



Guildford
College Group

VLE Strategic Review

A Review of the GO Virtual Learning Environment



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1. Executive Summary

This report:

- Describes the results of a review of the College's current Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), taking into account strategic, financial and pedagogical requirements for the provision of online learning.
- Recommends on the basis of this evaluation that the College adopt the "Moodle" VLE as its primary tool for the provision of online learning.
- Outlines the consequences of doing so and proposes a transition plan that is in keeping with the e-learning and strategic plans for the College.

2. Context of Report

Since 2003, Guildford College Group has maintained a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) that promotes the extension of learning beyond the classroom environment. The use of such an instructional tool is considered a vital element of a modern College's educational offering. Virtual learning environments are a ubiquitous presence in higher and further education and central to the provision of distance, blended, collaborative and technology-enhanced learning programmes.

The need for a VLE is thus not a point of contention. The key questions are if the College has been well served by the solution in place, if it is capable of meeting the corporate and strategic aims of the College, and if an alternate solution is available that allows the College to more effectively meet strategic and educational goals while providing better overall value for money in the medium to long term.

VLEs are constantly evolving. This evolution creates a need for continuous evaluation, consideration of alternatives and an appraisal of the resources and opportunities available. The ability to be flexible and adaptive to changes in the provision of online learning is key to the efficient use of instructional technologies. Initiating change rather than reacting to external market conditions is preferable if Guildford College is to realise the goals of its e-learning strategy. Avoiding change is not a viable option.

Initiating change allows us to implement a strategy that is unique to the College Group and its brand identity. In essence, the College can plan for a growth strategy in which the VLE grows to accommodate changes in the provision of courses, the increased prominence of mobile and distance-based learning, and results in a system that is easy to use, quick to learn, reliable and flexible. It should also allow us to leverage the expertise of the wider e-learning community in the UK, which is an excellent resource of best-practice that should be drawn upon.

2.1 Strategic factors

2.1.1 Increase and Widen Participation

As a key strategic aim of the College, increased participation amongst students, parents, other Higher/Further Education institutions and commercial partners is addressed through the e-learning strategy. This in turn places structural and performance requirements on the VLE used to implement this policy.

In order to successfully implement the e-learning strategy, the VLE must be flexible, adaptable to changes in strategy and educational requirement, and capable of integrating tools and capabilities allowing users of all ages, technical skill level, and using mobile technologies to interact with the College via the Internet.

A key criterion is the development of an e-learning model that ensures use of mobile/distance learning to enable increased student access to learning materials.

2.1.2 Improve Quality

Key to the corporate aim of improving quality is the development of high-quality learning and business support that maximises attainment at a national standard and establishes a high standard of customer satisfaction.

A VLE must be capable of providing a working environment for each course the college offers, or combining courses into a single public-facing group in which students and teachers can interact. Student performance should be trackable and usable for feedback purposes.

2.1.3 Maximise Income and Business Efficiency

In the current economic climate a VLE must contribute to income and business efficiency in three ways:

1. **Cost-efficiency** – the VLE must represent value for money, with costs commensurate with the level of support and functionality provided.
2. **Value-added** – the VLE should be compatible with standards for open learning. It should also be capable of making use of learning resources external to the College, both commercial and open. This can consist of learning materials developed by external vendors, or shared course materials between institutions.
3. **Resource deployment** – The cost of provisioning a VLE should not be a drain on complementary e-learning initiatives. The associated costs should be both manageable and sustainable, factoring in growth in capability and performance as the system evolves.

2.1.4 Invest in Physical Resources

The VLE should be compatible with or adaptable to e-learning initiatives and associated technologies throughout the college. As a guiding principle, the ability of the VLE to draw information from other systems to further educational goals should be a given. The VLE should also be flexible in a way that ensures that capital expenditure on equipment does not result in a scenario where one piece of technology does not work with another. The VLE should not be a barrier to the efficient delivery of new e-learning initiatives or curriculum development. The principle of **openness** is key in this case.

2.1.5 Value our People

The VLE serves the staff as well as students and external learners. Professional development must be facilitated by the VLE, and should allow a staff member to develop a portfolio of their continuous development while employed by the College. In the event their employment reaches an end, this portfolio should be available to them in recognition of their efforts and development as members of the College team.

In this way we can see the potential of the VLE to reinforce the College's commitment to its staff and their professional development. This is also useful to the student population, serving much the same purpose.

2.2 Benefits to Customers

2.2.1 Students

Students should benefit from the potential of an accelerated development programme for the VLE and a standardised interface that is branded to their individual college, yet easy to use and consistent over time. It should not be subject to the whims of an external vendor, or sudden shifts in the commercial sector.

At the same time, the VLE encourages students to continue the process of learning beyond the classroom. It is not necessarily intended to act as a replacement for classroom-based learning and the work of teachers, but rather as a supplement that enhances the value of the course material offered. By making learning convenient and accessible, the College offers an advantage over its peers.

2.2.2 Staff

Teaching staff should be net beneficiaries of integration of data from College data storage systems. The content retrieved from various system should enhance the experience of teaching and reduce the amount of repetitive data entry. This includes databases, access to e-journals, and third party data provided by RSS feeds.

Additionally, the ability to creatively use media to enhance teaching should be unburdened by technical requirements. A simple process of taking photos or videos, uploading them, and indicating the course to insert them in should be sufficient. The level of difficulty should be equivalent to that of YouTube or Facebook – popular media and social interaction websites characterised by ease of use.

2.2.3 Partners

The Guildford College Group has set as a strategic objective: “Achiev[ing] greater economies of scale through collaborations, federations, shared services, mergers or acquisitions.” A VLE for the future should facilitate new partnership opportunities:

- In committing to an open architecture for the development of a VLE the college will be able to make use of a development community distributed globally, with resources allowing the College to offer tools and features that would otherwise be beyond its capabilities.
- Other Colleges using an open architecture should be able to share courses and common user accounts, allowing the College to expand the reach, compatibility and convenience of the VLE.

2.3 Effectiveness of VLE

The selection of a VLE should provide a stable, affordable platform with predictable costs and a foundation from which to implement the e-learning strategy over the next three to five years. This allows for long term planning with an eye to gradually improving service provision based on cycles of feedback from users and input from other e-learning practitioners throughout the UK

The required development time can be reduced by building on the development work done by other substantially-sized institutions and participating in community-based groups focused on technical developments and educational use of these tools. Such conferences are commonplace and provide an excellent forum for sharing information.

Leaders in this field include the Open University and University College London, which both have committed substantial resources to supporting and developing Moodle.

3. Evaluation of existing VLE

3.1 *Technical and Functional Analysis*

The technical and functional analysis is undertaken with the purpose of highlighting the required functionality of the VLE for teaching and learning purposes. The capability of the existing Blackboard VLE is compared with the Moodle VLE, which emerged as the most suitable replacement candidate. The justification for Moodle as a replacement candidate is covered in the subsequent section.

For the purposes of comparison, the list of identified requirements is enumerated. The ability of the Blackboard versus Moodle VLE to accommodate these requirements is then compared.

3.1.1 Content management

Requirement	Description	Blackboard	Moodle
The ability to take advantage of new technologies for delivering and supporting learning.		The GO VLE is designed as a single application with several third party applications plugged in.	Moodle is a modular application made up of a set of 'building blocks' or modules configured around a core web site application. New features or modules developed by third party suppliers can be added as discrete elements without impacting other parts of the VLE. This reduces the risk in adding new tools and services to meet specific institutional or school requirements and therefore provides significant benefit over the existing technology. A significant number of higher education institutions and companies are actively developing new tools for integration with Moodle. Many of these are free or offered with support.
Content Migration: migration of learning materials from Blackboard to the Moodle VLE	Existing course material, student information, performance statistics and history must be migrated from the existing VLE.	A migration from Blackboard 7.3 to 9.1 has been successfully undertaken, but faults in the product supplied by Blackboard have led to an approximately 2-3% failure rate. In these instances the course material has been transferred manually. Full migration was completed in August 2010.	A variety of tools are available free of charge to ease this transition. Moodle also accepts course imports on a single basis.

Resource creation	Users shall be able to create new resources, integrate them with the platform and export them.	Learning object creation is completed on the desktop using a variety of software tools e.g. CourseGenie, Microsoft Word, Multimedia authoring software etc. These objects are then uploaded to Blackboard	<p>Learning resource creation is possible within Moodle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single web page authoring, which can include graphics. • Lessons: a tool which can incorporate a number of PowerPoint presentations or other files and enable progress through the materials <p>More complex learning objects, for example containing a series of web pages, audio/video files, simulations etc. will still need to be created using desktop software and uploaded. A growing collection of tools to facilitate Lesson creation are available however.</p>
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Coursework	Student should be able to submit completed coursework.	Blackboard 7.3 offered a drop box feature for upload of files. This feature has been discontinued. Now used via Turnitin	<p>The Assignment feature allows assignment setting, coursework submission and provision of informal feedback.</p> <p>Moodle also enables storage of marks and grades in the Gradebook.</p> <p>Turnitin is also available for submission of coursework and plagiarism detection.</p>
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Multiple device accessibility	Resources should be made available to a range of devices.	Accessing Blackboard via a we browser on a mobile device is possible, but not recommended as the experience is unpredictable. There is a mobile option available, at a significant additional cost.	Moodle 2.0 offers mobile device integration as standard.
Peer to peer internet telephony.	Ability for students to connect and converse with each other in their courses.	Not supported.	Plugins for Google voice, skype and Dim-Dim conferencing tools.
SMS text services	Means of sending text-based notices from the VLE to individual or groups of learners.	Not supported. Maybe be possible via Edutext building block, although building blocks are poorly supported in Blackboard.	Not as standard. However a variety of custom modules are available, both free and as commercial offerings.

3.1.2 Curriculum mapping and planning

Requirement	Description	Blackboard	Moodle
Accessibility	The platform interface shall be accessible to users.	Limited. Blackboard uses a frame-based presentation model which presents three web pages as one. This limits its ability to work on different platforms. It also is not compliant with W3C standards for access. Generates multiple errors when tested.	Yes. Text size and colour and background colour are configurable by the user. According to the Moodle development roadmap, Conforms to all major W3C accessibility guidelines.

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Customisable interface	The user interface shall be capable of being customised to adapt to the learner's preferences.	Text size is adjustable, however, system does not allow for high contrast themes or improved access for text reading devices.	Text size and colour and background colour are configurable by the user. Layout can be changed by an individual user for example page layout. Cana also be changed to accommodate visual impairment.
Navigation and search	Curriculum information shall be used to search for and to navigate to resources within the platform.	Search not supported.	A global search can be enabled.

3.1.3 Learner engagement and administration

Requirement	Description		
Access off site	Users shall be able to access the learning platform away from the College	Yes	Yes
Authentication	Users shall be uniquely identified and verified using single sign-on.	Yes, the Blackboard system is capable of accepting single sign-on, although the system is inefficient and high-maintenance.	Has its own authentication system. Integrates seamlessly with Active Directory and keeps data up to date. High level of customisation possible.
Data protection	All stored data shall be secure.	Yes	Yes
Groups and roles	It shall be possible for users be allocated to one or more groups and assigned roles.	Blackboard has limited group capability, but difficulty of use and configuration prevents regular use.	Yes. Moodle has a highly sophisticated grouping system that can be customised to the user's requirements.
Information access	Users with privileges shall be able to	No. Issues in Blackboard 9.3 have arisen where	Yes – highly customisable and user defined permissions.

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	access appropriate information.	access to sections has been difficult or impossible. This was identified as a design decision by Blackboard, over which the College has no control.	
Portfolios	Users shall be able to create and maintain portfolios for sharing content and to support personal development. Note: Portfolio definition varies with the context. Requirements are complex and different for each School for example some Professional Bodies have specific requirements for the type of information and data formats.	Not supported. Blackboard does not have any such capability planned.	Moodle has portfolio tools included, however the real strength of the Moodle system is the Mahara e-portfolio system, intended to complement Moodle and be deployed alongside with it. It is a full-featured, open source portfolio solution for all types of portfolio development.
Tracking	Facilities shall be provided to track learners' support needs and performance.	Supported on a limited basis.	Teachers or administrators can view detailed user activity logs for individual students, including pages accessed within a module, digest of forum posting and Objective assessment results.
Usage data	Information about individual and group usage of the resources shall be available.	Yes. Limited but information available in Blackboard.	Moodle Logs enable teachers or administrators to view course usage reports detailing statistics such as total module login history, module accesses, number of forum postings etc.
Timetabling	A timetable, or an interface to one, should be supported.	Not available	A variety of solutions are available to import data from the Eclipse system.
Class lists		Yes. Available within each course as a simple list.	Available in each module. Member lists are available members of staff with the correct privileges.
Automated		Yes. Course enrolment	Yes. List based enrolment available but superior options for real-time enrolment via a

course
enrolmentprovided via snapshot tool, Moodle-bridge module also available and preferred.
using lists generated by
Web Services.

3.1.4 Tools and services

Requirement name	Description		
Discussion forums	Users shall be able to take part in discussion forums by posting and reading messages.	Yes. Each course has it's own secure discussion forum if activated.	Yes. Each course can have it's own secure discussion forum. There are three forum templates. Users can also subscribe to a forum in order to receive a digest by email.
Web services	The platform shall be capable of transparently interacting with web services using standard protocols.	No.	Yes.
Audio-visual conferencing	Audio- and video-conferencing should be supported.	No.	Yes. Dim-dim conferencing tool available, but also compatible with higher end cisco offerings, allowing scheduling or booking of equipment based in classrooms. Can provide links to classroom events.
Blog	Users should be able to create web logs.	Available via plugin and as core feature.	Blogs can be created by students or staff. Built into Moodle.
Email	One-one and one-many messaging should be facilitated.	Limited. Email messages can be sent as announcements in courses, but usability is described as limited.	Yes. One-to-on messaging is supported. Messages to groups can be sent using forums and forcing everyone to subscribe (receive email messaging).
Messaging	Users should be able to send messages to individuals and groups of users.	Yes	Yes
Resource syndication	Syndicated content, such as newsfeeds, should be supported.	Limited support, not configurable.	Yes
Instant Messaging	Real time messaging between individual users.	No	Yes, built in.
Wikis	Wikis are	Yes	Yes.

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	collaboratively authored web pages they can be created or edited by a group of users and can be powerful learning tools.		
Online presence	Who is currently online? Must be possible to users to opt out for privacy.	No	Yes
Chat (asynchronous text communication)	Real time text-based discussion between a number of users.	No	Yes
Module archiving	Content and other features of modules can be archived, re-instated or re-used for new occurrences of modules e.g. for different cohorts or years.	Yes	Yes
Module features and settings.		Limited course configuration is possible. Limited to title and availability dates.	Moodle is very flexible in this regard. Staff can configure each course independently, depending on the approaches taken to teaching and learning. There are also a number of default course templates available.
Interface		GO branded – Blackboard refuses to support custom themes and theme has design issues that cannot be addressed.	Highly customisable based on user location. Fully compliant with accessibility standards and hundreds of professional designed themes to choose from. Custom themes can be developed based on these specific to each of the Colleges.
Gradebook		Yes.	Yes
Annoucnement		Module specific only	Site wide and module specific. Also customisable to any level of organisation specified within Moodle.

3.2 Staff and Student Survey

In order to accurately determine the attitudes of teaching staff, support staff and the student population towards the VLE and its use, a survey was undertaken to coincide with the launch of the upgraded GO VLE. 135 staff and 273 students responded to the online survey over a period of 45 days. The sample is representative of the College as a whole, and can be considered accurate within an acceptable margin of error.

Students and teaching/support staff were asked to respond to a series of 22 questions on their perceptions and experiences of the existing Blackboard VLE (branded as GO).

3.2.1 Response range

Of the 135 respondents to the staff survey, the largest number of individual responses was received from Farnham Sixth Form College. Responses were most strongly distributed amongst teaching departments as opposed to support departments. While Farnham staff have previously used the Moodle VLE and responded well to it, the revised Blackboard was also perceived positively by Farnham College staff.

Staff

Department	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Farnham Faculty	13	10%
Other – not specified	10	8%
Guildford Business School	10	8%
Learning Resource Centres (LRC)	7	5%
Student Services (For Staff)	6	5%
ICT Support (ICT)	6	5%
Human Resources (HR)	6	5%
A Level Academy	6	5%
Work Based Learning	5	4%
Information, Admissions and Careers (IAC)	5	4%
Horticulture, Landscape, Floristry and Garden Design	5	4%
Health and Childcare	5	4%
Animal Care	5	4%
Facilities	4	3%
Essential Skills: Additional Learner Support (ALS)	4	3%
Construction	4	3%
Arboriculture and Countryside	4	3%
International Centre for Education	3	2%
Faculty of Responsive Training	3	2%
Department of Achievement, Standards and Curriculum Reform	3	2%
Web Services	2	2%
Student Services (For Students)	2	2%
Reprographics	2	2%
Management Information Services (MIS)	2	2%
Hospitality and Catering	2	2%
HE & Professional Workforce Development	2	2%
Hair and Beauty	2	2%
Technical and Professional Construction and Engineering	1	1%
Public Services	1	1%
Marketing Team	1	1%
Finance	1	1%
Executive Team	1	1%
Exams	1	1%
Travel, Tourism and Professional Studies	0	0%
Sports Turf	0	0%

Students were most strongly represented in business, computing and A Levels. Programmes with a significant non-classroom component had the fewest respondents. This may indicate that GO is used less in programmes that are more practical in nature – for example workplace-based teaching or apprenticeships. This would suggest that a method of allowing access to the resources of a VLE without access to a desktop computer might be an advantage if wider use of the VLE is to be encouraged.

Students

Department	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Business	47	18%
Computing	46	17%
A Levels & GCSEs	39	15%
Other – Engineering, Arts, Business Horticulture, functional math and English, Counselling, Chemistry.	20	7%
Animal Management	18	7%
Childcare	11	4%
Health & Social Care	11	4%
Media	11	4%
Sports Studies	11	4%
Access To Higher Education	9	3%
Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy	8	3%
Public Services	7	3%
Travel and Tourism	7	3%
Photography	6	2%
Equine Management	5	2%
Catering & Hospitality	3	1%
Construction	3	1%
Access to FE	2	1%
Business Administration	2	1%
Performing Arts	2	1%
Accounting & Finance	1	0%
Countryside Management	1	0%
Electrical	1	0%
Landscaping	1	0%
Professional Studies	1	0%
Teaching	1	0%
Arboriculture	0	0%
ESOL	0	0%
Floristry	0	0%
Garden Design	0	0%
Horticulture	0	0%
Motor Vehicle	0	0%
Skills for Life & Basic Skills	0	0%
Sports Turf	0	0%
Supported Learning	0	0%

3.2.1.1 Staff Feedback

Comments from staff included:

“I think that the improvements made over the summer are great and off the top of my head there is nothing I would add to that. Just that it would be nice to link up LRC content with relevant course areas rather than having to hve tutor rights to see them/ add content.”

“THANK YOU for linking passwords with network.”

“Make it less long winded like Moodle, Blackboard can be frustrating, e.g. waiting for screen to load, minor freezing when scrolling (especially in Gradebook & when setting up quizzes). More shortcuts would be brilliant e.g. like the eye in Moodle for hiding/unhiding rather than having to edit each object individually which can be so time consuming.”

“The biggest problem seems to be that when a group of students access one item the system crashes. It would be useful if there was a spell check as a student can input a correct answer spelled slightly wrong and lose a mark (another reason for dropping e-assessment, which I tried to use with several student groups - should be useful in the case of bad weather!)”

“Not at all easy to navigate - nothing is ever where you would logically expect it to be in my limited use of the site. Can spend ages trying to find the simplest things”

“It is very hard to find documents and information through GO, When I search, entering text in the little box, it rarely comes up with anything to do with my request, I recently put 'Dog Grooming' in the search for courses containing this and it came back that there were no courses with 'Dog Grooming' included! And I know that that is not true!”

“However the most difficult area of using Go is the time limits placed upon the teacher themselves. Between project management of two courses, lesson plans, schemes, differentiated targets, work sheets, marking, visits, meetings and all sorts Go has become a lower priority than just surviving the week and the term. I'm cross with myself for this because I appreciate Go's usefulness and believe I have some good ideas for implementation however time and college expectation are always the enemy.”

3.2.1.2 Student Comments

Student comments were generally positive, but certain comments stood out:

“I think that if someone is unwell and is unable to come to college to attend lessons, I believe that they should be able to go on go and watch and have the lesson at home. Like an iplayer. When, after a programme has been televised it goes on iplayer so that people who have missed the programme can catch up. However I do think that for this to work I think that students parents/guardians should first ring the college and tell them their ill. The students should be able to watch the lessons that they are studying due to the fact GO shows the courses that they are doing. They should be able to click on the subjects they missed and watch the lesson and catch up with what they have learnt.”

“GO could be improved if it had a better design and more up-dated coding behind it. Could be made better with some jQuery and Ajax rather than using frames. It would make it better for the user too. :)”

“I understand something has happened to the Go! Website during the Summer holidays. I am still pretty much trying to find my way round the new Go! It may be just a little useful to provide some guidelines etc. to make it a little more user friendly. Otherwise, Go! is still pretty much accessible and good to use.”

“The navigation of course areas (Arts & Humanities for example) is needlessly complicated:

- a) There appear to be duplicate folders (i.e. 'English Poetry' in the root 'Arts & Humanities' directory, and 'English Detailed Study: Poetry' in the 'Course Units' directory, which causes confusion for students; incidentally, some of the information in the latter of these examples is not relevant to the current course)*
- b) There is too much redundant structuring of resources in each course unit directory. For example, in the 'Philosophy: Human Nature & Understanding', there are three subdirectories containing relevant resources. These would be better displayed in a list on one page, with headers separating the 'Unit Information', 'Assignments' and 'Learning Resources' sections. Each page on GO! Takes 2-3 seconds to load, and presenting all course-relevant information on a single page would reduce the amount of time wasted navigating through a file structure which is over-engineered and offers no functional benefits.”*

“The colours may look a bit boring for me, and the icons as well. But it's easy to use and find things.”

“Make video files available in other formats. Many for the suggested videos for all aspects of the PLC course are not recognised on my Mac and I have to install windows based software to view. I own a Mac because of the issues Microsoft software represents but then I have to buy/install it in order to watch these clips...not good.”

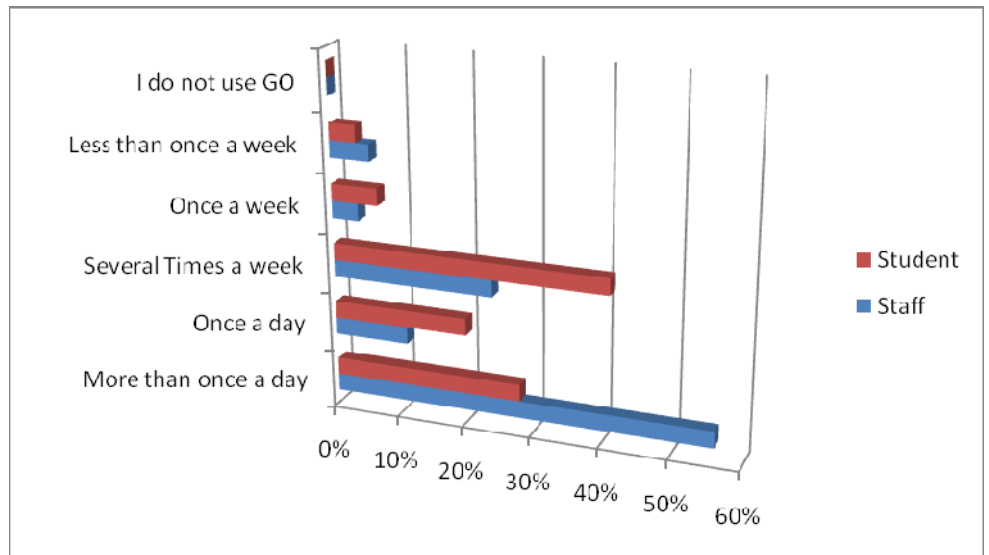
*“place each students timetable on their so they dont have to ask around or get another copy printed out, worked well at farnborough sixth.
make it easier to submit homework, more clearer at advertised better.”*

3.2.2 VLE Usage

Respondents were by majority frequent or occasional users of Blackboard. All respondents use the GO VLE. Amongst staff 67 per cent used the VLE once a day or more. 48 per cent of students used the VLE once a day or more.

Of those who used the VLE, 67 per cent of staff agreed or strongly agreed that it was easy to use. 90 percent of students gave the same response. While students found it easy to use, this indicates that the adjustment to the refurbished VLE may have been more difficult for teaching staff.

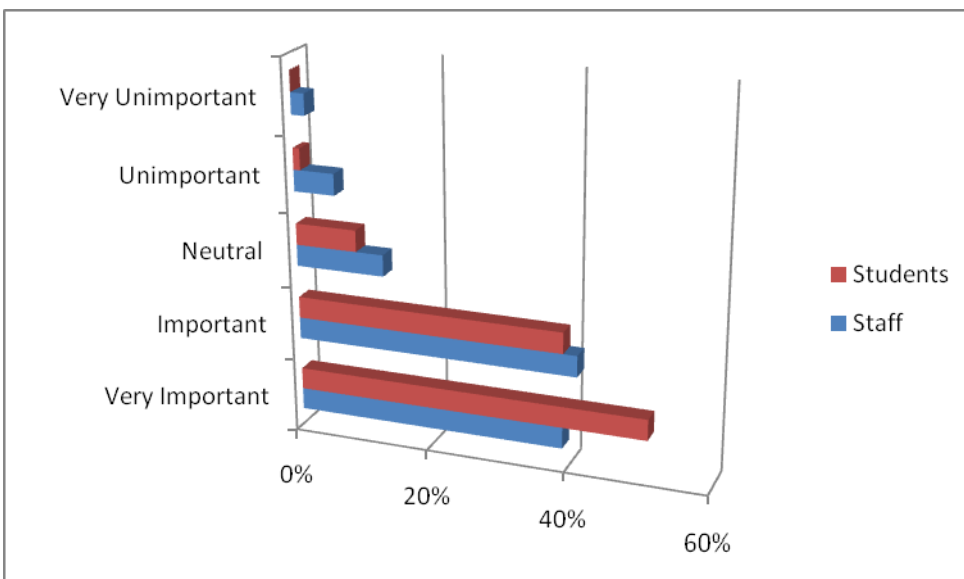
83 per cent of staff indicated they were experienced with the use of the VLE. 75 percent of students indicated they were experienced in the use of a VLE. This indicates that a VLE is not a new experience for either staff or students. They are both familiar with its use and see it as important to their studies at Guildford College. This is reflected in the perception of the importance of the VLE.



83 per cent of staff indicated they were experienced with the use of the VLE. 75 percent of students indicated they were experienced in the use of a VLE. This indicates that a VLE is not a new experience for either staff or students. They are both familiar with its use and see it as important to their studies at Guildford College. This is reflected in the perception of the importance of the VLE.

A strong majority of students and staff indicated that the use of the VLE was important or very important to their work at the College. This establishes the VLE as a central part of the educational experience. Staff and students are both used to using VLEs, experienced in their use and perceive them as being important to their educational experience.

With this in mind the initial upgrade of the Blackboard VLE can be considered a success. Within Web Services a sharp reduction in support requests combined with a positive public perception reinforces the value of the VLE as a central feature in the e-learning strategy. However, this should not encourage complacency in the provision of online learning via the VLE.



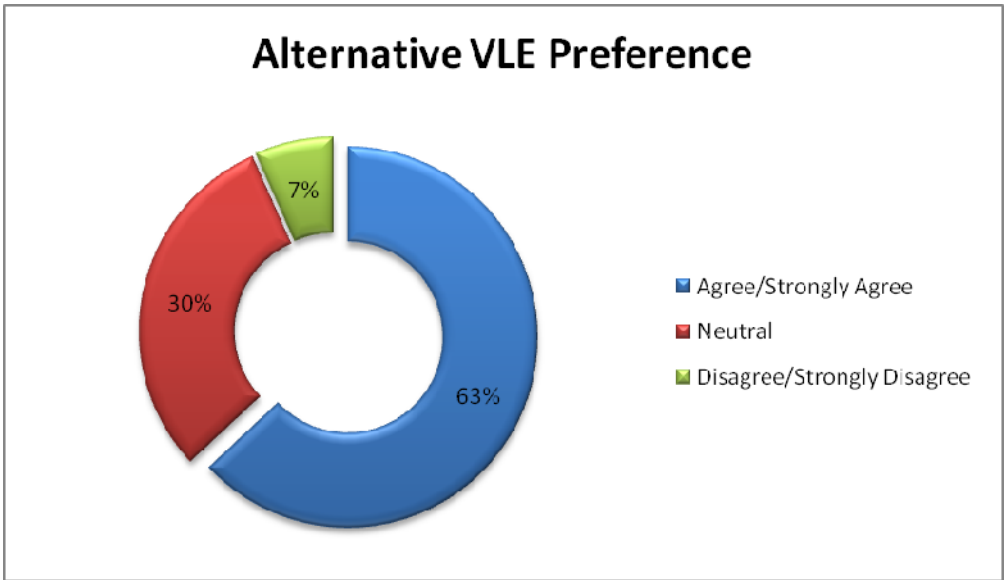
62 per cent of staff have used Blackboard, however 19 per cent have used an alternative VLE. 71 per cent of students had used Blackboard and 23 per cent have used an alternative VLE. Of the total group of respondents 63 per cent indicated a preference for an alternative to the current VLE. A further 30 per cent were neutral on preference for an alternative to the current VLE. Only 7 per cent opposed the idea of an alternative VLE.

Of those polled, the key issue identified were technical

problems with the VLE (17.4 per cent of students, 18.8 per cent of staff) Other notable issues were a perceived lack of time by staff (30.2 per cent) and a lack of incentive to use the VLE by students (17 per cent) These were identified as very significant barriers to the use of the VLE. These issues are reflected in the support experiences

of the Web Services team. The inability to make the VLE software conform to expected standards for the College is reflected in the results indicated in the survey.

The results of the survey indicate that teachers and students respond favourably to the VLE and find it both a



useful and important part of their learning experience. However the existing VLE solution is the source of concern over its technical performance.

This reinforces the opinion of the Web Services team, who have endeavoured to improve the existing product within the past eight months. It is the opinion of Web Services that the existing solution is at the peak of its operational capability, yet remains inadequate to the demands of the e-learning strategy as currently

envisioned.

3.3.3 Summary of Survey

The feedback exercise focused on determining how users felt about the existing virtual learning environment and what features they used most often. This provided an indication of what tools were used and how often. Subsequent questions about the VLE indicated what features were the most likely to see continued use, and what additional features would see use in the new environment.

The survey results indicated that while the existing posting of lecture notes and presentations would likely continue to be core activities, there was a desire to use multimedia resources such as audio, video and images. A desire to use forum tools was also indicated. Turnitin-based assignment submission is indicated as growing in popularity.

3.4 Mobile Learning

As a further pedagogical consideration, the requirements for mobile learning and access were considered. The existing Blackboard offering has a proprietary mobile device extension, but it is a potentially expensive add-on. By contract, Moodle 2.0 is the first VLE in production to offer compatibility with mobile devices as a core feature – not an add-on. There is no cost associated with this as it is a central part of the product.

3.5 Financial Requirements

The existing Blackboard VLE solution is based on the model of an annual license encompassing the use of the software and support for the product itself. These issues are addressed in turn.

3.5.1 Licensing

The current licensing arrangement with Blackboard is for annual renewal at a cost of \$71,000 US dollars per annum. This fee is set in American dollars and is not fixed to an exchange rate. As a result, the overall cost can vary from as much as £60,000 to a low of £44,636, the estimated renewal price for 2010-11.

Going forward, the Web Services manager has entered into negotiations in an attempt to achieve better quality for money. The feature set of the Blackboard product is largely indistinguishable from that of Moodle – in fact the product roadmap is acknowledged as inferior to the quick development model of the open-source Moodle product, which boasts thousands of developers and a mature product. The benefit to the relatively high licensing fee of Blackboard is in the support provided with the product. The cost can only be justified on the basis of this support. A successful reduction in price was obtained via the securing of a 15 month licensing period for the price of a 12 month renewal. This has saved the college approximately £10,000-£15,000 for the 2010-11 fiscal year.

A consistent effort from Blackboard is continually made for a multi-year licensing commitment, usually based around a 3-5 year subscription plan. While offered as a cheaper alternative over several years, the formal quotes for this service have revealed several hidden costs and fees, resulting in a substantially more expensive product over time, with less control of the service than we have at present. In addition to this, the exceptionally poor standard of product and customer support has made it impracticable to commit to any type of long-term relationship with Blackboard as a vendor.

3.5.2 Support

As the Blackboard VLE product is technically less feature-rich than the Moodle VLE, the main justification for the high annual fee has been the availability of good support. This includes support against system failure and the implementation of up-to-date software free of significant errors.

Unfortunately, this support has not been forthcoming. The professional relationship between vendor and client has been characterised by neglect, avoidance of responsibility by the vendor at all levels, and questionable sales tactics to secure the maximum license fee without providing timely support for the product. The impact of this has been detrimental to the provision of e-learning at the College.

In the absence of reliable product support the Web Services team had not altered the VLE between 2007 and 2009, working with the older 7.3 Blackboard release. An upgrade to 9.0 was attempted by the new Web Services manager in January 2010, but the product was found technically unfit for purpose. A successful upgrade to version 9.1 of Blackboard was achieved successfully for September 2010. However this was accomplished in the complete absence of support from Blackboard. The necessary skills to accomplish this were generated within Web Services, resulting in the allocation of resources and time meant to be acquired through licensing support services to Blackboard.

This unfortunate set of circumstances led to a deterioration in the relationship between the College and Blackboard Inc. An attempt to amicably resolve this via several level of management at Blackboard was unsuccessful over a period of five months. The primary response to inquiries was one of evasion of personal responsibility and an attempt to sell a high-priced product – often while a complaint was pending with an executive member of the organisation. High-level complaints went unresolved for months at a time, and sales executives would deny the content of previous emails, which are supplied in the appendix to this document for reference.

A temporary resolution to this situation required a meeting arranged by the Web Services Manager with Demetra Katsifli, the Director for Academic Innovation at Blackboard, and Bas Broekarts, the Vice President for Blackboard's European operations. Only at this level could a license renewal be secured and simple inquiries about Service Level Agreements (SLAs) addressed. A copy of the client support service guide and a commitment to improve what all parties agreed was an unacceptable level of service for the money spent were the main outcomes of the meetings. An improved license renewal rate for the following 12 months was also obtained.

As a result of these events, it is the determination of the Web Services Team that the money allocated towards the license fee for the Blackboard VLE represents exceptionally poor value for money. This effectively negates the sole advantage of the proprietary Blackboard licensing model – a secure and reliable support mechanism. In the absence of this mechanism the annual license fee should be invested in securing support via a third party vendor, or hiring a dedicated member of staff to act as a full-time support representative. Either option would represent superior value for money and prevent further stagnation in the development of the College VLE. This effectively eliminated the proprietary Blackboard VLE from contention as a result. See Appendix for the relevant reports and email history on this matter.

3.6 Effectiveness of Current Strategy

Since 2003, the current VLE strategy can be characterised as inefficient at best. The provision of online learning has been hampered by a minimally acceptable product, with a predatory licensing model and an unreliable support mechanism. A future VLE should not be tied to the corporate strategy of any one supplier. A more open system allowing the competitive provision of support would be preferable. This can come about as a result of internal training of support staff, or by contracting with external support agencies on an ongoing basis. The Moodle VLE offers a network of external hosting and support options. The open nature the Moodle system also insures that in the event of sub-standard support, the support contract can be competitively tendered to an alternative supplier. Such competitiveness injects an element of choice into the support of the College's VLE, which does not exist at present.

Table 1: Support options

VLE	cost	Vendors (certified by vendor)
Blackboard	£44,000k (approx as of 2010)	Blackboard only
Moodle	£5,000-£10,000 (estimated)	Pteppic.net Howto Moodle Synergy Learning School Anywhere E-learn Design University of London Computing Centre

Given the array of alternatives, the present practice of paying escalating sums from a finite budget for unacceptable support is unsustainable. The achievement of the College's corporate aims require a strategic shift in VLE provision.

4. Evaluation of potential replacement VLE

4.2 Potential replacement systems

Several replacement VLE systems were considered for detailed evaluation. Blackboard was excluded from consideration, given the financial, technical and pedagogical concerns raised in this report. It cannot be recommended as a viable long-term solution for the College. With this in mind, Several candidates were considered. Each candidate must meet core criteria:

1. Represent excellent value for money
2. Not be tied to the support of a single vendor
3. Have a strong Presence in the UK educational sector
4. Have a clear development roadmap, with an open architecture
5. Be a mature, stable product.

The selected candidates were graded as follows:

VLE	Value For Money	Multiple Support Options	Presence In UK Ed Sector	Open Architecture	Mature And Stable
Moodle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
IT's Learning	Unknown	No	No	No	Yes
Sharepoint LMS	No	No	No	No	No
Sakai	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes

Of the potential replacements, SharePoint LMS was the least suitable, despite preferential software licensing via the College’s existing license arrangement with Microsoft. This is due to its closed architecture, the immaturity of the product, the licensing cost tied to a per user basis, and limited functionality. IT’s learning and Sakai fared better, but still did not consistently meet the requirements established in this review. The only system that could consistently meet the stated requirements was the Moodle VLE.

4.2.1 Technical Requirements

From a technical perspective, the future VLE must meet several key criteria:

1. Run on existing hardware purchased under HEFCE funding
2. Integrate with the College’s streaming media server
3. Be supportable by external providers if necessary
4. Leverage the internal expertise of the Web Services team.

The Moodle VLE meets these criteria in full. It is compatible with existing technologies and can be supported on a contractual basis as necessary. The Web Services team is also uniquely positioned to take advantage of Moodle. In addition to a strong programming team, the current Web Services Manager is an experienced expert-level administrator and project leader for the deployment of Moodle-based VLEs, having worked on and led large scale VLE deployments at UK and Irish universities.

Prior to joining the College the Web Services manager worked with and directed development on Moodle deployment and transitions from Blackboard/Web CT to Moodle. A large scale Moodle migration plan would follow these well established plans and represent a low-risk strategy for implementing an enterprise level VLE. Rather than depend on this one individual, support can be transferred post-project to an external agency as desired.

4.2.2 Pedagogical Requirements.

Determining the requirements of the VLE for teaching and learning revolves around three strategies for evaluation. First, the key issues identified during ongoing support of the existing VLE were identified. Chief amongst them is the ability to combine courses into single course offerings. This is not possible in the Blackboard system. It is however offered in Moodle through “meta-courses” which combine courses for easier administration.

A more detailed overview of teaching requirements was gathered in the VLE users survey. Staff indicated which tools they used:

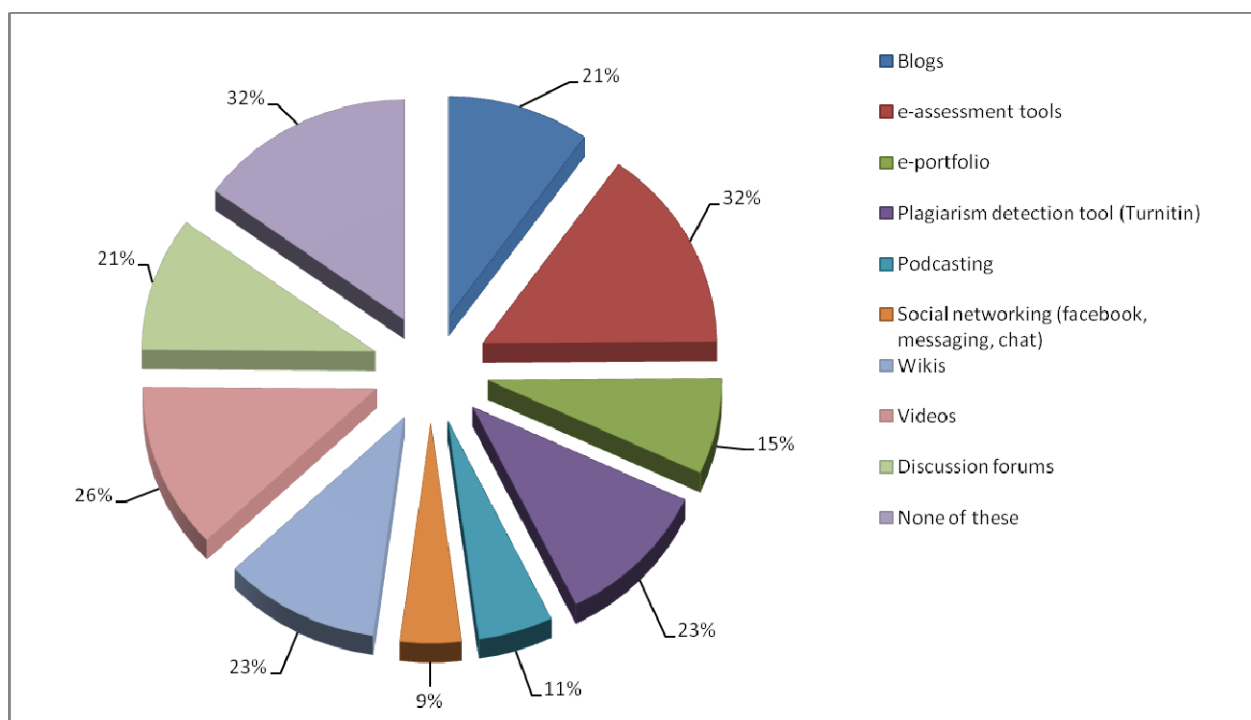


Figure 1: Tools used in VLE

They also indicated how easy it was to use each tool:

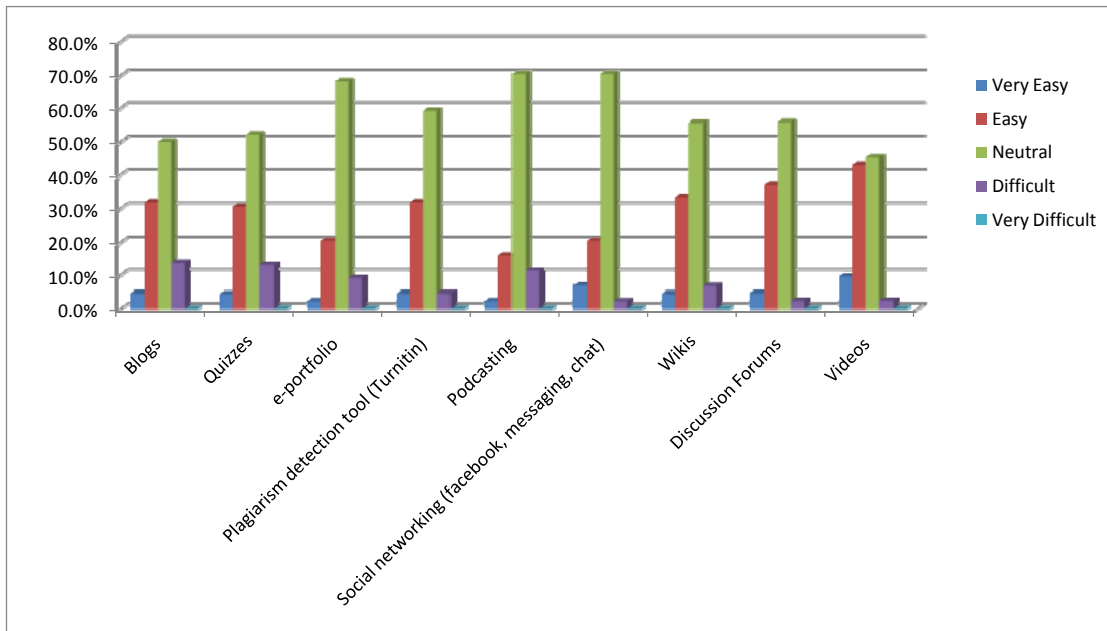


Figure 2: Ease of use

Interesting comments from teaching staff included:

“I don’t bother using very much technology in my lessons as I have been let down by equipment failures too often.”

“Most of the above is conducted in iWeb on the Macs, due to ease of use, positive feedback from exam board moderators, visual appeal”

These comments are indicative of a mixed experience of VLE use. While the tools get used, the response to the quality of tools supplied in the VLE is inconsistent.

Finally, the requirements for mobile learning and access were considered. The existing Blackboard offering has a proprietary mobile device extension to the existing product, but it is a potentially expensive addition, even if for a trial period. By contrast, Moodle 2.0 is the first production VLE to offer compatibility with mobile devices as a core feature of its software. There is no associated cost as the software is “open-source” – available as a supported service rather than as licensed software. This licensing model is addressed in the next section.

4.2.3 Financial requirements

The existing Blackboard VLE has an annual cost of approximately £44,000-£60,000. This rate is dependent on currency fluctuations, as the product is priced in US dollars only. By comparison the Moodle VLE is offered on a non for profit basis, and is licensed under the General Public License (GPL). This is a copyright-free license, which is irrevocable and shared amongst the members of the development community. Development of the product is directed by the founding organisation, but not constrained by it.

The business model is that of software-as-service. The software is free in perpetuity, but a vibrant community of commercial and non-commercial organisations has developed around the software as it has grown in popularity. The largest non-commercial supporter is the Open University, contributing upwards of £5 million to Moodle development since 2005. At least five UK Moodle “Partners” offer support and consultancy services. As indicated in the OU Moodle Rationale report, the software licensing model has several advantages:

The Moodle license, the GPL (General Public Licence), would allow the OU to fork the project at any time. It also prevents anyone from removing the source from public circulation. As Martin Dougiamas stated in a post to the Moodle community on October 7th, 2005:

Moodle will ALWAYS be free. ALWAYS.

being free and GPL has many advantages in terms of people liking the project and participating in it hundreds of people have written code for Moodle under GPL so changing the license would require every single one to agree to change it, otherwise there would need to be a complete rewrite from scratch. We use many libraries that are GPL and would require replacement. A new version would mean Moodle would be directly competing against the old GPL version, because most of the community would simply fork the project and continue going. As you can see, it's basically impossible to change the license.

The available financial models are thus software by license with support included (Blackboard) or software for free with service available at a negotiable fee from multiple providers (Moodle). The projected savings to the College in a shift to Moodle is estimated as approximately £55,000 annually. These are based on the following annual expenses:

Blackboard 9.1 annual License – \$71,000 USD annually
Learning Objects wiki/blog plugin for Blackboard - £10,000 annually.

The plugin is unnecessary with a move away from Blackboard, as its functionality is replicated in Moodle.

Projected savings would be redirected in the first three years towards the advancement of the e-learning strategy. Such funding could make lecture/seminar recording in high definition commonplace, allowing the college to develop a common infrastructure for digital signage, teleconferencing and recording. This would create exceptionally low barriers to entry for users and a high level of integration with the VLE.

Over a five year planning period, this would represent £250,000 in capital funding to create a value-added capability for the College – this would be unique to Guildford and a draw for the College. The College has already attracted attention from other UK higher/further education institutions for its learning-enhanced classroom, which is piloting these technologies on the basis of an HEFCE grant. It is this grant which has made much of the initial pathfinding work possible.

Additionally, a support and maintenance agreement at a cost of £5000 - £10,000 annually may be necessary to reduce dependency on the Web Services team, keeping in mind natural tendency for staff turnover. Competitive support is available from several Moodle partners at competitive rates. This ensures excellent value for money on a year-to-year basis. Initial costs in the first year of development may be higher, as additional support/services are purchased to ensure a smooth transition to Moodle. It is anticipated that in the first year of development, a figure of £20,000 to acquire external support and development would be most appropriate. These development costs are outlined in Section 5.3 – Project plan.

5. Recommendations of VLE Review

5.1 General Recommendations

The recommendations of this report are as follows:

1. The Blackboard VLE should be replaced by a Moodle VLE system, maintaining the established GO branding.

This entails the development of a transition strategy culminating in the launch of a new VLE for the commencement of the 2011-12 academic year. A new internal portal system will also be necessary, as the Portal system supplied with Blackboard will no longer be available. An excellent alternative in the use of a Sharepoint system is available, and has been implemented by other colleges, notably Godalming and Alton Colleges. The use of a Sharepoint system as a replacement has been shown to be advantageous, as Microsoft supplies plug-ins for use with the Moodle VLE, the licensing costs are covered under existing arrangements, and it ensures compatibility with existing software and services, which are Microsoft-based.

Web Services has set-up and is trialling a Sharepoint Portal system for use as an Intranet replacement. Trials will continue through 2011 with a goal of replacing the portal and the document repository for the 2011-2012 academic year.

2. The College Group's brand identity should be reflected in the use of the learning environment.

The College's *Aiming for Excellence* strategy establishes the Guildford College Group brand and its constituent colleges. While a single Moodle system can serve the entire staff and student population as it grows, it need not be monolithic or out of step with the branding strategy. Instead, Merrist Wood College, Farnham Sixth Form College, Guildford College, and Services to Business should all present the VLE to its users with an appropriate "theme." Based on location, staff and learners will see a VLE appearance appropriate to them.

3. Existing funding for VLE provision should be maintained and reallocated.

In cooperation with the director of IT, common e-learning goals can be reached by redirecting savings into new architecture designed to provide a long-term advantage to the College in the provision of online learning by distance. A modular approach will allow us to build capacity as funding becomes available. Inexpensive "quick fix" solutions should be avoided in favour of proactive strategies designed to serve the needs of multiple stakeholders with an interest in the successful deployment of teaching and learning tools.

4. VLE Support should be competitively secured on an ongoing basis.

No one supplier should be in a position to hold the e-learning strategy to ransom. If support is inadequate payment for services provided should be easily transferable to a motivated vendor capable of meeting a minimum level of performance. This is consistent with a healthy and competitive service market. This point has been reiterated clearly to senior management at Blackboard Inc, and has been accepted as a unacceptable state of affairs in our current relationship.

5.2 Risk Assessment

The potential risks are as follows:

Risk: Technical complexity – a Moodle system is only as good as the team that develop and configure it. Experienced developers can customise and configure Moodle to a high standard of performance. However, the "out of the box" configuration is quite plain, and while usable, would not represent an immediately satisfactory solution.

This is little different from the existing situation with Blackboard, but represents a risk nonetheless.

Mitigation Strategy: External consultancy is available from a variety of Moodle “partners” – commercial vendors providing development and support as a service. The Web Services manager is also a highly experienced Moodle developer, with experience in deploying Moodle for medium to large size universities. Additionally, an 8 month timeline has been established for implementation of the VLE strategy.

Risk: Reduced Opportunities for collaboration with other VLE users using Blackboard.

Mitigation Strategy: A move to Moodle will make working with other users of Blackboard more difficult. This risk is minimised however, as other Colleges in the Surrey area have already migrated to Moodle, and are organising their own Moodle-moot conferences and gatherings. Guildford College have been present as observers at these events.

Risk: Training - Staff and students will have to be trained in use of new VLE and suitable instructional materials will have to be developed.

Mitigation Strategy: The current upgrade from Blackboard 7.3 to 9.1 has been done in such a way that it is very similar to Moodle in terms of its appearance and functionality. The transition should therefore be gradual and intuitive to users of the VLE.

The overall risk in a move to Moodle can be characterised as minimal, with plans in place to compensate for possible risks. This should eliminate barriers to the successful adoption of a Moodle-based VLE.

The risk in taking no action could be presented as more hazardous to the successful realisation of the e-learning strategy. The financial, technical and support requirements of the existing VLE are an impediment to the realisation of the e-learning strategy, and an alternative is required if progress is to be made.

5.3 Project Plan

5.3.1 Budget

The proposed project plan for the modernisation of the VLE is as summarised below. Each element is broken down into key tasks, associated budgetary allocations, and anticipated timelines. It is proposed that funding derive from the savings realised from the end of the annual Blackboard licensing fee. The benefit of this approach is implementation of the VLE modernisation project with an overall net cost savings to the college. These savings will be realised in November 2011, as license renewal for Blackboard comes to an end.

Key Task	Budget Allocation & Rationale	Timeline	Budget Request
Moodle VLE development and support	£20,000 in initial year – competitively tendered between potential Moodle support providers. This includes an estimated £10,000 in annual support as a maximum and an additional £10,000 to supplement the efforts of the Web Services team with Moodle development services.	February 2011 – ongoing. Support will be renewed annually and tendered to ensure competitive support rates.	£20,000
Technical Equipment and Training	£3000 estimated. Acquisition of tablet devices to ensure new environment is tested and optimised for mobile learning. It is also anticipated that our iPhone developer will undertake additional training to expand the iGuildford app for use on iPads and focus more tightly on elearning. This work will be undertaken collaboratively with the directors of IT and Curriculum Development and Reform. Participation in Moodle development community events is also central to best practice. This budget figure anticipates	January 2011 – September 2012	£3000.00

	expenditure to cover related event fees, reference manuals, and other minor technical components.		
E-portfolio Development	Following the development of the new Moodle VLE, an e-portfolio system will be specified and integrated into the VLE – a well developed option exists for this and it is anticipated as a central need following completion of the VLE upgrade. It is anticipated that support and development will involve the use of external Moodle partners to implement this in a timely manner. It will be subject to competitive tendering to ensure maximum value.	September 2011- June 2012	£5000 (deferred to 2012)
Intranet/Portal Development	£2000 estimated. Replacing and upgrading the Blackboard Community portal with a Sharepoint-based installation is covered by existing licensing agreement with Microsoft. It is anticipated however, that consultation with external support agencies may be required to supplement the efforts of the web Services team. This budget estimate anticipates the necessity of external consultation as the project progresses.	January 2011- September 2010	£2000.00
Core Hardware requirements	In anticipation of a future VLE upgrade, funding via HEFCE was allocated for upgrades of servers in 2010. To this end, 5 servers have been purchased at an overall cost of approx £45,000 and allocated to replace the existing web and VLE services. All hardware has been installed and configured for use with a new Portal and VLE environment, with an anticipated lifetime of at least five years.	March 2010 - ongoing	£0
Total Budget Request 2011-2012			£25,000

5.3.2 Project Management

As a largely technical project, the technical development of the Project will take place largely within the Web Services team, led by the Web Services manager. External technical support may be required as indicated in the budget. As an expert-level Moodle developer and with experience planning and implementing several large-scale Moodle implementations at UK universities, the Web Services manager will generate development plans consistent with best practice, building on previous expertise acquired in institutional VLE development.

Importantly however, this should not be treated as a solely technical undertaking. The Director of Achievement, Standards and Curriculum Reform, Director of Information Communication Technology, e-learning Manager and Web Services manager will establish a “VLE development committee.” The Web Services Manager will be responsible for regularly briefing committee members on progress of VLE development and ensuring that feedback from committee members on pedagogical requirements of teaching and learning at Guildford College is reflected in technical designs.

Further, the Web Services and e-learning Managers will coordinate efforts on development of new training materials in anticipation of the change in VLE. Training and familiarisation will begin well in advance of the new academic year, ensuring staff and students are comfortable with new systems and procedures.

6. Implementation timeline

January 2011 – Initial pilot of Moodle 2.0 system by 12-15 teaching staff and CPD

February 2011 – Integration with streaming media service and iTunes U.

March – June 2011 – Development of Moodle Bridge linking courses, timetables, prospectus and other databases into Moodle. Complete automation of enrolment and course construction.

June - July 2011 – Quality testing and development of training materials.

August – September 2011 – Introduction sessions, data migration from previous system and formal launch of new VLE branded to individual colleges as GO VLE.

September 2011 onwards – support, maintenance, and development of e-portfolio capability via “Mahara” e-portfolio system for Moodle VLE.

7. Appendices

7.1 Summary of support issues raised with Blackboard Management

The cases listed below were presented to Blackboard as the most prominent examples where service fell below expectations, both in terms of response time and basic knowledge of the product and its support requirements. Comments in red are from Web Services.

Case #767134 - Guest access to organisations

19.07.2010

Too many to list. Case closed by support without asking. Still not resolved, seem to be going over old ground, repeating ourselves.

Case #649315 - Help link in header does not work

03.02.2010

Both BB9.0 and BB9.1 help links don't work. We ended up using a custom one as advised over the phone.

Case #648571 - Blackboard iPhone app missing

01.02.2010

Had to tell you that your app wasn't available

The Blackboard iPod/iPhone application was temporarily removed from the Apple App store but has now been restored. We apologize for the inconvenience.

Case #665444 - Critical Internal Error encountered while trying to render error page.

26.04.2010

After a clean install on a system to recommended specs, the system functions fine. For about three days. After this, all items under the the System Admin tab display the following message:

Critical Internal Error encountered while trying to render error page. If this problem persists please contact your System Administrator.

Case #663664 – Installation failed

16.04.2010

Case closed by customer

Created By: web.services Description: To support:

<http://discussions.blackboard.com/forums/p/48177/147097.aspx> Some SQL settings are not on by default. Issue now seems to be resolved.

Best Brian

suggested solution failed

Created By: web.services

Description: No antivirus software is installed. Let me emphasize that we have *exactly* configured our servers to your specifications for Blackboard 9.1.

As much as I would like to call a U.S. based number to resolve this issue, I am unable to make such calls from our internal phones given the cost. The number is not toll free from the UK. Please supply a UK number or if possible call us to resolve this. I will remain in my office until 7pm GMT.

Error remains the same as before: Install freezes at 67% with error:

I should emphasise that we require a solution relatively soon. Our experience with version 9.0 seems to indicate that the product is rapidly becoming much more trouble than it is worth. We were hoping for more from version 9.1.

Description

Install stops at 67% - does not resume under any circumstances or after any length of time.

After our last critical failure, your tech representative helped us upgrade to 9.1.407 from 9.0 - the site worked for two hours before tomcat started failing without explanation. we decided to start with a fresh server build as specified for BB 9.1 as our experience of Blackboard is that it is exceptionally difficult to install configure or work with - we find it almost universally disappointing thus far.

From bb-installer-log:...

We cannot get past the 67% mark on install. We have adhered precisely to the recommended environment spec. If we are to consider using this product, we require a **minimally stable install**.

Kind Regards Brian

Case #661925 - license error on upgrade killed system.

08.04.2010

Need I say more.

Case #640201 - LDAP authentication

18.12.2009

Very long support ticket:

found it on my own, thanks.

Until then, this ticket should remain open, as I was able to find out the error ID through **a quick google search as well** - what I'm looking for is an explanation as to ***why*** a valid LDAP account would fail, based on the information provided, and if security certificates would have anything to do with it.

We've now **dedicated over two weeks of development time** to this simple task, and are on the **verge of declaring Blackboard unworkable** for a campus-wide roll-out and excluding it from our VLE review. Single sign on is critical to our continued use of the product.

Case #637708 - Attempt to install blackboard 9.0 fails - Error while running tool:

blackboard.a

04.12.2009

Reassigned multiple times.

"OS: Microsoft Windows NT 5.2 (3790) Validation Error: MS SQL server is not the supported version. Need at least SQL Server 2005 SP2 (version 9.00.3042)

The week we set aside to install BB9 for evaluation is up. **If anyone can tell me why the thing refuses to install on the specification you provided, we can give it another day to revisit it and try once more.**"

"Sorry to say that on recommended hardware, **installation *still* fails.**

Server spec is: Microsoft Windows NT 5.2 (3790) Microsoft SQL Server Standard Edition Version: 9.00.3042.00

Root directory: :\Program Files\Microsoft SQL Server 2005\MSSQL.1\MSSQL Error reads as follows: "MS SQL Server is not the supported version. Need at least SQL Server 2005 SP2 (version 9.00.3042)" Any reason for this? No logs generated, no good reason why it shouldn't work this time."

"If we cannot get past install problems within a reasonable period this will affect our ability to continue using Blackboard products beyond version 7.3."

"Web Services is open from 9-5, Monday to Friday. **Calls outside working hours are not conducive to effective problem-solving. We look forward to hearing back.** If unable to provide support during working hours, please email updates to webservices@guildford.ac.uk"

"Called Margo Brown, indicated need for acknowledgment that issue is being addressed and a timeline for doing so. **No response by end of business day.**

We consider **this a key customer support issue**, and vital to the continuation of our support agreement. Please respond between 9-5 GMT."

7.2 GO VLE Survey results.



7.2.1 Student User Survey

Please note that “Other” should be discounted as a response due to a software error. The typed answers to “other” can be viewed to determine what the user entered when they indicated “other” as an answer.



























VLE Student User Survey 2010			
Respondents:	270 displayed, 270 total	Status:	Open
Launched Date:	10/05/2010	Closed Date:	11/29/2010

Virtual Learning Environment Strategic Review

1. student-type

		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Full-time		241	89%	n/a	n/a
Part-time		29	11%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		270	100%		

2. area

		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Animal Management		18	7%	n/a	n/a
Equine Management		5	2%	n/a	n/a
Computing		46	17%	n/a	n/a
Media		11	4%	n/a	n/a
Performing Arts		2	1%	n/a	n/a
Photography		6	2%	n/a	n/a
Construction		3	1%	n/a	n/a
Electrical		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Motor Vehicle		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Accounting & Finance		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Business		47	17%	n/a	n/a
Business Administration		2	1%	n/a	n/a
Professional Studies		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Teaching		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Catering & Hospitality		3	1%	n/a	n/a
Childcare		11	4%	n/a	n/a
Hairdressing & Beauty Therapy		8	3%	n/a	n/a
Health & Social Care		11	4%	n/a	n/a
Travel and Tourism		7	3%	n/a	n/a
Arboriculture		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Countryside Management		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Floristry		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Garden Design		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Horticulture		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Landscaping		1	0%	n/a	n/a
Public Services		9	3%	n/a	n/a
Sports Studies		11	4%	n/a	n/a
Sports Turf		0	0%	n/a	n/a
ESOL		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Skills for Life & Basic Skills		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Supported Learning		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Access To Higher Education		9	3%	n/a	n/a
A Levels & GCSEs		39	14%	n/a	n/a
Access to FE		2	1%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify view		20	7%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		270	100%		

3. confidence

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total	Points	Avg
I am confident using Internet	85.19% (207)	13.99% (34)	0.41% (1)	0% (0)	0.41% (1)	243	n/a	n/a

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I am confident working and learning online	69.42% (168)	27.27% (66)	2.07% (5)	0.83% (2)	0.41% (1)	242	n/a	n/a
I am confident finding my way around in GO	48.76% (118)	38.43% (93)	8.26% (20)	4.13% (10)	0.41% (1)	242	n/a	n/a
I am confident obtaining information using GO	41.32% (100)	42.15% (102)	12.4% (30)	3.72% (9)	0.41% (1)	242	n/a	n/a
I am confident taking part in online discussions	30.17% (73)	30.17% (73)	28.51% (69)	8.68% (21)	2.48% (6)	242	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						243		
(skipped this question)						27		

4. tool-use

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Skype	83	34%	n/a	n/a
Twitter	58	24%	n/a	n/a
iTunes	164	67%	n/a	n/a
Chat (Facebook chat, MSN, or any other)	193	79%	n/a	n/a
Facebook	221	91%	n/a	n/a
iPod	147	60%	n/a	n/a
Non-apple Mp3 player	51	21%	n/a	n/a
Flickr/Photobucket or other photo sharing site	47	19%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	243	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		243		
(skipped this question)		27		

5. web-browser

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Safari	58	24%	n/a	n/a
Firefox	94	39%	n/a	n/a
Internet Explorer	157	65%	n/a	n/a
Chrome	68	28%	n/a	n/a
Not sure/Don't Know	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	243	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		243		
(skipped this question)		27		

6. platform-used

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Apple computer	38	16%	n/a	n/a
Windows-based computer	218	90%	n/a	n/a
Linux-based computer	7	3%	n/a	n/a

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Don't know/Not Sure		4	2%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify view		243	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			243		
(skipped this question)			27		

7. internet-access

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg	
College Computer		209	86%	n/a	n/a
Home Computer		208	86%	n/a	n/a
Netbook computer (small portable laptop)		29	12%	n/a	n/a
iPhone		48	20%	n/a	n/a
iPad		10	4%	n/a	n/a
Android-based device		14	6%	n/a	n/a
Mobile phone other than those listed above (Android & iPhone)		98	40%	n/a	n/a
Laptop computer		159	65%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify view		243	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			243		
(skipped this question)			27		

8. video-viewing

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg	
Yes		189	78%	n/a	n/a
No		53	22%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			242		
(skipped this question)			28		

9. video-useful.

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg	
Very Useful		84	35%	n/a	n/a
Useful		88	36%	n/a	n/a
Neutral		57	24%	n/a	n/a
Useless		8	3%	n/a	n/a
Very Useless		5	2%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			242	100%	
(skipped this question)			28		

10. Have you used a VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) before?

Response	Response	Points	Avg
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	Total	Percent		
Yes	151	67%	n/a	n/a
No	75	33%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		226		
(skipped this question)		44		

11. vle-use

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Blackboard (GO)	160	71%	n/a	n/a
Moodle	39	17%	n/a	n/a
SharePoint LMS	3	1%	n/a	n/a
Web CT	11	5%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	226	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		226		
(skipped this question)		44		

12. vle-advantage

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Response Total	Points	Avg
Makes Learning Easier/More Interesting	34.51% (78)	44.25% (100)	19.47% (44)	1.33% (3)	0.44% (1)	226	n/a	n/a
Faster	40.27% (91)	40.27% (91)	17.26% (39)	1.77% (4)	0.44% (1)	226	n/a	n/a
Lets me do course work when I want to	50.88% (115)	34.51% (78)	11.95% (27)	2.21% (5)	0.44% (1)	226	n/a	n/a
Easier to Participate	28.32% (64)	42.92% (97)	23.89% (54)	4.42% (10)	0.44% (1)	226	n/a	n/a
Competitive Edge over other courses	21.24% (48)	35.4% (80)	35.4% (80)	5.75% (13)	2.21% (5)	226	n/a	n/a
Distance Learning	40% (90)	35.11% (79)	20.89% (47)	3.11% (7)	0.89% (2)	225	n/a	n/a
Stable Technology - it just works	31.86% (72)	39.38% (89)	23.89% (54)	4.42% (10)	0.44% (1)	226	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						226		
(skipped this question)						44		

13. use-go

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Teaching courses	18	13%	n/a	n/a
Taking courses as a student	90	63%	n/a	n/a
Accessing files	115	81%	n/a	n/a
Web-based email	50	35%	n/a	n/a
File-access via Netstorage	51	36%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	142	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		142		
(skipped this question)		128		

14. how-often-vle

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	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
More than once a day	40	28%	n/a	n/a
Once a day	28	20%	n/a	n/a
Several times a week	59	42%	n/a	n/a
Once a week	10	7%	n/a	n/a
Less than once a week	5	4%	n/a	n/a
I do not use GO	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		142	100%	
(skipped this question)			128	
15. ease-of-use				
	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Strongly Agree	53	37%	n/a	n/a
Agree	75	53%	n/a	n/a
Neutral	8	6%	n/a	n/a
Disagree	6	4%	n/a	n/a
Strongly Disagree	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		142	100%	
(skipped this question)			128	
16. experience-of-VLE				
	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Very Experienced	15	11%	n/a	n/a
Somewhat experienced	91	65%	n/a	n/a
Neutral	28	20%	n/a	n/a
Somewhat unexperienced	5	4%	n/a	n/a
Very unexperienced	1	1%	n/a	n/a
No experience at all.	1	1%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		141	100%	
(skipped this question)			129	
17. importance-go				
	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Very Important	72	51%	n/a	n/a
Important	56	39%	n/a	n/a
Neutral	13	9%	n/a	n/a
Unimportant	1	1%	n/a	n/a
Very Unimportant	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		142	100%	
(skipped this question)			128	
18. alternative-preference				
	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Strongly Agree	29	20%	n/a	n/a
Agree	57	40%	n/a	n/a

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Neutral		46	32%	n/a	n/a
Disagree		8	6%	n/a	n/a
Strongly Disagree		2	1%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		142	100%		
(skipped this question)			128		

19. Would you identify any of the following as significant barriers to using GO?

	Very Small	Small	Neutral	Large	Very Large	Response Total	Points	Avg
Lack of time	37.41% (52)	31.65% (44)	23.74% (33)	5.04% (7)	2.16% (3)	139	n/a	n/a
Lack of support	30.43% (42)	34.06% (47)	22.46% (31)	10.14% (14)	2.9% (4)	138	n/a	n/a
Lack of knowledge	32.14% (45)	32.14% (45)	22.86% (32)	9.29% (13)	3.57% (5)	140	n/a	n/a
Lack of incentives	25.74% (35)	24.26% (33)	29.41% (40)	16.91% (23)	3.68% (5)	136	n/a	n/a
Not really relevant to my subject area	36.23% (50)	26.81% (37)	27.54% (38)	5.07% (7)	4.35% (6)	138	n/a	n/a
Technical problems	19.86% (28)	32.62% (46)	24.11% (34)	17.02% (24)	6.38% (9)	141	n/a	n/a
Too many standards/guidelines	24.29% (34)	37.14% (52)	30.71% (43)	4.29% (6)	3.57% (5)	140	n/a	n/a
Lecturers do not promote it	34.29% (48)	27.14% (38)	22.14% (31)	7.86% (11)	8.57% (12)	140	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						142		
(skipped this question)							128	

20. Which, if any, of these tools have you used in GO?

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Blogs	34	24%	n/a	n/a
e-portfolio	22	16%	n/a	n/a
Assignment submission	72	51%	n/a	n/a
Podcasting	8	6%	n/a	n/a
Social networking (facebook, messaging, chat)	29	21%	n/a	n/a
Wikis	25	18%	n/a	n/a
Videos	29	21%	n/a	n/a
Discussion boards	27	19%	n/a	n/a
Quizzes	32	23%	n/a	n/a
None of these	31	22%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	140	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		140		
(skipped this question)			130	

21. ease-of-use

	Very Easy	Easy	Neutral/Does not Apply	Difficult	Very Difficult	Response Total	Points	Avg
Blogs	13.97% (19)	32.35% (44)	50% (68)	2.21% (3)	1.47% (2)	136	n/a	n/a
quizzes	21.97% (29)	28.79% (38)	48.48% (64)	0% (0)	0.76% (1)	132	n/a	n/a
e-portfolio	13.74% (18)	22.14% (29)	58.78% (77)	4.58% (6)	0.76% (1)	131	n/a	n/a
Assignment submission	29.85% (40)	28.36% (38)	38.06% (51)	2.24% (3)	1.49% (2)	134	n/a	n/a
Podcasting	10.85% (14)	14.73% (19)	69.77% (90)	3.1% (4)	1.55% (2)	129	n/a	n/a
Social networking (facebook, messaging,	24.62% (32)	21.54% (28)	47.69% (62)	3.08% (4)	3.08% (4)	130	n/a	n/a

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(chat)								
Wikis	20.45% (27)	26.52% (35)	49.24% (65)	3.03% (4)	0.76% (1)	132	n/a	n/a
Videos	18.18% (24)	27.27% (36)	51.52% (68)	1.52% (2)	1.52% (2)	132	n/a	n/a
Discussion Boards	15.38% (20)	25.38% (33)	55.38% (72)	1.54% (2)	2.31% (3)	130	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						138		
(skipped this question)						132		
22. suggestions								
View responses to this question							view	
Total Respondents							94	
(skipped this question)							176	
23. email								
View responses to this question							view	
Total Respondents							179	
(skipped this question)							91	

7.2.1.2 Student written feedback

1. Access to more video tutorials submitted by tutors.
2. Nope. Your great as you are B)
3. I beleve ease of use is allways helpfull to improve, i would also like to see some asthetic changes as it is a dull website.
Go is good because i can send work home via e-mail, However I'm not sure if I can access my work straight from GO as I have to e-mail it to my home e-mail or I will not be able to access it at home. I think it would be good if work from 'my documents' at college were autamaticly available from Go so I do not have to send them by e-mail each time. Also I'm not sure what my college e-mail address is so I have to send an e-mail to the address I know first, in order to Reply.
4. Class videos would be a very useful tool.
5. maybe integrate the messages section from course information with student email... i sent messages like this before to tutor and students and nobody knew how to access it or why it didnt integrate.
6. NO COMMENTS TOO PERFECT
7. More survey needed. student ideas and views should be highly considered.
8. Explain how it works during lessons
9. have a student online chat so students could chat to eachother whilst using GO
10. No its wicked
11. N/A
12. instructions duriing induction week.

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14. Have a blackberry app of go.
15. N/A
16. just tell student more about it
17. Personally i have found errors within your coding, if you ever need any help please feel free to contact Saulius at www.scoding.com.
I'm sure i can offer a good deal ;)
18. I think GO needs to be a lot quicker in how it runs.
- It should be also be able to access MAC work as well.
19. Regular updates and content by teachers.
20. It's just simply that I knew how to use Go like the back of my hand and now its changed it just takes a little bit longer to learn how to do/find things.
21. it was confussing at first and the teachers don't no how to use it
22. Not really its pretty easy
23. They can change th format of the website every year.
24. no
I think that if someone is unwell and is unable to come to college to attend lesssons, i believe that they should be able to go on go and watch and have the lesson at home. Like an iplayer. When, after a programme has been televised it goes on iplayer so that people who have missed the programme can catch up.
25. However i do think that for this to work i think that students parents/guardians should first ring the college and tell them their ill. The students should be able to watch the lessons that they are studying due to the fact GO shows the courses that they are doing. They should be able to click on the subjects they missed and watch the lesson and catch up with what they have learnt.
26. make it easy and simple to use.The blogs is only available inside "ALL TOOLS". Blogs is also shown in other places but couldn't be accessed.
27. Make it faster and more simple to find the work the teachers set.
28. [No Answer Entered]
29. no
30. As a Computing HND student, I don't really find it very difficult. It's good enough as it is.
31. A way in which go can be improved is by not having so many links to be able to get to the actual courses and their specific files.
32. Make the blackboard more convenient.
GO could be improved if it had a better design and more up-dated coding behind it. Could be made better with some jQuery and Ajax rather than using frames. It would make it better for the user too. :)
33. it. Could be made better with some jQuery and Ajax rather than using frames. It would make it better for the user too. :)
34. n/a
35. no
36. sometimes complicated to go through so many links

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37. some of these options have yet to be set up and ready to use, and I would like to use them. for example, blogs, discussion boards (so all students and staff can view everybody's points) I also know I'm not the only student that feels this way.
38. I still have not found anything that I want to be added or changed.
39. So far the website fits my needs.
40. well...I think you should change the name, it sucks! and like, first thing in the morning, settling down to a computer, BANG colour, pictures, loud images, man screw this, turns off computer. I don't know if that helps but, well..it told me to do it so yeah
41. Use all facilities for example, teachers should submit our on-going grades as we have the ability to view them, however they do not utilise this feature. The same as the announcement page - I have one teacher who uses this for assignment deadlines and this is invaluable!
42. to improve go it should have direct links from logging in to get to your subject areas straight away. This would make it easier to use and navigate for novices. The layout is good but to make it better maybe larger buttons for the most important and viewed items could be added at the top of the screen.
43. less technical problems and clearer instructions
44. allow you to press back and not go all the way back to the main menu
45. make it easier to find your way around
46. easier to access
47. nope it's all good
48. make it easier to use, and find your way around. include more links to social webpages (facebook etc.). And aim more toward young people.
49. very useful for getting assignment front sheets and power points from lessons. Most of my teachers promote it and use it a lot
50. Add access to youtube.
51. Clear attendance charts, (viewable by year, term, week, subject)
predicted grade charts,
deadline success charts,
course performance charts
52. The background can use some more decoration as it looks quite lifeless in only grey. Other colours could add some attractiveness. The personal section could use some changes too. Others are perfect and don't need extra attention.
53. not really
54. Make buttons a little more visible :)
55. I understand something has happened to the Go! Website during the Summer holidays. I am still pretty much trying to find my way round the new Go! It may be just a little useful to provide some guidelines etc. to make it a little more user friendly. Otherwise, Go! is still pretty much accessible and good to use.
56. Make sure it is always up to date with the latest assignments/work from subject areas
57. When logged into GO!, I think the left panel where all the files are should be slightly bigger and/or be more visible so that students can find it easier.

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58. not all subjects/teachers put the info on as clearly as others

59. no thanks.

Login credentials for student e-mail should be passed through from GO! login, or not required at all; username and password are the same for both so either there ought to be a way for the details to be passed through to the e-mail login process, or not needed at all as the user has already successfully logged in to GO!

The navigation of course areas (Arts & Humanities for example) is needlessly complicated:

- a) There appear to be duplicate folders (i.e. 'English Poetry' in the root 'Arts & Humanities' directory, and 'English Detailed Study: Poetry' in the 'Course Units' directory, which causes confusion for students; incidentally, some of the information in the latter of these examples is not relevant to the current course)
 - b) There is too much redundant structuring of resources in each course unit directory. For example, in the 'Philosophy: Human Nature & Understanding', there are three subdirectories containing relevant resources. These would be better displayed in a list on one page, with headers separating the 'Unit Information', 'Assignments' and 'Learning Resources' sections. Each page on GO! Takes 2-3 seconds to load, and presenting all course-relevant information on a single page would reduce the amount of time wasted navigating through a file structure which is over-engineered and offers no functional benefits.
- 60.
61. Short introduction course to Go! when you join the college, show you around, explain what it can be used for etc.
62. The colours may look a bit boring for me, and the icons as well. But it's easy to use and find things.
63. I preferred the version of "Go" last year. The layout was user friendly in comparison to the new system.
64. more update college information and news letter in the front of the website.
65. Easy to use.
66. Add students timetable, and attendance ! Also leaving the register so you can check you were signed in correctly rather than having to get the teachers to check for you !
67. Our lecturers do not keep as up to date as they could. Sometimes stuff not posted for a week or so after class. Presentations should be posted before class so that we can review, print and make notes if we want to. Can then also be sued for distance learning.
68. some of the subject files have no logic as to where to find information. Also novell net storage isnt very obvious if youv had no instruction on use
69. You could keep my course information up to date. Currently nothing relating my course or assignments is current and threrfore it is of little use.
70. I think the layout could be simplified and some sections of GO, e.g. discussion boards, should be highlighted as my greatest difficulty with GO is navigation.
71. None - for me it does what it should! It has slides for the lectures on so if we miss a lecture, we can catch up with relative ease - and if we need further guidance the lecturers can be easily contacted.
72. [No Answer Entered]
73. Reduce the number of times you have to enter your username for example the email feature
74. monitor the more popular sites and maybe incorporate those into the site.
75. Being able to personalise our accounts, making it easier to find my way around




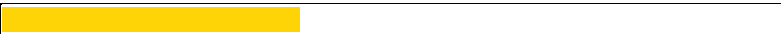













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the site, more opportunities for searching information about my course and researching about topics in my course, instructions for how to use email on the website.
























76. It should be faster. It should be more easily navigatable.
77. BETTER INTERFACE
78. go is getting better each year.....very well done job guys..
79. I preferred the GO website from last year. It is very confusing and difficult to find what you are looking for.
80. GO was much better well- arranged last year and not as confusing. technical problems appear this year more often.
81. Easier to navigate e.g. more simple layout
Make video files available in other formats. Many for the suggested videos for all aspects of the PLC course are not recognised on my Mac and I have to install windows based software to view. I own a Mac because of the issues Microsoft software represents but then I have to buy/install it in order to watch these clips...not good.
82. windows based software to view. I own a Mac because of the issues Microsoft software represents but then I have to buy/install it in order to watch these clips...not good.
83. Make folders within subject areas easier to access.
84. no
85. instructions
86. It is not clear how to start a discussion or contact other students/lecturers on the bourse.
87. Not really cause everthing in Go is perfect.
88. In the course area, to make the menu's simple.
89. show all emails off all students at Guildford college, so we can all find each other and talk
The background is still not changed, it can use some changes. The contents seem to be hard to find as the fonts are monotonous(change in colours or size according to subject can be helpful and also more interesting). If GO could be changed into something like student discussion site then it would be better.GO can also be used to post new notices regarding college activities too. In current state it needs improvement.
90. place each students timetable on their so they dont have to ask around or get another copy printed out, worked well at farnborough sixth.
make it easier to submit homework, more clearer at advertised better.
91. another copy printed out, worked well at farnborough sixth.
make it easier to submit homework, more clearer at advertised better.
92. Nope
93. A quick tutorial on how to use go and maybe some thought into other helpful features, such as; relevant to your chosen subjects.
94. increase ease of use, increase power and variety of tools at the user's disposal.

7.2.2 Staff User Survey

Please note that “Other” should be discounted as a response due to a software error. The typed answers to “other” can be viewed to determine what the user entered when they indicated “other” as an answer.

VLE Staff User Survey 2010					
Respondents:	97 displayed, 136 total	Status:	Open		
Launched Date:	11/03/2010	Closed Date:	N/A		
1. staff-type					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Full-time		97	100%	n/a	n/a
Part-time		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Other (such as temporary staff)		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		97	100%		
2. staff-role					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Teaching Staff		36	37%	n/a	n/a
Support Staff		47	48%	n/a	n/a
Management Role		17	18%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		97	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		97			
3. department					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
A Level Academy		3	3%	n/a	n/a
Animal Care		5	5%	n/a	n/a
Arboriculture and Countryside		3	3%	n/a	n/a
Construction		3	3%	n/a	n/a
Equine		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Electrical Installation, Engineering and Motor Vehicle		0	0%	n/a	n/a
Faculty of Responsive Training		2	2%	n/a	n/a
Farnham Faculty		7	7%	n/a	n/a
Guildford Business School		6	6%	n/a	n/a
Hair and Beauty		2	2%	n/a	n/a

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Health and Childcare		3	3%	n/a	n/a			
Horticulture, Landscape, Floristry and Garden Design		3	3%	n/a	n/a			
Hospitality and Catering		2	2%	n/a	n/a			
International Centre for Education		2	2%	n/a	n/a			
Public Services		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Sports		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Sports Turf		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Technical and Professional Construction and Engineering		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Travel, Tourism and Professional Studies		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Work Based Learning		4	4%	n/a	n/a			
14 to 19 Schools Partnership		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Commercial Development		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Continuous Professional Development (CPD)		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Department of Achievement, Standards and Curriculum Reform		2	2%	n/a	n/a			
Design Team		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Essential Skills: Additional Learner Support (ALS)		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Exams		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Executive Team		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Facilities		4	4%	n/a	n/a			
Finance		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Health & Safety		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
HE & Professional Workforce Development		2	2%	n/a	n/a			
Human Resources (HR)		6	6%	n/a	n/a			
ICT Support (ICT)		6	6%	n/a	n/a			
Information, Admissions and Careers (IAC)		5	5%	n/a	n/a			
Learning Resource Centres (LRC)		6	6%	n/a	n/a			
Management Information Services (MIS)		3	3%	n/a	n/a			
Marketing Team		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Merrist Wood Faculty Administration		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Operations		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Reprographics		1	1%	n/a	n/a			
Student Services (For Staff)		3	3%	n/a	n/a			
Student Services (For Students)		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Web Services		2	2%	n/a	n/a			
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		5	5%	n/a	n/a			
Total Respondents		95	100%					
(skipped this question)			2					
4. confidence								
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Response Total	Points	Avg
I am confident using	82.02% (73)	14.61% (13)	3.37% (3)	0% (0)	0% (0)	89	n/a	n/a

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Internet								
I am confident working and learning online	58.43% (52)	32.58% (29)	7.87% (7)	0% (0)	1.12% (1)	89	n/a	n/a
I am confident finding my way around in GO	31.46% (28)	42.7% (38)	15.73% (14)	8.99% (8)	1.12% (1)	89	n/a	n/a
I am confident obtaining information using GO	31.46% (28)	39.33% (35)	15.73% (14)	12.36% (11)	1.12% (1)	89	n/a	n/a
I am confident taking part in online discussions	25.84% (23)	20.22% (18)	29.21% (26)	20.22% (18)	4.49% (4)	89	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						89		
(skipped this question)						8		

5. tool-use

		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Skype		38	43%	n/a	n/a
Twitter		18	20%	n/a	n/a
iTunes		49	55%	n/a	n/a
Chat (Facebook chat, MSN, or any other)		32	36%	n/a	n/a
Facebook		50	56%	n/a	n/a
iPod		44	49%	n/a	n/a
Non-apple Mp3 player		16	18%	n/a	n/a
Flickr/Photobucket or other photo sharing site		19	21%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		89	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			89		
(skipped this question)			8		

6. web-browser

		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Safari		15	17%	n/a	n/a
Firefox		34	38%	n/a	n/a
Internet Explorer		73	82%	n/a	n/a
Chrome		21	24%	n/a	n/a
Not sure/Don't Know		2	2%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		89	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			89		
(skipped this question)			8		

7. platform-used

		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Apple computer		16	18%	n/a	n/a
Windows-based		85	96%	n/a	n/a

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computer					
Linux-based computer		6	7%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		89	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			89		
(skipped this question)			8		
8. internet-access					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
College Computer		84	95%	n/a	n/a
Home Computer		71	81%	n/a	n/a
Netbook computer (small portable laptop)		11	12%	n/a	n/a
iPhone		16	18%	n/a	n/a
iPad		3	3%	n/a	n/a
Android-based device		8	9%	n/a	n/a
Mobile phone other than those listed above (Android & iPhone)		11	12%	n/a	n/a
Laptop computer		57	65%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		88	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			88		
(skipped this question)			9		
9. Have you used a VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) before?					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Yes		54	65%	n/a	n/a
No		29	35%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			83		
(skipped this question)			14		
10. vle-use					
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Blackboard (GO)		51	61%	n/a	n/a
Moodle		14	17%	n/a	n/a
SharePoint LMS		2	2%	n/a	n/a
Web CT		1	1%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>		83	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents			83		
(skipped this question)			14		

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
11. vle-advantage

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Response Total	Points	Avg
Enhanced Teaching and Learning	36.14% (30)	44.58% (37)	14.46% (12)	2.41% (2)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Efficiency	33.73% (28)	45.78% (38)	15.66% (13)	2.41% (2)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Flexibility	33.73% (28)	44.58% (37)	16.87% (14)	2.41% (2)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Access and Widening Participation	34.94% (29)	33.73% (28)	27.71% (23)	1.2% (1)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Competitive Edge over other courses	19.28% (16)	32.53% (27)	42.17% (35)	3.61% (3)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Student demand	25.3% (21)	42.17% (35)	27.71% (23)	2.41% (2)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Funding/cost issues	18.29% (15)	30.49% (25)	43.9% (36)	4.88% (4)	2.44% (2)	82	n/a	n/a
Distance Learning	37.35% (31)	37.35% (31)	20.48% (17)	2.41% (2)	2.41% (2)	83	n/a	n/a
Stable Technology - just works	27.71% (23)	32.53% (27)	33.73% (28)	2.41% (2)	3.61% (3)	83	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						83		
(skipped this question)						14		

12. use-go

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Teaching courses 	34	63%	n/a	n/a
Taking courses as a student 	3	6%	n/a	n/a
Accessing files 	43	80%	n/a	n/a
Web-based email 	36	67%	n/a	n/a
File-access via Netstorage 	34	63%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/> 	54	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		54		
(skipped this question)		43		

13. how-often-vle

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
More than once a day 	30	56%	n/a	n/a
Once a day 	6	11%	n/a	n/a
Several times a week 	13	24%	n/a	n/a
Once a week 	2	4%	n/a	n/a
Less than once a week 	3	6%	n/a	n/a
I do not use GO	0	0%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		54	100%	
(skipped this question)		43		

14. ease-of-use

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		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg			
Strongly Agree		10	19%	n/a	n/a			
Agree		26	48%	n/a	n/a			
Neutral		9	17%	n/a	n/a			
Disagree		5	9%	n/a	n/a			
Strongly Disagree		4	7%	n/a	n/a			
Total Respondents		54	100%					
		(skipped this question)		43				
15. experience-of-VLE								
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg			
Very Experienced		11	20%	n/a	n/a			
Somewhat experienced		34	63%	n/a	n/a			
Neutral		5	9%	n/a	n/a			
Somewhat unexperienced		4	7%	n/a	n/a			
Very unexperienced		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
No experience at all.		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Total Respondents		54	100%					
		(skipped this question)		43				
16. importance-go								
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg			
Very Important		21	39%	n/a	n/a			
Important		22	41%	n/a	n/a			
Neutral		7	13%	n/a	n/a			
Unimportant		3	6%	n/a	n/a			
Very Unimportant		1	2%	n/a	n/a			
Total Respondents		54	100%					
		(skipped this question)		43				
17. alternative-preference								
		Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg			
Strongly Agree		14	26%	n/a	n/a			
Agree		24	44%	n/a	n/a			
Neutral		13	24%	n/a	n/a			
Disagree		3	6%	n/a	n/a			
Strongly Disagree		0	0%	n/a	n/a			
Total Respondents		54	100%					
		(skipped this question)		43				
18. Would you identify any of the following as significant barriers to using GO?								
	Very Small	Small	Neutral	Large	Very Large	Response Total	Points	Avg
Lack of time	16.98% (9)	24.53% (13)	20.75% (11)	30.19% (16)	7.55% (4)	53	n/a	n/a

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Lack of support	20.75% (11)	26.42% (14)	39.62% (21)	11.32% (6)	1.89% (1)	53	n/a	n/a
Lack of knowledge	23.08% (12)	34.62% (18)	32.69% (17)	9.62% (5)	0% (0)	52	n/a	n/a
Lack of incentives	32.08% (17)	16.98% (9)	45.28% (24)	5.66% (3)	0% (0)	53	n/a	n/a
Lack of recognition for career development	30.19% (16)	15.09% (8)	49.06% (26)	5.66% (3)	0% (0)	53	n/a	n/a
Technical problems	16.98% (9)	18.87% (10)	28.3% (15)	18.87% (10)	16.98% (9)	53	n/a	n/a
Too many standards/guidelines	22.64% (12)	15.09% (8)	49.06% (26)	9.43% (5)	3.77% (2)	53	n/a	n/a
Organisational structure of the College	23.08% (12)	21.15% (11)	42.31% (22)	7.69% (4)	5.77% (3)	52	n/a	n/a
Lack of Student Engagement	15.09% (8)	32.08% (17)	43.4% (23)	3.77% (2)	5.66% (3)	53	n/a	n/a
Too few standards/guidelines	26.92% (14)	15.38% (8)	55.77% (29)	1.92% (1)	0% (0)	52	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						53		
(skipped this question)						44		

19. Which, if any, centrally-supported technology enhanced learning software tools do you use in your teaching?

	Response Total	Response Percent	Points	Avg
Blogs	11	21%	n/a	n/a
e-assessment tools	17	32%	n/a	n/a
e-portfolio	8	15%	n/a	n/a
Plagiarism detection tool (Turnitin)	12	23%	n/a	n/a
Podcasting	6	11%	n/a	n/a
Social networking (facebook, messaging, chat)	5	9%	n/a	n/a
Wikis	12	23%	n/a	n/a
Videos	14	26%	n/a	n/a
Discussion forums	11	21%	n/a	n/a
None of these	17	32%	n/a	n/a
Other, please specify <input type="button" value="view"/>	53	100%	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents		53		
(skipped this question)		44		

20. ease-of-use

	Very Easy	Easy	Neutral/Does not Apply	Difficult	Very Difficult	Response Total	Points	Avg
Blogs	4.55% (2)	31.82% (14)	50% (22)	13.64% (6)	0% (0)	44	n/a	n/a
Quizzes	4.35% (2)	30.43% (14)	52.17% (24)	13.04% (6)	0% (0)	46	n/a	n/a
e-portfolio	2.27% (1)	20.45% (9)	68.18% (30)	9.09% (4)	0% (0)	44	n/a	n/a
Plagiarism detection tool (Turnitin)	4.55% (2)	31.82% (14)	59.09% (26)	4.55% (2)	0% (0)	44	n/a	n/a
Podcasting	2.27% (1)	15.91% (7)	70.45% (31)	11.36% (5)	0% (0)	44	n/a	n/a
Social networking (facebook, messaging, chat)	6.82% (3)	20.45% (9)	70.45% (31)	2.27% (1)	0% (0)	44	n/a	n/a

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Wikis	4.44% (2)	33.33% (15)	55.56% (25)	6.67% (3)	0% (0)	45	n/a	n/a
Discussion Forums	4.65% (2)	37.21% (16)	55.81% (24)	2.33% (1)	0% (0)	43	n/a	n/a
Videos	9.52% (4)	42.86% (18)	45.24% (19)	2.38% (1)	0% (0)	42	n/a	n/a
Total Respondents						46		
(skipped this question)						51		
21. suggestions								
View responses to this question							view	
Total Respondents						38		
(skipped this question)						59		
22. email								
View responses to this question							view	
Total Respondents						58		
(skipped this question)						39		

7.2.2.2 Staff written feedback

1. none - more of a push from staff development and the business to increase usage, show staff benefits.
2. Much better than GO last year, easier to remove/load items. Much quicker to do it from home than at work though.
3. Being able to upload more than one file at once, eg a folder.
4. It is desirable the information to be well classified and accurate. Any changes, or new elements on GO to be reflected in the Staff bulletin issues.
Visual appearance since screen change now viewed as much worse than original - some students experiencing 'visual' problems in seeing some content, menu on left can appear cluttered, why is there a 'view change' option to folders which then defaults back to standard??
5. Major problems with individual set up on Go! since changes to 'automatic' re-enrolment - can't the course manager get control back on 'add student' to avoid lengthy delays and problems?
6. Please re-instate link to College Website pre log-in.

When GO was updated over the summer & re-launched for the start of this academic year a number of learners on the ESF Projects that were doing distance learning were not updated on the new changes being implemented. The majority of learners enrolled on the ILM Leadership & Management courses were unable to log into GO as they needed to have their access rights re-set. If we were notified that the upgrade would have caused logins to change we would have ensured everything would have been done on our end before login problems occurred. More communication on what the upgrade of GO meant for learners logging in would have helped.
7. I think that the improvements made over the summer are great and off the top of my head there is nothing I would add to that. Just that it would be nice to link up LRC content with relevant course areas rather than having to hve tutor rights to see them/ add content.
8. It would be good if when editing a document that is attached in go!, that you didnt have to re-attach the document as sometimes all I need to change is the name of the link, but if you do that, you have to re-attach the doc each time.
- 9.

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Some parts of old GO were MUCH easier

New GO is not really a forward step... feels like a beta-release

Intrgration of external content a little clunky

I like the new GO file storage & easy internal links

Web-team should be using the same hardware as the users so w(They)siw(We)g (rather than wysiwyg). esp using 1024x768 screen

Web-team do a great job at providing answers to all the faults I find

New GO will probably feel better in a year or two.

10. Not a lot of real-estate on the GO desktop - students don't shrink the menus. Some content overwrites the course menu.

Changes are slower, links are slower, some parts clunkier

THANK YOU for linking passwords with network.

Changeover probably not helped by being at same time as Office 2007 (another big learning curve)

Took me a while to work out how to upload & run a ZIP file of web pages or Flash content

THANK YOU for removing some of the file-size limits - I can now manage video again

It will all come out in the wash..... just reserve a bottle of wine for every friday evening when you get home!

11. Make it less long winded like Moodle, Blackboard can be frustrating, e.g. waiting for screen to load, minor freezing when scrolling (especially in Gradebook & when setting up quizzes). More shortcuts would be brilliant e.g. like the eye in Moodle for hiding/unhiding rather than having to edit each object individually which can be so time consuming.

12. It seems quite slow to respond when you click on things. It would also be good to upload whole folders straight onto Go! rather than just a file at a time or a zip file.

13. It is very difficult to navigate and find what you need

14. Enable Go to identify a particular word and search for a policy/procedure based on that - for example, people don't realise that the bullying policy is actually entitled the 'Anti-harassment and Bullying Policy'. Go! will not locate that policy unless you quote the whole title properly which, of course, they can't. That issue still seems to be causing a problem.

15. The biggest problem seems to be that when a group of students access one item the system crashes. It would be useful if there was a spell check as a student can input a correct answer spelled slightly wrong and lose a mark (another reason for dropping e-assessment, which I tried to use with several student groups - should be useful in the case of bad weather!)

16. Go is very very slow. Response time of up to 12 seconds on return key depression makes it hard to use GO in a busiy day. It is unacceptable. This problem mask all others for me

17. You already have improved it considerably!

18. give me more memory (please)

19. The management of users on a course, Class groups could be a standard part of the import. The support for mathematical structures within test is weak. The ability to control the layout in the tests if using images is limited to one, per section. Unable to insert images in structures ie tables. It is not clear how images rae dealt with, some can be loaded from the course files others are uploaded and stored?. The import of files to a course does not work, but upload a package does. The general speed of the system particularly with garde centre is a real issue with a definite pause between actions.

20. I don't find I need to use Go! as a regular part of my job and as such find it difficult to use when I do have to; eg booking CPD courses.

21. Not at all easy to navigate - nothing is ever where you would logically expect it to be in my limited use of the site. Can spend ages trying to find the simplest things!

single unique course codes

course titles which match eclipse

automatic enrolments

guest access / access denied

22. better training for staff

staff don't keep their areas up-to-date

documents not easy to find

no global search

no timetables for students to print out

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23. It is still very time consuming and difficult to find a document on Go and to add or Change content on courses.
24. It is very hard to find documents and information through GO, When I search, entering text in the little box, it rarely comes up with anything to do with my request, I recently put 'Dog Grooming' in the search for courses containing this and it came back that there were no courses with 'Dog Grooming' included! And I know that that is not true!
Finding information like checklists easier.
25. Update Go getting taking out teachers and staff who worked here three years ago!
Keep it updated
26. Change it's name to GOne!
27. It is a very slow system that takes valuable time to put documents onto GO for student use.
28. None
Change it for a more intuitive, faster and robust tool.
Too many instances of errors.
29. Too slow.
Individual file transfer only not batch upload.
Turnitin no indication of problem if error made-settings not saved for future.
30. The current erratic network speeds in the College mean that the speed of GO access is often very slow which means that updating pages on it can be a very laborious process.
I only use GO in a limited way
Would like help to do specific tasks.
31. Go workshops are when I am teaching and not on the MW site very often
maybe have a session for the area in which I teach with other tutors who will be using GO in a similar way.
32. I feel that Go! could be enhanced by making it easier to find documents
33. Make the GO Blog function as easy as other blogs available on the internet.
Visually Go is a bit of a mess at the moment - confusing, distracting, harsh and undifferentiated. Verbally Go is also very text heavy, image light and chaotic. It requires a level of confidence and assumes a level of awareness.
34. However the most difficult area of using Go is the time limits placed upon the teacher themselves. Between project management of two courses, lesson plans, schemes, differentiated targets, work sheets, marking, visits, meetings and all sorts Go has become a lower priority than just surviving the week and the term. I'm cross with myself for this because I appreciate Go's usefulness and believe I have some good ideas for implementation however time and college expectation are always the enemy.
35. Have information for international students about local events and celebrations? I like the twitter updates :)
36. It would be great to have a messaging facility on GO that staff could use to send emails to ALL students or to all students at a specific campus.
37. I feel that Go needs to be more flexible while searching for documents
Just got the idea, that old GO! used to have something like "planner" or "To do list"? So all the users could make a list of things they need to do including the deadlines plus some other details like: notes, progress on the task, ticking box when job done, reminder?, select priority or a queue number, split personal and work related tasks...and so on.. I think this was quite good...
I'm sorry if it's already on GO! I just couldn't manage to find it :o)
38. Another good service would be something like "post it" application... simply to save quick notes so it doesn't get lost, well that's something I use a lot on my home computer so I believe it would be useful for some people.
Again, not sure if it's already on GO! as I don't use GO! that often.
I quite like GO! the way it is.

