

Notes from DLF on 05.03.19

(1) Interactive Learning Space at Dalhousie 2S15

We began with an input from Jonathan Walker of UoDIT. He reminded us that his team works from 08.00-22.00 hrs, so classroom-related IT issues can be dealt with, even out of normal office hours – by contacting help4u@dundee.ac.uk. The out of hours team's support would extend to helping DL staff, when there's any kind of tech failure/problem, pertaining to teaching and learning.

We were taken through a useful introduction to the general purpose of 2S15 and 'apps anywhere', which is currently only available through the managed student desktop, and so not suitable for distance learners. A 'bring your own device' project team is looking into extending the service so that students can install 'apps anywhere' on their own devices. Several of the apps available through 'apps anywhere' are also available through MS 365 (such as all the Office apps), offering the potential for some consistency of provision as it allows all students on a programme to use the same version of software, making it easier for staff to advise if something goes wrong.

Jonathan reported that students have been polled to find out what hardware they use (by the 'bring your own device' team). It was requested that distance learning students should be polled re this: Jonathan will feed back to the relevant staff in UoDIT.

Staff can request other software to be installed on 'apps anywhere' and providing licensing allows, Jonathan's team will sort out (contact help4u@dundee.ac.uk).

There was some discussion re Sonic Wall, which is adjudged by many to be much superior to the old VPN. It is useful for accessing certain licensed software – and can speed up access to journals from the LLC, as well as giving staff access to H and S drives when off campus. This is available to all and can be publicised to students.

We briefly discussed how 2S15 could be used by distance learning students and staff; it was suggested that Panopto could be used for live streaming from an event in the room, or distance learners could Skype in and, in relevant situations (such as the forthcoming LearnFest), one of the 'pods' around 2S15 could be set aside specifically to allow those at a distance to participate.

Jonathan demonstrated how the instructor computer can broadcast to all and how that facility can be extended to learners in the pods; it is clear there is lots of potential, particularly for F2F teaching, in this room – although it was recognised that staff would need to practise ahead of the event! Jonathan assured attendees that teaching staff would be supported by his team, providing they are given advance notice.

Jonathan would welcome any feedback from staff or students about IT equipment or accommodation, e.g. if the lighting is too bright and is affecting the quality of learning and teaching; feedback would also be helpful re the 'apps anywhere' repository: he would like to know, which categories would be useful for sorting content?

He will find out what the end date is for the 'bring your own device' project (ie when 'apps anywhere' might become available to all students) – and let us know.

(2) The University's Survey Service

Iain Gillespie introduced the University's Survey Service. He reported that the survey service team will do a lot of work for the staff and so it is not necessary for everyone to learn a lot about the technicality of Jisc Online Surveys (which has recently taken over from Bristol Online Surveys). Students can also get help from the Survey Service team – with queries. We were urged not to set up a free Demo account; instead request a JOS account from the Survey Service team. Iain ran through the different stages of setting up a survey: design, distribution and analysis; including an appropriate structure, starting off with a Welcome page and a note about GDPR. He demonstrated the different types of questions available.

We were instructed not to use other software, such as Survey Monkey and Surveygizmo – which are not recommended for legal and intellectual reasons – they are not necessarily subject to UK laws including GDPR.

(3) Taught Postgraduate survey

Martin Glover introduced the above survey and shared some results of the one which is currently live. Since 2018 this has been conducted through an internal survey; using JISC online survey service; same set of questions as designed by the HEA for the national survey of taught postgraduate students. It is designed to be quick for taught postgrads to undertake. User access control functionality, with each student being issued with an individual identifier, ensuring that students only complete the survey once. It is now delivered to them by email link, as a rolling survey, targeting different groups of students throughout the year – at a time adjudged to be best for each cohort (e.g. after their second module). Distance learning students are included in all the reminders which are sent to all students until they respond to the survey – or when it closes, whichever happens first.

There has historically been a low take up and response from PGs – around 25% to date - compared with NSS – run by IPSOS Mori. However, the survey is still ongoing and is including a lot more students this academic session, because it is being sent out on a rolling basis, rather than just once a year as previously.

Martin would be pleased to hear from staff about what they'd like to find out from the survey.

It was suggested that programme teams could publicise UoDTPG survey, as it is possible that the current subject line on the email may not catch the attention of distance learners, who often receive email from central university which is not necessarily relevant to their context (e.g. about events specifically in Dundee).

It was also noted that disseminating information through University Learning and Teaching Committee doesn't always reach the right people in all teaching contexts! Martin will look into finding a way to communicate directly with all programme leads (it was suggested that this is information which Admissions now has).

Next DLF meeting:

9 May 2019 Dalhousie 1G06 14-16.00 hrs

Topic: 365 tools and Blackboard Ultra

Email Aileen and Susie with your ideas for future sessions please!

a.mcguigan@dundee.ac.uk or s.j.schofield@dundee.ac.uk