

Desire2Learn Client Success Story

NOTTINGHAM TRENT UNIVERSITY:

CREATING A LEARNING COMMUNITY WITH DESIRE2LEARN LEARNING REPOSITORY



Nottingham Trent University (NTU) is among the top 50 higher education providers in the United Kingdom, serving more than 25,000 students. Currently, over 600 courses are offered, which are run over three campuses, administered by nine academic schools with partnerships across the globe.

NTU is also a leading U.K. university for employability with nearly 95% of graduates with a first degree from full-time study in employment or further study six months after graduating. The NTU Supporting, Harnessing and Advancing Repository Enhancement (SHARE) project was recently awarded the 2010 Desire2EXCEL Collaboration Award for communication between and among teaching and professional service staff through their Learning Repository implementation.

The Issues

NTU wanted to promote and enhance content creation, improve teaching and learning resource sharing and resource management among university colleagues. The big question was how to create a sharing community mindset. This required a cultural shift, which is never an easy feat.



The Solution

In 2009 the SHARE project was born. Funded by the JISC Information Environment Programme, with support in kind from Desire2Learn Incorporated, the SHARE project is encouraging NTU staff to publish teaching and learning resources in learning repositories to enable the sharing of educational resources. With a campus-wide implementation of Desire2Learn® Learning Environment already in place, NTU integrated Desire2Learn Learning Repository to support the SHARE project.

Making it Work in 4 Easy Steps:

1. Develop and Follow a Comprehensive Project Plan

The SHARE team successfully implemented their project adhering to a defined project management approach. A comprehensive set of work packages was developed including a requirements gathering and analysis work package that defined such things as:

- How many repositories to create
- How to set up Trust Relationships and Permissions
- Setting up Metadata View
- Configuration Variables
- Scenarios for use
- Policies and procedures to ensure long term success

2. Learning Repository Set-up and Structure

Each school in the University was set-up with their own repository to encourage departmental sharing. NTU staff have been set-up with the necessary permissions to be able to publish content directly to the repositories. A University-wide repository was established as well to foster organizational-wide sharing and to distribute resources across all areas of the school.

3. Create a Collaborative Environment and Engaged Staff

For success, buy-in from everyone from senior management to teachers was necessary. Creating an open and transparent process was a top priority allowing all parties to provide input. Based on feedback from staff, several of the initial implementation assumptions were revisited including the localization of terminology and further simplification of the metadata profile.

A campus-wide cross-departmental working group was created involving the elearning developers, teaching, library, and services staff. To clearly communicate the benefits of the project and the technology, a series of use scenarios and best practices was documented.

In order to ensure a high level of comfort with Learning Repository and the SHARE project principles, a series of in-person workshops and online course was made available on an ongoing basis. It was understood early on that hosting workshops was not going to be the sole answer to the success of the project. Communicating the big picture using a set of tools made it work.

4. Promotion and Communication

The communication plan was a key ingredient to fostering openness. The project website (www.ntushare.org) provided a single point of reference for all the latest developments and resources. The site is also the gateway to the project blog and wiki. A leaflet and newsletters were also created to round out the communication plan.

The Outcome

NTU staff are collaborating and generating new ideas by seeing resources shared by peers. Good learning and teaching practices in online activity design, such as activity templates and learning modules which can be imported into courses for reuse and adaptation, are being shared.

The ability to re-use and re-purpose generic teaching and learning resources in areas such as study skills and information literacy has been greatly improved. Duplication has been avoided and demand on storage resources reduced. For example, academic writing, peer support and resources discovery guides are linked for use in multiple courses for re-use.

Administrative benefits have been realized as well. More effective resource management is being seen in relation to student support material that appears in handbooks (e.g., assessment guidance, schedules, marking frameworks, etc.). The definitive resource sits in the Learning Repository and dynamically linked to from multiple courses. This ensures that the resources provided are the most up-to-date and are consistent.

The SHARE project is also looking at providing access to external learning repositories such as JorumOpen (<http://open.jorum.ac.uk>), which gives free access to teaching resources deposited by U.K., Higher Education and Further Education institutions. Supplementary resources that may not have been discovered otherwise are integrated into a single search. Staff already have access to MERLOT, (Multimedia Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching) an external repository which provides free access to peer reviewed online learning and teaching materials in a range of subject areas.

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About Us

Desire2Learn includes Desire2Learn Incorporated and its subsidiaries.

Desire2Learn is a global provider of enterprise eLearning solutions enabling leading institutions and organizations to create teaching and learning environments that support them in realizing their vision.

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