Background to the case study

Rev Dr James Robson was the first tutor in Wycliffe Hall to investigate and experiment with the use of WebLearn for tutoring and supporting his students in their learning and formation. His aim in building his WebLearn site was to provide a clear, useful and easily navigable site relating to his involvement with students and his passion for their learning and growth.

James’s students sign up for tutorial sessions using the WebLearn signup tool, which is also enabled via the mobile platform, m.ox. The mobile icon in the sign-up tool provides the QR 2-dimensional bar code for students to scan during a lecture and go straight to the relevant WebLearn page to sign up for tutorial sessions.

James has made many enrichment resources available, with links built into the Home page for ease of navigation. Amongst this collection of rich resources are recorded Sunday sermons which are available as podcasts. James uses the group functionality to partition the Wycliffe students into the groups and papers that he teaches.

James summarises his use of WebLearn:

“I carefully designed the site so that everything is no more than three clicks away; no page is too cluttered with text; the links between layers are logical and hierarchical, yet interlinked; navigation is easy and intuitive. The outcome is that generally the WebLearn area is very successful. Beyond my own use, I’ve had 1140 visits, with 5000 instances of activity, and 87% of the 191 posted files were accessed by students.”

“Anecdotally, I’ve had many positive comments from students using the site”

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James’s WebLearn site makes effective use of several tools:

**Announcements tool:**
Customised announcements are posted in the site and also sent as emails to alert particular groups to relevant resources.

**Assignments tool:**
Students submit their essays electronically. They receive a digital receipt to acknowledge their submission and WebLearn keeps a record of who has submitted their essay, including the date and time of submission. James can assign marks and overall comments, which are seen only by the student concerned.

**Resources tool:**
This tool provides course information and makes available all kinds of resources that James has developed and written, including reading lists and audio recordings of sermons.

**Web Content tool:**
Links to relevant sites are provided, for further information and research, or enrichment. There are many existing learning resources that are freely available (e.g., podcasts, and many open educational resources) that can be incorporated into a WebLearn site. Tutors can even ask students to contribute to building a rich collection of relevant materials.

**Sign-up tool:**
James sets up tutorial times in advance, for the whole term and students can select which session they wish to attend and sign up electronically. This is much more efficient than having to contact students individually to find out which time slots are convenient for them. Students can cancel their booking while the signup period is still open, and other students on the waiting list can then sign up for the available slot.

**Surveys tool:**
WebLearn offers a survey tools which enables tutors to design and deliver course evaluation surveys to obtain feedback from students. Two comments received from James’s student feedback survey were:
- Encourage other staff to follow your example!
- One of the few to embrace the technology and make it a useful resource!