

## ***Moving a small university into a new age of eLearning. Our aspirations for lecture recording with Panopto.***

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What I'd like to talk about today is what I view as a new era in Learning Technology / 'eLearning' at Chichester. I was actually thinking of entitling this as the 'third age' of eLearning but thought that sounded a little too Tolkien!

So why a new era? Well we launched Moodle about 5 years ago. It was a soft launch with four departments piloting in the first year before going campus wide. Take up was patchy, as you can imagine, and usage even more polarized. But the first age had dawned.

We had Moodle as our VLE, but if we're honest, a glorified file repository. It was used sporadically with huge inconsistency in the quality of online modules.

What I would call the second age was after we added Turnitin to Moodle thus effectively making its use compulsory for lecturers. However, even without TII Moodle usage had been growing steadily, about 30% per year and it was becoming more and more central to the students' life. You hear students talking about Moodle, if you go into our LRC and look at PC screens - if they're not on Facebook then chances are they're on Moodle.

So this was arguably the maturing of our VLE. Student expectations grew and my team gave more and more advanced Moodle training.

But, and forgive me if this sounds contradictory, although we were doing things differently, nothing had *really* changed. I think it's fair to say, a bit like a business "computerizing" we'd become more efficient but there was no significant shift in the way things were done.

So to the topic of today's talk. We're now at the dawn of what I think will be a new era, that 'third age'. Allow me to explain.

We've piloted lecture recording solution Panopto for the last year in two lecture theatres and ten user licences and will be rolling it out campus-wide this year - starting about now actually.

So in relation to this I'd like to cover three main things today...

1. Why we're doing it
2. What the challenges are and have been and most importantly
3. What the benefits are we hope to achieve

I'll then tie it up with why I think this constitutes a new era

## Why

So why are we doing it? Why are we spending a lot of money on Panopto when budgets are tight?

The embryo of this project lay in our music department wanting assessed sessions – flute playing for example – to be observed remotely. Not recorded, just a fly on the wall type camera.

So we bought a couple of 70 quid IP cameras from Amazon and plugged them into our network and gave it a go. But the quality was not nearly good enough so we gave up with that. However, this little exercise had stimulated enough interested and whetted appetites that it got the wider subject of general lecture recording debated.

We knew other Universities were doing it but above all it was something our students increasingly told us they wanted it... I guess to a YouTube generation, *NOT* having lectures recorded almost seems a little odd.

## Challenges

So secondly what were the challenges?

Basically there were two, choosing the right solution and placating those who were against the idea.

Obviously, as with most ventures, there's more than one way to skin a cat. There are, of course, numerous suppliers and solutions which will do lecture recording all with their good and not so good points.

One of the project members had used Echo 360 at her previous institution, we were recommended to look at LiveStream by JISC and our Deputy Dean for Learning and Teaching happened across Panopto at another institution where she was doing some second marking.

So we had a play with all of them and one of our technologists went to events such as Echo 360 and Panopto conferences to get as much information as possible.

Basically we found LiveStream too limited and Echo 360 too complex, and quite expensive. Panopto, on the other hand, seemed perfect. It's a software-only solution thus about 99% hardware agnostic which really appealed to us.

Colleagues at other Universities such as Southampton and University College Cork very generously gave us valuable insights into their use of Panopto and lecture recording generally.

And Panopto has a Moodle plugin! We went with Panopto. It's also a hosted solution we only had to hand over the cheque to get up and running.

Panopto is a doddle to install and easy to use. The company are a joy to deal with and seem to have a clear vision of where they're going and what they're offering. They really seem to understand HE and are developing really useful features. Despite being a small Uni they were really keen to work with us.

That was the easy part.

I'm not a lecturer; never have been. But if I were, would I feel comfortable being recorded? Not being sure where that recording would end up and for how long? Hmm, not sure. Maybe.

What if I stop working at the Uni? Will they still be able to use me in a virtual capacity by replaying recordings of *my* lectures?

What if I make a pig's ear of a lecture? What about MY privacy? What about copyright and intellectual property?

Surely if lectures are being recorded students simply won't turn up? Surely it's much easier to stay at home and watch them any time, after the pub, in their pajamas?

And come on, what possible pedagogic value is there?

So it was 'soft' issues like these which were the biggest challenge. Like all universities we have teaching staff who can't get enough technology and others who'd like to stick with a blackboard and a good old pen and paper. The potential user base could largely be grouped into three categories.

1. Those who wanted or had even asked for it, and really saw (or had experience of) the benefits.
2. Those who had little or no interest but simply accepted that they'd not be compelled to use it and...
3. Those actively against it.

Luckily those against were in the minority, but really quite vocal, even to the extent of threatening Union involvement

The first step in allaying these fears was to state that it was not going to be compulsory. In fact, unlike some other Universities it would be an opt-in rather than an opt-out system.

We distilled it to a single sentence that if you don't want to use it, simply don't press the record button. But of course we had to formalise this.

In a meeting with one of the most vocal opponents I simply got my phone out, pointed it in her direction and said, “you know what? I’m videoing you now”. Of course I wasn’t, and told her so but followed up with, “every student has a video recorder on them now, it’s called a mobile phone. If they want recorded lectures they’ll do it themselves, and then we have no control over it whatsoever. At least if we do it ourselves we can do it properly and police it with the necessary safeguards.

That seemed to have quite an impact...

But I do genuinely sympathise. We worked very hard on a user agreement. Most tutors were satisfied that the recordings would only be available via Moodle thus restricting access and that they could remove the recording at any time.

The User Agreement has to be signed before any Panopto licences are given out. The User Agreement was looked over and amended for free by JISC legal so if you’re going down this path this is something I’d recommend.

So being a small University meant it was relatively painless getting this project up and going - as we’re small it’s relatively easy to get good cross-institution representation and not too laborious or bureaucratic to make decisions.

### *Expected benefits*

What has surprised me is the potential diverse usage of Panopto. The final decision to go campus wide was taken at our Learning and Teaching committee and almost every member of teaching staff said they could use it for something different.

Of course, the main expected benefits are pretty obvious.

If a lecture is a powerful teaching tool then why should it be a one-time-only event? It has value then surely being able to experience it, or parts of it again has got to be a good thing.

If however, the lecture is NOT a powerful teaching tool then Panopto lets us do something about it, pre recording a lecture and using the lecture time differently is the most obvious one but I reckon some of our more inventive teaching staff will probably come up with something else.

Students miss lectures for a number of valid reasons, sickness, personal problems, child care etc. Of course the last thing we want to encourage is non attendance but for valid reasons it’s great. We had a student on one of our business courses who broke a leg and couldn’t come into campus for about six weeks. His lecturer not only records her lectures but actually pre-records them so he actually missed nothing.

We live in a mobile world, why not spend that time on the train or bus re-watching a lecture? 3G, 4G and wi fi are not nearly as ubiquitous as we'd like but most of us can get online in most places.

Chichester doesn't have a particularly high proportion of international students but for those whose first language isn't English, again, being able to re-visit lectures is hugely beneficial.

Those then are some of the most immediate and obvious benefits. But the more ambitious tutors will be able to 'flip' the classroom. I was stunned when one of our lecturers told me he thought his large lectures were a complete waste of time. He'd much prefer to pre-record a lecture for students to watch in advance and then spend that time in-class for discussion and engaging activities. Well, we can do that now.

We may live in a digital world, or even post-digital but time and time again students complain of the lack of contact time. Well, by pre-recording lectures and turning lecture time into seminar time we can do that.

Then of course there are less obvious, more peripheral benefits. Panopto can do live streaming so events such as our annual Learning and Teaching Conference no longer have to be restricted to those who can physically make it to Chichester

University open days. OK if you're are checking out a University you really do want to go there to really see what it's like. But what if you want to come to Chichester, or Brighton, or Sussex for that matter and you happen to live north of Aberdeen that's a long way. Delivering open days online will now be possible.

Our own learning as a University. We're not yet offering a MOOC, and there's little to indicate we will in the near future. However, we may take baby-steps with a CHOOC - Chichester Online Open Course. I'm sure what we experience from Panopto will be valuable learning when we start to deliver online courses.

Will it inject our VLE with steroids? I attended a talk at the HEA Conference entitled "Is the VLE dead?". Well no it's not dead but nothing has an infinite life and adding lecture recording may well extend the lifespan of our VLE

Of course what we're predominantly aiming to do is help achieve one the central aims of our Learning and Teaching Strategy that 'every student shall have an outstanding learning experience'

We shall be keeping a close eye on how things go over the next year. One tutor using Panopto for one module has already done a questionnaire after semester one.

88% of her students watch one or more of the recording.  
50% said they were 'very useful'

Some comments include:

It is very helpful, especially when I struggling in assignment.

Very useful as I could play them whilst doing the assignment so all the information was fresh in my mind.

Very useful, should be done in more modules.

## **Conclusion**

So why am I talking about this as a new era? Well we now have something which I believe really will fundamentally change the way we teach at Chichester. While Panopto is, of course, a separate product, as it integrates with Moodle we're using this as a lever. There are posters around campus now, for example, stating 'Lecture recording now available in Moodle'. We're hoping this will make it seem more evolution than revolution and thus scare fewer people off.

Not only is it a big change for us right now, I also believe it lays the foundations for the future. I believe it is a catalyst for change.

We're didn't get a call from FutureLearn asking us to partake in MOOCs and I don't think we ever will. I do think MOOCS will morph into something very different in the next few years and I think when we offer online modules, as complementary to existing teaching or fully distance learning, we'll look back to the day we bought Panopto as the start of it.

So I hope you'll forgive me that much of this talk has been speculative. I certainly hope I can stand here in twelve months and give you some hard facts and interesting anecdotes about the way it's gone.

Thank you.