

JISC Developing Digital Literacies programme

Case studies template (non-mandatory)

It is a good idea to use a template to standardise the writing up of case studies, mini-projects, and other examples of digital literacy development. The template does not have to be identical to this one, but using this or similar will ensure that key issues are captured and that case studies are easier to cross-reference and search across the programme.

Item	Prompts These might be given to case study authors to ensure consistency, or might be notes to the team. Adapt these to suit the needs of your project.
Title	Developing a blog-based platform for students to document work in professional assignments
Subject area	Typography & Graphic Communication
Scope and context	<p>Background Typography runs a very successful professional practice scheme which allows students to work with external clients on real jobs while supervised in the Department. This is a significant differentiator for our programme in relation to conventional placements, and contributes significantly to the excellent employability of our graduates.</p> <p>Scope We have developed a preliminary framework for an online platform for student-led blogs to document, supervise, and publish coursework in a controlled manner. We will be developing this into a fully-functional solution for documenting coursework online, in realtime.</p> <p>Outcomes and deliverables We will setup and test a multiple-blog solution through the Wordpress platform. Our framework describes each assignment as a separate mini-blog, with two public pages (the agreed brief, and the final write-up of each project) and controlled-access blog entries for the interim work stages, for comments by supervisors and external clients. (This structure is based on a simplified version of a model we applied for TLDF funding for.)</p> <p>Sustainability The funding will buy time for employing two students to set up and customise the Wordpress blog, and supervision and testing time for the project coordinators (Gerry Leonidas and Rob Banham). The Department's intention is to gradually migrate the totality of professional practice documentation on this platform, and explore its use for other modules. Crucially, we expect the project to feed into our ongoing deliberations on the replacement of workfiles with more reflective documents, a process which is informed by our initiatives in PGT programmes and selected Part 1 modules. We are open to reviewing paper-based documentation of project especially for screen-based assignments, where documentation online is a natural fit.</p>

Rationale and aims	<p>Aims and objectives</p> <p>We aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Make our professional practice scheme highly visible, to both prospective students and as a showcase of T&L best practice; • Improve student experience with online documentation tools, in line with industry practice and trends; • Combine a work progress monitoring tool with a public aspect suitable to include in an online portfolio; and • Shift supervision by part-time staff via email-with-attachments (locally stored, difficult to share and trace for External Examiners) onto a more efficient system, where archiving and access is controlled by the Department.
Digital literacies addressed	<p>Enabling students to create a public-facing work record, contributing to an online portfolio.</p> <p>Enable staff to provide online feedback more flexibly than f2f allows (especially with part-time staff)</p> <p>Giving students experience with systems similar to those used by real-world companies</p>
Overview	<p>Two students were employed to develop a specification for an online tool. This included a review of current practices and problems including workflow bottlenecks. The system needed to be accessible and easy to use in order to facilitate wider use and rollout.</p> <p>The following stakeholder needs were identified:</p> <p>Department of Typography & Graphic Communication Staff supervising the Real Job Scheme projects</p> <p>Department of Typography & Graphic Communication students on Real Job scheme.</p> <p>UoR and external clients of the scheme, prospective students and parents, prospective employers</p> <p>The students have implemented Wordpress CMS and extensions. There is a some imminent work outstanding to finish the project in order to get to the testing stage.</p>
Digital resources and know-how used	<p>The students used their own laptops / iPads / smartphones for the development work.</p> <p>The aim was to need only moderate additional skills to help adoption,</p> <p>The users of the system will be tech-savvy.</p> <p>The plugins used are</p> <p>BuddyPress http://buddypress.org/</p> <p>CollabPress http://wordpress.org/plugins/collabpress/</p> <p>The added functionality focuses on setting up and managing projects assigned to specific teams, handling of file uploads, commenting, modest project management elements: tick off lists, calendaring, tasks</p>

Benefits and impacts	<p>Although the project is not yet complete these are the anticipated benefits and impacts</p> <p>For Department of Typography & Graphic Communication Staff streamlining of project monitoring and feedback</p> <p>For part-time Department of Typography & Graphic Communication Staff : enabling same off-campus</p> <p>For Department of Typography & Graphic Communication: documenting work, portfolio elements, using collaborative tools, peer-engagement</p> <p>For UoR and external clients: streamlined contact for RJ, helps with Project Management of own project; speeds up feedback; recruitment to scheme</p>
Conclusions or lessons learned	<p>Unanticipated time needed to adapt some of the Wordpress terminology to UoR scheme.</p> <p>We also needed to hide aspects of the CMS that are not helpful.</p> <p>Unanticipated time taken to adapt UoR paper documentation to Wordpress system, syncing with existing Real Jobs management system</p>
Links and further information	<p>http://typorealjobs.net/ (new platform still in development at the time of writing)</p> <p>http://mystudentswork.tumblr.com/ (example of “completed job” post)</p>
Further opportunities	<p>The planned roll-out for all professional assignments in autumn 13 term.</p> <p>The success of the project will be measured after roll out.</p>
Contact details for further information	