

Notes from TLTO/LTSN meeting at York 24 July 2001

Attendees

Cliff Allan, LTSN Programme Director
Rachel Farrand, Executive Projects Officer
Tom Franklin, Technologies Centre Senior Adviser
Richard Townend, LTSN Programme Manager
Ros O'Leary, LTSS Manager and LTSN Economics Deputy Director, Bristol U.
Merce Riu-Riu - Learning Technologist, University of Kent at Canterbury
Barbara Watson – Learning Technologies Team Leader, University of Durham

Brief for the meeting

To improve communication between LTSN, Generic and Technologies Centres and the TLT Officers community (see list archives for May 2001)

Agenda

- Introductions
- Background and nature of TLT Officers' Network
- Update on LTSN
- Networking TLT Officers/LTSN/Generic Centre/Technologies Centre
- Portals project update
- Any other business

All the items in the agenda were covered during the meeting, which developed as an informal exchange of information and views in no particular order. It was made very clear from the start that views and comments from the TLT Officers and other groups in the sector were appreciated and found to be useful, and they would be taken into account in shaping the centres' activities and developments. It was our impression that there was a genuine desire to improve communication.

Learning technology portal

This is being developed by the RESULTS project (Andrew Booth is liaising with the project on behalf of the LTSN/GC) and will become part of the wider Learning and Teaching portal, which is being developed in conjunction with ILT and the DNER. The main Learning and Teaching portal should be available by April/May 2002, when it is hoped that interoperability between the centre's databases will have been achieved. The portal will be maintained by the LTSN.

To improve communication

- LTSN aim to bring together news and events from all centres and make the information available to all main stakeholders including TLT Officers. One way suggested to do this is by posting quarterly updates on news and events to the relevant mailing lists (including TLT-officers). We suggested this would not easily cover events which are run at short-term notice, and requested that information is made available from a central repository (or searchable from a central point) to be consulted as and when required. It was agreed that an interim joint information system could be made available by Christmas 2001.
- Agreed by all that LTSN centres should always contact central support services of the Universities they visit, thus closing the loop on communication.
- Representatives of TLT officers will meet twice a year with representatives of LTSN, CG and TC (poss. same group of people to meet once during ALT-C)
- Representatives from LTSN, CG and TC (Cliff Allan, Brenda Smith and Tom Franklin) are willing to attend part of the SIG TLT-officers meeting during ALT and/or regional TLT meetings to provide updates on the centres' activities.
- **Database of departmental contacts.** The LTSN executive holds a database of departmental (subject-related) contacts which TLT-Officers (and LTSN centres)

would like access to in order to contrast with their own departmental contacts (for own institution only). LTSN need to resolve data protection issues before they can release any data, but will look into allowing their data to go back to each institution's central support units.

- **Institutional contacts.** LTSN is working on a questionnaire which will be circulated to all HEIs (and FEIs?) to populate a registry of institutional L&T support services which can be used by the centres to contact central support units when working with departments. IT was also suggested that as an interim measure until the L&T portal is available, a central repository of information is made available, which could contain links to institutional L&T support units.
- **List of TLT Officers.** The TC is planning to develop an open register of Learning Technologists (similar to the NetCulture Staff Developers Database <http://netculture.scotcit.ac.uk/database.html>). This should be available Sept 2001.
- **LTSN internal communication.** An internal list is available to disseminate information and discuss issues and concerns raised by themselves or others. They also hold 3 meetings per year with the centres' managers and have an annual conference and an annual away day for all LTSN staff.

Roles of the Generic and Technologies Centres

Both Centres work as information brokers to collate and disseminate resources across the sector and support LTSN centres' activities. As they identify gaps and needs, new resources are commissioned and made available through the Generic Centre (see GC Project updates http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/about/proj_updates.asp).

The Technologies Centre has a remit for the use of technology in both Higher and Further Education. It supports the activities of the LTSN and GC as well as institutional Learning Technology support units and staff. It will disseminate information and activities mainly through the Generic Centre, NILTA and ALT and the Learning Technology area of the Learning and Teaching portal.

Other issues

- We raised concerns about the different quality and range of services and information provided by different LTSN centres' websites. As yet, LTSN centres have no *checklist* of what should be provided through their website as core/minimum services, but standards for what is expected/desirable from an LTSN centre website will be developed after consulting the sector. Any suggestions to LTSN please <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/contact/>
- Although LTSN centres have a main remit to work primarily with academics within a subject area, and to effect change "on the ground" within a department, they are aware that, in order to be effective, they also need to work with central and faculty based support services. They acknowledge the need to establish contact with those services when working with a particular department and will look to find effective ways to do so.
- Some LTSN centres are providing subject-specific staff development for Learning and Teaching advisors, as well as new and more experienced staff. As ILT encourages the development of subject-specific pathways in ILT accredited courses for new staff, LTSN and GC are considering ways in which the centres could help. Again, any suggestions to GC welcome <http://www.ltsn.ac.uk/contact/>

Feedback

Any concerns about responses or lack of them from any communication with LTSNs can be sent to Cliff Allan.