

# METTLE 2004 Evaluation

Report prepared for the T&L(M&ET) Committee  
by Paul Fritze, Information Division  
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The METTLE Forum and Showcase event was run by TeLaRS on November 11, 2004. Given the significant organisational effort and staff time involved with such an event, it is important that not only its effectiveness is evaluated, but also every effort should be taken to capitalise on the opportunities it affords. In particular, important community building effects are difficult to measure but of strategic importance the University. A range of outcomes of the event are summarised here, with findings from the evaluation.

## Overview of outcomes

While professional development aspects of the event itself is of course the major outcome, the pre-event planning process also provided an opportunity to survey current issues and concerns staff and to build better connections between Information Division staff and faculties. In addition, resources suitable for ongoing professional development resources and data for further research have been generated.

**Table 1.** Overview of major outcomes

Phase	Approach	Outcomes
<b>Pre-event</b>	One-on-one interviews with 35 staff by six members of the TeLaRS planning team. Interviews coordinated and summarised with purpose built online contacts database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment of METTLE 2004 program with current needs;</li> <li>• qualitative survey of current community issues;</li> <li>• examples of teaching, research and support activities uncovered</li> <li>• connections between Division and faculty staff fostered.</li> </ul>
<b>METTLE Symposium</b>	Refined METTLE program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• external keynote speaker,</li> <li>• University eLearning and LMS strategy reports,</li> <li>• three key issue forums, Poster session.</li> </ul> Monash University participation was encouraged through CELTS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External keynote "Learning designs, student engagement and the role of learning management systems."</li> <li>• Reports on eLearning and LMS strategy presented;</li> <li>• Structured discussions on three key issues at forums;</li> <li>• Poster session provides opportunities for publicity, community contacts;</li> <li>• 23 external registrants, including 16 from Monash, plus others from U21 institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Post-event</b>	Online evaluation survey completed by 70 registrants. Resources generated made accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 91% overall satisfaction with event.</li> <li>• Extensive feedback generated for future event planning.</li> <li>• 50 case examples of teaching, research and support practice documented;</li> <li>• iLecture recordings made available;</li> <li>• summaries of key issues raised in pre-event interviews and key issue forums provided to T&amp;L(M&amp;ET)C;</li> <li>• Significant data has been generated to facilitate research into the MU 'communities of teaching practice' and analysis of client needs by Information Division;</li> <li>• Negotiations with Monash CELTS to exchange seminar speakers</li> </ul>

## Other data and reports:

Complete survey and evaluation data is available for more specific planning of future events, client analysis and communities of practice research.

Event program, keynote summary, iLecture audio, poster session abstracts, and images and video clips from the event can be obtained from <http://www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/telars/mettle/>  
 Paper on “Organisation of a faculty development conference: a neglected phase of institutional community building”.

### **Pre-event networking interviews**

METTLE provided a catalyst for six TeLaRS staff in the planning team to individually meet with a wide cross-section of 35 teaching and support staff for relatively informal discussion of issues related to the use of technology in education. This process should be seen as a professional development in its own right, benefiting both Division and faculty staff. Its purpose was to:

- align the METTLE 2004 program to current needs;
- survey current issues of concern to University staff;
- uncover fresh examples of good teaching and support;
- foster better connections between the Division and faculties.

**Table 2.** Meetings conducted by Division planning group with University staff by faculty and role

Faculty	Role:	coordinator	researcher	support	teacher	Total
Architecture, Building & Planning				1	3	4
Arts		1		1	3	5
Education				3		3
Engineering					3	3
Institute Of Land & Food Resources		1				1
Law		1				1
Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences		1		1	1	3
Science		1	1		1	3
Information Division				10		10
Other University Of Melbourne				2		2
<b>Total</b>		<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>35</b>

Contacts made followed up on leads given in the interviews. The leads provided hint at the nature of the University community, suggesting, for example, that teachers are more closer connected to other teachers than to support staff. T&L coordinators appear to connect to a broader cross-section of people.

**Table 3.** Number and type of leads suggested by interviewees

Leads given to:	Role:	coordinator	researcher	support	teacher	(blank)	Grand Total
coordinators		1				1	2
externals		2				1	3
researchers		1					1
support staff		4		26		2	32
teachers		9	1	21		21	52
<b>Total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>47</b>		<b>23</b>	<b>90</b>
<b>Average</b>		<b>3.4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2.6</b>		<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>

### **Issues raised in pre-event interviews**

The following selection of quotes from pre-event interviews represent the perceptions of a wide cross-section of staff genuinely interested in the use of technology in teaching.

*Overwhelmingly, “BlackBoard implementation process, training” was the major issue of concern:*

"Faculty budget committee need to know implications of migration to BB"

“There are staffing and resource implications. Have had to go ahead with planning for migration - can't wait."

“how will Blackboard support integration of locally developed tools? How can flexibility and individuality be preserved”.

"Don't want to lose "responsiveness" in being able to adapt LMS to meet local situations. Webract has been very effective in doing this and there is concern that this may be lost."  
"the pedagogy, not the technology."

*The issue of changing roles of teachers, students and support staff was noted:*

"Changing role of lecturer and student experience, e.g. impact of iLecture in reducing class experience."  
"Role of [faculty support unit] must change with the move to BB, but the central/faculty responsibilities not clear at this stage."

*The question of staff support was a recurring theme, often referring to the central/faculty models:*

"Local support staff can be very effective - they understand local context, people bump into them and exchange info., can provide one on one support precisely when needed. Training of support staff should include learning about the client background, time pressures, expectations - particularly in courses that have high staff turnover."

"there is a pressing need to connect the literate and non-literate, and that needs to be supported systematically by faculty management."

"Faculty support models and costing is a big issue. Faculties have to plan for no central support, but hope for balance."

"In moving to MU recently, found it difficult to get to know the community."

*The need for sustainable economic models for implementation of ICT were raised by a number of people:*

"Unlike other areas, [our department] has no natural income stream - hence interest in setting up distance education subject... income stream may employ academic and non academic support positions to maintain the course."

"Projects that have survived tend to be the database resources, with others no attracting funds necessary to maintain."

"Economic income stream factors seem to be driving move to online delivery, often done in didactic manner with little pedagogical consideration. Perhaps there is a move from earlier 'innovators' to 'entrepreneurs' less focussed on pedagogical ideas that getting something out of it."

*The need for incentives for teachers continues:*

"Incentives for teachers, e.g. teaching awards, teaching portfolios."

"General picture is that there are few teaching staff interested in technology developments and most of those previously involved are moving away because there is "too much effort and no reward".

"As academics don't mind being involved in using ICT, but hate the idea of publishing on this - need to focus efforts on discipline area. Quite happy to do show and tell, however."

"Need incentives for faculty people, e.g. encouragement by HOD, but it is very hard to get many academics involved. Perceived lack of reward and not enough time. Definitely need this encouragement to be from [faculty] level - where common interests in budget and discipline culture are. Teachers tend not to understand implications of new technology - no time, but do respond to what other staff are doing."

*Assessment, and in particular plagiarism issues, is an important consideration for teaching:*

"Assessment is important. Plagiarism really should include issues of information literacy - setting standards and educating student (not just about the tools like Turn it in)."

"Would be good to have broader discussion about the role of Turn it in, policing Vs educating, impact of assessment on teaching & learning practices, options for Melb uni, alternative T&L and assessment, integration of turn it in with BB."

## The METTLE event

METTLE 2004 built on the format of 2003, refined in the light of changing focus of the University environment and feedback. In particular,

- a general focus on Learning Management Systems was adopted.
- an keynote speaker was invited to bring an external perspective of core issues of teaching in the context of LMS introduction;
- key issues for the forum sessions were chosen as:
  - A central LMS: the possibilities and perils
  - On the horizon: the impact of emerging technologies on teaching and learning
  - Assessment: new models and current issues
- improved poster session layout, wider opportunities for participation and provision of food.

The number of registrations was 293 (up from 271 in 2004)

15 of the 22 external registrants were from Monash.

Two other representations from U21 Global institutions

169 registered for all sessions.

106 were listed as authors of poster presentations (this includes 49 who did not actually register)

Reports of the three forums by appointed TeLaRS reporters are given in the Appendix.

**Table 4.** Registration by faculty, role. \*staff percentages based on 2004 Faculty Profiles.

<b>Role:</b>	Architecture	Arts	Economics & Commerce	Education	Engineering	External	Information Division	Institute Of Land & Food Resources	Law	Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences	Other MU Area	Science	Veterinary Science	<b>Total</b>
Blank		2	2	2	1	2	10			5	1	1		<b>26</b>
Admin	1	1	3	1		2	12		3	4	8	2		<b>37</b>
Research		1		1	2	1	1	1		3		1		<b>11</b>
Student				3	1		1				1	1		<b>7</b>
Support		3	3	3	1	3	43	1	1	6	9	5		<b>78</b>
Teaching		1	2	2		9	2	3		19		8	1	<b>47</b>
Teaching & research	1	9	6	10	10	5	4	2	3	18	2	16	1	<b>87</b>
<b>Total staff</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>293</b>
% of faculty*	2.1	3.1	5.3	8.5	3.7	-	17	2.5	4.5	3.7	-	5.4	1.0	
<b>New staff:</b>		2	3		2	-	5		1	8	2	2		<b>25</b>

### Session registrations:

Keynote	1	15	9	20	13	18	60	6	6	44	17	27	2	<b>238</b>
Strategic	1	16	13	20	13	18	66	6	6	45	19	32	2	<b>257</b>
emergTech	1	7	3	9	4	6	26	1	1	18	8	5	1	<b>90</b>
assessment	0	3	3	2	4	5	3	0	3	19	3	4	1	<b>50</b>
centralLMS	0	6	7	9	4	5	30	5	3	11	6	20	0	<b>106</b>
Poster	2	13	10	20	13	15	49	6	6	42	14	23	2	<b>215</b>

## **METTLE 2004 evaluation**

70 registrants responded to the online evaluation survey:

Overall, 91% were satisfied or very satisfied overall

Catering: 93%

Venue: 94%

94% thought Ron Oliver's Keynote session useful or very useful

eLearning strategy: 56%

Blackboard report: 55%

Forums: 88%

Posters: 82%

**Table 5.** Satisfaction with organisational aspects

	<b>Very satisfied</b>	<b>Satisfied</b>	<b>undecided</b>	<b>dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very dissatisfied</b>
<b>Overall</b>	18	46	4	1	1
<b>Catering</b>	39	25	3	0	1
<b>Venue</b>	26	39	3	2	

**Table 6.** Usefulness of different sessions

	<b>very useful</b>	<b>useful</b>	<b>undecided</b>	<b>disappointing</b>	<b>very disappointing</b>
<b>Keynote</b>	34	14	2	2	
<b>eLearning Strategy</b>	10	23	12	13	1
<b>Blackboard report</b>	6	27	11	10	6
<b>Forum</b>	16	35	1	3	3
<b>Posters</b>	19	30	8	3	

21 respondents involved in presenting posters indicated a range of benefits. 31 respondents indicated they were interested in presenting a poster next year

**Table 7.** Benefits reported by 21 poster session participants

<b>Benefit reported</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Admin</b>	<b>Research</b>	<b>Student</b>	<b>Support</b>	<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Teaching &amp; research</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>New contacts ideas</b>	1		1		6	4	1	13	62
<b>publicity</b>			1		4	3	1	9	43
<b>Potential collaboration</b>	1		1		9	3	3	17	81
<b>recognition</b>					5	1	1	7	33
<b>Improved understanding</b>	1		1		2	3	2	9	43
					2	1	1	4	19

## **Survey comments**

A selection of comments here represent themes emerging in feedback on the different sessions.

### **Keynote session:**

“Engaging speaker with practical advice!”

“Excellent summary of what's important”

“Inspirational re the big picture.”

“Inspiring and practical speaker. Must check out the utilities on his Web site.”

“It was great having a keynote speaker from outside the university - this was a great initiative. His whole talk is directly relevant to the area I work in and his delivery was enthusiastic & entertaining!”

### **Blackboard**

“bit hard to understand”

“Demonstrations - preview of Blackboard not particularly useful in promoting the features of the LMS”

“Disappointing that a detailed timeline of events for implementation was not provided. In addition, lack of discussion regarding the positives and negatives of Blackboard.”

“Good to know what is ahead.”

“...Accessibility issues very concerning ... lack of thought given to this major issue. “

“tried to both demonstrate the LMS and explain its adoption in the bigger picture - doing both didn't work so well.”

### **Strategy:**

“5 mins at outset would do for this more "political" statement”

“Didn't come out with any definite/new info”

“Need visuals (eg powerpoint slides) to accompany talk.”

“Provided insights into Uni's strategic directions and focus for web-mediated learning and teaching”

### **Forums:**

“pity ... there was no time for discussion on broader issues”

“As before, too much time was spent on looking at how this system can be brought "up to scratch" with certain functionalities - eg. transfer of existing question banks - and not enough time was spent on telling us why Blackboard will be better...”

“Some useful reports regarding assessment - always the most difficult issue.”

“The 2 talks about Blackboard were worthwhile.”

“The speakers were knowledgeable and obviously very interested and concerned about their topics, plus eager to share experiences.”

“Very good to hear what people have been doing in the past 12 months.”

### **Posters:**

“Great to share experiences of others”

interesting...but only looked at a few

“it would be better to have the tables out from the poster material. o/wise a great space.”

“Locating lunch near the poster displays had its merits and disadvantages.”

“Only a few posters were of relevance to my discipline.”

“Terrific variety. Good to see what people are up to in snapshot views.”

“Useful - but less excitement & bustle than last year.”

### ***Points for discussion and recommendations for 2005***

The continued overall acceptance of this event makes its continuation in some form worthwhile, even as the Information Division redefines its services in 2005. Above all, there is a clear need to locate future events of this type within the broader planning of professional development activities across the University, e.g.

- future symposium events, seminars and newsletter services run in the Division;
- activities run by CSHE and other services (in particular the VC's Colloquium).

Ron Oliver's keynote presentation proved to be universally engaging and of practical benefit. Numbers of staff referred to the useful resources available at his Website. It will be a challenge to replicate this next year.

The key issue forums and poster sessions continue to be useful to staff. Over the last two years, however, the reporting of University strategies and directions has proved less successful. It appears difficult to tie this to annual events and could perhaps be more effectively disseminated through news releases, occasional seminars, etc.

It has been indicated how this event can foster connections between people and groups within different communities, in particular through forum session involvement or within poster presentations. For example there is an excellent opportunity to involve people from other institutions working with Blackboard, or encourage further contact with industry partners and U21 institutions. The strong involvement of Monash staff within the poster session was particularly appreciated and has led to further collaboration in professional development activities. Participation of postgraduate students could also be encouraged.

Data generated from this and previous events are underpinning research into the flow of knowledge within and across the University communities. These investigations align strongly with the factors supporting campus activity hubs raised in Ken Fisher's Libraries 10 Year Strategic Plan Report, which can be extended to teaching and support community, for example a Social Network Analysis perspective. <http://www.infodiv.unimelb.edu.au/bms/buildingservices/libstrat.html>

At a practical level, analysis of client needs, community participation and feedback from this activity has the potential to assist in the re-alignment of the Information Division to client-orientated services.

# METTLE 2004 – Keys Issue Forum reports

## **1. A Central Learning Management System: Possibilities And Perils (Wood Theatre)**

Convenor: Peter Tregloan

Reporter: David Cunnington

An opportunity to discuss support and training for Blackboard, how we can use it, what experiences others have had.

### **Robyn McCormick, RMIT Applied Science – BB possibilities and perils**

RMIT already using BB 5, soon to upgrade to BB 6. Speaking from experience as a user, to support face-to-face teaching and the delivery of online resources.

- Pre-BB used shared drives, departmental only, on campus only – but changed with BB
- For students starting with BB there are O Week introductory presentations, then repeatedly show students from then on.
- Access to BB is via the Learning Hub (Uni portal), which manages authentication and access to other tools.
- BB opens at Announcements page. Support material is available online.
- Use BB for – announcements/current info, course info, how to use site, staff contacts and info, course documents, assignments (email, discussion boards), authoring and editing course.

Discussion is more successful if linked to assessment.

Samples tend to be bland but useful.

Link through to separate course website provides more flexible options (“perhaps this is more appealing”).

Unexpected twist was discovery that BB notes changes to quizzes that are made after submission date, indicating which students had changed their answers.

Compliance issues are important – keep copy of site, make available to current and previously enrolled students. Makes problem by keeping all ever-enrolled students on the grade book.

Resistors have taken to BB easily because of the simplicity of use.

*Q:* At logon which subjects are shown?

*A:* All enrolled subjects – 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester (at the moment)

### **Dianne Chambers, Education – staff support:**

Not specifically talking about BB but model for EdFac staff support for technology, developed and used over past 5 years, is designed to provide facilitators and remove barriers to staff learning.

Support is based around a team of “fabulous individuals” with both technical and educational knowledge, who “know what we are doing for students.”

Model based on 3 dimensions:

**Model** – Seminars (current issues, new things, all staff, raising awareness), hands-on less used, mismatch between needs and not good value (might be ok with BB temporarily because of shared goals). Now PD Model is Just-in-Time – using P/T staff contactable via email, in a one-on-one context. Usually leads to other problem solving for the academic, maintain visibility and develops relationship between support staff and academic. (It was noted that the UniMelb ‘flying angel’ was in fact Nike – ‘goddess of victory’, but also Just Do It...i.e. solve immediate problem now and that will lead to follow-up and greater insight into individual support.)

**Time** – varying lead times (long, medium, very short, urgent).



**Place** – Centralised (more staff but don't belong to anyone, better knowledge of technology) vs Devolved (greater empathy and understanding of faculty, can lead to isolation, look at development of WebRAFT support as good model (support/academic/developer)

Proposed support model for BB:

- Central Help Desk
- Staff embedded in faculty
- Share accountability for learning and network.

*Q:* How do you balance technology skills with educational knowledge in support staff?

*A:* Balance underpins empathy and goals, so that sharing improves. Can each staff that is easy to learn but shared goals is a deeper cultural issue.

*Q:* What is the ratio of support to academic staff? Will it change?

*A:* No increase in funds and will manage support with current budget. May be able to plead special case to Faculty....but not yet.

*Richard MacDonald* outlined the BB Project model – central interface working closely with Faculty support, where it exists. Will also be a Support Manager, Application Manager, Academic Support Manager and staff, plus TeLaRS support – PBCLC, CDDP, LRS.

*Peter Tregloan* – indicated that TaLMET were concerned with the amount of resources that will be needed for support.

*Lisa Wise* – Monash experience is that there is never enough support.

### **Lisa Wise, Medicine – impact on Online Learning Unit, MDHS**

This is a cautionary tale – a professional academic in psychology got involved with the web as a cost-cutting exercise but now an online learning specialist. Not a recommended path as online teaching requires lots of technical skills.

Learning Management Systems line up alongside 'other' management systems e.g. content management, information management, digital object management, and draws on the applications that make up the system, i.e. email, discussions, quizzes, chat, authentication, etc.

Vendors like to make you use their product their way. If there is a problem for the user it may lie in the multiple layers of the system architecture therefore needing a high level of technical support.

LMS is part of an Enterprise Management System, i.e. portal, management systems, databases, applications and files, link together with LDAP authentication.

So, for the IT world, the LMS is just 'another admin system.'

ERPs are immature – still a way to go before we develop 'true' expertise for LMSs, perhaps another 10 years.

Need to define what is 'best practice.'

Perils and possibilities:

- ERP vs pedagogical tools

- Standardisation vs innovation (still 'mainstreaming the virtual') – e.g. small changes to terminology might mean changing much more, danger!

- Admin/tech/academic roles and responsibilities – possible to develop a mismatch between LMS and existing roles, may lead to a job shift or change in role. Material preparation may shift from office to technician/academic.

- Cost savings vs cost shifting - printing might shift from department to library/academic/user
- Branding vs usability – customizing may lead to inconsistency.

- Web-authoring responsibilities – where does Quality Assurance lie, what skills do academics need (individual and group), how are job responsibilities and access rights managed, active facilitation of discussion groups, for example, is time intensive and difficult to achieve, who is actually completing the assessment?

*Questions:*

*Debbie Weaver* – Monash noted that their students see current subjects only. Once subject is finished it is removed from the directory. What are the students left with? Do students still have to print out notes, this is still not agreed to at Monash.

*Peter Tregloan* – at Melbourne access will be provided for students to older material, and access to courses for prospective students.

*Richard MacDonald* – Material will be available until end of degree. Still not decided after that.

*Debbie Weaver* – could archive and provide CD.

*Lisa Wise* – access to content is academic's choice and can provide 'guest' access.

*Simon Strong* (Melb Uni Bookshop) – Bookshop currently sells teaching packages and keen to participate in any further packaging of materials for LMS, such as CD-ROM, printing on demand, etc.

*Question* – which version? The course the student did. No updates.

*Question* – what evidence exists that knowledge acquisition is different pre and post-internet. Som?

*Richard MacDonald* – comment: once implemented the students tend to be the ones who drive the LMS, mainly because of increased accessibility.

*Question* – from LFR Country campus – time taken to settle in and get usage up will be based on access via networks and users equipment. Network a problem for country LFR campuses, so there is already a two-tiered system.

*Peter Tregloan* – Money is certainly being used for all campus infrastructure improvements.

*Dawn Gleeson* – How do we deal with students doing parallel subjects that share common information, where does the common page exist?

*Richard MacDonald* – this can be done in BB. BB subject is matched to the Student Handbook and can also be used for non-handbook courses.

*Question* – Student Portal – not tied to subject and could be the place to provide the generic approach.

Peter Tregloan extended the session by 15 minutes into lunchtime and there will still more questions to be raised.

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18/11/2004

## **2. On the horizon: the impact of emerging technologies on teaching and learning (Copland Theatre)**

Convenor: Liz Sonenberg

Reporter: Paul Fritze

Liz introduced the discussion by describing some of the new technologies available now and on the horizon that will impact on us. As an example, as wireless technology options expand and there is integration of phone, PDA, messaging devices, the way we look at technology changes

<b>Technology:</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Bluetooth:	2-20 m		Personal area network
WiFi:	10-50m	54MB/sec	
WiMax	500m-5k	fast	Metropolitan area, in notebooks by 2006
3G	to 50k	.4-2MB/sec	Mobile internet

Fast and ready access to fast internet services will no longer be necessarily tied to specific hardware or geographical locations. This will challenge how we conceive classroom and campus experiences, but students adapt very easily to these new technologies - we need to be prepared.

### **Jon Peacock (Information Division) - Teaching spaces plan**

Jon described a personal vision of teaching spaces at Melbourne that will featured increasing convenience and different ways in which students engage and higher interaction between students and presenters. His personal vision for teaching spaces is for them to be elegant, comfortable and easy to use, empowering both students and academics.

Management of the 270 teaching spaces of the University come under the 2003-8 Teaching Spaces Management Plan.

The 'basic' lecture theatre is dying, with seminar rooms are being continuously upgraded; the higher end spaces being fitted with dual data display and DVD players. Demand for improved collaborative learning spaces that combine wireless and mobile learning technologies is increasing. An example of new spaces is provided by the foyers of lecture theatres, used as students wait for classes to begin. We need to rethink these types of spaces with new furniture and equipment.

iLecture auto recording of lectures is being rapidly taken up, with 53 spaces now equipped. Student hits on iLecture have dramatically increased, being used for review (particularly prior to exams) and for ESL support. Video capture of the document camera is being added as a service and can be "compelling learning aid" to complement the audio. Jon showed an example of a lecturer explaining concepts while gesturing to areas on the projected page.

A new style of user-friendly touch panel is being introduced in theatres, complete with a wireless remote control, enabling the lecture to move amongst the audience.

A keypad technology will be piloted in 2005. This comes with a PowerPoint plug in that enables lecturers to set questions to which students respond using the handsets with the results immediately projected.

To assist in maintenance and reliability, data projectors are now connected to the network and can be interrogated remotely and checked for faults

### **Peter Jones (Law) - PDA project**

Peter Jones provided overviewed the PDA trial carried out in Law this year to a group of 20 Jurisprudence students. This was part of a larger project involving the Department of Information Systems, MD&HS and the Information Division.

The purpose of the trial was in part a response to student queries about the use of PDAs and to evaluate their educational benefits and inform future policy and support procedures. Trials have been run in Stanford, NUS, but most studies focus on traditional use as diaries; no studies have been done in Australia.

The new Law building provides particular support the use of wireless technologies – a facility demanded by teachers and reflecting the use of discussion and ready access to legal information sources in Law.

The JD course is a two year intensive degree conducted with small group classes, students have significant work experience, average age of 35, proven study skills, different background and different technical skills levels.

Funding for the initiative was generated by purposeful approaches to companies that eventually resulted in Hewlett Packard eventually coming back with an offer six months later. HP needed a larger application so the opportunity to build a collaboration with Rural Health and Information Systems was developed. Law received 26 5550 iPaq PDAs and tablet PCs.

All students chose to opt in to the trial and were given information on legal aspects and evaluation. Support provided included HP and in-house documents, training. Support staff were trained prior to students.

Evaluation was undertaken through initial survey, later survey and focus groups. Benefits noted included the replacement of traditional diaries; students liked pocket Word and Excel, its AV and MM capacity and being able to review performances in the MOOT court room. Other benefits were access to legal information, note taking (students provided with folding keyboards) sharing work, enhancement of professional skills relevant to law firms, presentation tool, quiz tool, voice recorder and submitting questions to lecturer (although this was not so apparent in the small groups run in Law).

Problems identified included limitations in software, e.g. Pocket Word deletes footnotes!; occasional need to reset computer, limited text size (ok for blocks of text, but not for indented legislation). The landscape mode was better for this. Staff made little use of PDAs in classes.

Some attempt was made to partner with legal publishers to generate eBooks. In the end used some in-house content and reproduced some other materials.

The final surveys indicated a generally positive view. They appreciated the variety of applications and added more individually. Use of the PDAs varied widely from student to student. Overall, the PDAs cannot fully replace the desktop computer.

In questions Peter noted that there are no plans to carry this approach into future years primarily due to funding issues.

### **Patrick Blanchard (Information Division) - Mobile devices**

Patrick demonstrated a number of applications of current technologies. He noted that ‘trivial use’ is the key – if you have them with you all the time.

The ‘Alive’ text to speech application allows you to listen to pdf, Word or html files wherever you are. The Microsoft Reader eBook format is really useful and easy to use. The University of Virginia has a large collection of out of copyright books available which you can download into your library. Words can be looked up in the Encarta Pocket Dictionary (in different languages). You can highlight, annotate, make bookmarks, saving these for later as well as copy text into other applications and listen to reading. It is also very easy to create your own eBooks with a simple plug in for Word.

The issue of recharging of PDAs was raised, Jon noting that installation of such facilities is difficult and uses space.

The suggestion of using mobile phones as keypad devices to register student responses was noted as an idea to follow up.

### **3. Assessment: New Models and Current Issues (Commerce Th 1)**

Convenor Ron Oliver

Reporter: David Hirst

#### **Michelle Livett (Science): Online Assessment and Feedback at the University of Melbourne:**

A TALMET working group was formed to examine ‘Online Assessment and Feedback at the University of Melbourne’.

It was guided by two strategies from the university’s Teaching and Learning Strategy Plan:

- *Strategy 3*: Ensure that modes of assessment are making an effective contribution to the quality of standards of learning outcomes.
- *Strategy 9*: Strengthen the impetus towards the transformation of teaching and learning through appropriate use of new technologies.

The study was conducted in 3 phases:

- Survey of teaching staff.
- Dialogue with Faculty Multimedia Coordinators.
- Individual interviews with 7 staff members.

Take-home messages from the study:

- There is a lot of activity within the university in the use of online assessment and feedback: 30-40% of subjects.
- There is widespread interest in pursuing more online assessment.
- Staff expressed strong interest in more PD support.
- Fostering online assessment requires more support of academics.

Michelle displayed faculty by faculty data which seemed to show:

1. Use of:
  - Feedback and assessment tools.
  - Submission tools.
2. A lot of interest.

Assessment types used:

1. Quizzes.
  - Lot of use
  - Mainly for monitoring progress rather than assessment.
  - Many of the quizzes in use are far more sophisticated than the use of just plain text.
2. Non-quiz assessment:
  - Higher rate of use for assessment than quizzes.

- The most-used style is extended response graded by tutor.
3. Online submission type:
- 83 subjects
  - 11,400 enrolments
  - Less than quizzes but still significant.

Impact on students' perceptions of feedback:

- No convincing evidence from the QoT #4 question.
- But anecdotal evidence shows that students appreciate the feedback.

Stimulus to use online feedback and assessment:

- Ease of use.
- Colleagues positive encouragement.
- Grants and other incentives.

Effect on teaching practice:

- More informed of students' progress.
- More engagement with the students.

Issues:

- Increase in workload through having to assist students more on peripheral tasks.

Recommendations 1:

- A professional support plan is required.
- Ensure the LMS Professional Development includes discussion of the sophisticated tools already available.
- Accommodate existing models with the new LMS.
- Promote existing guidelines (eg. AUTC Report).

Michelle then listed some details on staff demand for the proposed support requirements.

Recommendations 2:

- Provide incentives and encouragement.
- Identify impediments to use of systems 24/7.
- Provide more support.

An implementation committee has been set up, for this and other Assessment reports in the university, and its work will be ongoing throughout 2005.

References:

- 23 June 2004 Academic Board Papers, see:
- <http://cgi.unimelb.edu.au/abp/archive/2004/pdf/0405A04b.pdf>

### **Ric Canale (LMS Project Director, Information Division): Blackboard Assessment Features**

Ric used the university's 'play pen' implementation of the Blackboard learning management system to demonstrate some of its assessment tools.

Beginning at the 'Control Panel', Ric selected the 'Assessment Panel' and made the following points:

- It is best to avoid going straight to the 'Test Manager', but rather ...
- Setup your test using the 'Pool Manager'. The assessments can be exported or you can share questions across multiple tests.
- Importing and exporting questions (to and from Blackboard) can be done using the QTI-IMS standard. The 'Respondence' software (for Windows OS only) can be used for text to XML translation.
- Question translation tools could be developed where there is a significant need within the university.

Q: Would keeping 'Test Pilot' running be an option? (One advantage of 'Test Pilot' is the support for random variables.)

A: It may be a possibility, or the translation of 'Test Pilot' – formatted questions may be possible. (Ric will be meeting with Sandra Silcot to discuss some of the issues.)

Ric continued his demonstration with the 'Gradebook' in Blackboard:

- When assignments and tests are created, they are automatically added to the Gradebook.
- Weightings for assessment components can be varied.

Q: Does Blackboard support hurdle requirement-type assessment?

A: Not known at the moment – needs further investigation.

Blackboard also supports the following group functions:

- Group discussion.
- Group sharing of files

### **Anna Shadbolt (Turnitin project, Information Division): Turnitin**

Anna's talk centred on the pilot study of the 'Turnitin' plagiarism detection software. She began by framing four questions:

- Is plagiarism an issue?
- What can Turnitin do?
- What has the pilot study shown?
- What are the cost implications?

Anna then began to address these questions...

*Is plagiarism a problem?*

- Various studies have shown that as much as 30-40% of student papers have plagiarized material.

*What does Turnitin do?*

- Scans submissions.
- Scans the web, the PROQUEST database of material, and papers submitted to Turnitin since 1998. It looks for matching text.

*What it can't do.*

- Distinguish between a direct quote properly cited or incorrectly cited.
- It therefore doesn't have any value system, it merely reports any matched text.
- The academic must make the decision on whether plagiarism has occurred.

*What has the pilot study shown?*

- 2121 student assignments have been scanned.
- 
- Of those scanned only 4% were actually plagiarised.
- Most students get it right.
- Of those getting it wrong, most are ESL students.
- Turnitin can act as a deterrent, i.e. students make sure they get their citation right.

*Benefits*

- Checking occurs against subsequent student cohorts in the same subject.
- Better informs teachers of writing skills of students.
- Better informs students of gaps in their skills and understandings. (DH: How?)
- Helps academics build a case when academic dishonesty has occurred.

*Costs*

- If it is only used as a stick it can damage the trust within the teaching-learning environment.
- Takes time.
- Student submissions must be electronic.

Q: What about copyright on student work?

A: A declaration must be placed on a cover page so that the student acknowledges that the assignment will be scanned by the university.

Q: Which jurisdiction do the assignments get stored in?

A: The USA.

Q: What is the annual licence fee?

A: US\$21,000 pa.

Q: What about the identified gaps?

A: It is only a tool and it requires academic scrutiny.

Q: Are text books, etc included in the scanning?

A: Only electronic versions can be scanned. It currently only uses the PROQUEST database and only includes what is available via the web. It brings up the original source.

Q: Were the students who submitted in the pilot study informed?

A: Yes.

Q: What was the reaction of those guilty of plagiarism?

A: The answer is that it is a matter of changing the culture.  
The session then closed.



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