

## CITSCAPES Awayday: eDissemination

Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> February, 2.00 - 5.00 p.m.

ICT Training Room PKLC 121, Park Campus, University of Gloucestershire

In response to the submission of the final report for Phase I of the CITSCAPES Project, we were advised by JCALT to regard the project website as our primary means of dissemination. This is a recent innovation from JISC (are we the first to whom this has been said?), and thus it's important, not only that we succeed in making the website a vehicle for dissemination, but also that we do it well enough to offer something of a model to others. We are therefore holding a half-day awayday (if that's not a contradiction) to focus on this task. All members of the Advisory Committee, and our Associate Advisers, are invited to attend. We have timed the meeting so that those who are attending the Advisory Committee meeting the next day may be able to attend this event by coming a little earlier.

A number of issues are raised by the identification of a website as a primary dissemination tool. The fundamental goal of dissemination is impact: to bring about change, in awareness or attitudes or practice. To do that we must engage with the whole HE and FE sectors, and this means that appropriate people in those sectors must become *involved* with the website: they know that it's there, they visit it as necessary, some frequently, others less so, they use what's there, they occasionally make input to it, and they regard it as a normal and permanent part of the resource available to the sector. Our challenge is to achieve that situation, and to get there we need to address some questions from the users' point of view:

- i. **Value:** how do we ensure that what they get from the site is valuable to them? The killer question; if there's stuff there that's useful, users will come back to it and will tell others about it. This means asking how useful our products are, and how we would expect users to use them in order to get best value out of them.
- ii. **Appropriateness:** are we ensuring that we're offering our products in ways that make the best use of the medium, i.e. using what the web can do that other media can't.
- iii. **Awareness:** how do we ensure that people know about CITSCAPES and its website? If people don't know about the site they won't use it. We can't rely on word-of-mouth. How we launch (or relaunch) the site is important here.
- iv. **Access:** how do we make sure that people can get there easily? One way is for users to put it on their favourites list; another is to see that it can be accessed from other key sites.
- v. **Robustness:** how do we ensure that it works when they get to it? That means that everything on it looks and functions as it should, on all reasonable browsers.
- vi. **Style:** how do we ensure that users remember a visit to the CITSCAPES site as an *experience*. Wow!
- vii. **Persistence:** how do we (or JISC) ensure that the site continues to be available, and to develop along with the sector.
- viii. **Impact:** how do we know what users think of the site and how they use it, and how do we respond to that information.

Our treatment of these issues will not only enable successful development of the project website, but will also contribute to the feedback and perhaps advice which we can offer JISC on the use of websites as a dissemination strategy.

The awayday will be run by Allan Martin and Lyn Oates, and will take the following form:

- 1.30 - 2.00 Tea/coffee available (not to be taken into the ICT Training Room)
- 2.00 - 2.05 Welcome
- 2.05 - 2.20 Review of the issues
- 2.20 - 3.10 Viewing of selected websites: the idea here is to look at websites which any of us think address some or all of the issues well
- 3.10 - 3.30 Refreshments
- 3.30 - 4.30 Brainstorming discussion on how CITSCAPES can address each issue.
- 4.30 - 5.00 Specification of goals for website development, and draft timescale.

This is a crucial issue for the Project, and also a great opportunity, and therefore as much input as we can get is welcome. If you can come, let me know by email at: [iteu@gla.ac.uk](mailto:iteu@gla.ac.uk)

Whether you come or not, have a good look at the website (<http://www.citscapes.ac.uk>) and think about the issues listed above. We think the site already has many good features, and many people have put a lot of work into designing, building and maintaining it. So the meeting is not about making a bad site good, it's about making a good site *outstanding*, as both an Internet object, and as an essential resource for the FE and HE sectors (and tomorrow, the world).

If you can't come, but have something you'd like to put into the discussion, or a website you recommend that we look at either before or during the meeting, email Lyn at: [loates@glos.ac.uk](mailto:loates@glos.ac.uk) (note the new email address).

If you are coming to the awayday and the Committee meeting, hotel accommodation can be arranged for the night of the 6<sup>th</sup> by CITSCAPES. However, we cannot guarantee ongoing availability of convenient accommodation, so if you are coming, and need accommodation, let me know as soon as possible.

Allan Martin  
17 January 2002