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# Jisc Day 1 PODCAST

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Moderator: Welcome to the Jisc Podcast. Today we've been at the ICC in Birmingham for Day 1 of Digifest – our celebration of the power of digital. It's been a successful and busy day that's see the Digifest16# trending nationally on Twitter.

Eric Stoller is an independent education consultant and speaker. Today he ran one of the most popular sessions of the day called 'Why educators can't live without social media'.

Eric Stoller: So, yes, so we're here at Jisc Digifest 2016; and my name is Eric Stoller and I'm a blogger, a writer for Inside Higher Ed.com. I do the student version technology blog and I'm really excited to be presenting this year at Digifest on why educators can't live without social media. A bit of a controversial, possibly hyperbolic title for a session, but the reality is of course that educators can live without social media, however, their practice can be dramatically enhanced by technology, especially by social media. I've been chatting with a lot of educators and academics here already today about how they view social media to enhance their practice and to just work on things like digital literacy and digital capability of their students, employability was mentioned earlier by an academic that I was chatting with and we were just talking about the idea that the more development that students do with their social media profiles and fluency and ability to use the channels for engagement, the easier it is gonna be potentially for them when it comes to finding a career or landing that first job and so yes, again with social media I mean the nice thing about it is you can do so many different things with it from a teaching, learning, literacy capability, employability perspective. There isn't just one thing that it can do.

I think the future of UK Higher Education is really interesting. It's a really fascinating space to be in right now when you've got things like the green paper, you know the Teaching Excellence Framework and you've got people you know, the fact that students are paying more in terms of fees. You've got increased pressures around competition so there's gonna be an interesting inter-play with staff and administrators and students on how they use social media effectively based on their remit. You're gonna see academics possibly engaging in more brand building just be default or by accident with regards to what they're doing with their modules and with social media and getting their students involved and the Institution using that digital outreach as a way to market and promote the sort of effective learning that is happening at the Institution.

So the other piece to that of course is the student experience. Students are very vocal and students are very vocal on-line. They're very vocal via social media channels and Universities have for years now been doing a great job with listening to what students have said. They've been doing a great job of connecting with students and I think we're going to see even more of that with various Institutional representatives connecting with students via these social media platforms as a way to create a student experience that is engagement focussed. That is literally student focussed.

Moderator: Matt Terrell is a co-founder of Call for Participants. We spoke about the Summer of Student Innovation.

Matthew Terrell: So hi my name's Matthew Terrell. I'm from Call for Participants, one of the Student of Summer Innovation entries from 2013 actually. I'm still working with Jisc. I'm also a mentor for the Student Summer of Innovation last year and the year before as well. So what the Student Summer of Innovation is, it's a competition for students and some staff to bring their ideas forward to Jisc to develop new technologies and solutions for education and research and develop these ideas to a point where they can actually then start to be used within Universities. As part of the competition, you know we get some grant funding and some of the projects that have been there year after year are now used nationally. Our company's international, been used by researchers in 340 Universities around the World so it can make a big difference by entering this competition.

Moderator: Sarah Knight is Senior Co-Design Manager in the Student Experience team in the Digital Future's Directorate at Jisc. We spoke about FELTAG.

Sarah Knight: Sarah Knight, Senior Co-Design Manager within Student Experience team, Digital Futures and I was part of a panel session talking about the evolution of FELTAG. FELTAG is a Further Education and Technology Action Group and was set up to support colleges and skills providers in rethinking and re-energising their digital provision. So the focus of the panel session was to discuss where are we FELTAG? What are the current challenges and how can we really support the sector in moving forward with the agenda?

The panel members for this session comprised of Yousef Fouda who is Vice Principal of the Warwickshire College Group, Anna Selway who is the Digital Futures Manager at Highbury College and Jamie Smith, Director of Strategy and Infrastructure at South Staffordshire College and they were able to present their views on how their colleges were addressing the FELTAG agenda. They spoke about the importance of having strategic leadership in support of the digital and in sharing that that leadership was enabling staff to be creative, to be supportive, to take risks and to think about how digital is really enhancing what they are doing rather than just simply replacing what we do face-to-face with on-line delivery.

We had some discussions around the importance of getting the infrastructure right and ensuring that our colleges have effective Wi-Fi provision, robust Wi-Fi provision for their students. Discussions around how by removing printers there were some efficiency savings to be made. Looking at alternatives to current virtual learning environments and discussions around what is the right solution for you in your context, in your college.

There were some discussion and recognition that staff skills were absolutely vital to driving the FELTAG agenda forward and staff did need support in terms of developing their digital capabilities. It was recognised that learners have a role to play in working with staff to develop their digital literacy skills jointly and also can be a driver for change, particularly in relation to thinking about how digital can really enhance their needs, offering them opportunities to make learning more available to them through their mobile devices and offering them opportunities to engage with learning outside of campus, outside of the classroom. So there's a lot of really interesting discussion and debate around those issues. There was a question raised about assessments and how awarding bodies need to become more aware of the power of technology and that is something which we are Jisc are working on to look at ways in which the assessment boards can be more proactive in supporting the use of digital.

Questions were raised as well about sort of, you know, Ofsted, Ofqual and making more provision or making more allowance for the use of digital and those issues were also sort of raised and discussed so a really valuable session I think highlighting how colleges really are making the most from technology and of course from a Jisc perspective, we're really delighted to be working with our partners in pulling together a snapshot of effective practice in FE and skills for the launch today of the Evolution of FELTAG – A Glimpse of Effective Practice guide which is available to download from the Jisc website or to get a copy from the conference. So some exciting things happening and a real emphasis I think on supporting and sharing best practice going forward.

Moderator: Here is Fid Bleasdale from Aquinas College in Stockport sharing her views of the day.

Fid Bleasdale: I'm Fid Bleasdale and I'm from Aquinas 6<sup>th</sup> Floor College in Stockport. Today I am, I've seen a lot of things and I'm going to take a lot away, a lot of questions really that I'm going to take back to share with some of my colleagues particularly around the student experience, student engagement and their voice in developing the digital experience while they're with us. It's also been an opportunity to review FELTAG so I'm going to take that back and just review where we're at with the key elements of the FELTAG recommendations. Networking with people has been fab. I've got 101 things written down that I am going to think about, reflect about and see how they fit in with our vision for the next academic year and going forward a bit further.

Moderator: Robert Haymon-Collins is Jisc's Executive Director of Marketing and Communications.

Robert- Haymon-Collins:

Last week I was able to meet Baroness Lane-Fox of Soho which is possibly the grandest title of anybody, you know, you want to interview that you could have in her offices in Somerset House in London. Not very far from the Jisc offices in Brettenham House and she has launched recently an organisation venture. A kind of concept, a thing called Doteveryone and so in the interview we were able to ask her a bit about that and what stands for and it was; interviews are kind of strange things because sometimes they feel rather stilted but this one felt really quite comfortable and more like a conversation. Doteveryone is really about her vision for public service in the UK becoming properly networked and digitally enabled so that was interesting in its own right but I think some of the things which are even more interesting than that were the whole issues around were the whole issues around gender imbalance in technology which I suppose we all instinctively know and you've only got to look around Jisc itself actually to see how many people who are on the technical side who are male of a certain age and the challenge about getting more women into technology, how you do that and what it means and the kind of tonal change that you might get out of the industry if there's a better gender balance. So that was, for me was a really interesting topic and quite a difficult one to crack.

And I was talking to her about whether was about getting more girls onto kind of STEM subjects you know in A level and what have you and one of the things which I found quite intriguing and quite good was that she said oh no, no it's not STEM. It's STEAM. Let's add arts back into the core subjects. Arts and science as being a core combination which I thought was a really interesting and fresh way of feeling about that so she had a lot; you know not surprising someone who is passionate as she is, you know can talk and talk for England so we got a really good length of time with her and a proper interesting interview and I hope that they will take the opportunity when they can, to see the footage that we've put here around Digifest and I suspect we might make a longer version of it available as well. So that's a good thing and that was good fun and all enjoyable and standing here in Digifest, again it's interesting looking around at just the gender thing, the balance of men and women here. It's a bit better than I suppose in a hard core techy environment but there's still quite a lot of you know, white middle aged men doing their thing but irrespective of your kind of gender or background, I hope that people are gonna take away some really practical things out of Digifest.

If you look on the Digilab area, there's our usual funky robots and stuff which is great fun but there's actually a few things there which are just really practical and you can pick up today and do something with and to make a bit of a change and I hope that people are gonna take that sort of experience away from the whole of the event that if you're in one of our inflatable pods listening to a speaker, you actually take away something that you can do something with back at your college or University tomorrow. If in one of the plenaries you actually might think slightly differently to how you came in, so I think for us it's; Jisc you know course this is kind of our event but it's actually not really, it's not so much about us although inevitably we've got lots of things that people should be using and

using more and making best use of but it's actually about encouraging people to see the technology as a way of delivering something fundamentally different as a key enabler.

It's like the video at the beginning of the day, it's the power for people to do things. It's not the pipes and wires itself, it's actually what it allows you to do which I think is a genuinely exciting thing and I think a lot of people, you know, at this kind of event instinctively know that and I just hope they're able to take away some stuff from these two days which allow them to make that transformation in their own Institution a bit easier and bit more comprehensive across their business.

Moderator:

All the presentations from today are available at [Jisc.ac.uk/Digifest](http://Jisc.ac.uk/Digifest) plus you can tune in live throughout day 2. We'll be back tomorrow for more great conversations and opinions. See you then.

[ENDS]