MUVE, Moodle and a Microblogging Tool: Blending technologies to prepare international students for language and life in the UK

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Overview

• M3 Project aims
• The Virtual Learning Environment (Moodle) and online course
• The MUVE (Second Life)
• The Microblogging tool (Twitter)
• Project outcomes
M3 Project aims

- To integrate Second Life and Twitter with our existing online course in Moodle
- To see what value this might add to students’ experience of the online course
- To explore one way of using Second Life and Twitter for educational purposes
Moodle

• Arrive UK
• A 5 week pre-arrival online course for international students
• Focus on living and studying in the UK
• Blends technologies (learning objects, podcasts, vidcasts, discussion forum, chat room)
• E-tutored
MUVE (Second Life)

Use SL to provide an alternative experience of part of Arrive UK (the online course)

Create a purpose built environment in-world where the student community can

- meet and take part in activities with tutor

- use course learning materials adapted/enhanced for SL

- use Twitter for social networking and vidcast-related activity
SL developments

• Disaggregate and adapt selected Learning Objects for use in SL:

Example: ‘Finding out about Southampton’

– THINc book (history of Southampton, tourist attractions, climate etc)
– Google floor map of south of the UK
– Set of interactive local maps (differing scales)
– In world quiz
WANT TO SEE ACTIVITY
YOUR ONLINE COURSE

Click on the screen to
and you will see a blue
right of your screen
top right of your screen
and a new window will
you to see the activity.
2 activities for you to see

As a student living and
studying in
Southampton, part of your daily life
will involve contact with the city
itself. For example, you can expect
to do your shopping off campus and
you may choose to live in a
residential area away from the campus and enjoy the social
life of the city centre.

These activities will introduce you to some important facts and
points of interest about the city in which you will be living.

Click the screen
HISTORY

Southampton is noted for being the home of the ship the Titanic, the Spitfire aircraft, and in recent years, some of the largest cruise liners in the world.

The city has its origins in prehistoric times, but the first settlement was founded by the Romans in AD43. Clausentum, as it was known, was an important trading port for Roman towns of Winchester and Salisbury.

The town was abandoned at the end of the Roman occupation, until Anglo-Saxon settlement in c.700AD. The town was known as Hamwic, then Hamtun which went on to become Hampton.

Southampton was the departure point of the ship Mayflower in which the Pilgrim Fathers left for America in 1620. The city has also been the Port of Departure for emigrants to the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and other parts of the world.

GEOGRAPHY & CLIMATE

Geography and climate are very much influenced by the sea and rivers. The city sits on the eastern edge of Southampton Water, a deep-water haven. The River Test and Itchen converge. The Test runs along the western edge of the city.

The Itchen splits Southampton into two, east and west. The city centre is located on the peninsula between the two rivers. Much of the Southampton waterfront has been redeveloped over the years to enable very large ships to use the port.

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WANT TO LEARN ABOUT SOUTHAMPTON?

Click on the screen to your right and view a set of 3 maps of Southampton.

Click the screen
Twitter (Microblogging tool)

• Link the student community threading their tweets (short messages of 140 chars) to create a community feed

• A specially developed plug-in for Moodle and a Twitter link from SL

• Allowing communication between the students
  - about course resources e.g. vidcasts
  - for social networking purposes
  - from SL, Moodle, the Web, mobile phone
Click the screen in front of you and it will turn blue. The video will begin to play. Long videos may be slow to appear.

Make sure that the video button is on. You can find it at the bottom of your screen.
Project successes

• Model for integration of new technologies within an online course
• Development of an open source Twitter plug-in for Moodle
• Adaptation and enhancement of course learning resources (Learning Objects and vidcasts) for use in SL and with Twitter
Project challenges

- Web 2.0 services unreliable and subject to change/frequent updating
- New technologies lack of accommodation to needs of non-native speakers (Eng)
- Steep learning curve required for SL
- Lack of time on part of participants
- Participant support and communication issues at distance
What next?

• Trial M3 outputs with other student groups in blended learning contexts
• Explore different ways of using the Twitter plug-in within online courses
• Create an in-world resource centre with a range of language learning resources adapted for SL
• Explore ways of using our Language Café environment for informal language learning
Thank you

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Second Life: University of Southampton region

M3 project:
http://www.elanguages.ac.uk/secondlife/index.html