

## POSTER PRESENTATION

### Choosing a virtual learning environment for the University of Bristol

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We are currently exploring the potential of, and practicalities involved in, the implementation of networked learning tools across the University of Bristol. Our project is to ascertain first the readiness of the institution for such an implementation and second, the form such an implementation should take.

An assessment of the expectations, attitudes and 'readiness' of our academic staff and students for networked learning will form the core of our evaluation – our poster presentation will report on the feedback we gain during this first stage, and present our conclusions as to the most appropriate ways forward. The presentation will cover findings which are specific to the University of Bristol, but will encompass issues which will be of relevance in other institutional contexts.

The second stage of our evaluation will involve looking in detail at specific Virtual Learning Environment tools and applications. In accordance with the approach recommended by the authors of the JTAP report *A Framework for Pedagogical Evaluation of Virtual Learning Environments*<sup>1</sup>, we will be attempting to analyse the available features of selected Virtual Learning Environment tools alongside an appraisal both of the educational principles informing their design, and the organisational context within which any chosen tool(s) will be implemented.

Our poster will present the approaches we take to this second stage of the evaluation task, describing the evaluation frameworks we adopt and reporting on our conclusions. In particular we will be asking not only which Virtual Learning Environment tool(s) best meet the needs of our institution, but also whether a cross-institutional approach to such an implementation is appropriate within this particular context. Is the centralised provision and support of such networked learning tools the way forward, or should we be looking at ways to enable individual academics and departments to select the tools most appropriate to their specific teaching needs? Given the constraints presented by the need for interoperability and adherence to standards, is some kind of hybrid approach possible or desirable?

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<sup>1</sup> Sandy Britain and Oleg Liber (1999) *A Framework for Pedagogical Evaluation of Virtual Learning Environments* (JTAP Report 41)