

# BLE-Bulletin

Rounding up e-learning news for the Bloomsbury Colleges

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## 1. Bloomsbury News

### i) **Developments for academic year 2009-10**

As students are starting to descend on the campuses of the Bloomsbury Colleges, what new e-learning developments can they expect to see this year? Blackboard (the BLE) was upgraded during the summer, providing better stability of the system but moreover offering a new **GradeCenter** for teaching staff and students to manage and access grades. In addition to Blackboard, exciting new pieces of software will be used in many of the Colleges, including Elluminate (audio/visual desktop conferencing tool) and Echo360 (lecture capture tool). The advantage of working as a consortium is demonstrated by the Colleges' benefiting from deals with content and system providers. For example, the Colleges are now sharing a consortium licence for the plagiarism detection software, Turnitin. Over the coming year, more details about these new and exciting opportunities will be reported in the BLE Bulletin.

### i) **APT STAIRS Update (by Caroline Bell, Project Officer)**



Since the last update, the APT STAIRS team has been disseminating the project's findings at various events, including speaking at the UCISA and ALT-C Conference, where Caroline Bell (Project Officer) and Sarah Sherman (Project Manager) collected the Best Poster award. Our final APT STAIRS event Taking the Next Steps will be taking place on the 8th October to present all their findings. If you would like to attend please click [here](#).

The team has been taking the APT model forward by pursuing other projects, including the e-Case Project at the RVC, APT 4 Africa and the APT Continuation projects. The e-Case Project is using simple technologies to enhance learning experience through collaboration; it involves veterinary students accessing PowerPoint presentations online to share and discuss clinical cases. The APT 4 Africa project is applying the APT step-by-step model to use simple data-collection applications on mobile phones to aid collaboration with different

communities. Lastly, the APT Continuation project is reaching out to three institutions outside of the Bloomsbury consortium (UCL, Kings College and Kingston College); three new demonstrators in these institutions are going to be exploring the use of Google Docs.

For more information about the projects and our final event Taking the Next Steps, please go to the website for more information [www.bloomsbury.ac.uk/apt](http://www.bloomsbury.ac.uk/apt)

## ii) **Using technology for business contingency planning**

Several of the Bloomsbury Colleges are using technology as part of their business contingencies in mitigating the potential effects of a pandemic outbreak or security threats. For example, the RVC is making use of [JANET txt](#) an SMS service, which allows the College to send messages to staff and students via text message to their mobile phones. If your College is making innovative use of technology and would like it included in a future BLE Bulletin, please email [s.sherman@bloomsbury.ac.uk](mailto:s.sherman@bloomsbury.ac.uk)

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## 2. Blackboard News

### i) **New President of Blackboard Learn**



A change in leadership was announced at Blackboard during the summer where Ray Henderson was appointed president of Blackboard's teaching and learning division. As President of Blackboard Learn, Ray oversees product development, client success and support as well as the global services and managed hosting functions. Follow this link for further information

<http://www.blackboard.com/Company/Leadership/Overview/Ray-Henderson.aspx>

### ii) **What is Blackboard?**

If you have friends, family – or even colleagues who still don't understand what Blackboard is, point them in the direction of this video. Michael Chasen, Blackboard's CEO explains it all to a Fox News presenter.

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/search-results/m/22243605/top-grade-for-blackboard.htm>

### iii) **MobilEdu**



Although currently geared to an American market, Blackboard has launched a new service called MobilEdu. MobilEdu is the category-defining suite of iPhone and mobile web applications which allows

you to deliver a rich set of services and content to the mobile devices of your community members with an Apple® iPhone™, iPod Touch® or any other web-enabled mobile device, *MobilEdu* users can navigate campus/school maps and course catalogs, get real-time updates on sports teams and special events and even e-mail instructors and classmates. Branded uniquely for each institution, *MobilEdu* can be accessed by users who download their institution's iPhone application from the Apple AppStore to their iPhone, iPod touch, or by using any mobile web browser.

<http://www.blackboard.com/Company/MobilEdu.aspx>

iv) **BbWorld09**

Catch up on the goings on at BbWorld by visiting this link:

<http://www.blackboard.com/bbworld/2009.aspx?contactID=121068091>


Alternatively, Sarah Sherman (BLE Service Manager) has made all the notes she took at the conference available to all via her blog:

[http://ble1.blogspot.com/2009\\_07\\_01\\_archive.html](http://ble1.blogspot.com/2009_07_01_archive.html)

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### 3. Other News

i) **JISC e-learning publications**

 JISC have released new e-Learning publications that put the learner at the heart of curriculum development:

- a. **Effective Practice in a Digital Age: A guide to technology-enhanced learning and teaching** helps to answer some of these questions. The publication marks an important watershed in JISC's programmes of research into teaching, learning and technology. It takes those new to using technologies in their teaching practice, as well as those ready for the next step, on a journey to using technology appropriately and effectively [www.jisc.ac.uk/practice](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/practice)
  - b. **Responding to Learners** is a resource pack which offers recommendations on how institutions can better respond to learners' expectations and uses of technology, as well as practical guidance on how to embed learners' voices more effectively into institutional processes and practice. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/respondingtolearners>
  - c. e-Learning is explored from a strategic viewpoint in **Managing Curriculum Change**, which investigates how technology can help make curriculum design processes more responsive. The publication visualises a curriculum lifecycle, with a focus on who needs to be involved to help theory become reality. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/managingcurriculumchange>
  - d. **Learning Literacies in a Digital Age** explores examples of technology skills provision in UK further and higher education and offers a series of recommendations for institutions which want to evaluate their own provision in this area. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/learningliteraciesbp>
  - e. **Snapshot study of e-learning and supporting infrastructure across 10 countries**  
A nationally co-ordinated approach to technology in education allows learners and researchers to adopt new technologies faster, according to a new international JISC study. <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/globalactivityinhe.aspx#downloads>
  - f. **Getting Started in Second Life** guide offers a step-by-step approach and a range of guidance for lecturers starting out with Second Life. Available to order or as a PDF from: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/documents/gettingstartedsecondlife>
- ii) **Carbon footprint tool from JISC helps universities and colleges tread more carefully**  
How green is IT? A new tool from JISC is helping universities and colleges calculate just how eco-friendly they are, by estimating the carbon footprint left by

their computers. Institutions can work out their carbon emissions by inputting information about the numbers of computing devices into the SUSTE-IT footprinting tool. The tool then estimates the overall amount of electricity used, and the related carbon emissions, to help the institutions target areas for energy saving.

<http://www.susteit.org.uk/files/index>

**iii) Update to the HEFCE strategic plan**



HEFCE has published the third annual update of its strategic plan for 2006 to 2011.

To read the updated plan visit:

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09\\_21/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_21/)

**iv) The Higher Education's Enhancing Learning Through Technology (ELT)**



The Academy has commissioned Glenafric (HEFCE's external evaluators of the 2005 e-learning Strategy) to map their work onto the revised 2009 HEFCE Enhancing Learning & Teaching through Technology (ELTT) Strategy and specifically the Implementation Framework, i.e. around the seven activity areas.

<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elt/hefceresources>

**v) Investigation into the uptake and use of Microsoft SharePoint by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)**

There is some evidence that interest in Microsoft SharePoint solutions is growing within the UK education and wider public sector. This new study is being funded by Eduserv under their Research Programme. The final report from the study will be made freely available to the community under a Creative Commons licence. The work is being undertaken by Northumbria University and is being led by Professor Julie McLeod. It will include a mix of telephone interviews, face-to-face meetings and an online public consultation. Please see the project website for further details.

[http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sharepoint\\_study](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sharepoint_study)

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## **4. Training & Events**

### **4.1 Bloomsbury**

#### **24/09/09 Dedicated training day @ SOAS**

Including

- moving to Office 2007, or looking at what is different from Office 2003
- making your teaching more accessible
- setting up your computer for more comfortable working
- learning about Blackboard and Web 2.0 tools

<http://www.soas.ac.uk/events/event51690.html>

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### **4.2 Regional & National**

#### **23/09/09 High Volume Digitisation: Issues, Trends & Innovative Robot Tech**

The New Technology Institute, Birmingham

<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/dcs/workshop.htm>

**23/09/09 Creating Digital Performance Documentation**

University of Bristol

<http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/training/>

**24/09/09 Managing Digital Performance Documentation**

University of Bristol

<http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/training/>

**25/09/09 Digital Performance Documentation**

University of Bristol

<http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/training/>

**30/09/09 Plagiarism: detection and management**

Royal College of Pathologists, London

[http://www.alpsp.org/ngen\\_public/article.asp?aid=69340](http://www.alpsp.org/ngen_public/article.asp?aid=69340)

**02/10/09 FOTE09: Futures of Technology in Education**

Royal Geographical Society, London

<http://fote-conference.com/>

**09-10/10/09 Africa Gathering - bringing sustainable, positive change to those who need it the most**

London

<http://africagatheringlondon.eventbrite.com/>

**14/10/09 UK federation in practice: Case studies from the community**

ICO Conference Centre, London

[http://www.ja.net/services/events/2009/federationinpractice\\_london/index.html](http://www.ja.net/services/events/2009/federationinpractice_london/index.html)

**15/10/09 Online Webinar: Employer Engagement**

<http://www.rsc-london.ac.uk/1350/>

**20-21/10/09 Cloud Adoption Arena – an online event**

<http://www.cloudadoptionarena.com/index.html>

**21/10/09 e-Portfolios: Effective Uses in Teaching and Learning**

Woburn House, London

<http://www.rsc-london.ac.uk/1334/>

**05/11/09 SHE09 – Online Simulations in Higher Education Conference**

<http://www.uwe.ac.uk/elearning/she/conference/index.shtml>

University of the West of England

**24-27/11/09 JISC online e-learning conference 2009 "Thriving, not just surviving"**

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/elconference09>

**18/12/09 A Word in Your Ear 2009 - Audio Feedback a one day conference about the use of audio for feeding back on students' work in higher education**

Sheffield Hallam University

<http://research.shu.ac.uk/lti/awordinyourear2009/>

**28-30/04/10 8<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Digital Archiving**

Geneva, Switzerland

<http://www.bar.admin.ch/eca2010/index.html?lang=en> / [Website ECA2010](#)

- Staff Development training courses from the University of London: <http://www.london.ac.uk/staffdevelopment.html>
- The BUFVC (British Universities Film & Video Council) programme of courses: <http://www.bufvc.ac.uk/courses/booking.html>
- JISC Digital Media training programme: <http://www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/training/>
- One day JANET Training Courses: <http://www.ja.net/services/training/schedule/by-course.html>
- Library Related Conferences: <http://library2.usask.ca/~dworacze/CONF.HTM>
- JISC Legal's newsletter: <http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/Newsletter.aspx>

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## 5. Resources

### i) **Cornell University Library ebooks**

Free access to several thousand full text out of copyright books digitised from Cornell University Libraries. They include many classic and rare books covering a wide range of subject areas from the humanities, arts and social sciences. Information on copyright policy is displayed.

<http://www.archive.org/details/cornell&handle=20090514-15495627>

### ii) **LearnCentral**

LearnCentral is a new social learning network for education, sponsored by Elluminate. More than a social network or a learning community, this free, open environment represents the next logical step of combining asynchronous social networking and the ability to store, organize, and find educational resources with the live, online meeting and collaboration provided by Elluminate technology.

### iii) **Useful Freeware**

Sonya Powney and Brian Cox from the RVC have put together a really useful list of freeware tools:

#### a. **Skype** - Free internet instant messaging, voice and video calls

Free download from <http://www.skype.com>

#### b. **PureText** - Removes formatting from text

Free download from <http://www.stevemiller.net/puretext/>

This is a good bit of software, quick download, quick to install. Simply copy some text with unwanted web formatting, and instead of pressing Control-V to paste, press Windows-V, and it will remove the font tags etc - "equivalent to opening Notepad, doing a PASTE, followed by a SELECT-ALL, and then a COPY". This is great for pasting from Microsoft Word into Blackboard or Perception.

#### c. **Bulk Rename Utility** - Renames groups of files

Free download from <http://www.bulkrenameutility.co.uk/>

"*Bulk Rename Utility* is a utility which allows you to easily rename files and directories, based upon extremely flexible criteria. Add date-stamps, replace numbers, insert strings, convert case, add auto-numbers, process folders and subfolders....plus loads more!"

#### d. **Picture Resizer** - Free Batch Photo Resizer

Free download from <http://www.rw-designer.com/picture-resize>

"An **easy-to-use** and **free** tool for batch resizing of JPG pictures and photos."

#### e. **CCleaner** - PC Cleaner

<http://www.ccleaner.com/>

"CCleaner is a **freeware** system optimization, privacy and cleaning tool. It removes unused files from your system - allowing Windows to run faster and freeing up valuable hard disk space. It also cleans traces of your online activities such as your Internet history. Additionally it contains a fully featured registry cleaner. But the best part is that it's fast (normally taking less than a second to run) and contains NO Spyware or Adware! :) "

**f. Browser Resizer** - Resizes Browser Window (for testing)

Free download from <http://www.brothersoft.com/browser-resizer-4842.html>

"BrothersoftEditor/ Allows you to resize a browser (or any window) to specific sizes (e.g. 640x480) to assist in developing web pages for specific resolutions. Allows selection of which browser window to resize, optional taskbar correction"

**iv) Green IT tools - Measuring Cost and Carbon - updates from SusteIT**

The **ICT Energy and Carbon Footprinting Tool** has been updated (August 2009) to provide a more user-friendly way to help estimate the energy and carbon footprint of an institution. At its simplest users need only input the number of ICT devices. The tool is free to use, but a condition of use is that results are reported back to SusteIT (in confidence if necessary).

<http://www.susteit.org.uk/files/category.php?catID=4>

Also available from the SusteIT Project website is a Cost and Carbon Comparison Tool designed to help FE and HE institutions estimate the costs and carbon emissions of thick (PCs) versus thin clients over a given period.

<http://www.susteit.org.uk/files/category.php?catID=5>

**v) Web 2.0 Video Guides**

**JISC Netskills** have produced **Web2practice Guides** to emergent technologies and innovative practice that explain how emergent web technologies like RSS, microblogging, podcasting and social media. Each guide consists of a **short animated video** explaining the key concepts, supported by a more in-depth guide covering potential uses, risks and how to get started.

<http://jisc.ac.uk/news/stories/2009/08/web2practice.aspx>

**vi) Digital Images for education**

An online image library, comprising over 500 hours of film and 56,000 photos, will be available free of charge for at least 25 years to UK higher and further education institutions from summer 2010. The key emphasis will be on bringing to life "**Our History**" – in particular, film and digital images that capture local history, UK history and world history during the last 25 years.

<http://imagesforeducation.org.uk/about/>

Rare, unpublished and previously unavailable recordings have been launched online thanks to JISC funding for the British Library's archival sound recordings project. 28,000 recordings covering 2,000 hours of sound are now online at <http://sounds.bl.uk> as part of JISC's digitisation programme, which has invested over £22 million in making available a wide range of heritage and scholarly resources of national importance.

**vii) New videos show how researchers use advanced technology**

New videos showing how JISC is helping researchers achieve faster, better and different research through virtual research environments have just been released at <http://www.youtube.com/user/JISCmedia>

The videos feature projects from JISC's virtual research environment (VRE) programme, which is trying to find ways to connect people and speed up research processes across disciplines. These include astronomy, physics, electronics, chemistry and the study of ancient documents.

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## 6. Funding Opportunities

- i) **JISC**  
<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/fundingopportunities/futurecalls>
- ii) **The Higher Education Academy**  
<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/elearning/elro>
- iii) **Higher Education Academy Subject Centres**  
<http://www.bioscience.heacademy.ac.uk/funding/tdf/>

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Please send comments and contributions for the next BLE-bulletin to:  
Sarah Sherman, BLE Service Manager, [s.sherman@bloomsbury.ac.uk](mailto:s.sherman@bloomsbury.ac.uk), 07515 580 385