Building digital capability service support webinar

Wednesday 24 February 2021

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# Transcript

**SPEAKERS**

GS, JC, LG

**LG**

Welcome everyone who is joining us this morning. And so this is a building digital capability service support webinar. And if you haven't attended one before, this is one of a series, we cover a range of topics, or use of every tool and service in general. So it's an informal session, please do use the chat and your microphones as much as you can.

The session is twofold today, we are really pleased that we have two colleagues who are going to be sharing their experiences of implementing the discovery in two quite different contexts. And the second part of the session will focus on us introducing some enhancements to the way that we that we operate our community, we are just developing a new Teams community site. And I'd love to get your thoughts and views on that. But firstly, we will get started. And I'm going to hand over to James Cale, Director of Digital Services at the University of Wales Trinity St David is going to share their experiences or implementing a discovery tool. And we'll be able to pick up questions after James's session. So if you want to just pop any questions into the chat, we'll pick those up at the end. And then we'll have an opportunity to do the same once. And we've heard from Gunter as well. So on that note, I shall hand over to James.

**JC**

Good morning, pleased to be here, I'm going to share a brief presentation with you just to go through our experience of the digital capability service. And as Lisa mentioned, there'll be an opportunity for questions at the end. But I'm more than happy that if you do have a question you use the chat, interrupt me if you want, I'm more than happy to kind of pick up on queries as and when. So hopefully, I'll be able to share the presentation with you now.

Okay. Hopefully, you can all see that. If there's any issues, please let us know. So I'm going to talk around our experience here. And I'll give a bit of background to both myself and the university. I have no doubt that some of you are asking, “Who are UWTSD?” and so I'll give you some context to that as part of the discussion as well. So, the university itself has an interesting history and our actual royal charter for Lampeter goes back to 1822. So one of the oldest in the in the country. In 2011. The Trinity St. Davids University was formed after a merger between Trinity College and Lampeter University in 2013. There was a further merger between the then TSD and Swansea Metropolitan University, which then form the UWTSD, as it is now. And in 2017. We weren't done with mergers. So we then merged with the University of Wales as part of our part of our group. The UWTSD group itself is actually wider than the stats on the screen now, because we also have as part of a group structure to two FE colleges, Coleg Sir Gar and Coleg Ceredigion. And so the actual numbers there, we're talking around 25,000 students if you include the fee, but for this presentation, I've just put up the stats there that we have around 12,000 students FTE in the last turn about 1500 staff. And we also have multiple campuses. So we have four campuses in Wales. And then we also have our Birmingham and London campuses as well. So, a little brief kind of background to my role.

I'm currently Director of Digital Services I was appointed in May of 2020. Not that long ago but seems a few years to me now. And I started out working for what was then UWIC, which is now Cardiff Met as an IT support technician and worked my way through the ranks then left after in 2010. After being there for nine years, and then I became director of new technologies at Cardiff High School. And then I came to what was then TSD in 2011 as part of the merger process of a new structure. And then since 2012 I was the Executive Head of IT and Systems before taking on the current role. And last year, as I noted, so very much education focused from HE and also from the years spent in Cardiff High School as well.

So as part of the presentation, I'm going to take you back to what seems a long time ago, but was a year ago, and looking at the institution of where we were. So where we were this time last year was in my previous role at IT&S, were looking at working with my colleagues in the Library and Learning Resources, and Technology Enhanced Learning Intel team, looking at an overarching digital strategy we identified we didn't have a digital strategy. And we wanted to look at developing one that overarching existing strategies that we had as individual units and look to put that in place for the 2021 academic year. And at that point, as you noticed, we had multiple campuses. So we already had systems such as dial access setup, in order to facilitate flexible access to services for staff and students, we had a headache in relation to the multiple campuses, but it meant that we had a very good system in place for remote access in relation to making sure and maintaining experience for learners and staff, whichever campus they were on, we had pockets of good learning around the institution mainly focused on distance learners, and the provision there. And so we did have some good, blended learning approaches already. Skype for Business was our main collaboration tool. And we also moved around 50% of our staff on to the Skype for Business telephony this time last year. And as part of a Swansea campus move where we consolidated two campuses to a new SA1 location, we'd actually made a decision for the default device for staff to be a mobile setup, which will be a laptop and docking station and hot desking in our Swansea campuses, and a move away from desktops. The other thing that this time last year, we just completed two- or three-months proof of concept for Microsoft Teams, we were somewhat slow in moving to Teams. But we've done a proof of concept with a number of users internally around some departments testing it as a collaboration tool. And we thought this had potential, but how do we implement it within the university?

We had some basic IT training. So we had some bespoke requests for training and face to face sessions. We ran various training dependent on demand for staff. But over the years, that kind of investment in the actual resources that had actually died down somewhat. And that was something that we were looking to pick up in relation to the digital strategy. And we also had info skills training for students, which was in place through our library and learning resources. So our actual digital skills element and training was much more enhanced for students than it was for staff.

So then obviously, as we're all aware, the global pandemic hit, and things took a significant change for us and everyone. So the initial reaction that we had with regards to the pandemic, Well, the first thing was that given the set of multiple campuses, the actual shift around February to May time was relatively painless, the infrastructure that we had, digital infrastructure facilitated such a move. So we were able to quickly enable staff to work from home, we were able to run up VPN setups, and our infrastructure, particularly our network infrastructure was very much designed on resilience and utilising a multiple campus setup. And so that worked really well for us. In late February, early March, we made a call, a bold call at the time, but looking back, it was probably the best call that we made in relation to suggesting to senior management that in order to plan for anything that might be happening in relation to lockdowns, we needed to move across the teams. And we needed to do it in a big bang approach. We couldn't do a normal approach to this, we wanted to get buy-in that we would move lock stock across as a collaboration tool. And so we did, and Teams became the main collaboration tool.

You can see there, that I’ve mentioned that we had around 600 active users and teams in March by April, late April, it had gone up to 1000. And it's continued to rise ever since. We'd also put in and invested in LapSafe and laptops for students and staff. With regards to loan laptops, so we had a significant number of loan laptops we could use. So we set up with our Estates Department initially a collection of loan laptops, but then as lockdown increased, we were able to post and deliver laptops to staff and students at home as well. So the initial response was very reactive. But it got us through to the summer. And however during that time we saw as others will have seen support requests, training requests with regards to technologies went through the roof. And it really identified a clear skills gap around the digital competency or confidence, particularly of staff, and in some cases students as well. And there was a growing realisation at that point that this wasn't going to be just a short-term reactive measure and we needed more.

The next section is around how we how we develop the foundations within the institution because it plays an important part in the outcome for us. In May, the University created the role that I'm in now, and it brought together our technology enhanced learning team, our Library and Learning Resources and IT and Systems team. And so my current role was created in order to drive the institution forward around a period of digital transformation, both in response to COVID, but also looking at post-COVID. And even at that point, we were looking at the long-term as well as the short-term approach. And it was realised very early that the reactive element that we had, there was really good staff, you know, were incredible and picking things up and driving them forward and moving swiftly from on-campus to off-campus learning. However, that was not a long-term strategy. And we identified that the pedagogical approach can often be short-lived in regard to this. And if anyone thought that we were going to return to normal, we needed to set the foundations to show that they didn't simply slip back to the previous elements of it. And even at that early stage, you identified the fact that we needed to build on what we were delivering to improve the actual student experience as well. And we felt that it would benefit the institution.

So we had very early buy-in from senior management that the development of an effective blended learning would be a key strategy, it would drive it and we needed to underpin that, and we needed to set the foundations. And we developed an ethos, we looked at, the caption there ‘people by default, technology by design’. So we were looking at a digital approach that would be based upon the people, the individuals, the staff, the students, the technology, meaning support in that, but we would look at a whole approach for the people and how we would deliver that. And we wanted that, the foundations were there and set and that it may take time. But we needed to set those foundations so that we could truly deliver on it a digital transformation piece, we felt that if you know the foundation's not there, as I said it would just simply revert back to what is deemed as normality, and we wanted this to be a catalyst moving forward. So just to go into some details of what we actually we undertook in August 2020, we developed a UWTSD digital framework for blended learning. And as I note there, it wasn't a ‘how to guide’, it wasn't full of kind of specifics, it was a conceptual framework that looked across looking at learning as in general, not necessarily blended learning as such, but a general approach to learning around guiding principles, and then looking at learning pathways and detailing things like organised learning and the different opportunities and different methods that could be used. And we benefited greatly from a member of staff within our education institute, and continue to do so at the moment, was brought back and he developed the digital skills framework for the Welsh Government for schools. And he was brought back as a partner and he's actually seconded back to them and half to us at the moment. And we were able to link back to the Welsh Government initiatives that they drove before and blended learning and had insight into the current thought process, which really helped us to define this. And as part of that wider framework, there were two key approaches that we were able to define and develop that sat within the framework, the digital framework for each and in themselves with it was key approaches for the University to take forward. The first one was that we developed a collection of a digital learning, teaching and learning standards document. It was contained within the framework, but it was built on that and also been created a more specific element than the actual framework did for blended learning. It actually gave benchmarks and accessible benchmarks for staff to understand about producing, delivering high quality, highly effective online learning digital learning, and it sets some standards that staff could work to. Because whilst, the digital framework is more that conceptual approach, the standards document gave them more to build on with specific information about how to approach things. And that was really well received. And the second element, which I'm going to talk about in a little bit more detail linked to this is that we created a digital skills framework. Again, it was built on the foundations of the framework for blended learning, but it was specifically developed in order to focus on digital skills and was based on the Jisc digital capability framework as well.

So the framework, the skills framework that we developed, I mentioned earlier that we identified even pre-pandemic that we needed to kind of develop on digital competence, competency or confidence for staff and students as part of a digital strategy that we then looked at, and even more so this was a pilot, this was highlighted that we really needed to focus on the evidence from March with the support request with the feedback etc. highlighted this further. We had a wide skills gap from, really the people that had taken to the online learning, the blended learning approach, developed innovative solutions, different organised learning approaches asynchronous synchronous, they'd really enhanced their learning experience and seen that with regards to the feedback from students; where others whose bread and butter within the lecture theatre was delivering, was speaking face-to-face, were struggling. And it really highlights that even at certain levels, some academic staff had relied on the on-site support of people turning on and helping them to log on to computers in the morning, we had a wide gap. And as part of the process, we gave access to staff to LinkedIn, and Microsoft resources. And so a lot of resources were being made available. But it was felt that we needed a structure, we needed something to give the staff that they could follow a process in order to look at their skills and look at the digital competency. And we try not to say digital competency. Not anymore, or digital skills, we look at it from a digital confidence perspective, because we're trying to focus on the areas where it's not necessarily that they don't have the digital skills, but they don't have the digital confidence. And so that is a buzzword that we're pushing around here. Because that also is seen as embraced a lot more than when you talk around competency. So we created a specific digital skills framework I have to put here we're inspired by Edinburgh, I did a lot of research personally around looking around and the structure that they, Edinburgh, brought to the actual process was something that we definitely liked. And we saw that as a really good one moving forward. That's not to say that others don't have a good approach. It was just one that I found early on in the research. And I found that that was a really good approach. So we created a website that we could point staff and students to that would give them a structure, it would be initially evaluating the current levels, they did competency, then being able to reflect on their development needs, looking at role profiles, looking at what skills they would need for their roles, and then third stage of accessing structured learning and content that would be appropriate in order for them to develop that, those skill sets.

So the digital capability service that we've signed up to with regards to just the functionality of it, once I was aware of it, and really kind of picked up, it really did tick the boxes in relation to what we needed to do. The discovery tool was a key part of our approach. And I'll touch upon that around the fact of having access to data and baseline measurables. In order to understand all this work, how successful are we actually being it gave us an out of the box element and solutions for steps one and two of our skills frameworks. It enabled us to capture that skill set information and also to look at and things like role profiles. And we're using the current kind of just default ones. But we're looking at developing that as kind of a future planning as well. And for the third step, and not only to be used the resources within the discovery tool, but we actually developed structured learning for each of the six just digital capabilities identified, we worked with Microsoft as well, in order to update some of their content links in relation to that. And I know they recently published an updated PowerPoint, interactive PowerPoint based on some of the work that we did with them and that they've done with others. At the moment on our website, staff can, based on the six Jisc Digital capabilities, download an entry level and an advanced level. At the moment, there are Excel sheets that simply give a link to a resource via Microsoft, LinkedIn, FutureLearn, Coursera, etc, that they have access to, and give the details of how long the actual course runs for and gives a brief summary of the course at the moment. It's downloadable Excel sheets that are structured and specific for learning. But that's something that we're going to be developing.

So the one thing to note on this service is we tried and failed with this with a bit of a big bang approach. And we are now reviewing how we did it. And I think that we didn't listen to the I'll be honest, and I'm probably going to say we didn't, I didn’t listen to the resources that were put ahead, when we signed up to the tool about the planning, it was a case of we need to get out quickly. And so that didn't work. And we've had positive feedback, but we've had limited completions of the discovery tool. And we're looking at a method to enhance this. And so we've actually changed three elements really recently, which I think is going to have a significant impact, which is the discovery tool is now included in the staff induction process. So we encourage staff, they have an online induction process in order to undertake a different discovery tool, whether they choose to share that or not, is up to them but they they're encouraged to undertake that in order to get a digital skills kind of baseline and we're encouraging them to do that.

The second aspect is we're running now. And starting next week, actually we're in in some weekly digital skills framework sessions with HR specifically targeted at managers and how they can use the discovery tool potentially as part of performance reviews and how they incorporate that. And I'm also working with HR around how we can incorporate digital skills more with regards to all job descriptions across the university that it becomes a default element that we enhance the typical thing that we put in our about good IT skills, will we enhance that, and we're looking at that being across the institution. And we've also worked with the Students Union to promote the service to students, because we've concentrated a lot on pushing on staff, because we feel that's the priority. But we've also been pushing this out to students as well. So just to summarise and wrap up, just to touch upon some of the future developments. And we are looking at more interactive websites. So we're looking at how the website can be developed to incorporate and replace the downloadable Excel files. So it'll be a more interactive website, in relation to the resources and the learning, we're also keen working with just going around the integration of the learning resources, actually, within the discovery tool, is their ability to bring it within the discovery tool.

And so we don't have to have that kind of step three, that that tool is developed and added to, I know you can add links in there, it's interesting of how we develop that further ourselves. We're going to be utilising data more in relation to the more that use the discovery tool, the more we have access to data and setting baselines and judging improvements and judging some of the work that we're doing. And we're also looking at the idea of creating a digital skill centre that will own this service moving forward within the institution. And finally, it'll be further embedded in the discovery tool itself in processes, and the early performance reviews and job descriptions are really pushing that in. I'm aware of time. But that is it for me. And I'm happy if there’s hopefully time to answer any questions anyone might have on the presentation.

**LG**

Thanks, James. That was an excellent overview of a really fantastic approach you're taking. Do we have any questions? Any questions for James, please do take the mic or pop a question in the chat box?

**Participant**

Can I ask a quick question, please?

**LG**

Go ahead.

**Participant**

Thank you for that. James. In terms of the analytics side, have you embedded that in any of the strategic monitoring or any of the KPIs for the institution, you know, so that people are continuously looking at that?

**JC**

Not yet, the procedure we're looking at the moment is we are working with Jisc on the learning analytics programme, and we're looking at developing within Wales the analytics element of the data both from Moodle, and from other elements. And the hope is that we'll be able to input that data into the dashboards that we create and add as part of our kind of student BI approach business intelligence. So at the moment, it will be looked at where I mentioned about the digital skill centre and the information it will be then utilising the data and the information, we have on that will be fed into a kind of a wider and produced and shared with senior director at different levels. But the hope is for me that we're able to incorporate this into our dashboard and our student insights dashboard that will give access to information on students and for staff. At the moment, there's no KPIs in relation to that. I think that the baseline for me is important that we encourage this level now, when we take this baseline because we're also doing, and we now have what I didn't mention was that the digital strategy has started. And we started that at the end of last year. And the executive head of Library Learning Resources is leading on that, to develop a digital strategy. As part of that we will be looking at how do we set potential KPIs and performance indicators and reference in some of this information around the whole digital element, because one of the things, the aim of that digital strategy will be that there will not be another digital strategy. The digital strategy success after two years will be based on the fact that digital is embedded across the institution and within the strategies. And so the KPIs will come up and link to that. And I think once we've got the increase of utilisation over the next few months, I'll be looking at the baseline data and then looking at how do we incorporate it, as you mentioned, things like KPIs and activity, push that into the wide institution reporting. So it's seen as part of the data in the general institution, business intelligence as well as the student as well.

**Participant**

That's great. Thank you.

**LG**

Do we have any other questions?

**Participant**

Yeah, I do.

**LG**

Hello, do go ahead.

**Participant**

Hi, James. I'm from Petroc and we’re an FE and HE college. Have you rolled this out across your partnership FE colleges, and have you had to adapt it at all for FE?

**JC**

No, we haven't rolled out to FE at the moment; whilst we're the UWTSD group, the FE colleges are in their own right. And we're quite separate in relation to them, particularly around technology because of the nature of it. However, we are looking at incorporating at a high level in relation to bringing in the FE representatives into some of the things we're looking at creating, for example, an EdTech and a teaching and learning leadership and working groups moving forward that will be concentrating on the blended learning approach to the University. And we'll bring in FE colleagues into that. And we're hoping that that will lead to kind of an alignment and I'm meeting with FE equivalents moving forward on a fortnightly basis. And I wouldn't commit to anything, but we are looking at the option of how do we align our current kind of digital strategies and approaches and access to resources like this? How do we align it and bring it together? And because it would be beneficial to the to the group and this is one of the areas where it's been identified that their collaboration could take place. Where in the past because IT networks and systems were quite different, and difficult to bring together, this is something that's a common approach. And so we're at the moment we're in the process of sharing our approach with them and then with us, and we're looking to align it and potentially how we can bring it together as a wider group and have hopefully a group digital strategy and a group approach, which will mean after you have access to these resources as well.

**Participant**

Thanks, James.

**LG**

Thank you. So thanks very much. I think we'll move on to Gunter. But if you do have any remaining questions for James do just keep them and we will pick them up after Gunter has shared one of their aspects to their implementation with it. So I'll hand over now. Thanks.

**GS**

Thank you, Lisa. Good morning, everybody. Pleasure to be joining you this morning. This is me, Gunter Saunders, University of Westminster. I'm going to be speaking about how primarily we've been trying to use the digital discovery tool over the last few years. Just a little bit about myself, I'm an academic by trade, I used to teach microbiology for over 20 years. Now I'm responsible for professional services. And I'm responsible for the team that provides learning innovation and digital engagement support across the university to both academic staff, and professional services staff. And I'm also responsible for the services that our library provides to both our students and staff as well. So as you can imagine both of those services, digital engagement, learning innovation, sport library services have been extremely busy. For want of another, better, way of putting it over the last eight or nine months.

So I'm just moving forward. I just want to initially think back five years or so when Westminster, probably not uncommon across the sector, was in a situation where digital tools and systems and services were probably not making the kind of impact, we would have liked on the way that we operated both in the teaching sphere, and in the professional services sphere. So digital transformation, began to focus perhaps in a more holistic way, about five years ago, Westminster, and we were we were looking at that stage, to begin a journey of transformation, to try to find ways that we could meaningfully embed digital into a curriculum delivery, but also to find ways that digital could be used to change the ways in which professional services staff worked, and indeed, in the way in which their services were provided to primary students, but also to staff. So with that focus on digital working and teaching, as part of that, the start of that journey, we came to understand and find out about both the Jisc digital insights survey and the Jisc digital discovery tool. And I'm going to focus, probably, on that, definitely, in the rest of the presentation on the discovery tool. I would emphasise that we see both of these tools are doing they do very different things, but they do complementary things and I think using them together in that complimentary way, provides a powerful platform on which to inform the way in which you might go in relation to your overall digital strategy and the way in which you wind up supporting students and staff as you tried to roll out that digital strategy.

So I'm just leaving the digital insights survey for the moment. But just to mention that we were actually just rolling that out. That's our focus at the moment, actually, the digital insights survey that's being rolled out to has been rolled out students and staff right now, I think when I checked this morning, we had about 903 students who have responded to the insights survey within four or five days of opening up to them. So that's quite impressive. Maybe illustrating the interest that inevitably students have currently in the digital world and in what we're providing to them. But the digital discovery tool, so I appreciate that many of you may know about this tool, and I won't spend too much time talking about it. But it is a tool for reflection. It's a great tool for reflection, I think. And it's a way whereby anybody can measure - these are my words - sometimes bad words, I think - measure their level of skill or proficiency in a range of digital functions against the national framework. Just using that terminology at Westminster four or five years ago, or four years ago, whatever it was, was a powerful thing to say to people. We're going to start using something that is National, that other universities are using. And to some extent, we can compare ourselves against other universities if we use this tool.

So this discovery tool, as you may know, provides ultimately, to people who use it, a report. And it's a powerful way to begin to engage individuals, certainly in a conversation around their digital skills, their digital confidence, and how those things might develop in the future. But more than that, we can use the digital discovery tool with individuals, yes, but I think the real power, and the real benefit to us at Westminster, which I'll come on to in a moment, has been way where it's been possible to use it with groups of staff at more or less the same time to bring groups of staff together to have collective conversations about their individual reports, but about the things that they need as a group, in order to deliver the goals and objectives that their groups might have in relation to exploiting digital. And that, again, might be for teaching, or it might be for general working or working around teaching. I would say the greatest success we've had has been with professional services staff. So the thing about the discovery tool is it has those metrics in it, where if you can get a group of staff to work together and can complete the discovery, reflected questionnaire, over a period of time, then you can look at those metrics and you can you can look to detect trends, and then discuss those trends with those staff to go forward with a with a plan for the department as a whole in terms of the way they might exploit digital in the future. So actually, what you see on the screen here is it's probably about 18 months old, I think this particular report. But this is an example of a report, which collates the collective data that we got from the finance department at the University of Westminster. So this was one of the professionals, the premier, in a sense, professional services department because they engaged right across the board about 30 staff in the finance department. And they all engaged with us in a single workshop, under the leadership of the Director of Finance, who we talked to you first and he bought into the idea. And we got into the questionnaire. We met them again two weeks later to look at the collected Jisc reports, the collected data from the reports. And the discussion was tremendously useful and powerful. And indeed, very, very, very interactive. It generated a great deal of interest. A number of clear targets came out of those conversations and actually a follow up meeting about a week later. And not only did we establish that the focus for them was very much around understanding more of how to work collaboratively online with people and how to better use online meetings as a way of engaging with each other but also with the students that sought their advice at various times of the year. Those are the things that that sort of came out in terms of priorities for them, but generally as well, it just raised up amongst the small proportion of them, who, you might say were very negatively disposed towards using digital raised up their level of interest. And they were in a sense taken along by, in this case, a great majority of staff who were very keen to move forward with digital.

So that focus led to us providing targeted support for this department around digital collaboration and digital meetings. But not only that, it also that the example then triggered much more interest from other areas, professional services, including the chief operating officer who helped us organise, and a series of events with the professional services directors, and each department developed their own plan going forward, for how they could engage their staff in the kind of approach that the Finance department took. In the end, not every Well, no other department other than Finance actually got all their staff to complete it. But the key thing was that the rest of the Professional Services Department essentially picked up on the same themes that finance have picked up on, and we wound up rolling all across professional services, those workshops and other support mechanisms we developed for the finance department, and there was considerable engagement with those workshops and other support mechanisms as a consequence. The other thing this led to was that Finance identified a few people in their department that went on to act as digital champions. And that made the engagement with finance even more granular, because they have small teams within finance. And each of those teams then began to identify what they're very specific needs were. So I just wanted to briefly mention that kind of engagement at department level, though most of that has happened with professional services, we did also have one success with an academic department. Curiously, there was a finance link because it was the School of Finance and Accounting. So again, there were we found the digital discovery most powerful was where we could get a group together. And they did it together. And they discussed it together. And they worked out a plan going forward together. And indeed, that department that led us to develop for this department at that time to probably about 18 months ago, maybe two years ago, a series of focused workshops around how they could better exploit the VLE in their teaching. What I want to say about the success of that departmental approach, and why I think it, it might be seen as something that's very much worth sharing with others as long as I'm trying to do here. So although the use of the discovery tool with our academic colleagues, certainly led to some engagement, I mentioned that one department, dotted across the other departments, or schools, academic schools are other examples of people who engage with the discovery tool, and maybe a few groups of staff. But the real impact came definitely with professional services. Were the success with the Department of Finance, as a group gave a tremendous, terrific use case that could be used to convince the most senior professional services staff to engage and then that filtered down. So I think there's very good evidence to suggest a bit. We were lucky, we could argue with timing, when I argued we were lucky with the timing. The fact is that when we went into lockdown in March, our professional services because of that programme, that came out of that engagement for departmental level with finance that programme focused on collaborating with others online, meeting people online working on developing artefacts and resources together online. That meant that our professional services departments were much better prepared than perhaps our academic colleagues were for the move to totally online. Working with that work in a finance department or professional services, whether that work is teaching. So I think this is a, and it's acceptable to say this is a really clear example of where engagement with the digital discovery tool has led to an impact Then, in unfortunate circumstances has enabled the Professional Services Department to move relatively smoothly towards online working. So this is actually my last slide, just about the future, really. And there are so many key questions that all institutions are asking right now, which are sort of up to them there. What can be preserved from the COVID period? How exactly will we work post-COVID?

So many questions to be answered, you know, how will we work? We still have meetings that are mainly remote, or people try and have meetings where some people are in the same physical space and others are joining remotely? But what will that look like? What is it that we need to do in relation to the wants and desires of our students quite to our students feel, has worked really well, during the COVID period, what our staff feel has worked really well? How do we, how do we bring all of that together? And what I was going to say was that I it during the COVID period a little bit before that, I think our use of both the insight survey and the discovery tool have had waned to some extent, we haven't run out of steam, but we were looking for new ways to try to more widely, particularly more widely engage academic staff in those tools, I feel the work we've done with professional service has given us clear results. But with academic staff, we were looking at ways to try and get better engagement. And some of the things we wanted to do at the outset, like embed the discovery tool in personal professional plans, that hadn't actually happened, we managed to get HR convinced that we should do that. So we've kind of lost our way a little bit with these two really good tools. And also, then, to some extent, the intervention of COVID has meant that people have had to engage in a in a kind of almost like, in some respects, panic-stricken way, with ways of working online, particularly teaching online, I think. But now, the way we're reaching a point where there's some light at the end of the tunnel and respective of COVID. Certainly, our goal at Westminster, and I suspect it’s the same generally across the sector, we want to get back to ensuring that we, in some coordinated way, develop the digital self-sufficiency of our staff. Because whatever happens in the future, there will be much more digital in what we do. And there certainly will be in professional services, and we hope they will be in in our in our teaching in our curriculum delivery areas. So I would say that I expect to see both the insight survey and the discovery tool, make something of a comeback at Westminster, particularly in the academic staff area, to help inform what we're going to do in six months from now. But also in professional services there because they're although they're a different stage, I think that the way in which they've exploited digital effectively for what they do, now's the time for them to reflect on that and think about well, equally, like academics, which bits do we want to keep, which bits really work? How are we going to provide our services to students going forward, which bits of those need to be face-to-face, which bits actually benefit from being online. So I expect to see a new surge in interest in both the insight survey and the digital capability tool. As I said, we're just running the insight survey now. And that is providing a stock of information for us on which to base some decisions. And I think in there, at some point, a decision will be that the digital discovery tool will pay a key part in developments going forward. And I feel that because of the situation in a sense, because COVID has actually made the fire alarm go off to some extent, I think we're more likely to see HR, for example, accept that having that kind of tool genuinely embedded in the day-to-day life of people make sense. And we did have difficulty in persuading people have the significance of a tool like that prior to COVID. But I think things have changed. people's views have changed they can see hopefully, that digital has a role that you can't just park in the corner with the fire extinguisher in case of an emergency has to be embedded. I think we'll stop there, Lisa, and thank you all for listening. And I’d welcome any questions or comments. Thank you.

**LG**

Thank you, Gunter. So that's a lovely point at which to end on I think there. And do we have any quick questions for Gunter, I'm just aware of time, so we will move on if we don't, but any burning questions? For now, okay. Please do continue to add them in the chat. And hopefully, Gunter and James can both pick those up, I can see that James has already been doing that. So thank you very much. But I just want to say a huge thank you to both speakers, because it gives you a really good feel of the sort of breadth of activity from a very sort of Big Bang approach and a sort of a very top-down approach from James and then a very targeted approach. And you can see the benefits of both. And what I particularly like, I think, in the Gunter’s example, is the importance of when working with different staff groups to tie in the embedding of the tool within conversations about their goals, because that will differ depend on different staff groups, and you can see for finance that was about, you know, enhancing their processes and understanding their starting points for that. So I thought that was a really good example.

Okay, so let me just move us on. And I'll just pick up my slides again, and I wanted to take this opportunity now I've got you all, to introduce a new development that we have been thinking about around enhancing our community side. So we already have in place to really vibrant communities, one within service community, like we're all here together sharing experiences, but and also with our more open wider community with our two events that we run per year. So, and through the conversations that I have with many of you on a regular basis, we know that we've got many shared challenges, to achieve our shared goal of enabling our staff and students to have that digital confidence and capability to thrive.

So it's clear, I think, from this definition of communities that we already have those three key components, we have shared a shared goal, we have shared interests, we have, and in some cases, shared practices around using some of the tools within the service. But I don't think that we're necessarily making the most of the community roots that we have, we have the mailing list, and we use that primarily to share things with you. But it doesn't necessarily work that brilliantly as a way for you to share with each other. And we don't have a shared space to share resources share examples. So we've been doing some thinking about how we can enhance that. And the solution that we're proposing is a Teams site. I'm sure many of you now are used to using Team sites in with your own staff and students. And we thought that might provide an opportunity to provide that more immediate space for you to be able to engage with each other. So we've been doing some thinking about an initial sort of draft statement around the objectives of our community, which are around those key goals of sharing expertise, as we've been doing today, and potential for working together to collaborate on some of the shared challenges that we have and support each other around those challenges. So that's just a quick summary of where we got to.

We'd certainly very much welcome any thoughts on whether you feel that is something that reflects your needs of the community, and just some, also some initial thoughts about what the purpose of our new Team site might be able to enable, in terms of that sharing of practice, the access to peer support, the exploring of new themes around digital capability, and, and potentially the ability for easier collaborate. So just as a starter, and I'm going to share a little poll, I would very much value your thoughts on whether you would see a value and would be prepared to engage with, you know, to a greater or lesser extent, in some way with that community just as a quick snapshot.

Just give you a couple of minutes. I can see everyone's contributing have we got everyone? I think we probably have. It’s still creeping up.

Right, I'm going to stop it there. And that's brilliant. And I can hopefully share the results of that with you. So we think we're getting a steer that yes, that could be a useful opportunity, which is fantastic. And the thing I would most like to get your thoughts on are these aspects, and we've prepared a Padlet. It's got a little column for each of these questions, just to better understand the value of a community site to you. And importantly, I think the topics you might like to seed, we can set up a whole number of channels for different topics, we can start off with just a general channel. And then we can obviously develop channels as we identify common themes, but it might be things that you already know that you would really like some advice or support around, or some things that you already know that you have that you contribute in terms of shared practices. And also what sort of type of content would be a value to you to share or have shared with you or to collaborate on. So hopefully, my colleague, Katie is just going to pop the link into the Padlet. into the chat. Brilliant. And so if you wouldn't mind just spending a couple of moments having a think about some of those elements. A little tulip to brighten up our mornings there on the Padlet, I'd really appreciate your thoughts either in this session or just after, if you've got some time just to have to share those thoughts. If you need some examples of the sorts of things, we were thinking might be useful to do within the community in terms of sharing of content, rather than just the sort of peer support element is just some ideas that we were we were considering. I mean, always useful for us to get your thoughts on, if you're coming across any key challenges, any things that you would like to request of the service, we could enable that through some shared documents, but also just opportunities for you to share some of the things that you're doing in terms of communication materials. Some of the implementation approaches the frameworks, for example that James had mentioned, we've had requests on occasion for business cases for strategies. So there are ideas, we don't want it to be limited to that. And so we would like you to really have a think about what you might like to see from that community. Let me just share my screen again. And we can see what's happening there with the Padlets.

Okay, that's brilliant. I would just give you two more minutes to put any initial thoughts in, I don't want to spend too much time on it. But as I continue to add anything that you think of, and even in the coming weeks in terms of aspects that you think ‘I could really do with some support on that’. I know that in my conversations, you're often asking questions about what others are doing. So this is really the opportunity of getting that information direct.

And you can see I've also added a little column there in for volunteers. It would be great if there was any of you who have experience with Teams sites who'd like or even just a real sense of what you would like to get from the community. If you'd be happy to help steer the development of the site in terms of the initial structure, maybe seed some discussions, it would be very light touch, meet up a couple of times in a year just to have a focus session around the community site. But most would be online. Please pop your name down. That would be fantastic, and I will be drawing on you. I do have a couple of volunteers already but more would be fantastic.

So while you're just typing away, I should just carry on working through. So I mentioned our advisory group, just because the main thing to decide is that this isn't something that we are taking control of or doing for you. And so we really want to make sure that the community is community owned, and that the themes and content align with the needs that you have.

And this also isn't a replacement for any of our more formal communication routes with us as a service team, it's really your space to use as you see fit. So that's why we're really keen just to get your thoughts and support around how it shapes up and develops. Okay, that's just a quick screenshot of the beginnings of the community site. I've added in a couple of channels just around a few of the topics that I know we pick up regularly in conversation with you particularly around tips and strategies for engaging staff, engaging students, digital well-being. And I've also added a page in for links and resources to share things that you might want to share between you have used. And I've dropped a couple of links in there to some of the recordings we have from these support community events, so that you can get ready access to that. And the FAQs in case that's useful.

But the main goal really is that this is something that you helped shape and inform, to so that you can get the most from it. And so importantly, we have created a form to enable you to join the community. And that links back through to the terms of use, and other elements. It's a really quick form, you just complete that to let us know that you'd like to join, Katie will pop the link to the form into the chat. So please do join it and start talking. And I think the session today hopefully has been a really good point in which to see that discussion. If you do have things you'd like to ask, please, please do start to use it for that purpose. And we can see how it develops. And so just to finish off in our last couple of minutes with a couple of updates from the service.

So in terms of overall usage, you can see that we have almost 30,000 users now using a discovery tool from 76 subscribed organisation. So it has grown quite significantly 40 universities, 33 colleges. And collectively, those staff and student users have completed over 27000 questions sets. And that's we're seeing a rough distribution equally between staff and students. And a couple of other quick news stories. So we are working to try and share and some of the examples that we've heard today. In case study format, we've got a new implementation story form, that we are now working up with Weston College for readiness for launching at the Digifest conference, which is in March. So if you have any stories that you would like to share about what is working well, please do let me know. And we can work with you to shape those up. Digifest is running between the 8th and 11th of March, hopefully you saw the link to that in the newsletter, it is free to members. So please do join as a full programme across four days, Monday to Thursday. We're running a digital capability session on the Thursday at 1.40. So it would be wonderful if you could join us for that.

Our community practice event 19th of May we'll be releasing the registration form sometime later in March. So you'll be alerted of that through the normal routes. And we also have a date for a new online version of our designing for digital capability in the curriculum course. And if you're interested in signing up or interested in sharing that link with any of your staff who might be interested in signing up, just the link there and Katie will pop that into the chat box just also has a campaign at the moment around digital wellbeing and about wellbeing in general. There are a number of online events available for that.

And I think all the links to those individual events in the newsletter. So please do refer to that if you'd like to join us for any of those. So on that note, I think that is it. I would like to again thank James and Gunter very much for sharing their experiences today. And if we do have any final questions, happy to pick those up in the last couple of minutes. Otherwise, thanks everyone for attending.

And please do go and join our community site. Looking forward to seeing you there. Thank you!