

A decade of change @ CSU 1999 – 2009

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This poster depicts the progression of multimedia learning resource development and related systems at Charles Sturt University (CSU) over the last 10 years from *ad hoc* audio and visual production to mainstreamed digital multimedia development. In 2000 the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching (CELT) established three campus-based Learning Media Laboratories. These are staffed by educational designers/technologists who assist staff with the development of innovative multimedia resources (largely through CDs) to enhance their teaching and to supplement their print based subject resources. As the demand for the affordances of the medium increased, the individual 'boutique' production of multimedia became unsustainable and the university moved to a mainstreamed and centrally supported process for multimedia development. The multimedia development process is designed to be responsive to the changing needs of staff and students in an ever changing landscape of educational technology. With an increased focus on blended learning, and following the university-wide implementation in 2008 of an open source learning management system, *CSU Interact*, further changes in demand for support of multimedia development are anticipated.

Keywords: multimedia, learning management system, online learning, mainstream.

Introduction

This poster depicts the progression of multimedia learning resource development and related systems at Charles Sturt University (CSU) over the last 10 years from *ad hoc* audio and visual production to mainstreamed digital multimedia development. Over two thirds of CSU's 36,000 students are enrolled through the distance mode where delivery has traditionally been largely resource based learning through print materials, with all subjects fully supported online since 1998.

A number of trends that have impacted on multimedia development are discussed below.

Online learning environment

The online learning environment (OLE) developed from a trial of 26 subjects in 1997 to a continuum from online supplemented to online supported for all subjects by 1999. This was managed as a University wide enterprise with fixed timelines and centralised control. Initially the OLE was utilised for administrative information, subject outlines and assessment criteria. The online environment then moved to include in-house developed communication forums, chat and online quiz tools. We can regard this as Web 1.0. The online learning environment was initially referred to as the virtual learning environment.

In 2003 a flexible publishing tool was made available that teaching staff could use to self publish digital resources. This enabled student's access to online digital resources not previously made available in other subject material delivery modes. There was limited central support for the development of resources for use via flexible publishing. The Open Source Learning Management System, *CSU Interact* (based on Sakai (Charles Sturt University, 2007)) was introduced in January 2006 for CSU researchers only for collaboration with other researchers both within the University and externally. An evaluation of various online learning environments for learning and teaching purposes was conducted in 2006 and Sakai was selected.

This integrated Online Learning Environment, *CSU Interact* (Charles Sturt University, 2008) was extended for learning and teaching in January 2008. *CSU Interact* is linked to an overarching

vision of the CSU learning environment and related improvements in the quality of learning and teaching. This allows staff and students to also access a number of CSU-developed applications such as OASIS (online multi-choice), as well as a collection of new teaching and learning tools more aligned to Web 2.0.

Pedagogical shift

Pedagogical approaches in the early 1990s were geared towards information dissemination and strongly relied on resource based learning.

In the late 1990s educational designers increasingly supported the design for online and multimedia, working directly with academic staff. In house developed collaborative tools enabled more social constructivist pedagogies. Educational design started moving towards course based design approaches.

Introduction of *CSU Interact* for learning and teaching in 2008 enables social construction of knowledge through the utilisation of Web 2.0 technology. Pedagogical approaches are progressing towards blended and convergent learning and teaching.

Learning designs

Initially learning designs were informal, individualised and eclectic. The introduction of formal and pedagogically grounded learning designs was based on the work of the Learning Designs Working Party 2005-2006. These learning designs are used within resource production in the learning media laboratories. The sharing of learning designs occurred within academic disciplines. CSU is currently moving towards University wide sharing of documented learning designs through a central web-based showcase.

University technology framework

The 1997 Technology Plan had a key objective to introduce emerging technologies and media with a focus of online support which resulted in all subjects online supported by 1999. The Virtual Learning Environment Working Party 2005-2006 emphasised the need for an integrated Online Learning Environment. The recent Learning and Teaching plan 2007-2011 seeks to align learning and teaching with the key objectives of the University Strategy 2007-2011 (Charles Sturt University, 2005) and builds upon the successes of the earlier plan (2002-2007).

Multimedia development

The Learning Materials Centre (LMC) and the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching (CELT) was established in 1998 from the Open Learning Institute. CELT was derived from existing units of the Open Learning Institute and had particular responsibilities for educational design and education innovation, including the use of technology in education. Multimedia production had largely been audio and visual production done on an ad hoc basis for individual academic staff. The use of VHS and analogue media was dominant.

In 2001 CELT established Learning Media Laboratories (LMLs) at Albury, Bathurst and Wagga Wagga campuses. Boutique digital media production was dominant. Development of multimedia started moving towards systemic and centrally supported processes and developing sustainable and scalable processes and products.

The current development model is the mainstreaming of digital multimedia following a team based approach focussed on learning designs. The team based approach brought together staff from the LMC, CELT and academia. Do-it-yourself online learning has become popular through the use of CSU Interact, CSU's online learning environment. The evolution of this process has necessitated upskilling of educational designers, learning materials production officers and restructuring of positions within the Centre for Enhancing Learning and Teaching (CELT) and the Learning Materials Centre (LMC) to support the move to a team-based multimedia development process on a university-wide scale.

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