication perhaps via the root of the blog. Looking at other journals. Increasing the Journal editorship. Continuing conversation about where the journal sits, and explore further.

Conference

More involvement and presence at the conference, including how to get published and the blog. Alongside a media presence at the conference to get video interviews from participants.

Blog

To encourage more discussion on the blog, including using badges as a reward mechanisms and integration with CMALT. Appointed new editor, and promoting Winter Conference

10 Dates of next meetings
TBC

11 Items referred to and from other ALT committees
None.

12 Items to be reported to the Central Executive Committee
Recommendation: To recruit an additional editor for the Journal using the existing shortlist of editors who noted interest.

Recommendation: To recruit an additional editors for the #ALTC Blog.

Recommendation: The Committee approves the new Journal Strategy.

Minutes written by: MH 26/10/2015
Reviewed by: NM 31/10/2015