Hello and welcome to the second edition of the Monash Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) newsletter. We hope that you find this a valuable source of news and information about the Monash VLE Project and Monash’s new educational technologies and initiatives.

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Announcements

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VLE Kicks Off Moodle Training Sessions

The VLE is pleased to announce that on Tuesday, 8 November, the VLE Project Team held its first Moodle training session, “Moving into Moodle 2”, at the Peninsula Campus.
Three specialised training sessions comprised of presentations and workshops have been developed specifically for the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. They are:

- ‘Moodle 2 Guided Tour’ - a presentation for lecturers which provides a brief overview of Moodle and seeks to inspire lecturers of the possibilities with Moodle using best practice examples collected from our early adopters
- ‘Moving into Moodle 2’ - a hands on workshop for lecturers who are working with a unit in Moodle which contains migrated content from Blackboard
- ‘Building from the Ground Up in Moodle 2’ - a hands on workshop for lecturers who are starting from scratch with a new unit in Moodle

All 29 Moodle 2 training sessions for the Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences are now available for registration on the VLE website and have had outstanding uptake. Trainings for other faculties will commence in the new year and will be available for registration on the VLE website soon.

We’d also like to take this opportunity to point out that our online Moodle support resources are also now available.

VLE Welcomes 2 New Staff Members

The VLE is pleased to welcome two new members to our fast growing project team!

Mitch Hughes, VLE Educational Designer, is a qualified and experienced teacher. Mitch comes to us from the primary education sector. Working in both the Victorian and Japanese education systems, Mitch has played a leading role in ensuring the implementation of educational technologies aligns with curriculum outcomes and is practiced in establishing a supportive environment to guide teaching staff through technology changes. Mitch has a passion for collaboration and enhancing educational practice. Mitch is energetic, dynamic and a force of positivity.

Li Mei Brusey, VLE Educational Technology Support Officer, has joined us just this week! Li
Mei come to us from Melbourne Business School where she has provided exceptional hands-on technology support for the staff and students with the Executive MBA Program. Li Mei brings superior customer support and troubleshooting skills and a solid understanding of eLearning technologies. Li Mei is thorough, dedicated and friendly.

Moodle Moments

Associate Professor Jonathan Clough Introduces us to his Moodle Word of the Day

Last month at our Moodle 2 Early Adopter Showcase, A/ Professor Jonathan Clough from the Faculty of Law introduced us to a feature he's added to his Moodle site, the Moodle ‘Word of the Day’. Jonathan added the ‘random glossary entry block’ on his unit's main page and connected it to the glossary activity in Moodle. This means that every time his students log into Moodle they see the prominently featured block containing a new legal term.

"Students eyes are drawn to the it. Having the block makes them look at it.”, Jonathan says. We think this is an excellent way for students to learn and be reminded of terms that are essential to their degree and encourage lecturers in other disciplines to try it out.

Watch Jonathan discussing this feature and learn how to create it yourself in Moodle.

Peter Wagstaff Integrates Moodle 2 with Web 2.0 Technology to Make Learning More Interactive
Mr Peter Wagstaff from the Faculty of Business and Economics has taken a social constructivist approach with Moodle by making learning more interactive for his students. He does this by embedding different Web 2.0 technologies within his Moodle site.

Every week Peter embeds a new You Tube clip of himself addressing his students. Embedding the clips within his Moodle site prevents students from getting distracted by having to leave Moodle to watch the YouTube video.

Peter also embeds a Twitter feed into his unit, enabling students to make unit related Tweets and have them fed through to the site.

Finally, Peter embeds a feed of students’ blogs using a Google reader RSS widget. Peter does this because he says that this can ‘enable the student-generated content to be in the body of Moodle, as opposed to off on the side, because Moodle should be about student interaction. I want the student voice to be very loud and available to other students.’

Watch Peter discussing this technology and learn how to create it yourself within Moodle.

Community Reports

Connecting with the Higher Ed Moodle Community at MoodlePosium AU 2011
In late October, several VLE team members and friends journeyed to Canberra to attend the 3rd annual Moodleposium, an annual A/NZ higher education Moodle conference co-sponsored by the Canberra Institute of Technology, the Australia National University and the University of Canberra. With roughly 150 delegates from a number of universities and a variety of roles, ranging from lecturers to educational designers to project managers, Moodleposium is a particularly important conference for Monash. The conference theme was "Presence".

Monash contributed to the conference program with two Moodle presentations. Pennie White, VLE Lead Educational Designer, presented on "Monash Moodle Moments", a collection of case studies of how Moodle is being used for best practice teaching at Monash. Pasquale Stella and Dr Dharani Perera-Schulz from Monash’s Usability and Accessibility Team in eSolutions also presented on "Creating an accessible Monash University Moodle Theme".

To learn more about Moodleposium 2011 you can visit the conference [website](#).

**Sharing at the Moodle 2 Early Adopter Showcase**

The VLE’s first ever Moodle Early Adopter Showcase was held on the 13th of October. The showcase, hosted by Lead Educational Designer Pennie White, featured several academics sharing about how they are using Moodle to make their lectures more interesting and interactive.

The Moodle Early Adopter Showcase proved a great medium for which to share ideas as not only did academics express enthusiasm over the presentations but many stayed well after the scheduled end of the session to chat informally about some of the ways they have been using Moodle to improve their learning and teaching.

If you missed the showcase, we invite you to watch our Early Adopter Showcase [videos](#).

**Celebrating with Moodle Partners at the Moodle Wave 1 Thank You Celebration**
On November 4, the VLE hosted a party to thank Moodle Early Adopters, Faculty Administrators and other Monash Moodle partners who helped to make Wave 1 a great success. Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) Professor Marnie Hughes-Warrington addressed the gathering, proffering her sincere thanks for everyones’ hard work, dedication and thoughtful participation in the newly formed Monash Moodle community.

Attendees were quickly swept into the spirit of things with people putting on their Moodle Early Adopter T-shirts that were made especially for the event as soon as they arrived. The Moodle VLE chocolate lollipops were also a hit. In fact, almost all of them were devoured well before the end of the celebration!

The VLE Team would like to extend a big thank you to all of you that have been involved with Wave 1, regardless of whether you were able to attend the party. Without you Monash’s first semester on Moodle 2 would not have been such a success!

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**Feedback in Action**

**Scheduled Releases to Moodle 2 Updated on VLE Website Weekly**

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. Changes made as a result of this feedback, along with changes initiated by the Moodle 2 technical team, are posted to the VLE website on a weekly basis.
View these changes to learn about the VLE's latest improvements to Moodle.

Warm regards,
The VLE Project Team

The VLE welcomes contributions about your experience with Moodle and other VLE technologies to our newsletter. To contribute please email vle@monash.edu.