

## Annex B: JISC CETIS Communications Evaluation Report

June 2009

Information to support Question C of the evaluation plan – sections relevant to us -

<b>QC How has the learning been acted on and disseminated?</b>			
How successfully have outputs and outcomes been synthesised into guidance and models that meet the sector's needs?	Demand/downloads of guidance etc; feedback from sector	Ad hoc	Communication and dissemination lead
How effectively have outputs and outcomes been taken up by intermediaries (as identified through stakeholder analysis) to influence the sector?	Communications group will reflect on this regularly; work of the collaboration team will also inform it	Recorded on ongoing basis; collated annually	Communication and dissemination lead

### C: How has the learning been acted on and disseminated?

As a JISC Innovation Support Centre JISC CETIS works both internally with the JISC Innovation team as well as externally to support the wider e-learning community.

#### 1. Web sites

Our web sites bring together educational technology news, comment and analysis, as well as information on our community events. Our aim is to contribute to current debates and future thinking in this rapidly growing and changing field.

The e-Learning Focus website was launched in 2004 to provide journalism and interpretation for the technology and standards work of the JISC eLearning Programme. At this stage the JISC CETIS website provided reporting and information on standards and interoperability, and many individuals within CETIS began to write their own blogs. In 2006 JISC CETIS launched a site which aggregated these blogs and published them on the front page. It became clear that an integration of both the e-Learning Focus and JISC CETIS websites would provide a co-ordinated approach and support synergy across the work of JISC CETIS and the JISC eLearning Programme.

In November 2007 the new JISC CETIS website was launched, and used a blog aggregation and publishing tool developed in-house and based on RSS. This enables all internal blogs to be brought together, along with the news and features from e-Learning Focus, and certain external sources. An edited selection of these can then be published on the front page. The site also provides routes into several 'domain areas', an 'events' tool providing information and booking facilities, and a variety of resources.

Educational technology and standards develop and change at such a speed there is a need for responsiveness and immediacy in reporting, alongside a need for more considered comment, analysis, and synthesis of developments in the field.

As an Innovation Support Centre it is essential that JISC CETIS explores and develops new tools and approaches to communications and dissemination; however this can lead to some interesting tensions between the need to be responsive and dynamic in a rapidly changing field, whilst remaining accountable to a large organisation like JISC.

Co-ordination with other communications work across JISC takes place through membership of the JISC eTeam Communications Co-ordination group, and the JISC Communications and Marketing group.

We are now updating the website to reflect current areas of interest, and to exploit tools such as widgets, and social networking tools.

### ***JISC CETIS web statistics***

The e-Learning Focus web site was effectively launched in November 2004. In August 2005 we started collecting statistics for the site. Statistics are gathered daily but reports are collated for each month. The statistic we use is the “unique users” figure:

*“A unique visitor is a host that has made at least 1 hit on 1 page of your web site during the current period shown by the report. If this host make several visits during this period, it is counted only once.”*

Unfortunately a unique user can't be equated to an individual. If multiple people view the site from within Bolton they may be registered only once. Conversely, if one individual accesses the site from home as well as work then they may register twice.

The new JISC CETIS site was launched in November 2007. Since the site aggregated blog posts we have also included figures for the JISC CETIS blog server. Many followers of JISC CETIS staff will of course go directly to their blog pages rather than via the JISC CETIS home page. It is also worth noting that since Scott Wilson started his blog on the original CETIS site, the statistics for his pages aren't included in these numbers. We know that Scott is an internationally regarded blogger.

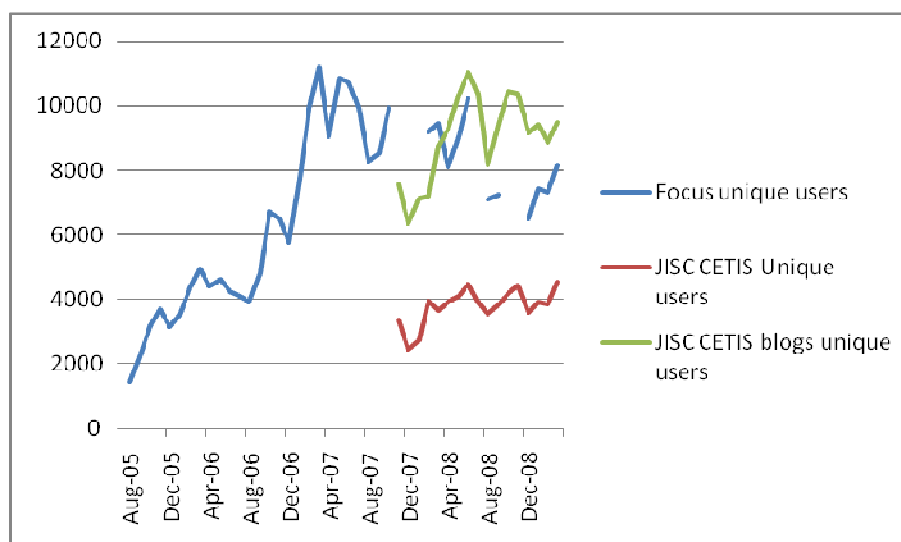


Figure 1, unique users visiting the e-learning Focus, JISC CETIS and JISC CETIS blog sites each month.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 1 shows that the number of unique visitors per month to the e-learning Focus site increased seven fold reaching a peak in March 2007 at 11,000. Since November 2007 our focus has been on developing the JISC CETIS site and integrating e-Learning Focus with it. As a result visitors to Focus have dropped slightly.

Since November 2007 unique users of JISC CETIS have increased from the region of 3000 to 4500 per month. Users of the JISC CETIS blogs have grown from approximately 7500 to 9500 per month. It should be noted that the JISC CETIS web site is a specialist site so is unlikely to attract vast numbers of visitors per month.

### **Output of news and features**

Part of the rationale for integrating e-Learning Focus with the JISC CETIS site was to be able to pool journalism across the service. Figure 2 illustrates the numbers of news and features articles published on both sites since November 2007.

<sup>1</sup> The gaps in the graph occur where there was a fault in the statistics gathering process on the website which was subsequently fixed.

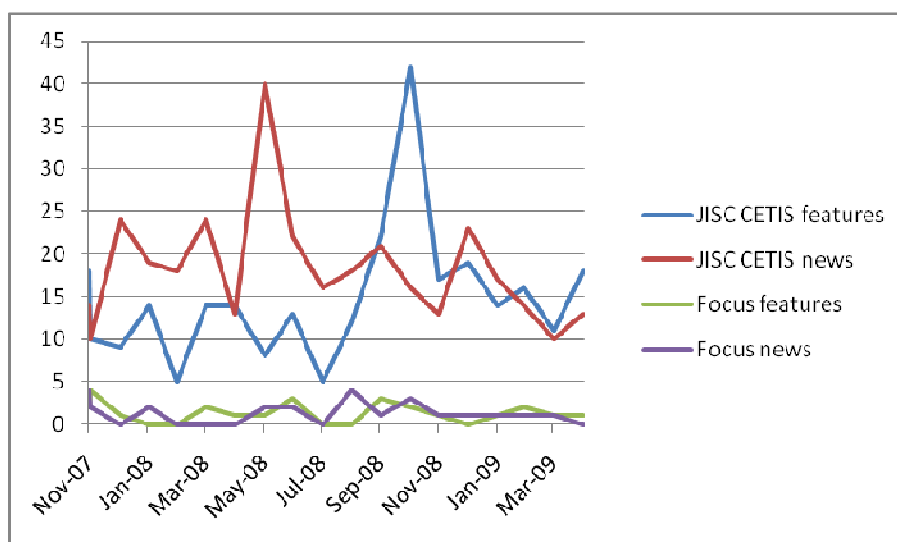


Figure 2: Numbers of articles appearing on the JISC CETIS and e-Learning Focus web sites

While the number of articles fluctuates on a monthly basis, it is clear that the number of articles appearing on the JISC CETIS site is far higher. Between November 2007 and March 2009 252 features were published on JISC CETIS compared to 23 on e-Learning Focus representing a ten-fold increase in the journalistic output.

### **Feedback on the web site from the user survey 2008**

"The linking to the blogs provides a platform of collaboration which keeps content live & upto date. Of course that has QA implications as well, but I really like the way the wiki is linked to the blogs. It's how a JISC service should be thinking."

"Comprehensive coverage, dynamic and up-to-date".

"A great deal of information and stimulating opinion."

"(The site represents) expert technical developers working in the field and providing pragmatic advice as part of a community, regardless of affiliation."

"I like the blog snippets on the home page. One of the biggest pulls for me is the quality of the information provided and the balanced view the CETIS staff bring to discussions."

### **Feedback on the web site approach (email communication)**

"Customer and community feedback on e-learning standard implementation is very important to product development at Icodeon, and this feedback can come in many forms - formal and informal.

The work of CETIS has been especially useful in this respect and the introduction of CETIS staff blogs has enabled the critical thinking and insights of the CETIS team to be fed into continual product development at Icodeon.

The blog by Sheila MacNeill (<http://blogs.cetis.ac.uk/sheilamacneill/>) has been very helpful in recent work with the Icodeon Common Cartridge Platform (<http://ccplatform.blogspot.com/>) - and is recommended reading for anyone engaged product development based on e-learning standards. Thanks Sheila!"

*Downloads of a selection on individual articles*

Timescales	Activity	Overview
March 2008	<a href="#">Beyond Standards Part 1 - The Standards Process</a>	Adam Cooper reflects on the past 10 years of developments in educational technology standards and ponders the role of standards as we move "beyond this period of anticipatory standards."  Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>695</b>
July 2008	<a href="#">How Users can get a grip on technology innovation</a>	Wilbert Kraan discusses the process of technology commodification, and the impact of educational technology standards.  Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>731</b>
July 2008	<a href="#">Resources on writing successful JISC bids (updated)</a>	A two page update on an article published last year which points people to resources for writing bids. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>424</b>
July 2008	<a href="#">Creating flexible user applications using widget technologies</a>	A four page interview with Scott Wilson about the TenCompetence project and the wider potential of using widget technologies in to support e-learning. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>1197</b>
September 2008	<a href="#">Open Educational Resources – Opportunities and challenges for Higher Education briefing paper</a>	35 page briefing paper by Li Yuan; Sheila MacNeill; Wilbert Kraan written to support the HEFCE Open Content call. Distributed by RSS, CETIS Announce (776 subscribers) and also in the ALT Digest. Total downloads in the 3 months since publication: <b>1005</b>
October 2008	<a href="#">Exploring e-Assessment: A practitioner's perspective</a>	A nine page commissioned article by Helen Ashton from Herriot Watt university exploring the issues for practitioners of adopting e-assessment. Distributed by RSS, CETIS assessment SIG email list (147) and ALT Digest. Also sent to RSCs in Wales and HEA Digest list. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>419</b>
December 2008	<a href="#">CETIS 08:Technology for Learning, Teaching and the Institution</a>	A summary of the keynote and parallel sessions at the JISC CETIS annual conference. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>509</b>
February 2009	<a href="#">SWORD: Cutting Through the Red Tape to Populate Learning</a>	A 20 page commissioned article by Sarah Currier, the Product Manager for Intrallect Ltd., introducing SWORD (Simple Web-service Offering Repository Deposit) to those interested in sharing, reuse, repurposing and management of teaching and learning materials.

	<a href="#">Materials Repositories</a>	Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>1968</b>
March 2009	<a href="#">Technology Change in Higher and Further Education: A service Oriented Approach</a>	An online publication (70 pages) for those involved in strategic planning, deployment and implementation of IT systems in Educational Institutions. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>1999</b>
April 2009	<a href="#">IMS withdraw QTI v2.1 draft specification</a>	Rowin Young discusses IMS's decision to withdraw QT1 v2.1 (since reinstated). Total views in the 3 Months since publication: <b>2280</b>
April 2009	<a href="#">IMS, QTI and the economics of interoperability</a>	Wilbert Kraan discusses why asymmetric interoperability offers realistic business models for the development of assessment tools and systems. Total views in the 3 months since publication: <b>640</b>
May 2009	<a href="#">Google Wave and Teaching and Learning</a>	Wilbert Kraan discusses the potential impact of Google Wave on e-Learning. Downloads in the month since publication: <b>1497</b>

## 2. JISC CETIS newsletter

Our email format newsletter has been distributed since July 2005 summarises the main news, features from JISC CETIS and JISC funding calls each quarter and is distributed to the [JISC-ELEARNING@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:JISC-ELEARNING@jiscmail.ac.uk), [JISC-ELEARNING-INFO@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:JISC-ELEARNING-INFO@jiscmail.ac.uk) and [CETIS-ANNOUNCE@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:CETIS-ANNOUNCE@jiscmail.ac.uk) lists. CETIS-Announce has 780 subscribers.

### **Feedback**

"(The newsletter) was very helpful to me. You referenced six documents that I found immediately useful to my work as well as giving me an excellent summary of the JISC e-Learning activities.

I listed two of the documents in this week's Sakai Update. I have enclosed a copy so you can see how they were described. Expect to see some more references in a later Update.

I am looking forward to the next edition. Thanks for the good work. It certainly benefits the community."

"I have just started to look at this newsletter and found it to be extremely useful and informative. I hope you will keep it up."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> From email correspondence

### **3. Technology change in Higher and Further Education – a service oriented approach**

This online publication<sup>3</sup> provided through the JISC CETIS website, was launched at the JISC Conference in March. It offers analysis for the sector on the state of play with the development, applicability and adoption of service oriented approaches in Universities and Colleges.

This resource represents a synthesis of the last five years of investment by the JISC eLearning Programme into service oriented approaches and web service technology, and highlights many JISC projects that have piloted these approaches in their institutions. It takes a socio-technical approach to technology adoption and is based on the lifecycle model which underpinned the 'Creating an MLE Infokit'<sup>4</sup>. It has been written by experts in the field from within JISC CETIS and JISC, and from a Head of IT Services in a University.

It is intended to be a dynamic resource which gathers all the relevant work JISC has funded in this area so far, and provides a navigation route into the territory using expert commentaries which then link to the experience gained through JISC funded work.

It is designed to be built on over time as the work JISC is funding in this area moves forward, and it contains the basis of several briefings and articles.

It is too early to get clear statistics from the resource, but without a strong launch it is still attracting in the region of 200 unique visitors per month.

### **4. JISC CETIS conference**

Our annual conference in November is attended by approximately 150 delegates. The conference takes an "unashamedly technical focus" and is an opportunity to obtain feedback and discuss developments over the past year, to consider educational technology developments in the near future, and to provide advice to JISC and JISC CETIS about where their priorities should lie in the coming year. Many of the e-Learning Programme projects are represented. The first of these conferences was held in 2004, and focussed on 'e-Learning Tools, Standards and Systems', and it has since become a popular fixture in the annual calendar.

Whilst there is a communications and dissemination dimension to this event, it plays a major role in our core business and will be evaluated in that context. A more detailed evaluation of the 2008 conference was presented to the JISC CETIS Board in March 2009.

Feedback from the conference evaluation:

- 88% of respondents found the conference either useful or very useful
- 100% of respondents thought the conference should be held on an annual basis.

"Still feeling inspired following #cetis08"

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<sup>3</sup> <http://soa.cetis.ac.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.jiscinfonet.ac.uk/InfoKits/creating-an-mle>

“Very enjoyable conference with a great atmosphere.”

“High quality discussion (even though the agenda followed was a bit wandering). Nothing specific I could highlight, but it broadened my thinking.”

“The session was well planned and well facilitated, so the balance of presentations supporting the aim of the session was just right, and we kept to time and had an excellent flowing discussion afterwards. It was good to have a discussion at the cutting edge amongst people all at a similar level of understanding.”<sup>5</sup>

## 5. JISC CETIS Communities

JISC CETIS has been running community based expert groups since 1999. Originally these groups clustered around the IMS specifications but more recently they have broadened their remit and now also provide a platform for JISC projects to disseminate to, and consult with, the expert e-learning community. Originally each of the groups (Accessibility, Assessment, Educational Content, Enterprise, Lifelong Learning, Metadata and Repositories, Pedagogy Forum, and Portfolio) aimed to hold four meetings per year. However in the past year JISC CETIS has begun running a number of short lived expert working groups, we now run 12 public events per year which include special interest group meetings. Like our conference the remit of these communities is core business as well as dissemination, and so is evaluated as part of the core Service.

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June 2009

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<sup>5</sup> From conference evaluation