

RSC Newsletter

Summer 2009

Stimulating and supporting innovation in learning



Conference 2009!

The dust has settled on our e-Learning Conference 2009.

Delegates reported having a very useful and inspiring day. The event began with an introduction from Sal Cooke, of JISC TechDis, and then the keynote session from John Stone, Chief Executive of the Learning & Skills Network. John spoke of the issues surrounding Web 2.0 and expectations learners will have of their learning in the future.

Delegates attended a large selection of workshops on subjects such as podcasting, mobile learning projects, Second Life, e-portfolios, QR Codes and more. There were also 'How To' sessions, as well as interactive areas and an extended exhibition.

The JISC Services were out in force to highlight support and resources available to delegates. All sessions followed the key three themes of the day:

- Engaging All Learners
- Assessing Learners
- Learning Without Walls

Inside this issue, we focus on feedback from the day. The conference Reflection website encouraged delegates to record their thoughts.

The day was a great opportunity for delegates to explore the latest developments in e-learning and share good practice happening in the region.

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Conference Reflection



Some comments from the conference Reflection website www.tinyurl.com/reflectionsrscyh09:

"...I came to the conference with a negative attitude towards e-learning and after just one morning of workshops feel that I now have a positive attitude towards e-learning and feel confident to pilot this at my centre..."

"...good conference, enjoyable and engaging, well organised with a wide range of workshops appealing to a vast range of learning providers, well done to all..."

"...some good tips to take back and share with colleagues..."

"...have created a Ning; reviewed Molenet; very positive about activity in Y&H..."



#RSCYH09



"...great opportunity to look at lots of different initiatives and ideas for using technology to stimulate learners..."

"...feel re-inspired to experiment..."

"...excellent conference in York especially meeting up with interesting people & getting some new ideas. Learnt about twitter tags!"

"...this was the first time ever I visited an e-learning event held by RSCYH. I found it very informative, and it has given me lots of ideas that I might be able to use for my curriculum area..."

"... .it was beneficial to me as practical resources were shown in the workshops and we were given the opportunity to use them too which gave me an insight into the uses of it for me..."



Staff News...

Sadly, 2009 will be Events Officer, Lena Henderson's last Conference.

Lena has left the JISC RSC YH to become Project Administrator & E-Designer at York St John University.

She will begin her position in September after completing studies for her MSc in Multimedia and E-Learning.

We wish Lena all the best in her new role!



Staff News...

We also say a sad farewell to Jean McAllister, Chair of our Steering Group.

Jean retired from her post of Principal of Shipley College this term and is also stepping down from her role on our Steering Group.

Jean has been Chair for the past three years and has been a strong supporter of JISC RSC YH. We wish her all the best.

Heather MacDonald, Principal of The Sheffield College, is the new Chair of the Steering Group.

Heather has over 27 years' experience in further education at colleges, sixth forms, and local authority advisory and inspection services. Heather became Principal at The Sheffield College in September last year, previously being Principal of Wakefield College.

Win with JISC RSC YH



Due to the generosity of our sponsors, we were able to offer great chances to win at this year's Conference.

Four lucky delegates were winners on the day:

- Guy Scarlett from Leeds College of Music won a laptop (courtesy of Second Byte IT) (pictured, above left)
- Tony Swaby from T-Centrix UK Ltd won a Digimemo (courtesy of OneFile) (pictured, above right)
- Christine Carlton from York Training Centre won an iPod Nano (courtesy of Janet Txt)
- Blayn Parkinson from York St John University won a Digimemo (courtesy of Selwyn Electronics)

There were also two lucky post-conference winners who were randomly picked out of all delegates who had posted a reflection on the day:

- Phil Openshaw from Leeds City College, Technology Campus, won a Read&Write Gold Mobile



device (courtesy of TextHelp)

- Steve Bennington from Hargreaves Training Services won a Flip Video Camera (courtesy of JISC TechDis)

Phil posted a link to his blog post on the day at <http://philopenshaw.blogspot.com>, while Steve used the Reflection Station to comment:

"Really enjoyed the day, excellent networking opportunity... Gadget Show workshop very useful and seemed very well received by all - well done to all of the team.."

Each winner will be able to use their prize with learners.

For ideas on how to use the different technology in teaching and learning, visit our Excellence in Inclusivity website: <http://inclusivity.rsc-yh.ac.uk>.

There is a 'Technology' section that points to video case studies that outline how each type of technology is currently being used with learners in the region.

Congratulations to all our winners!

Learning Evolution



Delegates may have noticed a strange looking sign at the e-Learning Conference, bearing a mysterious symbol. We are pleased to announce that this is the logo for our new awards project, coming in the next academic year!

Evolution is our way of 'Recognising Regional Success'. We want to reward good practice and give a voice to people in the region doing great things in e-learning. Evolution will be your chance to nominate colleagues who you think should receive wider recognition.

The logo for the scheme was designed by Leeds College of Art & Design student, Jamie Avis (pictured above, with Marion Miller, JISC RSC YH Manager). Jamie's design was chosen from 21 designs supplied by the students on the National Diploma Graphic Design course.

Jamie, 17, based his design around the letter E "because it was simple." "I developed the design around ideas of electricity and the concept of growth

and development. The glow highlights this," he explains.

Jamie is halfway through the two-year course. The project was useful for Jamie's developing portfolio. "We rarely get a live brief in the first year so it was good to have a 'purpose' to the project," he said. His aim is to work in branding, possibly creative advertising or visual communications. "It would be nice to be able to walk down the street and see my designs," he said.

Marion Miller, Manager of JISC RSC YH, said: "We felt it was important to include learners in putting this project together and it has been great to work with such talented young people. It was very difficult to choose the final design from the high quality of all the submissions. Congratulations to Jamie."

Details of the award categories are being finalised and nomination packs will soon be available. Register for more details and your nomination pack at: www.rsc-yh.ac.uk/evolution

Next year...



Look out for the 2009/10 edition of our Support & Events flyer, coming to you this Autumn.

We will be putting together our new Events programme over the Summer. We hope to continue providing sessions on relevant subjects. If you would like to see an event on a particular subject, please let us know by emailing support@rsc-yh.ac.uk.

The Mobile Classroom

One of the latest case studies to go live on the Excellence Gateway focuses on Rotherham Adult & Community Learning and their use of technology to create a 'mobile classroom'.

Learn how Rotherham ACL is piloting the loan of laptops with dongles so that all learning providers, especially those based in non-traditional learning environments, can connect to the Internet.

JISC Regional Support Centres across England are working with the Excellence Gateway to provide examples of good practice in e-learning. You can access examples from our region via our website:

www.rsc-yh.ac.uk/casestudies.asp

If you have an interesting project you would like to feature on the Excellence Gateway, contact Christine Comrie, Information Officer: c.comrie@rsc-yh.ac.uk

FEATURE:

How To...

... tweet

It takes minutes to set up a Twitter account. Simply go to www.twitter.com and click on 'Get Started - Join!'.

You need to think of a username - not necessarily your real name - and password and associate an email address with your account. That's it!

The tricky bit with Twitter is what to do then.

A good place to start is to follow us! Twitter works well when you interact with other users. Go to www.twitter.com/JISC_RSC_YH and click 'Follow'. You will then receive all our updates. You could then look through people who are also following @JISC_RSC_YH and follow them. Start a conversation by including '@USERNAME' in your tweet. (For example, to send a public tweet to us you would include @JISC_RSC_YH in your tweet). You have 140 characters to say what you think.

If you have used Twitter to communicate with your learners then we would like to hear from you! You could become the next subject of a case study for the Excellence Gateway. For more details, visit the 'Case Studies' section on our website:

www.rsc-yh.ac.uk/casestudies.asp

Twitter Bird Image Credit:
Bruno Maia, IconTexto,
www.icontexto.com

Is Twitter Any Good?



It seems that everyone is on Twitter these days. From Barack Obama to Jonathan Ross, the idea of posting comments up to 140 characters in length for anyone to read on the internet is big in the news. But, according to Nielsen, only 40% of people stick with Twitter for more than a month. Does this mean that Twitter is a fad to be disregarded?

Well, we think no. The key is to think of Twitter as a communication tool, not a soap box on which to shout out what you had for tea or what the weather is like where you are.

Just a click away are people with similar job roles and interests as you. 'Follow' them and you will discover posted links to blogs and websites that could point out great new teaching tools or introduce interesting new ideas. You can engage in public or private conversations. The ethos behind Twitter is one of openness, with most who 'tweet' willing to respond to anyone.

Hashtags (#) are used to organise tweets on the same subject.

Therefore, if you search for '#education' you will see all the latest posts from around the world on that subject, listing current trends and links to more information, which allows you to research around a topic. A quick search for #education brought this result from 'ToughLoveforX': "[Don't fight cell phones in High School. Use them to get from here to there. #QR #education. From Ed week.com http://tinyurl.com/njahrm.](#)" This provides a link to an article on 'Making the Case for Mobile Computing' in education.

You can also create your own tags. We used the tag #rscyh09 for our recent e-Learning Conference 2009. A quick search for that tag then made it easy for us to see what people thought of the event, as they wrote about it. It is the instant nature of Twitter that is key. You can view posts in real time. In this way, we received instant feedback on our conference - something that could also be useful in the classroom.

So try it out! If you want more help and advice, contact us by emailing support@rsc-yh.ac.uk.

News Round-Up



Free Guide to Effective Practice

Not sure about the difference between a website and a wiki, a podcast and a sound recording, or how to best use them for teaching and learning?

The Effective Practice in a Digital Age: A guide to technology-enhanced learning and teaching has been launched by JISC to help answer some of these questions. To download the publication in a range of formats visit:

www.jisc.ac.uk/practice

Video Assist

JISC Digital Media has announced the launch of Video Assist, a new service offering free in-depth support to projects in HE and FE institutions which require the creation of moving image resources.

A project which qualifies for Video Assist will receive 4 days' worth in total of bespoke off-site support and on-site supervision

For more information, visit www.jiscdigitalmedia.ac.uk/video-assist

EG update

The Excellence Gateway has been rebranded simply as the 'Excellence Gateway', and not the 'QIA Excellence Gateway' as it was formerly known.

The new URL for the Excellence Gateway is www.excellencegateway.org.uk

The JISC RSC YH contributes case studies of good practice in e-learning to the Excellence Gateway from the Yorkshire and Humber region.



International Success for AccessApps

Our colleagues at JISC RSC Scotland North & East were invited to

Barcelona to pick up an accolade for AccessApps!

AccessApps is an initiative supported by the JISC Regional Support Centres and JISC TechDis. It consists of over 50 open source and freeware Windows applications, running from a USB stick. AccessApps provides a range of solutions to support writing, reading and planning as well as sensory, cognitive and physical difficulties. For more information, visit www.rsc-ne-scotland.ac.uk/accessapps

JISC and the JISC RSCs welcome the new 'Generator'

JISC's Regional Support Centres (RSCs) are partners in the development and deployment of Becta's 'Generator', the new technology improvement self-assessment tool for FE and skills.

We welcome the new tool, in whose development JISC RSCs have been involved from the outset - through representation on the 'Generator' Design Authority, and through enabling regional focus groups to capture sector feedback.

The JISC RSC YH Manager, Marion Miller, states: 'Learning providers will be able to use the outputs from this tool to inform the individual e-learning strategic support that the JISC RSCs provide.'

If you would like help in completing Generator, your e-Learning Advisor can help. Contact us to arrange a visit on 0113 343 1000 or email support@rsc-yh.ac.uk

Exchange

Keep up to date with funding calls, new resources, training opportunities and details of new initiatives by visiting our news blog, Exchange. The link and newsfeed can be found on our website:

www.rsc-yh.ac.uk

If you have an item to add to Exchange, please contact Christine Comrie, Information Officer: c.comrie@rsc-yh.ac.uk

Useful Links

JISC RSC YH Learning Platform

A structured virtual learning environment (VLE), our Learning Platform is a source of information from our events. It is a repository of presentations as well as information relating to our JISC RSC YH forums, where users can exchange and share information in user groups.

JISC RSC YH Exchange

Regular posts with details of news, events, funding opportunities and free resources, divided into appropriate sectors. You can also sign up to receive the fortnightly e-bulletin digest of the most important recent posts.

My RSC YH Space

Our informal social network to share and discuss ideas and developments in e-learning with peers. Upload photos and videos and view contributions made by other members. Write and read blogs, make and view podcasts, ask questions and share good practice. Join in!

All the above links can be found via our website:

www.rsc-yh.ac.uk

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Editorial



It was great to see so many delegates at our e-Learning Conference 2009. The team worked hard to produce an event with something for all managers and practitioners in supported sectors.

The Conference was slightly different this year. With fewer keynote speeches and more workshops, we wanted to give delegates greater choice in choosing a personalised programme for the day. The exhibition area was also enlarged with even more opportunities to try out technology in a learning context. Feedback from the

event has indicated that you were happy with the results!

All feedback will now go into our planning for the next academic year. For 2009/10, expect a new programme of events to complement our one-to-one consultation visits. We will also be launching our exciting new awards scheme, Evolution. Look out for details of how to nominate a colleague - packs will be sent out over the Summer.

We start the new academic year with a new Chair of our Steering Group. We bid a sad farewell to Jean McAllister and wish her well in her retirement. Jean has been a constant source of support and guidance throughout her long association with the JISC RSC YH. Heather MacDonald, Principal of The Sheffield College, takes over as Chair and we look forward to working with Heather as we take the JISC RSC YH forward.

Enjoy the Summer period and the JISC RSC YH team and myself look forward to working with you in the Autumn!

Marion Miller, Manager
JISC RSC YH

What now for 2009/2010?

Every Summer we plan key actions for the coming academic year. Priorities come partly from national initiatives but mainly from the needs of regional learning providers.

Delegates at our e-Learning Conference 2009 completed a survey setting out their key support needs of the future - and we're keen to receive all feedback.

We want to hear where you would like our support the most.

If you wish to add your contribution, please email us at support@rsc-yh.ac.uk with 'Support Needs' in the subject title.