Connectedness – Massey University’s use of Adobe software in distance education
Contact Details

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About Massey University

Massey University is distinguished from other universities by its multi-campus structure, its unique contribution to New Zealand's land-based industries through research and teaching, its connectedness to industry and communities and its commitment to life-long learning via distance education.

Five academic colleges are represented at all three campuses and extramurally. Areas of academic excellence include agriculture, food and applied biological sciences, veterinary studies, design, fine arts and visual arts, nursing and public health, fundamental sciences, engineering and technology, finance, sport and exercise science and education.

With about 37,000 students, Massey is New Zealand's second largest university.
The questions that I’ll discuss...

**Pedagogical Decisions**

Why did Massey University begin exploring synchronous web-conferencing and asynchronous presentation tools?

**Effective Practice**

How have staff innovated with the use of these tools and how are they being supported?

What has the staff and student response been?

What are the implications for teaching and learning?
Communication with students studying at a distance has traditionally been via:

- Postal service
- Telephone
- Contact course
- Fax
- Mailing lists
- Web/WebCT*
- WebCT forums*
- WebCT text chat*
- Conference telephone call
- Traditional video conferencing

* Massey University has now moved to the Moodle open source LMS
Transactional Distance

“With separation there is a psychological and communications space to be crossed, a space of potential misunderstanding between the inputs of instructor and those of the learner. It is this psychological and communications space that is the transactional distance.”

Sarcasm Gets Its Own Emoticon

Are you prone to that most glorious form of humor known as sarcasm? Do your e-mail contacts frequently misinterpret your superior wit as outright cruelty? SarcMark has the solution you require.

At present, you probably use emoticons in order to make your feelings known via text or e-mail — cushioning a slight reprimand to a co-worker or friend with a friendly: 😏

Now there’s a whole new symbol to add to your lexicon, the SarcMark, which looks something like a whirlpool with a dot in the middle (see image above). Here’s what the website has to say about the product:

“With the spoken word, we use our tone, inflection and volume to question, exclaim and convey our feelings. The written word has question marks and exclamation points to document those thoughts, BUT sarcasm has NOTHING! In today’s world with increasing commentary, debate and rhetoric, what better time could there be than NOW, to ensure that no sarcastic message, comment or opinion is left behind Equal Rights for Sarcasm – Use the SarcMark.”

You can download the SarcMark at the company’s website for Windows 7, Windows XP, Windows Vista and mobile devices for use in Word documents, e-mail, instant messaging and more. After downloading, all you have to do is hit “Ctrl” and “.” and the mark will appear, instantly givingwyry impact to the sentence in question.

The symbol costs $1.99, which seems a small price to pay for conversational clarity.

Fun Fact: “Sarcasm” comes from the Latin sarcasmos, which means “to tear flesh.” How bad-ass is that?

http://mashable.com/2010/01/15/sarcmark/
Context/Drivers - 5

Innovation using technology

- Avoid - The viral approach
- Avoid - The "Field of Dreams" approach
- Perceive a need
- Explore solutions and alternatives
- Trial and evaluate
- Implement (including professional development and student support)
• Technology affords the interactions and the resources that create learning opportunities
• Pedagogies define the way that technologies are best used

Dance Metaphor - The technology sets the beat and the timing. The pedagogy defines the moves.

Terry Anderson, PhD and Professor, Athabasca University, Canada
Why web-based conferencing?

- Desktop to desktop
- Reaches students working/living/studying at a distance
- Collaborative from each individual’s desktop rather than at a set location
What is Adobe Connect and Presenter?

Convert PowerPoint files into narrated, interactive learning experiences, that can include video, animations, simulations and quizzes.

Can be made available online, delivered as a PDF, integrated and tracked within an LMS or placed on CD.

Multimedia presentations, simulations, text/audio/video chat (including virtual breakout rooms) and file or application sharing

Save all room layouts and content for instant reuse.

Record meetings for review later.
Connect example 2 - Staff development

Conflict of the Faculties

- Kant’s model of the university
- Lower faculties: law, medicine, religion - ‘applied’, serving state
- Higher faculty: philosophy concerned with truth
- Conflict between knowledge and application - today?
- Outer limit: state and act of (powerless) truth - today?
“Although the contact courses are really valuable and students love them and we get a high turnout, not everyone can make it. Our courses cater to adult learners and the types of reasons for not being able to attend the contact course include all the sorts of life events you can imagine - from babies and sick children, to being overseas and to being unable to leave the business unattended. Since we are now catering to offshore internationals...the ‘not able to travel’ is likely to be more of an issue in future, so we trialled for the first time streaming the contact course via Connect to online participants. It was a great success (once we had the sound issues sorted) and we got good interaction from those who attended this way and they felt part of the class.”
Connect example 4 - Online breakout rooms
Professor of Management
Macquarie Graduate School of Management

Richard Badham

Richard Badham was educated in Politics and Sociology at the University of Warwick, completing his Ph.D in 1982. Since that time he has worked at the Department of General Philosophy (University of Sydney), and the Departments of Science and Technology Studies and Management at the University of Wollongong. During this period, he has been seconded as a von Humbold fellow to the Technical University in Berlin (1989-91) and the Foundation BHP Chair of Management in the BHP Institute for Steel Processing and Products (1996-2002). He has been a Visiting Fellow at a number of universities in Europe, the UK and the US.

His professional interests have been varied, ranging from social theory and philosophy to

Power, Politics and Organizational Change

Helen: ok
Coops: ok
hojiz: ok
Keith: ok
Sandra: ok
Craig Prichard: We can hear you fine
Craig Prichard: that would be great
This session is an interview and discussion with former Labour Government minister and now Massey Vice-Chancellor, Steve Maharey. The purpose of the session is to provide us with a practitioner perspective on a key challenge of 'Developing Strategy and Direction'.
Connect example 7 - Library

Massey University Library - Virtual Research Consultations

• Alternatives previously were email assistance or telephone. Connect and sharing computer screens via broadband.

• “Impromptu” sessions about EndNote. Enables Library staff to take over the student’s computer and make changes as required.

• Library Meetings/Working Groups – work across 4 libraries in New Zealand

• Online class demonstrations for database searching and EndNote
Creative Writing: ‘Writing Cures’

- Writing gives people freedom to explore and define their own experiences about
- Whatever feels most relevant
- At their own pace - compare recent research in blogging e.g. Tan, L. (2008)
Psychology Research Thesis
Student Resources

Ross Flett
Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology
Contact

Outline
Psychology Research ... 00:60
Welcome 01:21
A Message from Mand... 01:03
In a nutshell...what ne... 00:36
Topics and Supervisors 00:28
Key things to note ab... 01:22
What is an Honours pr... 00:59
The Supervisor/Stude... 00:25
Things for you to thin... 01:33
What should supervis... 01:17

51 Minutes 35 Seconds Remaining
ePortfolios
Adobe Captivate

The Lifecycle of a Digital Item in the Library Website

Bright idea of an object to create? Chat to your Section Head/Manager.

Send a link to the object to your Coldev group and the Stream Group (via Heather) for peer review.

Consider peer feedback and make any adjustments.

Don't forget to check it periodically to make sure it's up to date (e.g. screenshots etc).

Captivate Best Practice

See the eLearning Best Practice guidelines.

Tutorials designed using Captivate need to:

- Be designed to completely replace or in-class presentations.
- Be designed to be interactive.

PRODUCTION LENGTH:

- Captivate tutorials should aim to be short.
- Add interactivity to make the tutorials more engaging.

BANDWIDTH CONSIDERATIONS:

- Avoid recording unnecessary sound and video.
- Import PowerPoint slides at a lower resolution.
- An acceptable published screen resolution is 1024x768 pixels in most browser windows and Adobe Captivate.

LOOK AND FEEL:

- Standard LMS:
- Maintain a consistent look and feel across all content.
- Authors need to include:
- Massey branding on the start and end.
- Use standard fonts and style.
- Include audio if appropriate.

PROOFREAD AND SPELL CHECK

- Proofread and spell check your text before producing and text for flow, transition, and time.

TIPS AND TRICKS:

- Record the screen capture all in one go and add any necessary comments.
- Record the audio for each slide.
- Clear your browser history before you start.
- Set the recording area to record only the screen – this eliminates the recorded screen size.
- Record the introduction and summary slides.
- Leave the captions on your slides.
- Edit the final slide so it automatically repeats.

eLearning Best Practice

KNOW YOUR USER:

- Identify your users before getting started. Is the audience students, faculty or staff?
- Design with users in mind.

ARTICULATE the LEARNING GOALS:

- Establish the goal. What is/are the most important information to be conveyed?
- Articulate what you want users to learn. Be realistic about your learning goals; avoid squeezing in too many learning objectives.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT MEDIUM:

- Think about what you are teaching and the best tool to deliver it.
- Captivate is best suited for short demonstrations. Presenters for more complex information and explaining concepts. Don’t forget that a printable document may be the best option.

DEVELOP A SCRIPT or STORYBOARD:

- Writing a clear and concise script is key to the success of your project. To be effective, the message, script or storyboard needs to be well planned. The script articulates the goals and acts as a guide for the entire production. Without a well defined script, the job to create a meaningful tutorial will become unmanageable. See the section on storyboarding (Page 7) for details.

NAVIGATION:

- Create a clear visual navigation. Logically navigate the user through the desired features on a screen, web page or slides. Avoid jumping around a page and go too quickly or slowly.
- Should you want users to move from one web page to another, alert users when linking away to another page, or be clear about their need to click on a link to move forward.

NARRATION:

- The narrator needs to speak clearly. Avoid speaking too slowly or too quickly.
- The narration should be friendly, lively and relatively informal.
- People viewing the tutorial may not be able to hear the audio.
- Use narration in the 2nd person (i.e. you) or 1st person (i.e. I) but be consistent, whichever you choose, stick with it throughout.
- Solicit feedback from colleagues on the pace and suitability of your narration.
- The tutorial author does not necessarily need to be the narrator.
- Include layperson’s definitions for technical or librarian terminology. Avoid using acronyms.
Professional development and support
Connectedness – Student and staff perceptions of synchronous and asynchronous delivery in distance education

Communication which happens at the *same time* (synchronous), as opposed to communication that *can wait* (asynchronous) - [Haefner - 2000]
Asynchronous and synchronous tools

- Were initially a matter “educational convenience” (Corbeil, 2006)

- “When desktop videoconferencing technologies made their debut in the mid 1990s, it appeared that web-based distance education was on the verge of a major communications revolution. However, after a brief period of experimentation, desktop videoconferencing was abandoned by most distance education providers before it had a chance to fully evolve.” (Corbeil, 2006)

Corbeil, J. R. (2006). The (r)evolution of synchronous communication in Distance Education. *Issues in Information Systems* VII(1), 5.
“...reason for the dominance of asynchronous text discussion in distance education is perhaps the one still most prevalent: It is convenient for both student and instructor. One of the strongest selling points of distance education has been that it could be done anytime, anywhere. Thus, for many online instructors and students, not having to be online at a particular day and time is one of the most attractive features of a distance education course.”

It is notable in this respect, that the evaluation of asynchronous communications dominated research and that as recently as 2007, it was being suggested that “minimal research on synchronous communication has been conducted” and that “of the research performed to date, studies of learners’ perspectives related to synchronous learning lag far behind”

Asynchronous discussion

- “Asynchronous discussion facilitates student learning and higher-level thinking skills, perhaps due to the cognitive processing required in writing, time to reflect upon posted messages and consider written responses, and the public and permanent nature of online postings.” (Johnson, 2006)

- “…the flow of conversation, the building on each other’s utterances in the light of new insight that constitutes dialogue, is interrupted by the asynchronous nature of the online communications. Members wait for some time before questions are answered, while in the gap other topics are pursued.” (Chapman, Ramondt and Smiley, 2005)


"Collaboration is increasingly seen as critical across the range of educational activities, including intra- and inter-institutional activities of any size or scope. As the ways in which researchers, students and teachers can collaborate with each other increase, knowledge is becoming a community property, and the construction of knowledge is becoming a community activity".

82% of the students indicated that the pre-recorded presentations somewhat improved or greatly improved their enthusiasm for study.

75% indicated it enhanced their time management of their study.

87.5% of students responded that it somewhat improved or greatly improved the clarity of their study.

48% felt that the presentations greatly or somewhat improved helping enhance discussions that took place elsewhere (such as within a discussion forum or live meeting).
Presentations - Advantages

“You can always refer back to it later in the semester to hear the lecturer go over the slides/presentation. Going to be handy for exam prep”

“It's great because I could sit at work watching them or at home whenever I wanted and did not have to arrange a time to go to class and listen. Also I had the option of listening and or/reading. A bit of a mixture was good.”

“I'm an audio learner so way better. Can turn the lecture on and listen to it while doing other tasks such as cooking dinner.”
Presentations - Disadvantages

• As well as 86% of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement “The use of presentations fitted in with my study patterns and I felt in control of the pace of my learning”, 55% also indicated a desire to interact with others at the same time as viewing presentations.

• Another student referred to presentations as “one-way messaging” and others commented on not being able to ask questions or interact with the academic staff member at the same time.
Meetings - Advantages

- 81% of students strongly agreed or agreed that the use of video and/or audio enhanced their learning.
- 72% strongly agreed or agreed that Adobe Connect enhanced their interaction with students.
- 83% indicated it enhanced their interaction with the lecturer.
- 81% of students agreed or strongly agreed that the use of Adobe Connect enhanced the quality of the course.
- 79% agreed or strongly agreed that they would take another course with this technology used.
- 79% would also recommend that other courses use the system.
Meetings - Advantages

“Just a great sense of inclusion in the course; connection with the tutor and other students; it is a fantastic addition to the extramural mode.”

“Real time discussion. Ability to ask questions of peers and tutor directly. Conversational interaction - social interaction.”

“Opportunity to meet fellow students and paper co-ordinators. Allows for the sharing of information/resources on a personal level. Able to question/debate subjects or assignments.”
Meetings - Disadvantages

“Interruptions by many questions from other users makes flow of presentation stilted, but still useful to see others questions”.

“Being part time extramural, I don't always have the time to meet online at prescribed times because of work commitments”.

“teachers with a *transmissive* approach are more likely to use ICT applications and tools that support the *presentation* of information” and that “teachers with a *facilitative* approach will attempt to exploit ICT to promote the active engagement of learners and use communication tools that support *dialogue* to promote and develop understanding through discussion and collaboration”.

Transactional Distance

Online synchronous meetings:

- Provides opportunities to increase teacher presence
- Increases student social presence, communication and collaboration
- Provides scope to decrease the sense of isolation

“Increasing dialogue between students and instructors effectively decreases transactional distance”. (Pattillo, 2007)

Student comments - connectivity, real time, instant conversations, live discussions, less ‘alone’, inclusiveness, spontaneity, immediacy.

Perceived by students as useful for providing self-paced material that was enhanced through the use of audio, video, quizzes and multimedia interactivity.

Seen as being beneficial because of the information they were able to convey that text readings were not, including the tone, pace and language used by staff, including hearing foreign languages spoken for those studying this area.

Staff also agreed that the presentation systems added a new dimension to their teaching.
Conclusion - 2 (Adobe Connect)

- Seen as useful as a means of providing educational opportunities that students would miss by studying at a distance.

- Provided opportunities for live presentations and discussion, interaction through quizzes and polls, student or guest staff presentations, screen sharing, small group discussions (through the use of breakout rooms) and meeting recordings for revision.

- Meetings created a sense of immediacy, increased the sense of community amongst students and were seen as contributing factors to improving dialogue amongst all course participants.
Conclusion - 3 (Support needed)

- Technical support, student support and staff professional development
- Staff with a passion, expertise and vision in the effective use of these systems to promote and encourage their use.
- Strategic policies and planning to support the approaches being taken.
- Operational resources, and resources for the support of staff and students should be provided.
- Not only encourage the use of the technologies, but be seen to embrace and commit to the unique and crucial role that they will play in the delivery of courses within an institution.
“...the challenge lies in finding ways to integrate synchronous communication into the asynchronous teaching model, thus preserving the flexibility and convenience of asynchronous communication while enhancing the overall efficiency and quality of communication through synchronous communication” (Corbeil, 2006).

As one staff member commented:

“...you need to identify your teaching style, identify how you are communicating the knowledge and match that to the tools; asking if they do match and what do I need to modify in my teaching style to make these tools and my style work.”

Corbeil, J. R. (2006). The (r)evolution of synchronous communication in Distance Education. *Issues in Information Systems* VII(1), 5.
Thank You

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