Poster presentation

Pilot study to review use of WebCT in taught units

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The University of Western Sydney has a high level of use of the e-learning system, WebCT, with more than 1100 staff and 33,000 students accessing more than 2,300 sites. Within the University, there was a perception that the e-learning system was largely used by staff to provide learning materials and resources to students. To investigate this further, a pilot study was set up to examine the range of flexible learning approaches used in WebCT across a sample of undergraduate and postgraduate sites.

The pilot study reviewed 100 of the 700 taught unit sites in WebCT from Spring Semester, 2005, and checked for types of usage in these sites. A framework was developed to examine the 100 sites and record the diversity of ways in which WebCT was being used. The framework focused on the key areas of Content, Communication, Assessment and Explicit Learner Support.

The results show that academics are using WebCT for a range of purposes, with a particularly specific focus on explicit learner support. These results have helped de-bunk the myth that academics are only using WebCT to put up content, such as lecture notes. The study has provided results that need to be examined in more detail and in a larger study.

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