As a new academic year gets underway, some timely reminders of SCHOMS15 key messages

Let the journey begin
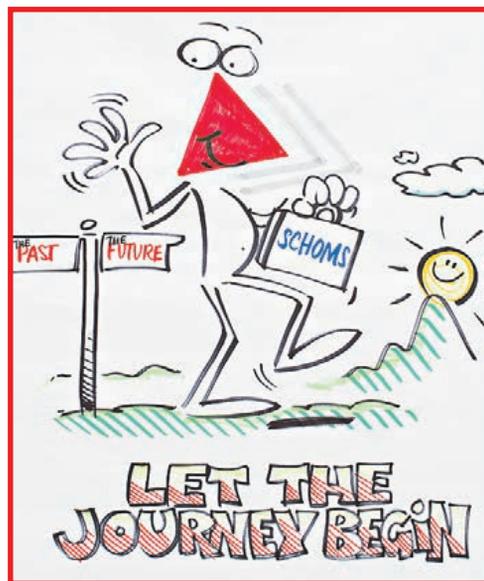
WELCOME to a new academic year – and to the latest issue of Connections.

SCHOMS members can take plenty of positive messages into their everyday roles from the SCHOMS15 conference at Leeds Beckett University.

Consultation and collaboration were key themes at the conference, attended by 64 delegates from 50 UK institutions – including 100th member, the University of Kent, a milestone which allowed administrator Catherine Cadogan to break out the celebration cake.

The University of Chichester and the University of Huddersfield were also represented for the first time at the conference, which heard Leeds Beckett's Head of Digital Pedagogy, Simon Thomson, spell out the best steps to take on a successful journey into the future (page 4).

Viv Nelson of Nelson Training emphasised 'the three Fs' – staying firm, friendly and focused – in a workshop on keeping the customer satisfied. There was also valuable advice to be gained on 'Managing Performance' (page 6).

Environmental psychologist and change manager Nigel Oseland spoke on how the most successful collaborative teams were made up of a rich mixture of personality types (page 5).

• Presentations reported in this issue were recorded and links are available to view at http://www.schoms.ac.uk/schoms-2015-presentations/

Az, Jim and Nigel leave fine legacy

SCHOMS said farewell to a trio of stalwarts at Leeds.

Dedicated long-servers (from left) Az Mohammed, Jim Sheach and Nigel Thomas were bowing out before taking retirement from the universities of Newcastle, Edinburgh and Aberystwyth respectively.

All were former members of the executive and Jim, in his final presentation as treasurer, told conference: "One of the most enjoyable parts of my time and the thing I will miss most is the great friends I have met. Colleagues have turned into friends.

"I am pleased to see so many people here for the first time and to see membership up to 100. I'm sure the organisation will flourish in the future."

Make a date SCHOMS16 University of Bath 27-30 June 2016

schoms15 in pictures

SCHOMS delegates line up for a group picture outside Leeds Beckett's James Graham Building.

Tessa and Mark join executive

SCHOMS Executive Committee has welcomed two new members – Tessa Rogowski of the University of Essex and Mark Dunlop of the University of Dundee.

They have taken up the places vacated by outgoing treasurer Jim Sheach and former chair Simon Birkett.

The full committee is (back row from left) David Evans (University of Chester), Mark Dunlop, Mike Allinson (University College London), Jay Pema (University of Cambridge), James Rutherford (University of Birmingham) and current chair Paul Wood (Bangor University); (front row) Catherine Cadogan (administrator) Tessa Rogowski, Jill Snelling (University of Exeter) and Caroline Pepper (Loughborough University).

Clive's on point with conference sketches

SCHOMS drew on the talents of Clive Francis to portray conference proceedings in a different light.

Conference cartoonist and caricaturist Clive proved a big hit with his prolific live depictions of goings-on, turning each exhibition and meeting space into a virtual gallery of his witty running commentary.

Examples of his observations accompany some of the reports in this issue of Connections.

Connect and engage to shape the future

In her conference welcome, Professor Susan Price, Vice Chancellor of Leeds Beckett University, said the SCHOMS network played a vital role in not only supporting but also shaping modern methods of teaching and learning.

INNOVATION and flexibility are fundamental to the future of learning spaces, according to Professor Susan Price.

And the key to delivering them is end-user engagement.

"Student expectations are rising fast and the modern student wants more," she said. "Universities need to invest significantly in learning spaces, infrastructure and technology.

"At the same time, we face very tight fiscal restrictions and there are competing demands for capital investment

"In a competitive market, and to meet the demands of a digitally advanced generation, learning spaces need to be progressive and to use innovative, intuitive technology to attract, retain and stimulate the very best students."

Professor Price said that technology needed to support modern methods of learning and teaching such as team-based learning, small group learning and flipped learning approaches.

"Learning spaces need to be designed to connect, to engage and to motivate and inspire students. If our ambition is to help students to work in an ever more digital environment then what better preparation is there than to immerse them in technology through education."

She said flexibility came into play with smarter technology. "The design and instigation of learning spaces is intrinsically bound out by the physical environment and this is where clever design comes in.

"The use of smart technology will ensure learning spaces support current needs as well as provide flexibility and agility to respond to further change."

Professor Price added that this depended upon technology providers continually consulting, collaborating and communicating with staff, students and professional service providers to better understand their key requirements and translate them into design and operational services.

How Leeds is iBeacon of progress

ONE of the major innovations being trialled at Leeds Beckett is iBeacon technology, delegates were told by the university's Director of Information, Media and Technology Services, Basem El-Haddadeh.

iBeacon is an implementation of Bluetooth low-energy (BLE) wireless technology to create a different way of providing location-based information and services to iPhones and other iOS devices.

The trial was tied in with the development of a Leeds Beckett mobile app and possible uses included attendance monitoring.

He also spoke of how off-campus students were being supported with Office 365 technology that gave improved access to virtual learning environments to help the sharing and editing of documents.

Basem said the university was working on creating multi functional rooms and new lecture theatre design, enabling spaces to be used as one big theatre or a number of smaller spaces.

Coming together as digital champions

Saffron Rose, Vice President for Education, Leeds Beckett, gave a students' view of technology and the learning experience.

ELECTED on a manifesto pledge to introduce lecture capture across all courses at Leeds Beckett, Saffron spoke of how it had been achieved in close cooperation with both the univeristy's Centre for Learning and Teaching and with Disability Services.

Behind the move was a drive for every student to benefit from accessibility for all. "Students have been extremely supportive of lecture capture," she said. "They found Powerpoints to be outdated and useless.

"As a disabled student with chronic lung disease, I benefited greatly from my lectures being recorded," she added. "I'm also dyspraxic so I struggled immensely to look at my lecturer and to try to take notes at the same time. I couldn't do it, I just used to give up."

Saffron said she had always been embarrassed and secretive about her learning disability and did not want to admit that she needed extra help.

The Students Union had also worked with the Centre for Learning and Teaching on a tablet project in which devices were issued to all staff and students and an analysis was drawn up on how they were used.

The same partnership was now working on a project called Digital Champions where one representative from each core faculty was being trained in digital literacy.

"The reps' role will be to identify digital development needs among staff and students, represent the wider student body on the digital learning forum, make suggestions for purchases and support Leeds Beckett in the development of its mobile app," she said.

'Always start journey of change with the conversation'

ACADEMIC staff needed to be welcomed on board the journey into the world of new technologies and changing spaces, Simon Thomson told SCHOMS15 delegates.

"If you don't get people on board, the journey cannot begin," he said.

Journeys were about discovery, challenge and excitement but they had to start with a conversation – everyone should know where they were going and when the journey was to begin.

He quoted Professor Diana Laurillard of the Institute of Education: "Transformation is more about the human and organisational aspects of teaching and learning than it is about the use of technology."

"That is how academics think," he told delegates. "They see their teaching and learning as the most important part and technology as a way of supporting them. So we have to take a journey of change."

Learning and teaching had been around longer than digitals tools or technology, he pointed out.

"Although I'm a big fan of digital technology, there is not a requirement to use it. Don't tell people they have use it but say to them 'this is how you

I his talk on 'Engaging Academics in Technology and Discussion', Leeds Beckett University's Head of Digital Pedagogy, Simon Thomson, suggested how our common journey to change should be planned.

can use it and it's quite powerful.'"

Simon said that psychologists had begun to recognise that the feelings connected to change were the same as those connected to personal loss.

"It's important that we consider that," he said. "If somebody you know had been affected by someone close to them passing away, you would be very sensitive about the way you approach them, you'd be very kind and supportive. We need to be doing that with academic staff when talking about technology.

"They're not confident, like we are, in the use of technology, they're not capable of problem-solving, which is why they require your support.

"If we forget that, we're never going to move along the change curve or get people to move from perceived negative change – such as removing all OHPs from classrooms, as we have done at Leeds Beckett, or making the classroom or the library different.

"We want to carry them along the change curve and then let go, allowing them to continue the journey on their own."

He identified new start academic staff as the key people to enrol in a journey of change. "They are the people who are going to progress

through institutions and become strategists, they are going to be in positions of power to make changes," Simon said.

To address the historical problem of technical issues deterring people from adopting technology - "a bad thing to happen for confidence" - Simon said: "We must begin to purchase technology that's fundamentally useable not functionable.

"Take Virtual Learning Envrionment (VLE). We purchase technology based on functionality. We should be spending a year on site testing products with academic staff and doing usability studies in order to make it more likely to be picked up."

Simon said people were resistant to change when they perceived it to be a threat to daily activities.

"We've got to get people to change their actions through our own actions. To me, this is not about technology. It is about conversation, talking to people at the beginning of the journey."

To enable academic staff to think about technology and how it relates to their learning and teaching - and to see it as part of their continuing professional developmen - Simon had introduced a Leeds Beckett framework called 4E developed around four fundamental questions:

• What can technology **enable** us to do

4

// **We've got to get people to change their actions through our own actions. To me, this is not about technology, it is about conversation, talking to people at the beginning of that journey** //

• How can it **enhance** what we already do

• How can it **enrich** learning experiences

• How can it **empower** learners and teachers

He demonstrated one of the tools he used in workshops with course teams - a paper foldable he called a 'chatterbox'.

"I introduce it as a smart mobile technology. What makes it smart is the user. Technology is not smart in its own right."

He said the chatterbox triggered conversations among academic teams of how they would plan out their technology using the 4Es. Now academic staff were required to write a section in their course approval document that described how they were going to use VLE and technology.

Simon said it would be a 'waste of time' to start the conversation and the journey without it having any impact.

Thanks to the 4E framework and other initiatives - such as a project in partnership with the Students Union and the Centre for Learning and Teaching to issues tablets to all staff and students within a course - the impact was being felt at Leeds Beckett.

"They're buying into it because they're explaining why and how they're using it and what it's doing to enhance and enrich experience.

"Technology may be the answer but first you need to understand the question," he said. "The only way to do that is through the conversations. The reality is it will mean a slower, incremental roll-out of technology.

"Always start with the conversation, never the technology. We do want everyone to see eye to eye but we don't want them to see it as a painful process. We want them to fully come on board, take journey with them and support them in that process. We're not telling them what to do."

Simon told delegates: "Every one in this room can take forward a change or make an impact regardless of how small you might feel within your institution or department."

Make space for all types of personalities

Environmental psychologist, workplace strategist and change manager Nigel Oseland spoke on 'The Psychology of Technology'. He discussed research studies he carried out for a manufacturer focusing on creating good collaborative spaces and assessed the impact of social media, rather than technology equipment itself.

TRUST and respect are the two most important factors for creating collaboration, according to Nigel Oseland.

"True collaboration is when two or more people come together and produce something that they could not have produced on their own," he said. "Social interaction leads to collaboration.

"We can help by creating collaborative spaces, where people can bump into each other, and we can create the right kit, but without trust and respect we will not get to a true collaboration."

Virtual teams were more task-orientated and tended to get straight to business because they exchanged less social information – as a consequence, they took longer to reach the stage of true collaboration.

The most successful collaborative teams were made up of a rich mixture of personality types and it was important to recognise and interact with them, Nigel said.

He had carried out research into how different types preferred to meet and interact based on the 'Big 5 Personality Inventory':

• Openness – how creative and open to new ideas

• Conscientiousness – how diligent and well planned

• Extroversion – how socially outgoing, prepared to take risks,come up with big ideas

• Agreeableness – how good at team working, empathetic to colleagues

• Neurotic – how much anxiety experienced

"Introverts can suffer from communication apprehension. This means they prefer not to meet face to face and research says they will use social media sites more often.

"Extroverts will use any means of communication to get their message out and will respond to everything."

He identified a trend for workplace designers to provide creative, noisy, open plan environments. "These are great for the extrovert, but not so good for the introvert," he said.

He also pointed out that the spaces being designed for extroverts were not being used because they tended to work more out of office.

He said a growing concern for workplace designers was the physical health problems of some next generation workers – bad posture and obesity through spending too much time at computers and impaired hearing through turning up headphones so loud.

Nigel also explained how emerging generations were starting to communicate in different ways.

"Youngsters are moving away from Facebook onto Instagram, Snapchat and other social media sites," he said. "This will affect how we provide technology in different environments."

'Make every contact a quality contact'

DELEGATES were appointed to a new role during an opening afternoon workshop – as members of the Sandra advisory group.

They were enrolled by Viv Nelson, managing director of Nelson Training, as part of the session on **'Keeping the Customer Satisfied'**.

In a live case study, Sandra (played by actress Betty Coltrane) was talked through her reaction to a demanding professor (played by actor Rob Joiner) who wanted action on a replacement bulb for a projector.

Delegates judged that Sandra had behaved well in showing restraint – particularly in being addressed as 'techie' – and in touching on trying to get more information and outlining a plan of action.

However, they were unimpressed by her lack of smiling demeanour, poor body language, absence of empathy and eventual use of sarcasm in dealing with his request.

Summing up, Viv Nelson emphasized 'the three Fs' in keeping the customer satisfied – staying firm, friendly and focused. She advised a somewhat bewildered Sandra: "Listen, let him offload, empathise and go through what can or cannot be done."

Viv added to delegates: "Deep down, we don't give a monkeys about the people who wind us up or who patronise us. The skill is not to let it show and to maintain dignity, be assertive and be professional.

Viv Nelson reviews conference contributions to the debate.

'HAVING A SANDRANISM
EYE CONTACT
"AT LAST WE SEE EYE TO EYE –
IT DIDN'T HURT DID IT?"

'Keeping the Customer Satisfied' and 'Managing Performance' were the titles of workshops conducted by Malvern-based Nelson Training, who use live interactive drama with a touch of comedy to demonstrate how teams, team leaders and management can develop engaging people skills.

"Make every contact a quality contact and increase the quality contact with each encounter. It achieves your objective and leaves the people you deal with feeling good."

Attention turned to team leader Jeff (Rob Joiner) in a second workshop on **'Managing Performance'**.

Delegates' advice was sought in how he could discuss under-performance with one of his difficult employees. Yes, Sandra again.

"Ask a team leader, adviser or supervisor for the worst aspect of the job and the answer is having these difficult conversations about behaviour or performance," Viv said.

She suggested how it could be managed "so it doesn't destroy the relationship, end up in accusations of bullying or harassment or with a grievance being levelled at you."

Viv summarized under-performance as falling into three broad categories:

• Tangible examples of making too many mistakes, turning up late or failing to do the job in terms of quality or quantity

• Technically completing work but with a negative outlook that sapped

"Put the magazine down". . . one of the many pieces of advice Sandra received from delegates.

the energy of fellow team members

• Absentees – "a combination of both the above if only they turned up".

It was time-keeping that Jeff wanted discuss with Sandra in the live case study. He was advised by delegates to plan and prepare his conversation and to make it clear what was unacceptable.

Viv added a technique borrowed from counselling. "Don't judge and don't prescribe," she said. "Also, make sure there's a balance of good and bad when you talk."

She highlighted the 'ask' approach rather than the 'tell' and suggested a learning conversation in which the employee was encouraged to score their contribution on a scale of one to five – with five representing exceptional.

"Most people will underestimate but it encourages answers from them," she said. "You can then ask what warrants their score, what would it look or feel like if it were a perfect five, what tools and strategies you can use to move together towards that."

And Viv advised delegates not to expect too much from one conversation. "Plant some seeds and always value their input and experience."

Jeff struggles to impress Sandra with his people skills.

Question Time: edited highlights

Question Time at SCHOMS15 covered The Challenges of New and Emerging Technology. SCHOMS chair Paul Wood put the questions to panellists (from left) Rob Hyde of SCHOMS, Daniel Burgarth of Aberystwyth University, Peter Sutton of Pure AV, Dav Rai of Pacific Computers and Mike Shaw of Kramer Electronics. For a full re-run of the session, go to: http://www.schoms.ac.uk/ schoms-2015-presentations/

What will be the next big talking point?

MS: Collaboration and wireless connectivity.

DR: Wireless, HD and quality. Higher education always asks for something quick and easy that can be scaled into an existing installation.

PS: How to educate the educators. Technology needs to be trained, condensed and put into the right context. Another is the advent of laser projection.

DB: As a researcher, I'm running an international online seminar series with thousands of people, which converges with idea of collaboration. Looking into the future, I'd like something that replaces eye contact, that enables me to look directly at specific users.

RH: The capture of technical writing, 'fit and forget' to free up time and to simplify the interface for users.

4K: Who's doing it, why are they doing it and will we be doing it?

PS: Increasing resolutions are becoming more important, it's a natural progression, not so much for the small meeting room but for a lecture theatre with a big screen

DR: When we've been asked, it's been about video walls and large displays. Can't see it being in a classroom in education but I can see it being a feature in a new building. I wouldn't say it's similar to a 3D fad but if the content is there, it could be very useful.

Is there a future for hardware/ collaboration tools when we can develop our own software?

DB: I don't use boxes any more, I'm using a software solution because I would have to convince colleagues to buy more boxes that would have to use specific apps.

MS: It's about what the users want. It's the people in the classroom who need to understand and use whatever it is. You've got to think about the user and offer a flexible solution.

PS: It's about conformity and consistency and ease of use. Your challenge in heading up and providing technology for the educators is to give them a simple platform that everybody understands.

Wireless connectivity, not connectivity between devices, but simply to use in a space - is there any point or is it a white elephant?

PS: It's negligible. Unless it's set up in a collaborative room, 95% of time it will never get used.

DB: The training portion of it is a necessity. Putting these products into a room without showing people how to use them is one of the problems.

DR: From integrator's perspective, I've been into rooms where we've installed a visualiser and, the next year, there's still an OHP in the room. It's a stumbling block and if they don't want to change, you guys have a very difficult job. We don't come in and sell to lecturers. If we could, maybe with manufacturers, it might be different but it's difficult.

RH: We are the providers of tools to be able to do a job. We've got to make sure there's an ability to do it if they choose to do it but it is, in the end, their choice to pick what they want is suitable for their teaching.

MS: It's about choices, some rooms you want hard wired, some rooms you may want wireless connectivity.

Sharing devices - what products are available to go across all areas that don't use a lot of ports and how do we deal with the issues of security?

MS: You're talking Active Directory. There's a product with 1024 bit encryption, you need security codes to log on, stick the unit on your network and the access to it is about network management. We're back to choices. You want the solution, you work the network to provide it.

DR: In a lot of cases AV and IT guys don't always get on and there's a problem to get integration. The way we've done it in universities is to send out a trial product to get it tested in all environments. In most cases manufacturers don't know the hiccups until it's in the environment.

DB: Network security is overrated in HE. The main weaknesses of networks are the students and the users because we get all this phishing now and if this comes with a programme that creates a tunnel, then all the network security is gone anyway. Some sort of practice among users to have secure passwords is more important.

Informal learning spaces call for more than casual attention

STUDENTS want more informal learning areas - not only for study but also to socialise and feel comfortable and safe.

That was one of the main messages to come out of a study into provision at Loughborough University, Caroline Pepper told SCHOMS15.

Caroline conducted the data collection project in partnership with stakeholders including IT services, the Library and the Students Union.

"We wanted a better understanding of what students want and value, the university's approach to developing informal learning spaces and the journey we've taken so far."

Qualitative views were gathered from 265 students across campus in different study spaces, including individual library study booths, collaborative tables and student bedrooms.

Students were asked why they used particular spaces – for example, because of close proximity to timetabled activities or quality or design factors – and how they used them, such as for coursework or collaborative study.

"We also wanted to find out the technologies they were using and how frequently," Caroline added.

Caroline Pepper, Learning and Teaching Space Manager at Loughborough University, reported on a project at her institution to find out what students thought of informal learning area provision.

"There was generally high satisfaction with provision of informal areas but a clear message that they wanted more."

Location was the biggest reason for choosing a space. "Students wanted to be close to their school whether the space particularly suited them or not," said Caroline.

They expected informal learning spaces to include wifi, PCs, Macs, specialist equipment, printing facilities and BYOD. Environment factors –

natural lighting, heating, ventilation and availability of refreshments – were also important.

She said many students were unaware of the spaces. "There's no point having the spaces if students don't know where to find them," Caroline said. "Communication and marketing are key.

"We have created an informal learning map with overlaid features such as IT provision and vending facilities and we will keep updating it."

Caroline said student expectations were growing and universities needed to think of new ways to meet them.

But she conceded that funding was a major challenge. " It's difficult to convince senior management of the priority. We've got to find different ways of developing spaces as cost effectively as we can. And we need to be sure the facilities are fully utilised and appropriately supported."

schoms15 in pictures
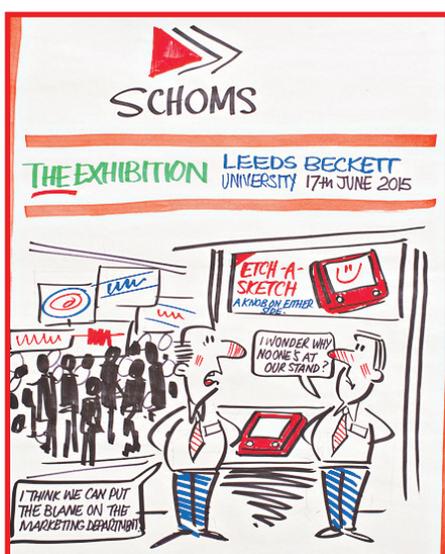
SCHOMS again played host to the UK's largest suppliers exhibition with a single HE focus.

Companies set up exhibition stands in the James Graham Building, giving delegates the chance to have concentrated discussions about requirements.

Pen-enabled tablet is mightier than whiteboard or blackboard

SENIOR lecturer Daniel Burgarth's innovative teaching device grew from a 'bottom up' project at Aberystwyth University focused exclusively on how to replace blackboards and whiteboards "with something more flexible and useful that would satisfy students and academic staff alike."

The result – a pen-enabled tablet – embraced the benefits of Powerpoint, whiteboard and blackboard, he said.

Like Powerpoint, it enabled him to face and make eye contact with his students, scroll through and record lectures and provide a pdf handout.

Like a blackboard, it removed the barrier between lecturer and students. "I can point where I write, I don't have to choose between Powerpoint and me."

And while it didn't wholly replicate the whiteboard advantage of being able to present on a large surface – starting on the left hand and retaining previous written material for reference – it did allow time for equations to be written down rather than provided.

"Students often say that the pace of whiteboard or blackboard lectures is more convenient to them because they have more time to think

"This method allows you to be interactive and to walk around. I don't

In his talk on 'Maths and Technology in the Classroom', Daniel Burgarth of Aberystwyth University demonstrated a teaching device that he said did away with the need for blackboards or whiteboards.

have to stand in front of the whiteboard. If I want to engage with students I can go to them."

Daniel demonstrated with a Galaxy Note, a Microsoft surface and a tablet with precise pen input.

"The application I use allows me to share a whiteboard between several devices," he told delegates. "I usually hold one device, the other is a teaching PC provided by the university.

"The app has a particular teaching mode developed in collaboration with me. I can screencast what I write on

the whiteboard in the lecture using Panopto on the teaching PC and I can record it. It's very easy to create teaching videos this way."

He added: "Only now have these devices reached the resolution and quality of handwriting where they can actually compete with the whiteboard."

He said the tablet supported a number of teaching styles and did not use a lot of network traffic.

Daniel evaluated the tablet by testing it on a small course of 30 third year maths students. "Not a single student preferred Powerpoint or whiteboard," he said.

Three of Daniel's 11 colleagues at Aberystwyth had now switched to using the pen-enabled tablet and Aberystwyth was set to buy 30 more "so that everyone who wants to teach this way can use it."

9

schoms15 in pictures
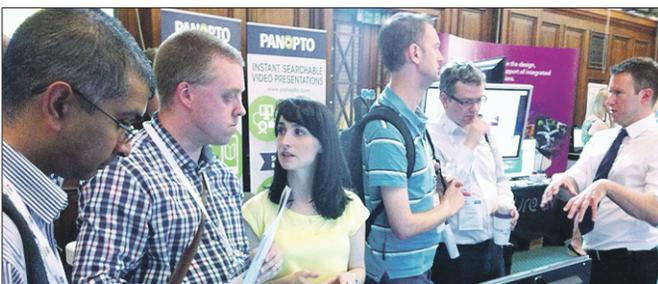
Still coming to terms with MOOCs

BBC education correspondent Sean Coughlan pioneered the Inaugural Pretend Powerpoint Display in his talk on 'MOOCs - after the hype'. He asked delegates to imagine the pictures accompanying his 10-point presentation, but thanks to cartoonist Clive Francis, we don't have to. . .

1: Newspaper front page, spinning headline

In year zero, MOOCs were going to take over and technology was going to happen for education like it had for shopping, banking and entertainment. People were signing up to MOOCs faster than Facebook but the short-term impact of technology tends to be exaggerated. Some say MOOCs have come and gone, but the real traction is yet to come.

2: A funeral hearse

During the thrill of the new technology, journalism was covering stories like the Royal Family having a website or Obama sending a text. Now everybody uses online technology and MOOC stories have to be exciting. Recently, there was a story about a MOOC for undertakers. Technology journalism has come full circle.
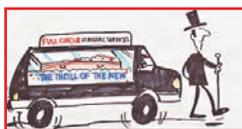
3: Coventry, population 317,000

Recently a single MOOC course running standard English attracted 370,000 subscribers – and it wasn't even run by a university. We've stopped being impressed. It's extraordinary so many people around the world wanted to sign up. Where it goes, nobody knows.

4: ClipArt image for 'university and money'

MOOCs began thanks to two key economic drivers in the USA. One was that universities were becoming expensive, federal governments didn't want to pay out and parents didn't want debts. The other was growing demand. MOOCs were a magic bullet, providing almost universal access and no limit on class sizes. MOOCs will continue to be important as an affordable way of reaching more people, but we don't know in what form.

5: An old fashioned phone

Technology doesn't always turn out the way we expected. The telephone was originally thought of as absurd. We should always bear in mind how things are likely to be changed. MOOCs might not be forever for education. The challenge for universities will be to keep part of the market. There will be pressure from non-traditional organisations seeing it as a lucrative space. Years hence, we don't want to be asking why universities didn't exploit it.

6: Chattering chimpanzees

We can't stop communicating and education is rooted in communication in ways we haven't realised. MOOCs allow people to learn alone but the experience has been that people want to study alone together. There are 24-hour university libraries full of people with laptops. It will be part of the next wave for universities to try to create virtual courses, allowing the organic sharing of ideas and social networking.

7: For sale sign, tumbleweed

At one time all universities were going to have offshore bases and make money out of overseas achievement. It proved to be expensive and risky. Now Stanford University is touring the world selling courses that can be taken via video. MOOCs could easily serve that market, delivering courses without the trouble and expense. The investment is not as vast and it can be pulled back. It depends on libraries of MOOCs but it has big implications for universities that want audiences very quickly.

8: Phone book, full of names

There must be a better name for the MOOC. It doesn't reach people outside HE. Names are important. MOOCs are a rebranded online course and may need reinventing.
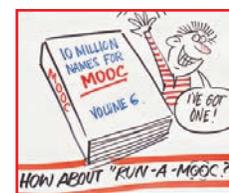
9: A moody cop image

Always follow the money to see where everything is going. Online learning has lots of traffic, millions of people wanting to learn. They don't want to pay, but there is a need to make money from it. MOOCs might become a way to recruit people or to help sell advertising. What allows it to make money will become an important issue as HE and funding are linked.

10: Graduation celebration

How far can universities go to reach that graduation moment through MOOCs? Perhaps MOOCs could be used as an online prospectus with small content as a teaser, eventually somebody might offerin full online prospectuses from prestigious universities. Some ambitious university will see they can reinvent themselves and that will throw down the gauntlet to entire HE system - the idea that you can get a good degree from a good university for £2k, rather than £9k. At the moment, we're playing with it. When somebody offers a full proper degree in a big subject in a form that represents good quality and good value, it will be a very important moment. That will be when the Year of the MOOC really begins.

10

InfoComm decision time

DECISION time is approaching on whether to take up a third year of the agreement with InfoComm under which all SCHOMS UK institutions became members.

Treasurer Jim Sheach reported that significant investment – about £24,000 on current membership numbers – had been made in the scheme, which was due for renewal at the end of this year.

He said that having 100 members out of the total UK membership of 329 in InfoComm had given SCHOMS 'a huge slab' of influence.

This included places on its advisory board, the ISE Education Advisory Board, involvement in editing documents and the chance to comment on a proposed new information technology post.

SCHOMS had also benefited from online training opportunities and a piloted CTS bursary scheme - which participants David Evans and Fred Phillips endorsed as having given their roles formalised credibility through certified qualifications.

"Given that we are 30% of the membership, we have to consider what further we want from it," said Jim. "Do we take up our third year option from the end of the

Outgoing treasurer Jim Sheach was delighted to leave delegates a note saying 'there is money left' and gave an update on the groundbreaking SCHOMS membership link with InfoComm

year? Do we repeat the CTS bursary scheme? InfoComm are pleased with our engagement and want to build on it."

However, Jim was disappointed that out of 20 CTS bursaries awarded, only 17 institutions had completed within the deadline. "In many ways that's a waste," he said. "Because it's free, it doesn't lack value. Institutional reps have a duty to ensure their people turn up."

He reviewed the results of the InfoComm scheme survey which showed favourable responses to the quality of training material and the opportunity to take online courses. The vast majority of respondents said that the InfoComm scheme had met expectations.

11

Kathy and Aileen grow worldwide connections

Kathy Grattan (left) of SCHOMS' Australian counterparts AETM gave a snapshot of her organisation's latest activities. Kathy leads the AV Client Services Team at the University of Technology, Sydney.

Executive director Aileen Scales outlined the aims of SCHOMS' US counterparts The Consortium of College and University Media Centers (CCUMC). The organisation is based at Indiana University, where Aileen works in audio visual.

AETM is looking into launching a Women in InfoComm organisation and has been put in touch with like-minded colleagues in the US, Kathy told conference.

She said a joint membership arrangement with InfoComm for the past two years had worked 'to some extent' but the most had not been made of training.

AETM had become an incorporated body and officially changed its name to the Association for Audio Visual and Educational Technology Management, Kathy added. The rebrand had entailed the creation of a new identity and website. Work was also taking place on design guidelines and on two videos, one to promote its conference and the other to reach potential members in related lines of work such as galleries and museums.

Regional meetings were being considered because not everyone could attend conference, Kathy said. There were plans for a trial meeting in New Zealand.

CCUMC is on a constant learning curve, according to Aileen. "We want to increase training, broaden relationships with other organisations and do more with InfoComm," she told conference.

"We'd like to get InfoComm training to come to our conference instead of our members having to travel to Florida or Vegas," she said.

"And following the scheme you (SCHOMS) started, we've approached InfoComm to see if we can get a discount membership to provide members with more value for money. It would help them to be members of all the organisations that will be vital to them in the future."

Membership currrently stood at 700 but CCUMC's goal was to reach 1,000. "One of our best assets is our list serve," she said. "There's not a day goes by that it doesn't have a question - such as how do you handle upgrades, how do I share, how do I get reviews."

Content capture: bringing new ideas to the surface

SCHOMS professionals are being urged to join efforts to find new ways of digitally capturing technical content for academics.

They are being invited to attend the latest in a series of workshops – at the University of Bath later this year – aimed at coming up with new writing surface answers.

"The idea is to encourage academics to face and maintain eye contact with students whilst using a visualiser and writing surface, reducing reliance on whiteboards and blackboards in lecture theatres," said James Rutherford, Learning Spaces Manager at the University of Birmingham, which hosted the first workshop last November.

Several universities and manufacturers joined the discussions at a second workshop in March at University College London (UCL).

"We are looking for a solution to be ergonomically designed for the academic and to be secure and easy to maintain for local AV teams," James added.

"It will require a fast response to motion, a more tactile feel and a highly intuitive interface – an analogue look and feel but one that can digitally record mark-making, display on a screen or as a projected image and can allow mobile devices to mirror and annotate the shared content."

UCL's Mike Allinson and the University of Bath's Rob Hyde reported on the collaboration to SCHOMS15 and made an appeal for more colleagues to get involved,

particularly from universities in the north.

Rob, Audio Visual Manager at Bath, talked delegates through some of the solutions that had been reviewed – including touchscreens, wireless presenting, tablets, sketch apps and interactive projectors.

"We're thinking along these lines but haven't got something we think we can deploy on a mass scale," he said.

Mike, Learning and Teaching Support Manager at UCL, added: "We discussed the technology, but technology wasn't the problem, it was what we wanted the technology to do. We couldn't define that. It's a real conundrum."

After a brainstorming session to help provide a clearer framework for the discussions with manufacturers, Mike also urged SCHOMS delegates to seek the views of academics within their own institutions.

"It's all about how they teach and how they want to teach, how to get the best experience for them and their students. Our job is to take how they want to deliver their lectures and discuss with the manufacturers how to turn it into technology for us," he said.

Mike and Rob are collating the feedback from the conference and will circulate another report before the next workshop.

If you want to get in touch with them to add your support or suggestions you can access their contact details via the SCHOMS membership directory.

SCHOMS15: last look through cartoonist Clive's eyes. . .

SCHOMS is the professional body for heads of services working within UK Higher Education. SCHOMS members lead and manage a diverse set of educational, media and institutional support services. They give strategic direction to support and promote excellence in teaching and learning practice.
Registered address: First House, 1 Sutton Street, Birmingham B1 1PE
Tel. 0121 415 6803 email info@schoms.ac.uk   www.schoms.ac.uk   Twitter: @SCHOMSinfo