



The Pirate BBC Essex Radio ship to commemorate Radio Caroline in April 2004 - Ultralab helped with live SMS text messaging and web-cams on the website as they were broadcasting. Jonathan Furness jonathan@ultralab.net

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2005

A year full of surprises, new challenges and continuing growth. Prof Stephen Heppell moves on to take on greater challenges and thus steps down as director, but remains in close contact. Ultralab wishes him the best for all his new endeavours and looks forward to close collaboration as he retains an advisory and steering remit. Richard Millwood takes on the Acting Director role and finds an Ultralab which needs only a light touch, just continuing support and advice. The team is mature, with capable project leaders, many of whom have been spreading their wings this year and developing confidence to strengthen Ultralab's reputation. The number of new projects are so prolific that to list all our activities continues to defy our best efforts to describe. In spite of all this evolution, established activities in Digital Creativity, Assessment and Widening Access through Online Learning continue robustly on the large scale. In this way, Ultronauts inspire confidence in Ultralab's capacity to deliver real results for real people in real time.

Richard Millwood richard@ultralab.net www.ultralab.net

DIGITAL CREATIVITY

INTERNATIONAL CERTIFICATE OF DIGITAL CREATIVITY

ICDC is a new qualification which accredits creative work made using digital technologies. This can be movies, animations, music, installations, interactive web sites, games and many more. It recognises and accredits success in this area by looking at fusion in the work of the learners. Kris Popat kris@ultralab.net & Malcolm Moss malcolm@ultralab.net www.i-cert.net

SUMMERSCHOOL DVD The 2004 Ultralab DVD production contains creative work from all over the globe, including Australia and New Zealand. Our friends from the Ministry of Education in Singapore contributed examples of creativity from their annual awards programme. We've got so much stuff this year the DVD set is a double layer, double disc set and as ever the children have surprised us with what they have achieved! Matthew Eaves matt@ultralab.net www.ultralab.net/summerschool

YSGOL HAF CAERDYDD (Summer School Cardiff) 2004 - *Profiad byth-gofiadwy oedd gweithio gyda disgyblion o bob cwr o Gaerdydd-cynhyrchwyd clipiau fideo digidol diddorol, yn adlewyrchu agweddau gwahanol o fywyd dros 24 awr ym mywyd y Brifddinas.* During the latter part of the 2004 summer term, ULTRALAB worked with a wide cross-section of Cardiff schools, both primary and secondary, who in turn produced DVD clips that represented life in and around Cardiff over a 24 hour period-with some other languages added to the commentary for good measure! Geraint Lang geraint@ultralab.net

CREATE AT BETT - Each year Ultralab, Apple Computer, Solutions, Film Education, Media Education Wales and South Street Productions come together to run the 'Create at BETT' stand at the BETT show in Olympia. This year Ultralab will be bringing young people from the RNF Heppell project and the SEEVEAZ SummerSchool to demonstrate creativity to the 22,000 visitors.

Maureen Gurr maureen@ultralab.net Matthew Eaves matt@ultralab.net Visit: www.bettshow.co.uk

SINGAPORE INTERNATIONAL DVD - Ultralab is liaising with four schools in England & Wales and the Technologies for Learning branch of the Singapore Ministry of Education. Together with schools in Singapore and NZ, USA and Apple Computers they will be producing an educational DVD. Each school will produce customized multi-media learning resources including teaching notes and showcasing students' work. Malcolm Moss malcolm@ultralab.net

AYR COLLEGE SUMMERSCHOOL - 32 schoolchildren from East and South Ayrshire joined Ultralab at the College where Ultronauts set a challenging creative goal. Ayr College staff

helped the youngsters enjoy the experience and a final showcase of work was held in the cinema on Ayr campus at the University of Paisley. Hamish Scott-Brown hamish@ultralab.net www.ultralab.tv/ayr/

ULTRALAB.TV

Ultralab.tv has been on television, created television and transformed television since 1990 and this project represents our growing involvement with digital video, streaming technology and new media. With more and more projects now crossing over and sharing DV as a successful medium, during 2005, Ultralab.tv will grow to encompass this diversity. Richard Millwood richard@ultralab.net & Hamish Scott-Brown hamish@ultralab.net www.ultralab.tv

WIDENING ACCESS TO LEARNING

ULTRAVERSITY - Ultraversity is a radical approach to online learning at undergraduate level offering a BA (Hons) Learning, Technology, Research and validated by Anglia Polytechnic University. It is intended for those who are in full time work but this includes those with full time family responsibilities. Central to the degree are a series of varied action research projects encouraging critical reflection on work practice. Stephen Powell stephenp@ultralab.net, Lesley McGuire lesley@ultralab.net & Tim Williams tim@ultralab.net www.ultraversity.net

NOTSCHOOL.NET - is an on-line learning community of young people who have been excluded from traditional education. It includes sick, terminally ill, phobic, disaffected, pregnant, traumatised, formally excluded teenagers and travelling families, in fact all those who do not fit or who are unable to attend school. The on-line community was established in 2000 and is now in its fifth year, providing a substantial research base. Jean Johnson jean@ultralab.net www.noteschool.net

POSTGRADUATE DEGREES - Ultralab offers a range of online modules at Masters level, for teachers and others engaged in ongoing professional learning based in APU's Faculty of Education scheme. Our stance is an action enquiry one, with the emphasis on the use of technology in learning. Students may gain a postgraduate certificate (60 credits), diploma (120 credits) or, with a final dissertation an MA in Education. Pete Bradshaw pete@ultralab.net learning.ultralab.net

RURAL NORFOLK PROJECT - The Rural Norfolk Federation and Ultralab have been working on ways to bring rural schools in Norfolk together online, using the latest learning community software to make distance no object. Children bond through the creation of film and exploring animation. Matthew Eaves matt@ultralab.net

NARRATIVE-BASED LEARNING - A QuickTime-based multiple-text-tracked development to deliver immersive, interactive narrative for specific learning objectives - from GCSE level French and German to Masters level in Health Care Practice for APU. Alice Mitchell alice@ultralab.net

HEALTH

We have been involved with the health sector since 1996 when we set up Chestnet - an innovative online learning community and supporting website - for the British Thoracic Society. Since then we have worked as consultants and on numerous short term projects with partners such as the World Health Organisation, Whipps Cross Hospital, Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust, the European Respiratory Service and the Eastern Deanery to name but a few. Sarah Jones sarah@ultralab.net

NEW SPACES FOR LEARNING

DESIGN COUNCIL ONLINE METRIC - Ultralab set up an online questionnaire allowing children to evaluate the design aspects of their school and be more involved with the process leading up to procurement or refurbishment. The website enables teachers to ask questions about the impact of certain school issues and give the children ample opportunity to feed back about what is good and what needs changing. The launch date for the website is set for March 2005. Hal MacLean hal@ultralab.net www.designmyschool.net

DISTRIBUTED SCHOOL - a rather radical approach to bringing the learning back to the centre of remote and distant communities. This is a school which is built across several sites in remote parts of the country. When village schools close, not only is the identity of the village 'lost' but pupils find themselves travelling 10 or so miles to the next big school. Imagine a curriculum where the children are firmly located at the centre rather than as consumers; where children are given an opportunity to be responsible for their own learning. If schools are really going to succeed in the next 10 or 20 years, we really do need to put children at the heart of our schools. Jonathan Furness jonathan@ultralab.net barney.ultralab.net/distributed_school

STEPPING STONES SCHOOL - Following on from our work with the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment to research and explore the future of learning environments, Ultralab are working closely with Stepping Stones, a school for children with Hemiplegia, to create a delightful and engaging learning environment. Ultralab's aim is to ensure teaching and learning can take place where there are no boundaries to success and where children's ambitions are limitless. And all this, situated in a converted chapel! Mark Constable mark@ultralab.net & Jonathan Furness jonathan@ultralab.net

COLBAYNS MEDIA ARTS COLLEGE - Ultralab is working closely with our friends at Colbayns High School in Clacton. The school is applying for Media Arts status and together we're working on ground breaking ideas to make Colbayns the very best Media Arts college in the country. Watch this space!
Matthew Eaves matt@ultralab.net

KEGS JUNIOR ULTRALAB - We are continuing to invite sixth formers from King Edward VI Grammar School in Chelmsford to work with us and develop new ideas whilst exposing them to teamwork and open source development. Richard Millwood richard@ultralab.net

NEW CURRICULUM

Design and Technology for the 21st Century - Technology + Ingenuity is a new approach to Design and Technology at both GCSE level and A level, offering a 'connate solution' to the Tomlinson recommendations. Totally e-assessed, this includes, among other features, formative assessment, online community and peer review and innovates by addressing the needs of all stakeholders in a systemic manner, hence the term 'connate'.
Colin Eisey coline@ultralab.net Malcolm Moss malcolm@ultralab.net

ASSESSMENT

COGS - a new look at online pupil assessment. Working in conjunction with Edunova Ltd, Unity City Academy and Africa Bookcase, Ultralab are helping to design and build a 'Learner Passport' for use by year 6 children in Middlesbrough as they move into year 7 and beyond. Innovative web based tools allow students to create their own personalised online identity and then, using an innovative interactive graphical interface, assess their performance on the "COGS" framework covering skills such as creativity, teamwork and leadership. Tom Stacey tom@ultralab.net www.cogspassport.net

eVIVA - our innovative e-assessment project involving the use of mobile phone and VXML technology came to a very successful conclusion in July this year. The project, funded by QCA, specifically addressed the online assessment of ICT at Key Stage 3 and involved the development of an online assessment tool that would allow both formative and summative assessment of pupils' work, as well as facilitating constructive dialogue between pupils and teachers. The final paper reporting back on eVIVA can be downloaded from www.eviva.tv or from slartibartfast.ultralab.net/lesley/blog/
Lesley McGuire lesley@ultralab.net

NEW VISIONS OF ONLINE LEARNING

EXECUTIVE LEARNING PROJECT - This Oracle supported project explores the influence of technology on pedagogy within executive learning. Representatives of leading business schools from MIT (Boston), IESE(Barcelona), INSEAD (Paris), EM LYON (Lyon), NYERNODE (Holland), CRANFIELD UNIVERSITY(England), JUDGE INSTITUTE (Cambridge, England) and ESMT (Berlin) have begun an in-depth exploration of issues in this area by engaging through an online community hosted and facilitated by ULTRALAB. Martin Doherty martin@ultralab.net www.execlearning.net

Heads Together - Learning Teaching Scotland and Ultralab set up this innovative online community for Scottish Headteachers. It provides a safe, private space for Heads to discuss professional matters with colleagues. It is now on offer to all Scottish Headteachers and has members from all 32 Local Authorities.
Kevin Thompson kevin@ultralab.net

PAGE 2 STAGE - a collaboration with WebPlay and Soda to facilitate online work between theatre companies and schools begins this year. Alison Gee alison@ultralab.net

PEN-I-BEN - Ultralab worked with the Welsh Assembly Government to establish and develop this online community for newly appointed headteachers and their mentors. Building upon the successful experiences of Ultralab's Talking Heads project, this also provided a unique opportunity for Ultralab to use the Welsh language in the community. Geraint Lang geraint@ultralab.net

PANDORA - a collaborative website for internal use at APU. Its aim is promoting collegiality between people from different discipline areas across the University who all have a common interest - encouraging learning through effective use of Information and Communications Technology.
Alice Mitchell alice@ultralab.net & Graham Hart graham@ultralab.net

ULTRABLOGS - Ultralab have been exploring the potential of blogs as methods for sharing information and internal communication. The new Ultralab website will be RSS integrated to enable and encourage knowledge sharing.
www.ultralab.net

POLICY AND ORGANISATIONS

E-DEMOCRACY - exploring how young people might engage in political issues through the use of text messaging in response to questions on local issues, to a large video screen in the town square. This is followed by an event where a panel representing young people, the council and the local

issues raised with the aim of increasing confidence and understanding between all parties. Leonie Ramondt
leonie@ultralab.net

ITTE and TTA - Ultralab is engaged with the ITTE community as a whole and with TTA in particular to look at ways of further developing the ICT aspects of initial teacher training and the training of the wider school workforce. We continue to research the impact of our Ultraversity and other developments for the TTA and look at ways of providing progression to QTS for Ultraversity graduates. Pete Bradshaw pete@ultralab.net

SODIUM - Ultralab works closely with Sodium, a transformation design company. Sodium work with clients to foster creativity and change in their businesses through learning and communications technology. Sodium helps individuals, teams and organisations release and nurture their own abilities to evolve, create and transform themselves.
info@sodium.co.uk www.sodium.co.uk

NAACE - the subject association for ICT and ILT is working with Ultralab on the 'Beyond School' working group of the association. The remit of this group is to develop a community within NAACE for those working beyond school.
Pete Bradshaw pete@ultralab.net

CULTURE

EVERY OBJECT TELLS A STORY - a user-driven, contributory website to help people recognise, understand and engage in the personal meanings and narratives that exist around and within objects. Users will be able to capture stories and objects in a range of online media including video, audio, text and pictures. The project will encourage and enable large numbers of people from varied backgrounds to explore the creative potential of using online technology for storytelling, inspired by either museum or personal objects.
Carole Chapman carole@ultralab.net www.everyobject.net

THE CULTURE OF TOOLS AND OUR HIDDEN

CURRICULUM - Dr. Stan Owers has been researching "The place and perception of technology in the curriculum". As part of the research programme, a number of research exercises were conducted including a survey of A-level students. Some 3100 students completed a 3-page questionnaire that was machine read producing data for statistical analysis; there are more than 80 graphs. Appendix 7 provides a summary including findings such as: Students not taking Maths find it uninteresting with a median of 2 on a 1 to 9 scale, both those who take Maths and those who do not, consider Maths important for getting a job; they both rated it a median of 8 on a 1 to 9 scale. There are many other findings that are interesting as well as serious causes for concern. Stan Owers stan@ultralab.net
www.ultralab.net/tools

CELTIC CONNECTIONS - established by Ultralab as a response to an identified need to set up a specific online community and to see whether such a joining of Celtic educators would provide foundation for establishing a collaborative dialogue between Gaelic-speaking Scottish educators and their Welsh-speaking counterparts. That need was identified at the A'Chuisle conference in Inverness by the Pen-i-Ben facilitation Team and a pilot group was set up in March 2004. Michael Hartley michael@ultralab.net & Geraint Lang geraint@ultralab.net

NEW & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

m-LEARNING - used mobile technologies to address the poor literacy and numeracy of disadvantaged young adults, who are perhaps unemployed, outside of formal education and who lack access to computers but do use a mobile phone. Ultralab developed m-portal, a system that affords learners access to mentors and to other learners and gives them tools to use and resources to explore. Alice Mitchell alice@ultralab.net www.m-learning.org

NOTRADIO.TV - is being developed within the Notschool.net project. It is a system which expands and enhances the authoring experience of standard internet radio and video streaming systems. Users can upload their media clips to the system for streaming and use the tools that notradio and notthebox supply to build and schedule programmes. It maintains a number of virtual channels each with its own schedule.
Kris Popat kris@ultralab.net www.notradio.tv

ETUI - a project we completed several years ago to develop a toy for 4-8 years old to encourage self-reflection, looks like re-emerging as a commercial exploitation project this year. Weiya Wang weiya@ultralab.net

ULTRASMS - UltraSMS is a free utility for sending and receiving mobile phone SMS messages to and from a MySQL database on Linux, Unix, Mac OS X etc. UltraSMS was created as an inexpensive solution for SMS enabling web (or other) applications as easily as possible for the developer. Tim Ellis tim@ultralab.net www.ultrasms.co.uk

UTXT2 - is exploring services that can be provided via SMS/MMS to send comments/messages to a server for presentation to others as stickies or small frames which are colour coded and fade their colours from a bright yellow to gray depending on how long they have been displayed. James Kadirire james@ultralab.net www.utxt2.com

