

Learning Technologist of the Year Award 2009 Winners

About the Award

ALT's Learning Technologist of the Year Award is now in its third year of operation.

The Award is open to individual members of ALT, and to individuals and teams based in ALT member organisations. There is a team and an individual award.

The aim of the Award is to celebrate and reward excellent practice and outstanding achievement in the learning technology field.

The Award was presented at the ALT conference in Manchester on 9 September 2009 by Martin Bean, Vice-Chancellor designate of the Open University.

The winning and short-listed entrants

Four team entries and three individual entries were short-listed and invited to make presentations to the judging panel. The awards are as follows.

Individual award

Joint Winners

James Clay from Gloucestershire College

Dr Vivien Rolfe from De Montfort University's School of Allied Health Sciences

Highly Commended

David Payne from Middlesbrough College

Team award

Joint Winners

The Xerte Project Team from the University of Nottingham. Team members are Andy Beggan, Fay Cross,

Nuno Jorge, John Horton, Patrick Lockley, and Julian Tenney.

The Beyond Distance Research Alliance from the University of Leicester. Team members are Dr Alejandro Armellini, Dr Palitha Edirisingha, Jaideep Mukherjee, Dr Ming Nie, Dr Sahm Nikoi, Professor Gilly Salmon, and Matthew Wheeler.

Highly Commended

The LSN MoLeNET Mentoring Team. Team members are James Clay, Elaine Coates, Di Dawson, Ron Mitchell, Mick Mullane, Lilian Soon, David Sugden, and John Whalley.

The other short-listed entrant (for the team award) was the JISC Regional Support Centre Scotland North & East.

The winning and highly commended entries, with comments from the judges

Individual awards



James Clay was joint winner of the individual award for his contribution to changing Gloucestershire College, which has become a leader in its use of learning technology.

Judges' comments

"James is having a substantial impact at his own college, in the Learning and Skills sector, and in the learning technology community more generally.

Gloucestershire College has made very big strides towards being exemplary in its use of learning technology, and James has played a leading role in bringing about this change.

Outside the college, James is playing a supportive and influential role in the wider learning technology community, for example within ALT, and within the LSN's mobile learning programme, MoLeNET.

James exudes commitment and drive, and the panel was particularly impressed with the way that James has put his knowhow at the disposal of others, for example through running workshops, hosting visits to his college, and through his contribution to the informal network of "ILT champions" in FE."



Vivien Rolfe was joint winner of the individual award for her outstanding work on the creation and evaluation of multi-media learning resources in science, and for her success as the eLearning Champion in De Montfort University's School of Allied Health Sciences.

Judges' comments

"Vivien has made the transition from biomedical researcher in industry to teacher and multimedia developer in a university.

The panel was particularly impressed with Vivien's multimedia Virtual Analytical Laboratory, a substantial on-line resource created by Vivien that supports students in their transition to studying science at university, frequently having had very limited prior experience of laboratory work.

The panel recognised Vivien's positive and wide impact on her university's overall use of technology in teaching and learning, and her commitment to evaluation, and to the dissemination of her work within the bioscience community. Panel members also noted Vivien's focus on the creation of resources that meet specific and important learning challenges, for example, her use of a plagiarism detection system as a formative tool in helping students improve the quality of their writing.

Alongside these achievements Vivien has continued successfully to develop her teaching career."



David Payne was highly commended in the individual award for his outstanding and innovative use of video to enhance motor-vehicle studies students' confidence and performance.

Judges' comments

"Learners on vocational courses at Level 2 typically find the assessment procedures very daunting. David's achievement was to implement a very effective and flexible video-based self-assessment process.

Under the approach developed by David, learners can capture video evidence of their motor-vehicle skills for subsequent review and feedback, by tutors and by peers.

The impact of this initiative has been profound. Specifically:

- other teachers in the college have been inspired to take the same approach, which will now be applied widely;
- learners have gained self-confidence and have acquired important IT skills alongside those relating to their primary course of study;
- a substantial volume of video-based learning resources have been created for use by future cohorts of learners.

David's work provides an excellent example of how a well-designed carefully focused intervention can have a transformative and beneficial effect for learners, within a subject area, and within a whole institution."

Team award



The Xerte Project Team at the University of Nottingham jointly won the team award for the creation of Xerte Online Toolkits, an Open Source suite of tools for elearning developers and content authors.

Above, left to right: Fay Cross, Nuno Jorge, Patrick Lockley, John Horton, Julian Tenney, Andy Beggan

Judges' comments

"The Xerte team has succeeded in producing a suite of software tools which is having an impact internally within the University of Nottingham and which at the same time is solving problems for a wide range of users externally, in the public and private sectors.

The panel was particularly impressed with:

- the team's combination of passion and professionalism;

- the team's clear plans for the future development of Xerte;
- the strength and enthusiasm of the community of users that has grown up around Xerte, in Higher Education and, in particular, in Further Education.

The panel commended the productive working relationship that has developed between the Xerte team and the JISC TechDis service, and the contribution this has made to Xerte's support for accessibility good practice."

The Beyond Distance Research Alliance (BDRA) at the University of Leicester jointly won the team award for its outstanding research-based contribution to the learning technology field.

Judges' comments

"In the four years since its inception, BDRA has made remarkable progress, and has become established as one of the UK's leading learning technology research and development teams, with an impressive range of outputs, and a remarkably high degree of team cohesion.

BDRA has succeeded in supporting and decisively influencing the University of Leicester's successful and growing use of learning technology in its own core provision. At the same time BDRA has remained outward-looking in its work.

The panel was particularly impressed at the emphasis BDRA puts on collecting and interpreting learner feedback in its research and development projects, at its focus on "low cost/ high value" interventions, and at the team's commitment to working collaboratively with external partners."



Standing L-R: Jaideep Mukherjee, Alejandro Armellini, Matthew Wheeler, Sandra Romenska. *Kneeling L-R:* Terese Bird, Gabi Witthaus, Madelaine Clarke, Samuel Kotei Nikoi, Simon Kear. *Sitting L-R:* Gilly Salmon, Ming Nie, Palitha Edirisingha

Team award, continued



Top: James Clay, Elaine Coates, John Whalley, Di Dawson
Bottom: Lilian Soon, Ron Mitchell, David Sugden, Mick Mullane

The LSN MoLeNET Mentoring Team was highly commended in the team award for its work supporting Phases 1 and 2 of MoLeNET, the LSN large-scale mobile learning programme in the English learning and skills sector.

The team has successfully supported participating colleges in their deployment and use of mobile devices in teaching and learning, and has acted to spread good practice and to ensure that breakthroughs in one participating college are shared.

Judges were impressed with:

- the way in which the different and complementary strengths of individual team members are utilised nationally;
- the strong commitment of individual team members;
- the contribution that the mentoring team has made to MoLeNET's overall beneficial impact on the learning and skills sector."

Judges' comments

"MoLeNET is a large-scale capital programme involving over 100 colleges and over 4000 staff to promote and research the use of mobile devices in the learning and skills sector, with each participating college assigned to a different member of the mentoring team.

The judging panel for the 2009 Award

- Donald Clark, Ufi board member
- Bob Banks, Tribal Group, and member of the ALT Research Committee
- Josie Fraser, winner of the 2008 individual award
- Rich Ranker, from Lancaster University Learning Technology Group, which won the team award in 2008
- Cathy Ellis, Becta (2008-2009 President of ALT)

A note about the 2010 Learning Technologist of the Year Award

Details of the 2010 Award will be published in early 2010. Organisations interested in sponsoring the 2010 Award should contact Seb Schmoller, Chief Executive of ALT – seb.schmoller@alt.ac.uk.

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The Trustees of ALT gratefully acknowledge Pearson eCollege's generous sponsorship of the 2009 Learning Technologist of the Year Award. For more information about Pearson eCollege go to www.pearsoncollege.com.

