Hello and welcome to the new VLE newsletter. We hope that you find this a valuable source of news and information about the VLE and Monash’s new educational technologies and initiatives.

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Announcements

Academic Board approves Turnitin as Monash’s Enterprise Plagiarism Detection Platform

The VLE is pleased to announce that on Wednesday, 20 July, Academic Board endorsed the adoption of Turnitin (approved the selection of Turnitin) as Monash’s Enterprise Plagiarism Detection Platform. (commencing in 2012). This approval was the result of a strategic enterprise application assessment recently conducted by the VLE Project Team under the guidance of Marnie Hughes-Warrington, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning & Teaching) which reviewed 26 plagiarism
products against Monash business requirements.

As part of this initiative, work on the revision of Monash’s plagiarism policy is underway.

In keeping with the VLE’s model of integrating educational technologies where possible, Turnitin will be integrated with Moodle’s assignment submission module.

Further, in order to meet the high student privacy standards upheld by Monash and the State of Victoria, as part of the Turnitin implementation the VLE Team will deploy a “world-first” technology solution to be developed by Monash in partnership with the Turnitin vendor, iParadigms, which will de-identify a student’s personal information (anonymous student data).

For more information regarding the Turnitin roll out, including details for when your faculty will be able to utilise this service, please keep an eye on the VLE website.

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**VLE Kicks Off the ePortfolio Review Process**

This week the VLE Project Team kicked off an ePortfolio review process with a view to selecting and implementing a student-focused enterprise ePortfolio tool as part of the VLE suite of educational technologies.

The first step in this process is to consult representatives within the faculties who have expressed interest in ePortfolios to better understand their requirements. Aggregated information from these consultations along with a list of strategic educational, technical and compliance (legal) requirements will then be used to conduct a formal review of currently available ePortfolio tools.

Stay tuned for more information regarding this review.

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**Moodle Moments**

**Moving to Moodle 2 Changes Associate Professor Rob Nelson’s View of the Syllabus**

This month the VLE interviews Early Adopter, Associate Professor Robert Nelson about the migration to Moodle. Robert believes that the process of moving to Moodle has enhanced his own view of the syllabus.
“The Moodle 2.0 interface is presented as if it’s a canvas on which we can produce stimulating paintings. It’s a creative undertaking, with lots of good cheer and sense of community. It isn’t a dump depot for pdfs but encourages us to see the interface as a series of activities. I’m very keen to rise to the occasion and devise lessons with new methods that probe ideas and ask students to respond. I want to think of options for them which are meaningful and reflective; and the process is enhancing my own view of the syllabus because thinking about anything as a conversation broadens perception and understanding.”

Robert is teaching the Graduate Certificate in Higher Education subject on Postgraduate Research Supervision. Robert has developed a series of ‘lessons’ in Moodle2.0 as a way of presenting scenarios that a lecturer might encounter when supervising student in their Higher Degree Research so that they gain some experience that is much safer than experimenting out in the field with real students!!! The 'lessons' allow feedback akin to a conversation with the lecturer of the course to help steer participants towards the best practice responses.

Learning Paths in Moodle 2 Using Conditional Activities

The VLE Educational Design Team and Karen Missen from the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences let us in on a great Moodle tip, using the conditional activities function to create learning paths.

If you are creating activities and resources in Moodle and you want activity or resource B to only be available to students after they have completed activity or resource A, then you can use the ‘Conditional release’ function. For example, Karen Missen wants her students to read a file prior to having access to a quiz. She sets up the conditional release so that students must open the file before they are allowed to complete the quiz.
Community Reports

Connecting with the Higher Ed Moodle Community at MoodleMoot AU 2011

Photo: The VLE Team meets with the founder of Moodle, Martin Dougiamas, at MoodleMoot AU 2011 in Sydney. (From left to right: Julia Fogarty, Martin Dougiamas, Susan Zolezzi, Richard Robinson)

Several members of the Monash VLE Team have recently returned from the largest ever Australasian MoodleMoot! Held in Sydney with over 500 delegates, the Moot’s theme was, “The Community Canvas” and focused on the “strength and creativity of the community that underpins Moodle and their ability to directly contribute to the future direction of Moodle”.

In keeping with the conference theme, the Australian Higher Education community was well represented with academic and professional staff in attendance from Macquarie, ANU, University of Canberra, UWA, Flinders, UNSW and LaTrobe, all of which are currently running or are teeing off implementations of Moodle.

Highlights included a keynote by Martin Dougiamas, the founder of Moodle, which divulged a sneak peak into the next release of Moodle 2, break-out sessions with other universities to discuss how Higher Ed institutions are using Moodle to change the way Learning & Teaching happens and the formation of a Higher Ed Moodle group to share ideas about what we’re doing with Moodle and other VLE technologies into the future.

To learn more about MoodleMoot AU 2011 you can visit the conference website at: http://moodlemoot.org.au

Making effective use of the VLE – case studies from the Humanities Seminar with Dr Nick Carter
On the 18 July, Dr Nick Carter, Head of History at the University of Wales, Newport, delivered a seminar at Caulfield Campus to over 60 Monash staff, sharing case studies from the humanities on how to make effective use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLE).

Dr Carter has adapted Roberts’ Four Models of Online Teaching and demonstrated courses he has developed from the Standard, Evolutionary and the Radical categories. The four levels of course development he described were:

- Naive Model (lecture notes),
- Standard Model (lecture notes, notes/slides/summaries, web links, course materials, guidelines, discussion boards etc.),
- Evolutionary Model (podcasts online assessment, online assignment submission etc), and
- Radical Model (no lecturer?, staff set parameters/provide resources but students learn through group collaboration and interaction).


We wish to thank Dr. Nick Carter and hope to work with him again in the future.

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**Feedback in Action**

**Improvements in Moodle 2 based on Early Adopter Feedback**

As part of the Early Adopters Wave 1 implementation of Moodle 2, the VLE Team has asked participants to provide feedback on ways to improve Moodle for enhance Learning & Teaching outcomes. As the result of feedback received in the past month, the VLE Team has made the following improvements to Monash Moodle:
1. Turned on the Feedback Module
2. Enabled Completion Tracking of Student Progress in Unit settings by default for all new units - this allows lecturers to set selective releases upon completion of resources and / or activities
3. Made changes to ‘roles’ including the reconfiguration of the Observer role to allow observation, but not interactions, and the Guest role to allow observation and interaction
4. Enabled staff and student users to upload a profile picture
5. Enabled staff and students to embed YouTube videos in Moodle

Early Adopters, we appreciate your valuable input and hope you will keep it coming. Feedback can be provided to the VLE Team by emailing vle@monash.edu .

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The VLE welcomes contributions to the newsletter. We’d love to hear interesting stories about your experience with Moodle or other educational technologies. To contribute please email vle@monash.edu.