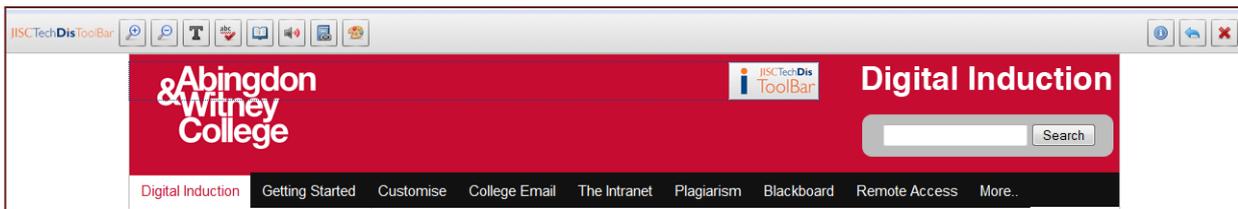


Developing a Digital and Learning Literacy Induction at Abingdon and Witney College



Background information

In spring 2009, we were asked to take part in a JISC funded study on Learning Literacies in the Digital Age which was designed to "... help ... raise awareness of digital literacies at your institution, as well as collecting data for our study." With the help of senior managers, we followed up the audit with 2 learner focus groups and participation in a pilot survey of the students' use of technology in FE, run by Sero on behalf of BECTA.

We discovered, amongst many other things, that a number of students didn't know they had a college email address and another group of respondents, while knowing that they had college email, rarely or never looked at it. Unfortunately, some tutors thought they were communicating with students via their college emails.

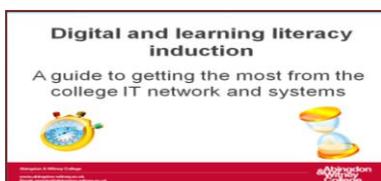
Our reaction to the audit and pilot survey

Early summer 2009 found a small group of ILT (in FE this means Information and Learning Technologies) enthusiasts and two senior managers meeting and agreeing to produce a pilot digital and learning literacy induction that would be a mandatory part of full time student course induction in September. It would be delivered in an IT room wherever possible and contain 7 sections, including an activity and short Flash quiz to keep learners' attention in the hour it would take to do. When a tutor had taken a group through the induction, learners would receive a 2 GB branded college memory stick containing useful college information and handouts.

The induction would be a general introduction to the following areas:

- Changing passwords
- Customising the computer (accessibility features and software)
- College email system
- Introducing the intranet and acceptable use of the internet
- Blackboard VLE
- Avoiding plagiarism
- Remote access

We thought that individual tutors could customise each section, adding and subtracting information in line with their learners' needs.



A PowerPoint show was created, with some video clips, but no quizzes, and uploaded to the intranet. There were 3 versions; one for classroom use, one for individual student use (late arrivals or those who wanted to check information) and one for new members of staff.

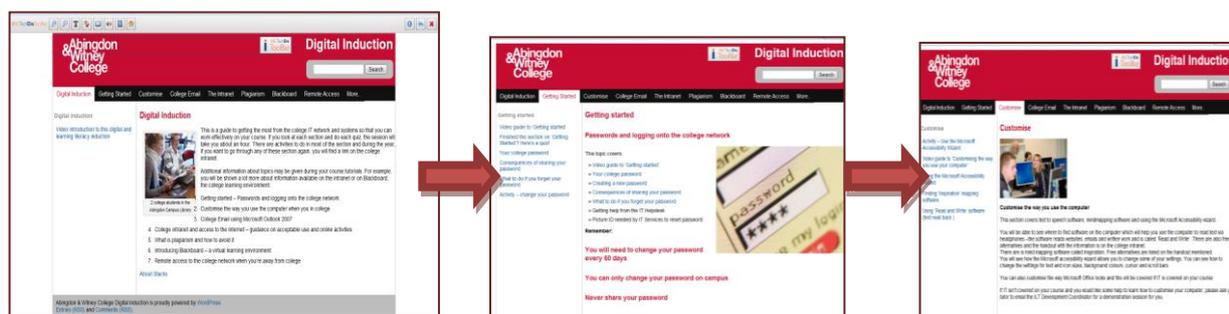
1500 memory sticks were given to students on completion of the induction. A survey of students and staff was conducted in December and 88% of the students agreed that:

Overall, the content of the session was a helpful way to give me and other new students information about the use of technology in the college	88%
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The next step

In October 2009, funding for an action research grant from LSIS (Learning and Skills Improvement Service) was received to develop the digital and learning literacy induction further by organising a cross college working party to assess the pilot and improve on it. It was agreed that it needed to be available in text for Level 2+ learners and also in multimedia format for Level 1 students who have poor literacy skills. Both versions needed to be web based for easier access by staff and learners.

This is now near completion and has been previewed to the working party and a small group of learners. The video version sits within the text version and the JISC TechDis Toolbar (<http://bit.ly/a3ZOzi>) sits on each page, offering customisation by size, text colour and style, a dictionary and text read back. The Flash quizzes will shortly be added to each section.



A few of the lessons learned:

- ✓ Don't assume that learners know how to use technology appropriately in an educational setting.
- ✓ If you don't ask the learners directly, you won't know what they think.
- ✓ Some tutors needed help to run the PowerPoint and reported that **they** learned from the induction. They said it raised their awareness of digital literacy issues as well.
- ✓ Backing from senior managers is critical to the success of a project as well as the implementation and embedding of it into the curriculum and tutorial programmes.
- ✓ Findings and outputs from other JISC projects (Phase 1 & 2 Learner Experiences of e-Learning- <http://bit.ly/aYjLVq>), participation in JISC audits and BECTA pilot surveys, as well as participation in special interest groups like ELESIG (<http://elesig.ning.com/>), provided invaluable evidence and support for implementing an effective process for supporting new learners in FE (and some staff...).

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