



SUMMARY REPORT ON THE NEARPOD PILOT PROJECT

ABSTRACT

This report draws on the experiences of both staff and students using Nearpod in a variety of teaching and learning situations over semester 1 in 2015

Marion Curdy

Learning Technologies Adviser

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Key recommendation

There is clearly an institutional need for tools that not only support the 'Switch it on' policy in learning and teaching but that also supports innovative models of teaching eg. Flipped teaching. Nearpod meets some of those needs and has been a popular tool amongst both the students and staff in the pilot.

Little assistance has been required during the pilot and it is expected that implementation would have minimal impact in terms of support.

It's worth noting that Nearpod's success is dependent on students' WIFI access and that during the pilot there were some reported WIFI issues when large cohorts simultaneously connected to the network. Such instances need to be monitored and escalated to Network services for investigation should the use of the tool increase.

This type of tool is an area of growth and we should continue to review tools as they arrive on the market and continue to evaluate these tools as demand develops.

The outcome of the pilot is to recommend that we continue to support Nearpod on a small scale whilst evaluating new products and would anticipate demand be similar to that of PollEveryWhere for which we have 100 licenses.

Scope

The aim of this report is to summarise the initial findings from the evaluations carried out on pilots that used Nearpod and determine the suitability of this software as an institutionally supported teaching tool. The report will draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the analysis of staff and student experiences of using Nearpod. The findings of the report are presented under five key headings to assess the suitability of the software:

- Usability
- Functionality
- Impact
- Support
- Technical.

Background

About *Nearpod*:

Nearpod is a presentation and polling application for seminar and lecture environments. Presentations can be created or uploaded to the tutors web based account and interactions added. Interactions include polls, multiple choice questions, open ended questions and annotation of images. The presentations are pushed out to students devices (android, OS and browser support) where students can view the presentations and participate in interactions.

Instructors receive reports of results and immediate feedback of student understanding. The entire pacing of the presentation is controlled by the tutor from their own devices, eg. iPads, resulting in them not being limited to being at the front of the room, they can circulate and respond personally to questions raised.

Instructors can also push out websites and other files to students to encourage students to read beyond the topics covered in the lecture or seminar.

Introduction

The pilot sought to investigate the suitability of Nearpod as an institution wide tool to support changes in the model of teaching as well as the 'Switch it on' policy, based on the evaluation of 4 key criteria:

1. Functionality
2. Usability and accessibility
3. Technical and support
4. Impact and engagement

Methodology

10 licenses were purchased but included 1 for the management of the pilot and so 9 licenses were available for the pilot. 9 applications accepted, 9 pilots completed across a range of schools and subjects. 9+ admin/academics and 300+ students involved in the pilots. Feedback gathered from participants with questions dependent on role (student or staff).

NOTE: some staff have been included in the pilot evaluation who we're part of the pilot as they had set up free accounts with Nearpod or had shared the account allocated to an individual member of staff.

Pilot Summaries

The following are details of the pilots

Tutor Name	School	Student numbers	Number of uses	Summary of use
George Olivier	PABS	>200		Nearpod will be used during delivery of lectures as an aid to increasing engagement and monitoring student understanding of the subject material being covered.
Simonne Weeks	PABS	>200		A two hour lecture could benefit

				<p>from student interaction. Using Nearpod will break the monotony of teacher-led presentation into 'bite-size' information. The students can apply what they have just been taught using the applications in Nearpod. For example, using a diagram saved as an image and upload into Nearpod allows the students to identify key parts; or a Q&A could summarise the essential points.</p> <p>Another advantage of using Nearpod is being able free to roam the lecture theatre and interact with the students whilst being in control of the delivery of the presentation.</p>
Hannah Wood	SET	160		<p>In the 2013-14 academic year, the module was changed from a traditionally taught lecture based module to the flipped model of teaching, which involved changing the contact time from 2 hour lectures to 1 hour tutorials per week. As part of the tutorial sessions, Poll Everywhere was used extensively; however engagement with this did not last long! I propose to use Nearpod to deliver the tutorial sessions with interactivity built in, instead of a session of standalone of poll questions, to try and improve engagement. Here</p>
Kirsty Smallbone	SET	40		<p>Students sometimes struggle so it would be useful to use nearpod to test their existing knowledge and enable us to tailor the lectures accordingly, plus develop quizzes, tests etc to enhance their learning experience. This is especially true for the BA students who usually</p>

				<p>have no chemistry. It would also allow us to duel teach and push the students with chemical knowledge further while allowing those with no knowledge to develop the basics. In addition I can see that it could be potentially used to access online real-time AQ data which encourage the conceptual understanding of AQ, look at spatial and satellite data etc.</p>
Kevin Morton	SSM	120		<p>I have been using Nearpod in the past, predominantly as a demonstration to students and staff of tools available via Apps. Due to my restrictive personal license, I have not used it as much for my own teaching, although intend to with this pilot license.</p> <p>Nearpod will be used to integrate learning and theoretical elements of the PE courses, whilst allowing for greater levels of student engagement and interaction. BYOD is a key term I intend to facilitate in future lectures and feel my use of this tool will extend much further than the four modules highlighted above.</p>
Claire Marriott	PABS	30		<p>Enable students to see information up close. In particular, use during lectures around microscopy and histology work will allow students to zoom in closely to images of cells which they cannot focus on from a distance. In addition to this it would be a valuable tool when communicating more complex molecular and biochemical pathways, allowing students to follow these processes close up.</p> <p>The use of quizzes and students</p>

				being able to draw on their devices will also be a great way to monitor understanding and keep students engaged.
Georgia Wrighton	SET	20		
Lucy Chilvers	CLT			<p>PASS Leader (and ASK Ambassador?) Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Live tweets for comments/ questions/ competitions -Polls to assess students opinions about their own ability/ skills to become a PASS leader/ personal development planning/ motivations for becoming a PASS leader (would gather useful data for research)/ understanding the role of a PASS leader -Drawing mind maps/diagrams in small groups re 1st year timeline/ purpose of facilitation/ testing out visual strategy cards/ <p>PASS Leadership Module</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Polls to assess students opinions about their own ability/ skills to become a PASS leader/ personal development planning/ motivations for becoming a PASS leader (would gather useful data for research)/ understanding the role of a PASS leader -Tweet questions/comments -CV critiquing activity <p>Peer Proof Reading Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Proof reading a piece of writing using Microsoft Word track changes live -Questions/ concerns re. their role/ proof reading -Completing a poll to provide feedback/voting re what proof reading is/ boundaries to their role/ feelings of confidence and preparation
Asher Rospigliosi	BBS	30>		To facilitate student participation and interaction during seminars

Findings

There were two types of users involved in the pilots:

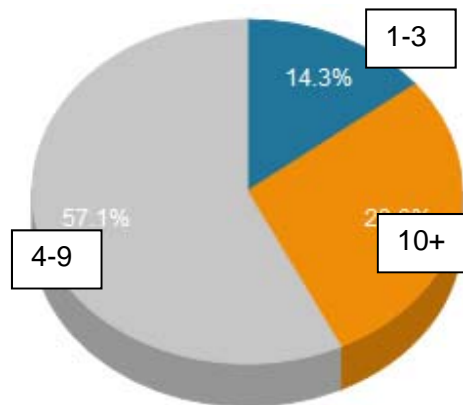
1. **Instructors** - these were staff who were given a tutor account. This enabled them to:
 - a. Create presentations and interactions for up to 200 student participants
 - b. Receive instant results from the interactions
 - c. Review and analyse participation data
2. **Student/participant** - these were generally students (although also staff in some cases). These were participants of the presentations and interactions and could access the presentations on their own devices and take part in the available interactions. If students register for their own accounts and access the presentations from their accounts they could also add their own notes to the presentations.

Sample from pilot Feedback

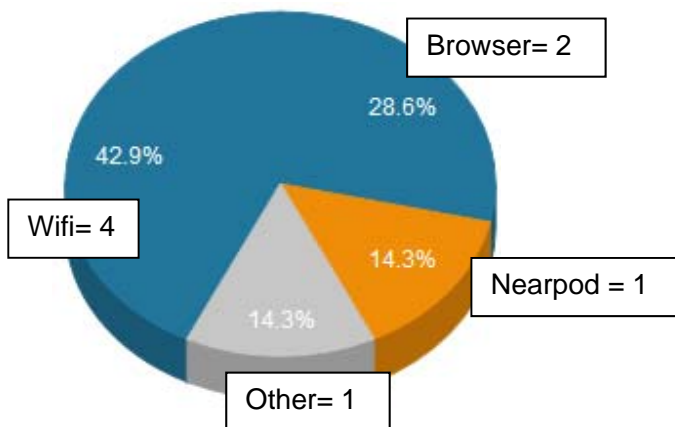
Feedback forms for both user types were circulated at the start of semester 2 and the following is a summary of the feedback received.

Instructors

How many times did you use Nearpod during the pilot?



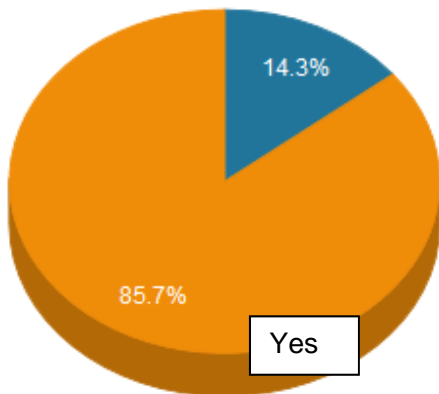
Did you experience any technical problems?



For larger groups >80 students the wifi in Watts building did not support the NEARPOD application. However, I did use it in Mithras house for 120 students and it worked.

Needed to update Firefox one week to get NEARPOD to run

Do you think using Nearpod has had any impact on your teaching?



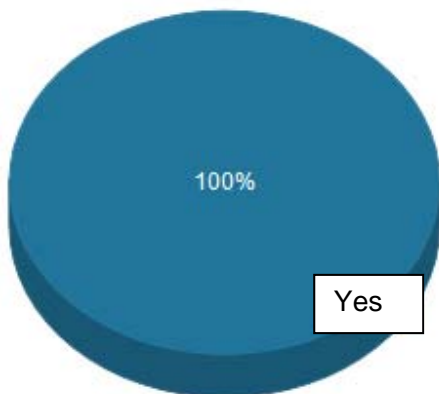
“It improved engagement and also gave me a good feel for the level of understanding of the students, being able to share good examples - for instance in the draw it questions was really beneficial.”

“Really boosted student/attendee engagement and helped with the display of images in a variety of different teaching rooms.”

“More questions, more discussions, more visual slides.”

“Always good to have something which makes you assess the way you teach and how it can be more engaging - good to think up quiz questions and what’s really useful to the students. Very fun way to be interactive and get the students engaged”

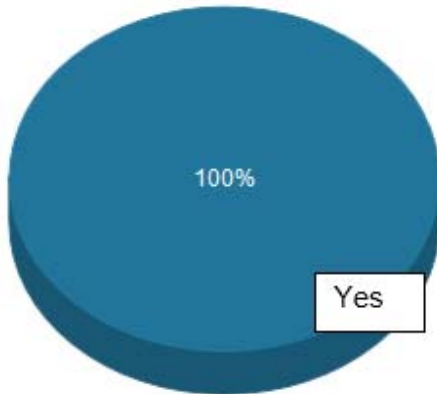
Overall, do you think Nearpod was suitable for your purposes?



INTENDED USES:

- Face to face tutorial sessions on a flipped delivery module, nearpod was to be used for different types of questions, usually multiple choice but some drawing ones too, plus to allow students to better see diagrams for questions rather than relying on just the projectors.
- Deliver lectures that students could interact and answer questions.
- To boost interactivity and student engagement. To demonstrate the strengths of the tool amongst students and peers. To create a video using Nearpod, to present to JISC.
- Interactive quizzes during lectures mainly.
- To check levels of understanding during a lecture session so I could then focus on the problem areas.
- Assisting the PASS programme with a large scale lecture session for International students. Also I hoped to use it as a teaching tool for a variety of eLearning workshops.

Would you recommend Nearpod to colleagues?



Discussed it with colleagues working in very different subject areas and it seemed more applicable to some than others. A number of people could see the benefit though.

Of course. Students need to use this tool and take far more control of their learning. I don't see any issues with using this for staff development too.

How did you feel about using Nearpod?

"I found it a really useful tool, it seemed to engage the students and they didn't get bored of it like they had with poll everywhere the previous year. the first session i was a little bit nervous to make sure i was using it properly and that it worked, and i did have backup PowerPoints just in case but it was very easy to use and i soon became comfortable with it."

"Brilliant, easy to use and allows me to walk around the lecture theatre."

"I really, really like and enjoy the variety of functionality. I was vaguely nervous about whether it would work well in a room of 200 students, but it worked really well for multiple choice questions and the students really seemed to engage with it. I already thought that it was good, but mostly I have been impressed with how stable it is in a variety of different teaching situations."

"I enjoy using the tool and would like to continue to do so after the trial period is over. I was concerned with one or two connection issues, however, I feel the tools available are very useful and definitely encourage greater interactivity."

"During the sessions I felt very frustrated that it didn't work as smoothly as I had hoped. I was also disappointed that a fairly significant number of students did not participate seriously - putting in flippant answers. I enjoyed using it and think that it has potential to be useful. I found not being able to prepare questions and session off-line frustrating."

Were there any unexpected outcomes or benefits?

"Student satisfaction was high and it was nice to see some using the tool to present with, despite not being told to."

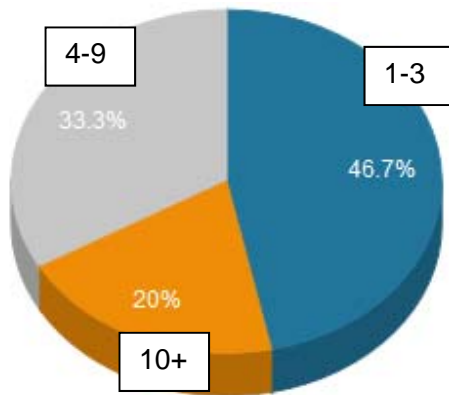
"The reports were more useful than i thought they would be and gave me a good appreciation of the engagement and understanding."

Was hoping for the instant feedback / increased engagement and definitely saw that. There also seems to be something extra about using ipads over a piece of paper and getting students to work in groups - the group dynamic is somehow more balanced with an electronic device with all students getting involved rather than the one with the pen and paper taking over. What was unexpected was that on a few occasions when there were connectivity issues or less time to get nearpod set up the students responded really well to general open questions and the more reserved students were contributing to discussion even without the safety of the nearpod anonymity. This may just be the students getting more comfortable with each other and with discussing things in class of course but it was interesting to see that in the second half of the semester the students were just as engaged and communicative without nearpod as with if a quick quiz was thrown in.

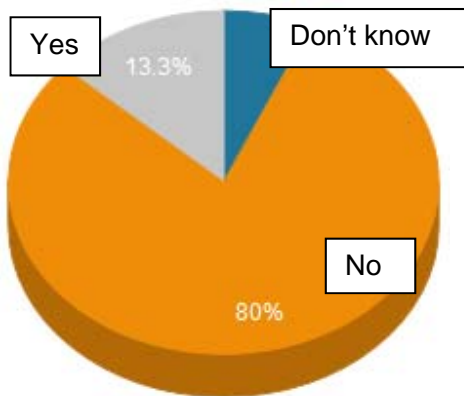
It would be good for some licenses to be available to student teachers or possibly students who need to give presentations to external partners. Could be a good activity akin to Scramboo (except, perhaps more self-sufficient)."

Student

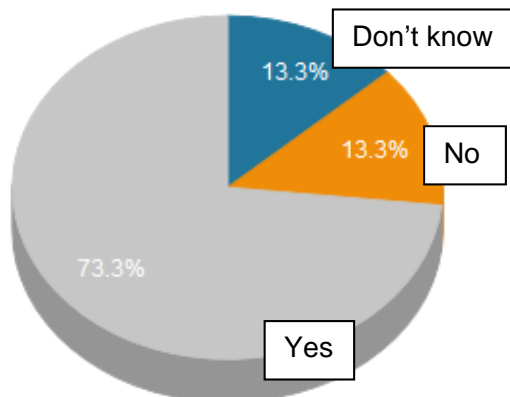
How many times have you used Nearpod?



Did you have any difficulty using Nearpod?



Do you think using Nearpod had a positive impact on your learning?



I liked the simplicity. The application is extremely easy to use and is a very effective communicational tool between the lecturer and students. Organising the presentation so that both informational slides and questions allows students to show the lecturer the extent of their understanding of the topic

Interactive, questions make you listen and help you know if you understand it

Interactivity, being able to access the slides from your devices instead of just having them at the front of the lecture room

You were able to get immediate feedback on your learning through the questions. If you got the question wrong you could discuss it and find out why

The clarity and the ability to answer questions and see other people's opinions on the particular question, this helps to evaluate the level of understanding of the whole class

It was interactive with the class, also this mean if someone was quieter than others they can still answer rather than saying it out loud within the lecture. Easy way to get the class to answer simple questions

I liked the interactivity it created in the lectures

Immediate feedback!!

Usability

Tutors required little support in either using or developing their Nearpod presentations to meet their specific needs.

Students generally found the software or app simple to access and use. We had a few issues with students trying to access presentations with older or more unusual devices. Where this happened the students either shared devices or used laptops.

Consideration around the availability of student devices may need to be made by schools. The standardisation of devices available to students

Functionality

Simple interface used on individuals personal devices. Supports the use of both PC (Windows, Mac etc) and mobile devices (Windows, Android, IOS) via a free App.

Students view the presentation content at close hand on their own devices as well as interacting and sending responses whilst receiving feedback in realtime.

Tutors control the pace of the presentation as well as the timing of interactions and the release of feedback. They can control Nearpod wirelesses from their tablets meaning they can circulate amongst their students with ease. The structure and functionality enhances student discussions, collaborations and engagement.

Impact

Long term pedagogical impact is difficult to measure on a short pilot, however it appears from the feedback of both staff and students that the levels of engagement was higher than experienced with other tools –

Both students and staff were asked what the impact on their learning or teaching was.

Staff: Do you think using Nearpod has had any impact on your teaching?

“It improved engagement and also gave me a good feel for the level of understanding of the students, being able to share good examples - for instance in the draw it questions was really beneficial.”

“Really boosted student/attendee engagement and helped with the display of images in a variety of different teaching rooms.”

“More questions, more discussions, more visual slides.”

“Always good to have something which makes you assess the way you teach and how it can be more engaging - good to think up quiz questions and what's really useful to the students. Very fun way to be interactive and get the students engaged”

Students: Do you think Nearpod had any impact on your learning?

“Using Nearpod application to aid teaching makes learning easier and as such, it is worth investing in it.”

I liked the simplicity. The application is extremely easy to use and is a very effective communicational tool between the lecturer and students. Organising the presentation so that both informational slides and questions allows students to show the lecturer the extent of their understanding of the topic.

Interactive, questions make you listen and help you know if you understand it.

Gives information and helps to increase knowledge. It helps students to save information in mind easily and save their time to study.

Support

All instructors involved in the pilot were offered one to one time with their LTA to get started, one session proved adequate. Staff were also offered support in the classroom on their first run to help iron out any initial issues their students may have. Of the 10 staff taking part only 2 felt this was necessary.

A blog was also created for the pilot and staff were encouraged to record their experiences throughout the pilot. This proved to be a useful resource for staff and was used to support and offer guidance to each other, see: <http://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/nearpodpilot>

Technical rather than user issues were the only barrier for those taking part.

Both staff and students were asked the following question:

Did you have any difficulty using Nearpod?

All instructors experienced some issues although only one directly related to Nearpod and an update resolved the issue.

Of the **students** who responded 18% answered yes, 72% answered no and 9% don't know.

Technical

Nearpod as an application has proven to be a robust and reliable service. During the course of the pilots there has been no reported downtime or operational difficulties. Their central support responded promptly to queries raised.

There were however a few issues with browser versions not supported and internal WIFI issues preventing access.

Cost Implications

We recommend following a similar model to that of Polleverywhere where we purchase a set number of logins and allocate accounts to staff as required. This licensing structure would give us the flexibility to annually review usage and reallocate disused accounts.

The cost for 100 teachers is \$7,770.00 with up to 200 students per concurrent session, although this can be increased for large cohorts, for example the University of Manchester uses Nearpod with over 350 students.

Conclusions

Findings from the pilot evaluations indicate that Nearpod improves interaction, engagement and understanding in lectures and seminars and provides instant feedback to both staff and students as well as helping to support the 'switch it on' policy.

Some of the deficiencies of the software, identified in the findings, represent the relative immaturity of the product and it is anticipated that usability and functionality will continue to be improved as new versions are released. Indeed Nearpod's willingness to engage with the academic community has resulted in substantial improvements during the pilot, this includes the ability for students to take their own notes within the lecture on their own devices, additional interactivities as well as interface improvements.

During the pilot staff reported a deeper understanding of their students' engagement and understanding due to the ease of using the inbuilt reporting tool.

The software is most effective where there is the right equipment available to both staff and students (tablets and smart phones) and this may limit the initial uptake of Nearpod, although UCAS reported that 83% of new students in 2014 had a smart phone.¹ However, research tells us that there is a gap between students owning mobile devices and actually using them for academic purposes, and given that students carry these devices into their lectures we should be encouraging their use for the purposes of engagement rather than distraction. Nearpod encourages the use of students' personal devices and can foster deeper learning.

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The Nearpod YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Nearpod>

JISC InfoKit - Selecting Technologies

<http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/infokits/selecting-technologies/>

¹ <http://www.ucasmedia.com/2014/eight-out-ten-freshers-have-smartphones>