

Building a digital workplace: a whole organisation approach

Piloting the digital capability discovery tool:

Coleg y Cymoedd

Taking part in the pilot of the **digital capabilities discovery tool** (<http://bit.ly/digcapdiscovery>) aligns well with the broader vision and activities to build a digital workplace at **Coleg y Cymoedd** (cymoedd.ac.uk). A new digital vision has been launched that is based on a business model encompassing all aspects of the organisation including the culture and values, teaching and learning, the use of learning and data analytics, how the organisation invests in technology, what the college wants to achieve as a business and what the college wants learners to achieve beyond their learning experience in terms of digital capability, digital citizenship and transferable skills.

What does a digital university or college look like?

Taking a step back and asking 'what does a digital university or college look like?' has raised awareness of the need to assess the digital needs and potential of the organisation as a whole rather than rely on pockets of effective practice spreading organically. Developing staff digital capabilities is essential to the success of the digital vision and a strategic approach is required to overcome common challenges such as competing pressures on staff time, a limited number of dedicated staff training days each year, logistical and geographical considerations for a multi-campus college and a small dedicated team of eLearning staff (2).

The aim of participating in the pilot was to ascertain an initial benchmark of how digitally capable staff felt they were and to use the information to inform training and support options. The college was also keen for staff to be empowered to identify and action their own continuous professional development (CPD) needs.

Hitting the ground running

The outputs and resources from the **building digital capability** (<http://ji.sc/building-digicap>) co-design challenge means that Coleg y Cymoedd is benefitting from a nationally resourced and informed project, enabling the learning technology team to 'hit the ground running'.



"I found the discovery tool really well put together, it is clear and concise and arguably has more traction and weight having been developed by an external organisation. It would have taken weeks or months to engage staff with something similar had it been devised in-house."

Richard Fullylove, strategic ILT manager / rheolwr TDG strategol, Coleg y Cymoedd

Pilot approaches

The piloting of the digital capabilities discovery tool sits alongside other related initiatives such as the launch of the new digital vision, a digital festival held in December 2016, engagement with students via a learner digital tracker based upon the **student digital experience tracker** (<http://ji.sc/student-tracker>) and other CPD activities. Work specifically to engage participants to pilot the discovery tool included:

- » Formally tabling the initiative with senior leaders and college management to raise awareness and get active support in promoting the tool and its relevance to their faculties, departments, and teams
- » Using all available communication channels to promote the initiative to all staff (weekly email reminders, Staff Life blog posts, tweets etc)

- » Creation of a dedicated Jisc digital toolkit SharePoint site using a blog format with regular posts giving relevant details, signposting resources and offering tips
- » Design of an infographic campaign poster and a flyer highlighting digital capabilities as one area to address as part of the requirement to engage in 30 hours of CPD and how this could be achieved
- » Drop-in workshops (one held on each of the four campuses) held during the lunch hour with support available from the two members of the learning technology team
- » Making use of all available channels and existing meeting structures where technology may be involved and can support other priorities extended the reach of the learning technology team and secured additional buy-in (eg groups engaged in college management, and teaching and learning mentors)
- » Drop-in workshops were not hugely well attended. In the future it may be better to run drop-in sessions during other staff CPD activities and ensure participation is recorded on individual staff CPD records

Outcomes

All staff were encouraged to participate in the pilot. 199 participants engaged with the discovery tool, 146 of these identified themselves as staff and 37 identified as managers or senior managers.

Working alongside the senior managers and college leaders proved a successful way of ensuring the significance of addressing staff digital capabilities was recognised as an integral aspect of functioning effectively as an educational business.

The pilot and the data it has generated will be used to establish a benchmark level of digital capability and identify areas for further development.

Key lessons learned

- » Ensuring the senior leadership team were fully informed about the initiative and understood the importance of building staff digital capability was critical. The championing and strategic leverage this afforded helped to engage teams and individuals. Close working relationships with the human resources 'learning and development' team was also critical
- » Exploring whether those who used the discovery tool took forward any of the self-development guidance and resources suggested in response to their answers into their professional development review plans and any impact it has had. This would have to be on a voluntary basis but could yield useful additional insight
- » Changing expectations about what training is and looking at how best to encourage both staff and students to engage with technology through self-study. One approach would be to look at different **digital capability role profiles** (<http://ji.sc/Digi-cap-different-roles>) produced by Jisc and identify what online training and resources could be used to support self-directed development

Next steps

The data from the pilot is currently being analysed but Coleg y Cymoedd intend to build on the benchmark data obtained from this cycle and take part in the piloting the next iteration of the discovery tool.

Other actions currently being considered as a result of the outcomes, interest and engagement the pilot achieved include:

- » Using the data to curate a cohesive set of online resources to encourage self-development. This could include repurposing and increasing use of existing resources such as the Microsoft Educator Community and developing new easy-to-access resources using visual approaches such as infographics, How2s, and recipe cards to address gaps in provision
- » Following up informal discussions with colleagues who took part in the pilot on the probability of embedding digital capabilities within the college Leadership Academy programme
- » Embedding digital capability development in staff induction processes

Find out more:

Richard Fullylove from Coleg y Cymoedd gave a presentation at the inaugural launch of the Jisc Digital Capabilities Community event in May 2017. Our digital capabilities blog includes a **summary of the event** (<http://ji.sc/community-of-practice>) and links to a downloadable copy of Richard's presentation together with a Periscope recording of the presentation itself.



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