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**SCHOMS**

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# connections

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## Lecture capture: the first steps

DELEGATES at SCHOMS 2012 were the first to hear the findings of two surveys into the hotly discussed development and benefits of lecture capture.

Professor Gareth Hall has spent the past 18 months gathering user views and experiences - why students like it and why staff are using it or choosing not to.

He unveiled the results so far of the projects - one into teaching staff experience funded by SCHOMS and the other into staff and student experiences conducted at the University of Aberystwyth, where he lectures in psychology.

Overall, he said the projects revealed the issue was not just

**The SCHOMS 2012 conference hosted by Darcy O'Bree at The University of Hull focused on how we approach huge changes to the way universities are operating. One of the latest developments is lecture capture. Professor Gareth Hall of Aberystwyth University gave members an indication of how teaching staff and students are responding to it.**

wrapped up in whether technology was good or bad. "It seems to be more deeply rooted in what is the function of education."

Professor Hall said the debate about technologies such as lecture capture and podcast was being conducted against the background of mainstream education media coverage that it posed a threat to lecturers' jobs.

"Lecturers fear being 'outcast' by a superior actor, turning the job into

an entertainment business, so only the most entertaining lecturers will maintain jobs," he said.

Another belief was that students would stop attending lectures. "They didn't with Blackboard," Professor Hall said, "and they still haven't now."

There were also views that technology contributed to universities spoon-feeding students too much and that the use of laptops in class was

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## Simon heads new-look Executive Committee

SCHOMS is heading towards its 2013 annual conference in Aberdeen with a new Executive Committee in place.

Simon Birkett, Technology Enhanced Learning Manager in the Institute for Learning Enhancement and Innovation at the University of Derby, has chaired his first meetings since taking over from Toni Kelly.

Toni, Head of Learning Space Development at the University of Birmingham, stepped down after four years at the helm.

The Executive Committee has also taken on a new look with Jim Sheach, Jill Snelling, Darcy O'Bree and Caroline Pepper replacing Stuart Davies, Nigel Thomas, Shona Cameron and Az Mohammed. Pictures and more details on page 6.

Meanwhile, Darcy and Caroline have been confirming plans for SCHOMS 2013 with organiser Iain Harold at the University of Aberdeen. More details in the next issue of Connections.

# Lecture capture: the first steps

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disruptive with students straying on to social media.

Meanwhile, positive applications, such as the iTunes university, did not get talked about.

## The SCHOMS survey

Lecture capture users recognised it led to a decreased workload with fewer emails. At assessment times, students were referring to lecture capture instead of contacting the lecturer, which freed up time.

Those who chose not to use it said it was something else for them to learn and they didn't have time. They had research pressures or no time to edit. "They thought they had to go back over lectures and cut out all those little bits in between. It's not the case."

Many teaching staff felt they were losing their choice and control of learning. "A lot of technology is making them feel uncomfortable because it is questioning their teaching methods. However, I think that's healthy. We

have to go through a bit of turbulence.

"Research-focused lectures were quite against having to participate in anything more than lecturing. They held the view that students don't get to ask questions if they don't come to class."

Professor Hall addressed the issue of teaching staff being self-conscious.

"A lot of teaching staff are technophobes, they don't want to engage with it. They get scared because they don't know where to find the power button, or know how to fix an issue with lecture capture on the podium. Stationary microphones are a problem. They hit record but then wander around the lecture theatre. Mobility is important in their ability to deliver a lecture."

Professor Hall acknowledged a concern among teaching staff about accountability – possibly being sued if a student listens again and discovers inaccurate information. On the other hand, supporters of lecture capture said it was a process of learning for students to follow up and question. He

accepted there were implications with copyright and intellectual rights.

He felt an answer was to incorporate lecture capture more intelligently into teaching. "At the moment it seems to be very stationary. A lecturer will turn up, press record, deliver the lecture, and upload." He suggested that lectures could be recorded beforehand with lecture time used to do more problem-based learning and to engage students.

He also said full use of the technology had yet to be explored. There was a capability in software-based provisions to leave notes, for which training had still to be given. "It's important that it gets brought out," he said, "but again, there will be a battle with academics to incorporate it into their workload."

He admitted that it had been 'really difficult' compiling the views of teaching staff for the SCHOMS exercise. "I feel sorry for you approaching academics," he joked. "You've got a tricky customer trying to sell benefits to."

## Views sought on SCHOMS education and training

PLANS to build on the SCHOMS Fellowships and project schemes by offering specialist training opportunities were announced by Executive Committee member John Lynch.

"There's a fragmented provision of training around the sector," he told conference. "As managers of staff, we want to get the best out of employees and we have looked at SCHOMS running courses that you or your staff could attend, using the specialist knowledge within our group."

The Executive has since met to start evaluating the bigger picture of education and training. This will include engaging with other providers in the field to gain a better understanding.

A briefing paper will be circulated to members before Aberdeen 2013 and major discussion sessions are being planned for next year's conference to set the strategy for developing SCHOMS education and training.

### John takes early retirement

● The announcement of the plans was one of John Lynch's final duties for SCHOMS before taking early retirement.

He accepted the offer from Leeds Metropolitan University, where he was Media Projects Consultant.

The education and training remit has been passed to new Executive Committee member Jim Sheach, who is preparing the briefing paper for Aberdeen.

"John has been a highly valued member of SCHOMS the Executive Committee. I'm sure everyone would like to join me in passing on our warmest thanks for everything he has done and wishing him well in his retirement," said the new Chair of SCHOMS, Simon Birkett.

# Poor lecture environments are bigger student concern

## Lecture capture: The University of Aberystwyth survey

STUDENTS at Aberystwyth University used lecture capture mainly as part of exam revision and to clarify concepts, not just to improve exam marks.

That was one of the key findings of Professor Hall's study into staff and student experiences with lecture capture at the University of Aberystwyth.

Their overriding opinions were not driven by any positives about lecture capture – rather by how the lectures were so bad.

"It made me uncomfortable because I'm a lecturer," said Professor Hall. "But it is true. We are not trained to be great speakers, we mimic what we were taught at university and we think it's the best way to do it. But I've seen the light."

Students reported that their main source of information gathering was in the lectures, but that the lecture environments were 'awful'.

"There's a high cognitive load that seemed to be big problem - listening and note-taking at the same time was disruptive to them engaging with the lecturer in a way that the lecturer would like."

The best thing was that attendance hadn't been affected.

"It's nothing to do with lecture capture whether they turn up or not. If they like the lecturer, if they like the topic, if they've got a module handbook and they know what's coming up, they are strategising which lectures they would like to go to. If lecturers are incredibly boring, students won't turn up regardless of whether it's recorded or not. Some students even said they wouldn't listen to the lecture capture. It's something to consider, how we can make lectures more engaging and exciting."

Professor Hall said that some students were starting to make their own intelligent use of lecture capture. "Some lecturers can go off on a tangent and make references that aren't on the slides. The students use lecture capture to go back and find the references and then to further their reading. They're even organising study groups around lecture capture."

Mobile learning was important to students. They wanted to know they could download and listen in a coffee shop, or on the seven-hour train journey home from Aberystwyth. "Some students are turning lecture capture into MP3 and playing it under their pillow when they go to sleep to see if the information would absorb into their head."

Professor Hall highlighted the pastoral support benefits that lecture capture delivered. "Some students who have English as a second language said it had improved their English."

And he pointed out that students were thinking more about facilities in terms of being a consumer in education. As fee increases from September would make value for money a bigger issue, students would be driving demand for provision and wanting to decide how it was used. "It was talked of in terms of being a consumer right," he said.

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### Digital 'crystal ball'

DIGITAL Natives are being captured in Glasgow - and it's giving us an eye to the future.

The 'natives' are induction week students at the University of Glasgow. And it's their views on technology being captured in a survey run every two years by Kerr Gardiner, Head of Learning & Technology Unit.

"We ask about their prior access to technology, hardware, networks, how they had been using it and their expectations of using it at university," he told conference. "It gives us an evidence base and not just about what our current students want. It's a crystal ball for what future students will expect."

Keir said that the latest survey had shown a significant shift to mobile computing, with an increase of smartphone use and decrease in laptop use.

"We've got to be aware of this and the impact it's going to have on teaching," he said.

### Procurement plea

PROCUREMENT services should be part of a project decision-making team from the start, Essex University procurement manager Liz Anderson told delegates.

She said procurement needed to understand what was critical, help to prioritise requirements and build an effective specification.

"We're here to provide a service to you as a customer. It's not just about purchasing, it starts with the identification of need."

She urged delegates "not to bring in procurement at the last minute."

Liz was introduced during a talk via Skype by Tessa Rogowski, Essex University's ISS Customer Services Manager.

# Challenges of a more sustainable future

**Andrew Smith, Head of Estates and Sustainable Development for HEFCE, provided an insight into HEFCE's chief roles in investment, regulation, information and partnership before concentrating on 'Thinking Sustainably'.**

HIGHER education can contribute massively to sustainable development, according to Andrew Smith – through research, teaching, its own business operations and its effects on local communities.

He gave the example of research at Cranfield University that had led to the development of upward facing wing tips on aeroplanes to improve efficiency.

"They're also working on ceramic coatings for engines that allow them to be more fuel efficient. Work like that is going on in HE all the time," he said.

He gave other illustrated examples including:

- Ravensbourne Greenwich Peninsula campus – where the institution relocated to Isle of Dogs. "It's not only stunning architecture, they have reduced the floor area dramatically, leading to a big increase in efficiency, and have played a big part in regenerating the area."

- Buckinghamshire New University – where the institution has relocated from five campuses to a single campus. "They have cut floor area by about 40%, their carbon emissions will fall as well. They've got better quality space and the costs of running infrastructure have been dramatically reduced. It's a real win-win situation for them. I think we will see more of that efficient operation in HE."

- Refurbishment of the David Wilson Library at the University of Leicester – "the big advantage is a reuse of embodied energy within the building. From a sustainability point of view, refurbishment is usually better than redevelopment."

Andrew Smith told conference there

was a good story to tell on estate management. "Estate condition is better, we're accommodating more students, increasing income, and doing that with only a small increase in floor space. Despite all that growth, energy consumption is unchanged."

However, he warned that there would be an expectation for energy consumption to fall. New carbon reduction targets were going to provide 'a heck of a challenge' but HEFCE was proposing to encourage it by:

- Linking its capital funding to carbon reduction.

- Funding projects to see how sustainable development could be improved – he gave the example of a project to monitor the activities in buildings at night that used power. "Do research buildings really need to be open 24 hours a day?"

- Revolving Green Fund – specifically funding carbon reduction projects within institutions. He singled out plans for a wind turbine at Lancaster and an anaerobic digestion project at Harper Adams that uses farm waste from the college to produce heat and power. "It saves them money, reduces their carbon footprint and provides research for students."

Andrew Smith said HEFCE wanted to see sustainability included within the projects it funded to ensure that it was at least being considered.

The future was uncertain in terms of the Higher Education bill, student numbers, tuition fees and core and margin. "While the sector is in a good state now there are definitely challenges ahead."

On partnership, he said HEFCE now



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described itself as a champion of the student. "It's quite a shift."

It had introduced students as a core part of its directorate and their contribution had been 'really helpful'.

He said the importance and impact of the student experience had been driven home to him during a visit to Loughborough University.

"They have a mentoring programme between members of the senior management team and student sabbatical officers. The Students' Union runs a 'better choices' campaign around alcohol and there was a big programme of employing students on campus with several hundred involved, particularly in the facilities department.

"I get the feeling of a bunch of people working together to learn from students what they wanted and to make things better. There was a bit of a debate about whether students were customers or stakeholders but it was felt ultimately that they should be partners. I thought it was really inspiring."

# 'Brave new world' of students as consumers

**Alex Bols, Assistant Director (Research) and Head of Higher Education at National Union of Students, spoke on 'The Changing Landscape of Higher Education'**

HIGHER education is facing a 'multiplier effect' of policy reforms – the most striking of which is the emergence of consumer traits among students, according to Alex Bols.

He said this 'marketisation' had the potential to bring a fundamental change in the attitudes of students.

"They will not just be contributing towards the cost of a course, but in many cases funding the cost entirely. So students who pay significantly higher fees will have different expectations. They will be more conscious of their rights to expect service standards, less tolerant of shortcomings, more demanding and more litigious."

So many students would have different attitudes and expectations, that the ability to unpick and respond to those will be one of the key challenges of how we went into the 'brave new world'.

Differences in fee levels between providers would also raise questions. "Are they just paying higher fees for enhanced employability or the reputation of an institution, or are they paying for very real differences in the experiences while they're studying?"

"I think there should be a core set of expectations that apply to all students whatever, wherever and however they study. I am concerned there will be a 'gold plating' of the experience for those students who are paying more.

"Will the student paying £9,000 get the 'gold card' when they arrive, which guarantees them feedback within a week, weekly meetings with their personal tutor, free laptops to support learning? Will the student arriving on their £6,000 course be

given the discount card, entitling them feedback within five weeks of the assessment, a termly meeting with the personal tutor and access to the institution's computer labs outside peak hours?"

He said that an entire customer approach to education could result in a more conservative approach to teaching and assessments. "It has the potential to impact on wider academic standards by rewarding the entertainment approach to teaching and removing the difficult. There are challenges within a system that is based around satisfaction or responding passively to the demands of students."

He quoted a survey in which – when faced with the question 'if you were given a limitless pot of money, what would you spend it on?' – 72% of students said teaching and 52% said learning facilities and resources.

This had implications for learning spaces within institutions. "Students are going to be expecting more innovative solutions than increasing the sizes of lectures," he said. "The number of innovative spaces being developed at institutions feels like the exception rather than the norm. Institutions have the showcase learning suite but not yet a wider, radical reshaping of the academic campus. It will be interesting to see if any universities take that step."

He said students should be involved in sharing ownership of the problem. "We're all part of the same academic community and more effective engagement will create a very different atmosphere on campus."

On technology, Alex Bols said virtual learning was becoming an



**// Students are going to be expecting more innovative solutions than increasing the sizes of lectures. . . institutions have the showcase learning suite but not yet a wider, radical reshaping of the academic campus. //**

increasing part of the university experience. Half of all students questioned in an NUS survey used it every day yet there remained an impression that the virtual learning environment in universities was still relatively unused.

He reminded members of an NUS charter on technology and HE, calling for digital technology to be thought of at a very early stage in curriculum design and to make the whole process more student-friendly.

"We have begun to see some interesting ways of integrating technology into learning and teaching.

"We have been calling for a senior fellow in each institution faculty or department who understands technology and can articulate the benefits to academics.

"We should also use the technology that students already have. Large numbers of students have mobile phones and PDAs in their pockets and want that to be increasingly integrated into their teaching and learning."

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## Sensor system tested

PROGRESS on a plan to use motion sensors to monitor room occupancy was presented by Hull University's Darcy O'Bree and Kev Sach.

Their project aims to overcome inaccurate systems for gauging teaching space bookings and availability.

"Matching up what's timetabled with what's being used is a problem for every university," said Darcy, Hull's Field & Media Services Manager. "Most do a manual survey, walking around taking a snapshot of what's available on the day. It does not look at the whole day and totality of room usage.

"The issue is departments and academics booking rooms and consistently not turning up."

Kev, Field Services Engineer - IT & Audio Visual, talked members through the technicalities of their tests to make motion sensors part of room management systems.

## Workstation success

LEARNING Spaces Specialist Az Mohammed spoke on the role played by students in the installation of Quick Access Workstations at Newcastle University.

"We asked students about social spaces on campus and found they wanted quick access to IT services rather than going to a computer cluster after a lecture," he said.

With £60,000 funding, he negotiated a redesign of the iDesk iCyber unit and an initial supply of 29 workstations were introduced in 2010.

"Nearly 41,000 students logged-on, nearly 11,000 unique users, so we installed another 11 in summer 2011 and have plans to install 14 more this summer to give full coverage," he said.

"It has filled a need we hadn't recognised until the student focus groups. It has enhanced the student experience and improved IT provision."



Stuart Davies



Nigel Thomas



Shona Cameron



Az Mohammed

## New-look Committee's aims

TRIBUTE has been paid to four outgoing Executive Committee members for their services to SCHOMS.

Vice chair Stuart Davies, Audio Visual Services Manager at Essex University stood down with Nigel Thomas, Technical Support Team Leader at Aberystwyth University; Shona Cameron, Director of Learning Services at the University of Strathclyde and Az Mohammed, Learning Spaces Specialist at Newcastle University.

"SCHOMS has benefited greatly from the skills and experience that Stuart, Nigel, Shona and Az brought to their executive roles," said Toni Kelly, who herself stood down as Chair of SCHOMS. "Their contributions and support have made a real difference to how our work is perceived within the sector."

Toni's place as Chair has been taken over by Simon Birkett, Technology Enhanced Learning Manager at the University of Derby. He has been joined by new Executive Committee members Jim Sheach, Section Manager of Learning and Teaching Spaces Technology at the University of Edinburgh; Jill Snelling, Learning Spaces Support Manager at the University of Exeter; Darcy O'Bree, Field & Media Services Manager at Hull University and Caroline Pepper, Learning Space and Administration Manager at Loughborough University.

"Toni will be a hard act to follow," Simon said. "Her astute leadership has brought SCHOMS a long way and we will be aiming to build on the progress achieved under her guidance to continue meeting the challenges faced in higher education."

The new Executive held its first meeting at Aston University in June and also meets regularly by video conference.



The Executive Committee has taken on a new look with (from left) Jim Sheach, Jill Snelling, Darcy O'Bree and Caroline Pepper.



## Exhibition looks into tomorrow's world

MANUFACTURERS of hardware, software and Audio Visual integrators looked into the future at the SCHOMS exhibition in Hull - at what is now recognised as the largest AV/classroom technology trade exhibition with a single HE focus in the UK.



## Valuable insights gained and shared at ISE

A PARTY of 50 SCHOMS members made the most of their visit to the prestigious Integrated Systems Europe (ISE) event in Amsterdam at the end of January.

"It was an excellent opportunity for us to see first hand technologies we might not have considered before and to discuss them with suppliers," said Paul Wood, Deputy Director IT Services, Bangor University.

"It also gave us the chance to feedback to manufacturers. Quite often, we don't see manufacturers, but at ISE they listen to what we say and I like to think it gets back into the design process and makes it better."

ISE 2012 is the largest professional AV and systems integration trade show in Europe, bringing together manufacturers, distributors, integrators and technology managers from over 100 countries worldwide.

Members also visited presentations during their three-day visit to the show - the third time that SCHOMS has sponsored attendance.

The Sponsored Buyers Scheme was established in 2010 and has proved to be popular with members.

"Ordinarily, some members do not have funding for this type of event," said Paul. "The partnership between ISE and SCHOMS ensures members receive the funding they need to cover travel and subsistence.

"We're looking to do it again in the future. ISE attracts paying exhibitors, we get a chance to share experiences and make more informed choices. Everybody gains from it."

## Streamlined survey in progress

PLANS are being drawn up for an autumn launch of a streamlined 2011/2012 SCHOMS benchmarking survey.

Work is continuing on making the online survey simpler to complete following a pre-conference workshop at the University of Hull which piloted the survey for 2011/2012.

"The workshop drew very constructive and genuine comments and all feedback has been reviewed, with a few areas pinpointed for further enhancement," said Shona Cameron, Educational Consultant, who presented with Tabetha Newman, Director of e-learning strategy, design and analysis

company Timmus Limited.

The streamlining includes a significant reduction in the number of questions and the inclusion of more user-friendly features such as drop boxes. "We're aiming to make the survey easier for the community to answer and lead to better information at the end of it," said Shona.

"The post-workshop questionnaire showed that plans for the new survey are going in the right direction."

A cross-section of SCHOMS members, including some Executive Committee, attended the workshop.

The survey aims to highlight trends and current concerns in audio visual and media services throughout higher

education. The 2009/10 report provided an insight into the delivery of services including organisational structure and funding, teaching room technical services, television and video services, photography and design.



Presenters Shona (right) and Tabetha at the workshop

# College seizes window of opportunity

IT was much more than a case of window-dressing when a university fashion department planned a move into a new central London studio.

The vision was for a specialist suite of rooms that followed student progression from seminar to design workshop to studio, where the final window designs were created.

This meant creating mobile frames that simulated shop window fronts and track lighting that simulated a shop window set-up.

The space also needed to include:

- A spray booth.
- IT connectivity to enable students to bring laptops into studio.
- Data projector, PC and white board, with large movable tables for group working.
- A storage room for props, materials and mannequins.

The move into the sixth floor rooms in John Princes Street - just off Oxford Street - faced students on the FdA course in Visual Merchandising at the University of Arts, London.

James Rutherford, Learning Environments Manager, said: "The course developed in partnership between London College of Communication (LCC) and London College of Fashion (LCF).



**// It was a fairly dirty, smelly space. . . and the roof leaked. But the biggest challenge was doing it as cheaply as possible. //**

"The original studio was at Elephant & Castle but the school in which it was organised was disbanded as part of an LCC reorganisation and we had to look for new space."

He was aware of three rooms in John Princes Street left by part of the BA Performance course. "It was a fairly dirty, smelly place," James said.

"There were resin deposits and other materials left from costume make-up and technical effects. And the roof leaked.

"But the biggest challenge was doing it as cheaply as possible."

The move had to be completed in three months - between summer and autumn terms in 2010.

Now the dedicated suite is enjoying a new lease of life. "Reaction has been very good," James said. "It has attracted successful corporate clients for press shows and exhibitions.

"And it was featured on the BBC One Show as part of an item about shop windows at Christmas."

