

Upgrading from WebCT to Blackboard Learn 9.1: the good, the bad, and the ugly

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Overview

- VLE Upgrade Project - Background
- Key Project Milestones
- Our Approach
- Our Experiences
- The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly
- Work still to be done...

VLE Upgrade Project: Background

- Supporting flexible delivery - enhancing the VLE with further tools for online communication and collaboration
- Upgrading the Institutional VLE, WebCT to Learn 9.1 (RFI Summer 2010, eLearning Strategy Gp)
- Moving to Managed Hosting
 - Reliability and fully managed service – 24 x 7
 - Faster response to technical issues
 - Scalable service
 - Parallel hosting of WebCT and Learn 9 during upgrade

Key Project Milestones

- Communication Strategy (April)
- VLE Project Upgrade Board (May)
- Blackboard training - eLearning staff (May/June)
- WebCT moved to Managed Hosting (June)
- Learn 9.1 environment ready (July/August)
- Training on Learn 9.1 - all staff (June/July onwards)
- Tools for supporting flexible delivery (August)
- Blackboard consultancy – 2 days (June/October)

Achievable?



Our Approach

- VLE Upgrade Project website, meetings with key stakeholders, student survey
- Establishment of eLearning champions
- Defining School/discipline 'flexible' course templates
- Encouraging a fresh start
- Delivering general and tailored workshops
- Reviewing processes such as integrations with Student Records, course creation, rollover
- Aiming for better integrations with other software

Name?



WebCT



Our Experiences



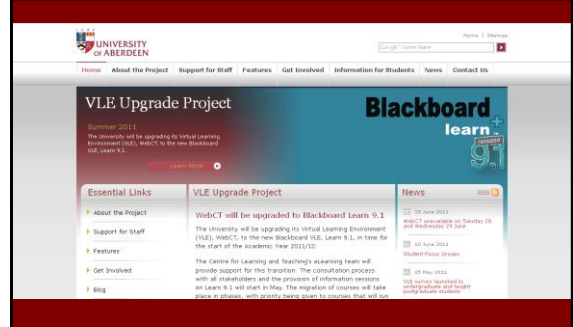
- Moving WebCT to Managed Hosting went without a glitch
- Technical problems with creation of courses based on templates in Learn 9 resulted in a 2 week setback
- Late identification of our need for the Blackboard Section Merge tool
- Semi-automatic process for uploading staff to MyAberdeen established but nothing else feasible – Blackboard Feed Converter tool used
- Blackboard Collaborate 11, Voice Tools, TurnitinUK and Questionmark (QMP) fully integrated although still some issues with QMP

continued...



- Tight timescale and too few resources allocated
- Staff concerned about the timescale but supportive and, overall, positive about the move
- eLearning champions and key administrative staff played a key role – essential to the success of the project

VLE Upgrade Project Website



The Good, the Bad and the Ugly



- Initial feedback from students and staff has been, overall, positive
- MyAberdeen went 'live' from 20 August and we have not encountered any serious performance problems
- Further tools for online communication and collaboration in place (Collaborate 11, Voice Tools)
- Staff have been making heavy use of Announcements and Send Email tool and increased use of Assignments and Tests tools

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly



- Problems with the send email immediately option when creating an Announcement
- Permissions errors when trying to view content – particularly pdf files and banners
- Group sets – description bug
- Tests – issues with lack of significant figures option, embedding images in the question text, partial credit
- No alternative for Who's online
- Custom roles – not as customisable as we thought

Work still to be done...



- Some students still using WebCT
- Integrations with Student Records need to be redone
- Processes for rollover, automatic course creation etc still need to be developed.
- Communities and content management need to be further developed
- Staff training on MyAberdeen, good practice in course design
- Developing MyAberdeen into more of a 'student portal' for learning & teaching



Questions?