



INFORMS: the Information Skills Project

Final Report

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1. Introduction

The INFORMS project, primarily aimed at developing the information seeking skills of students and investigating the cultural changes within the teaching and learning in institutions that may be required for this to occur, arose out of the JISC funded DNER INHALE project.

The three partner institutions within INFORMS were the University of Huddersfield, (lead partner), Loughborough University and the University of Oxford.

Beginning October 2002 the project ran concurrently with the INHALE project to March 2003 and was completed at the end of September 2003.

2. Project aims

- ?? to integrate VLE and Digital Library Use into teaching practice
- ?? to develop the information seeking skills of both academic staff and students
- ?? to raise the awareness of the resources available through the Information Environment
- ?? to involve staff who might not otherwise be involved
- ?? to enable and provide support for re-using content and learning objects
- ?? to develop the skills and knowledge of librarians- pedagogical and technical

3. Project objectives

- ?? The development of partnerships and collaborations within the context of the partner institutions to include all the different stakeholders in the support of student learning within VLEs. The range of staff involved will include those not necessarily currently involved in the teaching and learning aspects of curriculum development within the partner institutions e.g. computer staff or library staff.
- ?? The creation of 6 new core units in the INHALE database using local and national information resources for identified modules at Loughborough and Oxford

Universities. The subjects for the curriculum focused pilots within the project were be:

?? **Business, Engineering, Sport**

Loughborough University at undergraduate level

?? **English, Medicine and Social Sciences**

Oxford University at undergraduate level

?? This will be undertaken with the support of the INHALE project team and will entail the use of the guidelines and tools already produced by the project.

?? The building of sets of relevant information skills materials to address the different levels of learning needs of the particular students in the different partner institutions.

?? The embedding of these new units within the different VLEs at each institution (LEARN at Loughborough and Bodington at Oxford) using the tools and methods developed by the INHALE project.

?? Use the INHALE evaluation model and toolkits to assess the impact of the information skills materials on the outcomes of student learning.

4. Project deliverables

?? 6 new subject focused Information Skills Units (as detailed above) built around core Digital Information Resources and integrated into teaching practice – extending, developing and scaling up the INHALE database

?? Evaluations of impacts and effectiveness on staff and students

?? Case studies on the student experience of using the resources at Oxford and Loughborough

?? Case Studies of joint course development & embedding in VLEs at Oxford and Loughborough

?? Technical reports discussing any problems encountered in the use of the objects database and in the integration of the units generated by the database.

?? 5 free consultation visits to other HE/FE institutions

5. Project phases

The project was divided into three distinct phases: -

?? Phase 1: Start-up and development of resources

The INFORMS web site was created by the Huddersfield team and included secure shared document and news input facilities for the project team.

During this initial phase the project partners at the University of Loughborough and Oxford identified key staff, modules and information resources for the project.

With the support of the INHALE team at Huddersfield, presentations and training workshops were devised and run for the staff in the new collaborative teams at Loughborough and Oxford, to pass on the methodologies used by INHALE.

Training covered the authoring to and re-using content already within the INHALE database, the use of the evaluation toolkit and on the integration of the information skills resources into the LEARN VLE at Loughborough and Bodington VLE at Oxford.

New institutional portfolios for Loughborough and Oxford were created within the INHALE database to enable these partners to create their own new and customised skills materials.

The newly developed information skills materials were embedded within the teaching and learning materials in the VLEs and tested by the teams .

Iterative evaluations of the effectiveness of the above processes were collected from the staff involved and were used to assess the effectiveness of the INHALE models.

?? Phase 2: Module delivery and evaluation

The information skills materials were delivered to the students.

Pre and post test evaluations will be administered for each pilot module. The data collected was used to assess the effectiveness of the new information skills materials on student learning outcomes within the pilot modules.

Feed back of technical problems encountered was recorded during this phase.

?? Phase 3: Report writing, dissemination of project experiences and learning, exit strategy

All the evidence was gathered together and each institution shared in the writing of the reports and case studies from the project, which are being disseminated via the INFORMS web site, as well having been submitted to relevant journals and conferences.

An exit strategy that had a number of different possibilities was created.

6. Loughborough University summary report

(Click here for the full [Loughborough University Final Report](#))

Information literacy is commonly known as Information Skills Training (IST) and covers good practice in developing literature searching strategies, searching of databases, evaluative skills and citation & creation of bibliographies.

The library has a well established presence in the University for the teaching of information skills and has developed a number of different strategies in the delivery of this.

The Library was concerned that not all students had the opportunity to attend IST sessions and wished to find alternative ways of enhancing information literacy skills within the University. It was felt that self-paced online tutorials would allow greater access to training materials for students at time of need. The INFORMS project provided the opportunity for the development of these.

Over five years ago the University developed its own electronic learning environment, Learn. Its simple format enables Academics to create their own materials for Learn using Word or a web authoring tool. Learn links modules directly to the appropriate reading lists, exam papers and study guides and there is a discussion list facility. Lecturers can also create tests utilizing Questionmark Perception.

The uptake of Learn has varied from department to department and individual to individual. 1,054 modules out of 2,500 modules have material on Learn. Some academics have put on a mixture of module outlines, lecture notes, PowerPoint slides,

Excel spreadsheets, exam papers and PDFs. Others have progressed further and created interactive learning material and utilize the discussion groups.

The project team at Loughborough, after consultation with the relevant lecturers, wrote new INFORMS units for the following subjects:-

Business, Engineering and Sport

And embedded these for student use in pilot modules within the Learn VLE. They also undertook a baseline evaluation of student information seeking skills across the three chosen faculties. This was followed by evaluations of the students' skills on individual modules within Learn before and after their use of the resources. .

6.1 Loughborough case study

The following pages include a start-up template for the **Business module** in the pilot. The template was useful for recording all the key information about the module such as learning outcomes and the agreed requirements for the information literacy component in support of particular outcomes (e.g. a written assignment or presentation). It also included brief follow-up discussions on the outcomes of the use of the materials.

Following this are various screen shots showing steps in one information skills unit, the units linked into the Learn VLE and Loughborough's library web site.



Module start up record

Dates:	October 2002 Friday 10 January 2003
Module Name	Personal effectiveness
Module Code	ABCDEFGG
Module Teacher	Lecturer X
Pathway/Branch/Course and year	All first year Business students

Credits Mode: F/T, P/T	10 credit F/T
Dates	Second semester (February 6 to May 2003)
No. of Students	272
No. of teaching sessions	Contact time: plenary sessions and workshops: X hours
Unsupervised activity	X hours – this module concentrates on student centred learning, including a central group project.
Length of each taught session	1 hour lectures & workshops
Assessment + Dates	Presentation – May 2003 Group report - May 2003 Individual skills report - May 2003
Learning Outcomes	On completion of this module, students should be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ?? discuss the importance attached to personal effectiveness and personal transferable skills; ?? describe key competencies; ?? describe and record their own personal strengths and development; ?? collect ideas and data from a range of sources; ?? work in a team to complete a project on time, and produce a high quality presentation; ?? apply organizational, teamwork, time management and interpersonal skills to project work; ?? Exhibit verbal and written communication skills.
Room Content Brief overview of the module content Information Skills Components e.g. DNER Elements Local EIS Suggested Activities	Will vary Students will develop and enhance study skills. Scenario related to assignment will be used throughout the module – this year the students are being asked to design & deliver a training scheme aimed at particular market sectors. The students choose the training topic and the market sector. One hour lecture on how to find information to support both this assignment and their studies in general. It will cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ?? Key words ?? Developing a search strategy ?? Searching the library catalogue, reading lists, the web, databases and subject

	<p>lists, the web, databases and subject gateways.</p> <p>The pre-test questionnaire will also be completed during this lecture.</p> <p>The students will be expected to complete at least 4 Informs tutorials in their own time. This will not be mandatory.</p>
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Follow-up: 27 June 2003

Extracts from the discussion:

“Feedback for the whole module is often neutral or negative as some students feel they are “being taught to suck eggs” and it is later on their placement year that the students realize its relevance. Lecturer X recognizes that some students’ study skills are at a high level, but most students need to enhance them. He is especially concerned that students do not know how to select good quality material to read and was pleased that the results of our survey reflected this.

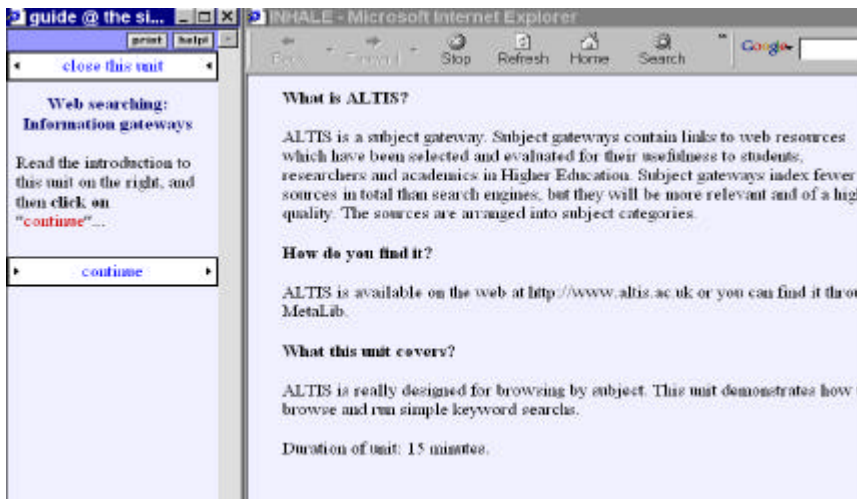
Lecturer X had not looked at our Learn page or the tutorials in great detail and therefore could not offer any comments. Lecturer X was very pleased that the students had accessed the tutorials 150 times and stated that this was a lot higher than he had anticipated. He feels students will often not complete a task if it is not assessed.

Next year the focus of the module will move to professional development planning (pdp) and focus more on these skills. There is also now a third year module that builds on Personal effectiveness and encourages the students to reflect on who they are and where they want to go in their career.

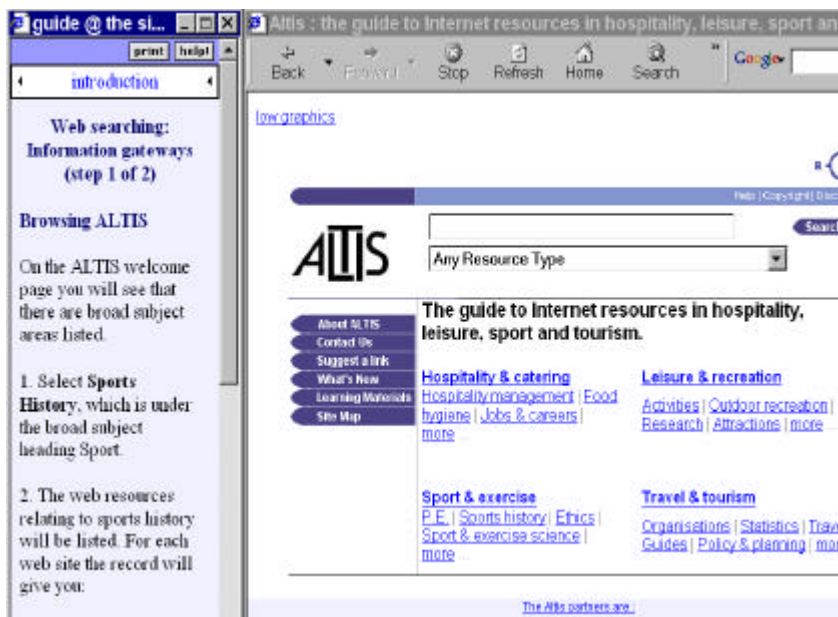
Lecturer X was pleased with the library input into the module and would like us to take part next year. He would like to increase the library’s input to two hours with a very subject specific search example. He is also happy to consider timetabling student use of the INFORMS material, the only issue may be getting a lab. He is also happy to consider assessing library input e.g. asking the students to include a bibliography and evidence of use in their group report.

Lecturer X feels the INFORMS tutorials would be of great benefit to other core business modules, especially those with a large assessed coursework component. He suggested that we contact the module leaders to let them know the tutorials exist and how they can point to them from their Learn pages.”

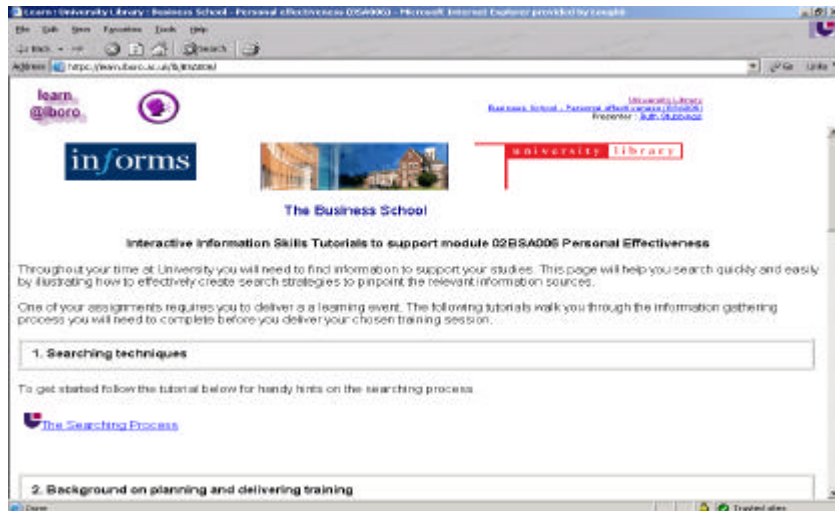
The online units were easy to create. This is the Introduction to the ALTIS (The Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism subject gateway) unit that is now being used by ALTIS:-



The next step showing the live ALTIS web site in the unit and the guide at the side, taking students through this core information resource:-



The INFORMS units are linked into the individual module within Learn:-



The INFORMS online units (Online tutorials) linked to Loughborough University's Library web pages for information skills support:-

Online tutorials	Courses run by the Library	Guides
The searching process	Self-Guided Tour - plan of the Library	Finding information for your first assignment
Library catalogue: basic	Lunchtime in the Library courses - introductions to general and subject specific resources	Finding information for your project: successful database searching
Library catalogue: advanced	Database of the month - how to search particular databases more effectively	Citing references and creating bibliographies
		Keeping yourself up-to-

There are now 22 Loughborough portfolios within the INFORMS database: -



6.2 Loughborough conclusions

The INFORMS project has shown that:

- ?? The INHALE database writer can be easily transferred to another institution and database tutorials can be written quickly. Within four months 18 unique tutorials were written by the Loughborough project team to support three academic departments.
- ?? The database tutorials were embedded into three modules and delivered via the VLE, Learn. Therefore demonstrating that the tutorials can be embedded into alternative VLEs, including those that are “home grown” such as Learn.
- ?? Academic staff involved in the pilots became aware of the importance of information literacy skills. Plus those students that took part in the project became more proficient in searching the Internet and subject specific resources.
- ?? The INHALE questionnaires provided valuable data on what electronic resources staff and students are using and provided valuable feedback on the INFORMS tutorials.
- ?? Admin tools such as the Project module start up record can be customized to meet local needs and formally record teaching requirements.

The INFORMS project at Loughborough has:

- ?? Raised academic staff awareness of the importance of information literacy skills.
- ?? Offered alternative learning and teaching methods.
- ?? Assisted the Academic Librarians in further enhancing their pedagogic skills.
- ?? Raised student awareness of good quality information sources.
- ?? Encouraged the sharing of learning objects and good pedagogic practice across HE institutions through the central database of tutorials.
- ?? Two Internet subject gateways (ALTIS and SOSIG) are pleased with the tutorials relating to their services and would like to link to them.

What didn't work as well as expected:-

- ?? With hindsight the questionnaires would have worked better if they had been piloted first and then customized so as to elicit better responses.
- ?? The speed of the web server at Huddersfield caused considerable problems in the roll-out to students of the INFORMS resources in face-to-face teaching sessions to students. By the time the INFORMS project team at Huddersfield had purchased and installed a new web (with the requisite mod_perl software) it was unfortunately too late to re-run any of the teaching sessions.

However despite these problems Loughborough was successful in replicating, testing and refining the models, methodologies, tools and materials developed by the INHALE project.

Loughborough library is planning to expand the project to all three of the Library Faculty Teams to support information literacy teaching across all academic departments.

7. University of Oxford summary report

(Click here for the full [Oxford University Final Report](#) and the [English Faculty Report](#))

The University of Oxford is a complex organisation comprising many autonomous colleges. There is a plethora of faculty, college and University libraries all residing within this complexity. There is no unified information skills teaching strategy across the colleges and unlike the majority of other UK universities courses at Oxford are not modularised.

The INFORMS project was managed at Oxford via the Learning and Teaching Group within the Oxford University Computing Services.

The work was done in conjunction primarily with library staff in three subject-specific Faculty libraries. (English, Medicine, Social Sciences).

Due to the nature of tutorial teaching a lot of induction training to online resources is conducted by librarians rather than by academic staff as at other institutions. In addition there is a section of the central library (SERS – Systems and Electronic Resources Service) which provides integrated support and systems for a wide range of IT-related services and activities across the library sector and had input to the design and construct of the project.

The centrally-supported WebLearn VLE system (based on the Leeds created Bodington system) was introduced in pilot phase by the Computing Services a few months into the project. Thus there was no established usage of VLEs at Oxford prior to this study and often no awareness of the concept. An initial survey was undertaken to ascertain the staff and students' preferred point of access to a VLE. Most when asked about where in a VLE the Informs resource should reside provided answers relevant to their awareness of the effectiveness of their various libraries.

As well as writing the information training materials the Faculty librarians delivered the series of questionnaires to establish the baseline competencies of staff, librarians together with students in the 3 different subject areas.

7.1 Oxford English Faculty case study

Library staff within the English Faculty at Oxford run formal induction and training sessions for students and provide written documentation as part of the general reader services programme. However this is not normally built into the teaching programme. Hence the start-up template to record the collaboration between the academic teaching staff and the librarians were not used. The English Faculty is in the process of developing its own online teaching strategy in conjunction with the establishment of WebLearn - the new Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) for Oxford University powered by Bodington. It was felt that providing virtual training tutorials would complement the current information skills programme run by EFL staff and encourage more students to use the many databases and electronic resources available to them.

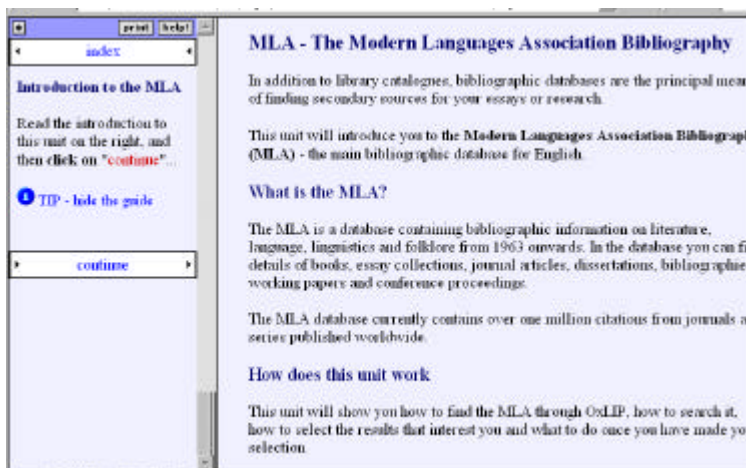
Trials of the tutorials written for the English faculty students took place over two days in March, with students encouraged to participate by both academic and library staff. An email and poster campaign was used to advertise the project. The first day of testing was hampered by a university-wide network problem, but in the end over fifty students tested the materials and provided valuable feedback through pre- and post-test questionnaires; individual interviews were conducted in some cases. The questionnaires invited students to critically evaluate the tutorials, as well as encouraging them to think more widely about their general information skills and how they go about finding material from the Internet and other electronic resources.

The results from the trial sessions and completed questionnaires were generally positive. Many students had never used the databases before, so for library staff it was an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of the range of resources available in Oxford. Students liked the fact that the tutorials were short and easy to navigate, and would allow them to access specific help on databases at a time that most suited them. The main problem students experienced was actually linking in to the live resources, as one of the databases

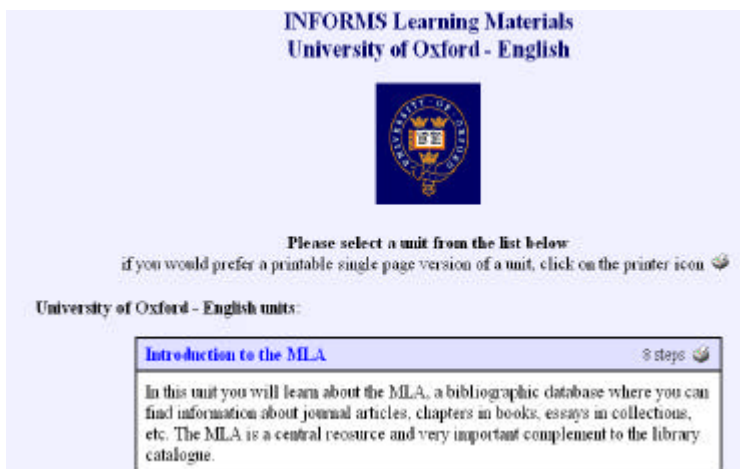
used placed a limit on the number of concurrent users which meant that access was denied occasionally. This is something that should be considered when writing tutorials. On a more general level, the questionnaire results highlighted a number of issues that library staff need to address including an over-reliance by students on search engines rather than using bibliographic databases for literature searching, and a lack of knowledge about constructing good search strategies and subject keywords for retrieving relevant information from databases as well as the Internet.

The aim now is to write similar tutorials for all the main databases used by English students and to link them in to information about courses on the VLE written by lecturers and tutors.

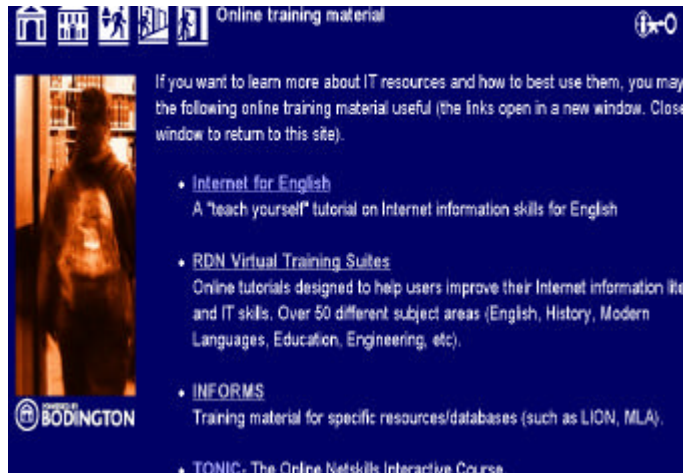
The Introduction to one of the database resources (MLA) written by the English faculty Librarian at Oxford:-



The University of Oxford's English Faculty INFORMS Portfolio:-



The English Faculty pages on the University of Oxford's VLE Web learn:-



Online training material

If you want to learn more about IT resources and how to best use them, you may find the following online training material useful (the links open in a new window. Close the window to return to this site).

- [Internet for English](#)
A "teach yourself" tutorial on Internet information skills for English
- [RDN Virtual Training Suites](#)
Online tutorials designed to help users improve their Internet information skills and IT skills. Over 50 different subject areas (English, History, Modern Languages, Education, Engineering, etc).
- [INFORMS](#)
Training material for specific resources/databases (such as LION, MLA).
- [TONIC- The Online Netskills Interactive Course](#)

The University of Oxford's English Faculty Library INFORMS web pages:-



ENGLISH FACULTY HOME PAGE

informs

Follow the links below to access the training materials. If you have any questions about the tutorials or the resources they point to, please contact yvna.berglund@ell.ox.ac.uk or the staff at the English Faculty Library.

- [Start page all tutorials](#)
- **Tutorials for English:**
 - [Introduction to the MLA](#)
 - [Introduction to LION](#)
 - [Searching LION for literary criticism](#)
 - [Accessing Full-Text Works on LION](#)
- **General tutorials:**
 - [Introduction to Internet](#)
 - [Your search strategy](#)
 - [How to Reference Web Sites](#)

7.2 Oxford conclusions

At the start of the project the VLE that was to be used in the project at Oxford was about to be installed and the librarians involved were starting “from scratch” with both the writing of the information skills resources and the use of the VLE. By the end of the project the following outcomes had been achieved: -

- ?? The librarians within the 3 Faculty libraries wrote 10 new information skills units.
- ?? The INFORMS tutorials are now embedded in the Oxford University VLE and will act as a framework for teaching students how to locate, select and exploit relevant information sources in the future.
- ?? Information about some of the Faculties is now available on WebLearn and academics are starting to mount online, interactive learning and teaching materials including reading lists, lecture notes and bulletin boards.
- ?? The INFORMS project provided an ideal opportunity for exploring new methods of teaching information skills to students within the context of the VLE.
- ?? The INHALE questionnaires provided the Oxford faculty libraries with valuable data on the information seeking skills of the students at Oxford.

What didn't work as well as expected:-

- ?? The organizational set-up at Oxford was confusing and thus communication with the relevant people was not straight forward.
- ?? Extracting feedback from the librarians at Oxford was difficult to establish via the various mechanisms set-up for this purpose (Discussion Board, e-mail)

8. Technical report

- ?? The INHALE user guide was re-edited and disseminated via the Discussion Board.
- ?? An Editorial Policy on creating the INFORMS units was produced.

- ?? A Conditions of Use Agreement that includes a Creative Commons License was created.
- ?? The CGI code developed during the INHALE Project was ported to work under the faster mod_perl environment.
- ?? Improvements were made to the way the code is structured, with common functionality placed into several core Perl modules.
- ?? Support was added to allow UKCMF compliant metadata to be added to individual units.
- ?? Basic support for generating IMS Content Package (using UKCMF) versions of units, using metadata stubs to link back to the database.
- ?? Support was added to allow institutions to download raw usage logs in Excel CSV format.
- ?? Changes were made to provide a more flexible method of allocating accounts and portfolios, along with the facility for institutions to manage their own settings.
- ?? Support was added to allow institutions to customize the appearance of their portfolio and units.
- ?? Scripts were written to allow automated processing of web based evaluation reports in to SPSS.

9. Evaluation report

The following is a summary from the [INFORMS Final Evaluation Report](#)

There are also 17 individual Evaluation Reports from the surveys undertaken of the information seeking behaviour of the students at Loughborough and Oxford located within the [Evaluation Reports](#) section on the INFORMS project web site.

9.1 Evaluation aims

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- ?? to investigate the impact of the materials on information seeking skills of academic staff and students
- ?? to measure the impact of the materials on raising awareness of IE resources
- ?? to monitor staff involvement within the VLE environment

?? to investigate the impact of project involvement on the pedagogical and technical skill of librarians

?? To document project learning, monitor progress and disseminate reliable information to stakeholders.

9.2 Success criteria, performance indicators and outcomes

Success Criteria	Performance Indicator	Outcome
Take-up of the project deliverables	Number of modules within two partners sites using the materials Number of INHALE/INFORMS skills packages used by external institutions Number of student logins to materials	Targets achieved and exceeded 400 plus units used by circa 16 HE/FE institutions to date Positive statistics drawn from VLE's
Positive impact on student learning	Lecturer assessment of impact Student achievement of learning outcomes	No interviews undertaken Positive evidence drawn from questionnaires
Project deliverables reached or exceeded on time and within budget	Project milestones reached Time-scales achieved Costing and budgeting mechanisms adhered to	Milestones reached Some slippage on evaluation Project completed within budget
Increase in the knowledge base of academic staff, library staff and students using the IE for teaching and learning	Number of academic staff and library staff active Number of staff undertaking staff development programmes in this area	Positive evidence collected This indicator not necessarily viable – positive evidence drawn instead from reports from both institutions

Sharing of best practice/new partnerships with other HE Institutions	Number of academic papers delivered Number of new relationships forged	Papers delivered and ongoing New relationships forged with both institutions and with the 16 HE/FE institutions mentioned above
Cultural change within partner institutions	Number of staff involved Uptake of materials Number of modules in the VLE	Positive evidence from both Uptake achieved and exceeded 18 tutorials created at Loughborough, 10 at Oxford
Transferability of INHALE products and resources	As above Staff feedback	Evidence of successful transfer and development of toolkits, products and resources

9.3 Evaluation results

9.3.1 Investigation of the impact of the materials on information seeking skills of academic staff and students

The [17 Evaluation Reports](#) from the different surveys undertaken at Loughborough and Oxford showed the following:-

Loughborough Students

- ?? Improvements in internet and database searching skills
- ?? Little change in use of information sources
- ?? Some change in awareness of information sources
- ?? Positive responses to the INFORMS materials

?? Refinements recommended for survey instruments

Oxford Students

- ?? Improvements in internet searching skills
- ?? Big increases in use of some information sources
- ?? Increases in awareness of information sources
- ?? Positive responses to the INFORMS materials
- ?? Information required at point of need i.e. in a VLE

9.3.2 Take up and use of the INFORMS information skills materials within modules in the VLE's

Loughborough

- ?? 18 new subject specific database tutorials for three subject areas were created and piloted
- ?? Web log statistics show student access to the tutorials across all 3 schools

Oxford

- ?? 10 new subject specific database tutorials for three subject areas were created and piloted
- ?? Observation of student use during all piloting sessions

9.3.3 Investigation of cultural change within the partner institutions

Loughborough

- ?? Pedagogical and technical skills of a select group of library staff were enhanced (p3 September 2003 [Loughborough University Library's Report](#))
- ?? Awareness of Academic Librarians raised about flexibility of electronic tutorials for different learning styles and for time and place of learning (ibid. p 28)
- ?? INFORMS database tutorials may be offered in staff development training for Library staff (ibid. p28)
- ?? Percentage of academic staff became more aware of the importance of information literacy skills (ibid. p3)

- ?? Three other academic departments are interested in using the INFORMS materials (ibid. p28)
- ?? Awareness of this type of learning raised across all academic departments (ibid. p28)
- ?? New INFORMS tutorials planned per department for next academic session (ibid. p28)
- ?? Increases in student awareness of subject specific resources may lead to move away from current 'Google' culture (ibid. p28)

Oxford

- ?? INFORMS tutorials may be a valuable follow up/reiteration tool for Medical students to refresh and expand skills (p2 [Oxford University Final Report](#))
- ?? Online tutorials to become part of English student information skills training programme (ibid. pp 4/5)
- ?? Responsibility for developing new online tutorials to be included in job description of English Faculty Reader Services Librarian (ibid. p5)
- ?? Increased use of VLE envisioned to change learning culture of English faculty if closer liaison is achieved between tutors and library staff and students will thus be encouraged to use more electronic databases, accordingly the profile of the library will be enhanced (ibid. p5)
- ?? Format of library induction sessions may be changed to encompass remote access to INFORMS tutorials from student study bedrooms (ibid. p5)
- ?? Changes may be introduced to make information skills essential component of all undergraduate degrees in the English Faculty (ibid. p5)
- ?? Extra training sessions on how to use the Internet properly for academic research should be introduced (ibid. p5)

9.3.4 Monitoring and reporting the progress of the project including information for stakeholders

Huddersfield

The evaluation was tracked by an evaluation events log and timeline and entries on the progress were kept as daily diary entries. A Project Discussion Board was used for

communication and dissemination between the three partners as well as serving as an archive of progress. Telephone, email and written communications also served to monitor the progress. The Project Website was kept up to date with news and reports. Steering Group meetings were minuted and progress reports were delivered by all partners. Monitoring and Formative reports were delivered to JISC at the appropriate set times.

(All the Evaluation and other reports can be found on the [INFORMS Project](#) website)

Dissemination

Loughborough

Internal

- ?? DIS newsletter
- ?? Librarians report to the Library User Committee
- ?? Library web page
- ?? University's Learning in Progress afternoon

External

- ?? e-Lit Conference – Paper presented

Stubbings, R & Franklin, G. (2003) *Electronic Information Literacy: the Loughborough experience of Informis*. Paper presented at the e-Lit Conference, Glasgow, Glasgow Caledonian University.

- ?? JIBS seminar – Presentation
- ?? Demonstration to Leicester University Library

Oxford

Internal

- ?? Learning Technologies Newsletter – item included

External

Murray, V. 'Informing Oxford'. Article submitted to *CILIP Update*.

Other Dissemination Activities

Presentations and Demonstrations :

5th February, 2003 presentation to UCR, University of Glamorgan

19th February , 2003 presentation to UCR Nottingham Trent

28th February, 2003 Demonstration to librarians at Coventry University

12th May, 2003 Demonstration to librarians at St. Martin's College of HE

6th June, 2003 Metadata presentation to EC SIG Group meeting, held at the University of Huddersfield.

11-13th June, 2003 Round Table at e-Lit Conference Glasgow Caledonian University,

1st July, 2003 Poster Demonstration, Learning and Teaching Innovation Unit-

Conference, University of Huddersfield.

10. Summary

Supportive evidence has been gathered from both partners to show that the INFORMS materials have had a positive effect on the information seeking skills of students involved in the piloting.

A comparison with the INHALE project findings and the INFORMS project student evaluations have shown that the students' information skills and needs at Oxford and Loughborough are not dissimilar from students elsewhere and that there is still a considerable need for core information skills teaching, particularly on creating a search strategy and on key subject information resources.

Academic staff in the pilots at Loughborough have benefited from being involved in the project. The picture is slightly different at Oxford where the academics are not involved in student induction training in online resources; however, the project has been successful in raising their awareness of the value of this type of training.

Student awareness and use of IE resources has been increased at both institutions, perhaps more so at Oxford than at Loughborough.

Staff involvement within the VLE environment has been increased due to the project at both institutions. At Oxford the implementation of the VLE is still in its early stages and the project ran at an ideal time to explore new methods of teaching information skills to

students within this context. At Loughborough the VLE is well established, even so the project raised a lot of interest and led to requests from several departments for tutorials to be written for their subject areas.

At both institutions project involvement has had a beneficial impact on the pedagogical and technical skills of a number of the librarians. At Loughborough the tutorials were written to follow good pedagogic practice and were checked and tested prior to roll out by Library staff, including Academic librarians, Senior Library Assistants and Library Assistants. All involved stated the process had enhanced their abilities and knowledge of databases. The tutorials may be offered as Staff Development training to further enhance library staff skills. At Oxford library staff were particularly keen on the opportunity to exploit the new VLE to produce new methods of teaching information skills to students, as well as exploring this new perspective alongside more traditional training methods. Both institutions found the writing of their materials very straightforward and successfully created a large number of tutorials. This achievement alone points to new technical skills being gained by all the staff involved. Furthermore, the Oxford English Faculty Library, in particular, believe that their planned future implementation of the INFORMS tutorials can only contribute to the new role of library staff in the increasingly changing information environment.

Dissemination at Loughborough has resulted in interest and take up of the INFORMS tutorials across several other academic departments not initially involved in the piloting. At Oxford the picture is not as clear given the newness of the VLE, however, within the English Faculty it is planned to progress the INFORMS tutorials to provide a significant part of the student information skills training programme across key databases.

Cultural change has begun at each institution, the pebble of INFORMS has been dropped into these two new academic pools and already the ripples are spreading further and further afield.

Finally the INFORMS database is being utilised by 16 other HE/FE institutions and over 400 teaching units are being used to teach information searching skills to students. A number of possible exit strategies have been proposed for the project, currently these include a basic maintenance service level agreement for the web site and resources and the commercialisation of the INFORMS software via a Commercial Fellowship at the University of Huddersfield.