Making it rich and personal:
the personal path to institutional learning environments

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Abstract

The world is changing and universities must respond to students' needs and expectations in agile and effective ways. Learners enter university with an inevitable diversity of technological familiarity and a mix of naïve and sophisticated approaches to using technology as a part of their learning.

The University of Southampton has designed and is implementing a holistic learning environment radically different from the VLEs which have gained widespread use since the late 1990s. Starting from the concept of rich learning environment it became "more than a system, it's a mindset". Social software, open data, co-creation and co-evolution are some of its hallmarks. We propose a framework for a digital cognitive apprenticeship to meet the combined challenges of 'living and learning in a digital age'.

This presentation examines the roots of personal learning environments and considers the interplay of organisational ambitions and requirements needed to support personal learning in a university context.

Biography

Dr Su White, Web and Internet Science,
ECS, University of Southampton

Su White is an associate professor who researches in the Web and Internet Science Group within Electronics and Computer Science (ECS) at the University of Southampton. She is also part of the team developing the use and functionality of the Southampton Learning Environment and Southampton's EdShare educational repository.

Su began researching the intersection of institutional change and innovation in the early 1990s. She has published extensively addressing institutional change, the educational use of technology for learning, and educational and curriculum innovations.

Su has considerable experience of technology enhanced learning (TEL) and has led and made significant contributions to educational development, evaluation and dissemination activities to a large number of funded TEL projects. Latterly her focus in that area turned to the evolution of personal learning environments. Her recent research activities reflect the emerging web science agenda and include work on web science curriculum, semantic technologies, open data and open repositories.

Su White has over 80 publications; details can be found at http://www.ecs.soton.ac.uk/people/saw/