



**Maintaining a sustainable Future
for IT in Higher Education**

Thursday 16th June 2011

Poster Session

Collaborative Online Tools to Support Global Business and Community Engagement

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Abstract:

This paper presents some of the findings of a JISC funded project that trialled collaborative online tools in a business and community engagement context. Two of the trials demonstrate effective practice in the application and implementation of Web 2.0 tools in a global collaborative context within UK Higher Education Institutions. These two trials employed a wide selection of collaborative tools in very different contexts: the Northumbria University trial project involved undergraduates from the School of Design working with multinational industry partners and students from overseas universities, whilst the trial at the University of the Arts, London developed a community of practice (CoP) for photojournalists encompassing postgraduate students, academics and professionals.

The Director of IT Services at Northumbria University was involved with their trial project from the start and was member of the Project Board; this relationship was crucial and led to the tools being hosted by the University together with the support that this brings. The University of the Arts employed externally hosted solutions.

Both trials enjoyed success with very supportive comments from their external partners and students. Student feedback in the Northumbria trial was instrumental in the change of tool from semester 1 to semester 2.

The people aspects were as important as the tools deployed; for example, the 'seeding' of the photojournalists CoP was a central factor in its success. The Community of Practice for Photojournalists continues to be a very active online community and at Northumbria University secure Web 2.0 tools are available for collaborative ventures.