

JISC RSC Northwest

eLearning Focus for Senior Managers

eLF-4SM
May 2011



“Welcome to the May 2011 issue of the JISC RSC Northwest Newsletter for Senior Managers”

Andrew Quarmby, RSC Northwest Manager

Saving or Savaging?

There is a need to consider far-reaching change after immediate ‘savings’ have bitten. Inevitably, financial pressures lead to short term measures based upon the need to reduce staffing budgets – **decisions which no management team takes lightly and which involve immediate and pragmatic solutions.**

The need to balance front-line delivery and ‘back-office’ functions – no doubt with some blurring of which belongs to which – reflects similar debates and decisions across the public sector – the Police being the most recent example, as I write.

However, **a sustainable future depends upon a College’s ability to achieve systemic and cultural changes in the way it operates: efficiency in the long**

term is not just a question of shedding resources, but often of approaching things in a different way. The opportunities provided by technology are integral to this process.

The uses of technology within Colleges vary, but can be at high levels of sophistication. This is particularly true where data-management is concerned, as there are direct funding consequences of getting it wrong. Over a period of time, paper-based processes have been largely driven out by the opportunities provided by MIS and the approach of ‘do it once and get it right’ has led to the development of single-source data and of ‘ownership’ of data down through the management chain.

The adoption of similarly consistent approaches to the management of

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RSCs - stimulating and supporting innovation in learning



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NEW for you!

JISC RSC
Regional Support Centre
Northwest

JISC advance
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JISC RSC Northwest Annual Event 2011

“The Institute of Technology”



Open for one day
only, on Thursday 30
June 2011

Enrolment for this
special one-day
event, in central
Manchester, opened
on 4 April, as this
newsletter was
edited, just 34 of the
150 FREE places are
left!

To find out more,
visit:

[www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk/
event11](http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk/event11)

For details of all
upcoming JISC RSC
NW events:

[www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk/
eventcalendar](http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk/eventcalendar)



Sixth Form Colleges and JISC Services

By Andrew Quarmby

Those of you who manage Sixth Form Colleges will be aware that, for a short period, there was some doubt about the continued availability of JISC Services, including the JISC RSCs, in view of the move of Sixth Form Colleges to DfE (BIS funds our work).



I am pleased to say that we have now been informed of continuity of all JISC services for Sixth Form Colleges for 2011-12, supported by funding from DfE, routed through BIS.

For those of us who have managed in the sector from 1993 (or before), the move to dissociate Sixth

The JISC Advance Concordat with the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS)

A Concordat has been agreed between JISC Advance and LSIS. I include the text below.

The work of JISC Advance and LSIS will proceed in partnership at a national

level. Strong relationships are being fostered between the regional LSIS Managers and the JISC RSCs. Here in the Northwest we are working closely with Jo Higgins.

Form Colleges from FE Colleges and to ally them with Schools, marks a significant shift. From the RSC perspective, we value our relationships with Sixth Form Colleges and also the perspective they bring to our Forums and Events. Colleagues in FE Colleges share, I am sure, this respect and the value attached to a common arena for development for the post-compulsory sector.

We shall be working with Sixth Form Colleges to define a programme of support which best meets their needs over the next twelve months. If you have particular views or wish to be involved in steering this initiative, please contact our adviser, Anita Holt – ah@rsc-northwest.ac.uk.

An extract from the concordat appears on page 6 to give a flavour of the strategic co-operation between our two organisations.

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The JISC Review



Most of you will be aware of the major review of JISC which has recently been undertaken, and which now continues in terms of its detailed implementation during the next twelve months.

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content and learning *(whether this is web-based and outward-looking, or internal material for shared development, or learning material for students)* has been more uneven in many organisations, partly because of the lack of a funding and inspection imperative.

Consistency of development is also affected by the skills and attitudes of managers and lecturers, the nature of the curriculum and its assessment, and the aptitudes and pre-dispositions of learners.

In a relatively affluent climate, Colleges have seen much of this development as an optional 'enhancement' of learning, encouraged also by uneven approaches to the use of technology within Ofsted teams.

JISC provides many services to the HE and FE Communities – in addition to the RSCs, you will be aware of JANET and JISC Collections – but there are many more. Some of these services are now part of JISC Advance, a limited company which contains the JISC RSCs, JISC TechDis, JISC infoNet, JISCMail, JISC Netskills, JISC Digital Media, *(continued on right)*

The appropriate use of online technologies to support learning rides on the back of huge sector investment in technical infrastructure – which has not been accompanied everywhere by an equivalent management drive to maximise its use or to develop the skills of those who use it.

It may well be that a sustained re-examination of the role played by online technologies becomes as much to do with economics as with improving quality of provision. The JISC Regional Support Centre and the services of JISC Advance are an important, free resource in enabling you to get the most from your investment.

JISC Procureweb, and JISC Legal.

JISC itself is not currently a legal entity, which is why it set up a number of companies to manage aspects of its services. Part of the recommendation of the review is that JISC should become a legal entity and review the scope of its operations. Within this, there is a firm commitment to the broader FE and Skills sector as well as continued support for HE.

The next twelve months will no doubt bring changes, some of which may impact on the work of the RSC, of which I shall keep you informed.

In the meantime, the service from the Regional Support Centre is set to remain unchanged during 2011-12, where we will continue to support the effective and efficient deployment of technologies in the business processes and teaching and learning of Colleges.

Thinking Green....Going Green

“Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

World Commission on Environment and Development, quoted by Jones (2010)

Between 01 September 2010 and 31 March 2011, the JISC RSC NW have hosted 21 events. 13 of these events (62%) have taken place online. In total this has saved the travel costs and time of 111 delegates.

What is the RSC NW doing?

Following a review of the sustainability of our event management, we aim to...

- Where appropriate deliver events using a suitable online platform
- Wherever possible, use electronic formats: to publicise events, for event bookings, for

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eProgress Review

The JISC Regional Support Centres support the effective use of Technology in the FE and Skills sector, both within teaching and learning and a learning provider's business processes.

RSC Northwest offers an e-Progress Review service. This is a free, confidential service, which is designed to reinforce the self-assessment processes within a Learning Provider and to assist action-planning.

At a time of constrained public funding, an informed evaluation of your use of Information and Learning Technology in and beyond the classroom can bring significant short and long-term benefits.

Many organisations have invested heavily in software and systems to support learning and business processes, but are at an interim stage in terms of changing management and teaching and learning practices to enable them to get the most out of their investment. There is now great economic pressure to work efficiently and effectively and to use the enabling features of technology to achieve this.

An e-Progress Review can enable the strategic and operational thinking necessary for managers, staff and learners to get the most out of technology. It gives an opportunity to reflect on 'where we are' and 'where we want to be'. It is, primarily, sensitive to the particular culture and aspirations of your organisation and is not 'formulaic'.



An e-Progress review will enable Senior Staff with responsibility for technology to evaluate progress in:

- E-Safety, as a key part of the Safeguarding responsibility
- sustainability of systems and practices
- integrity and robustness of infrastructure
- accessibility and inclusion
- inter-operability and efficiency of systems and business processes

- the role of technology in Quality Improvement processes
- the effective use of technology in teaching and learning
- the effective use of technology in student support
- the technology skills development of managers and staff
- employer-responsiveness
- listening to the learner voice
- An initial consultation with your link RSC adviser to define the scope of the review, which may cover all or just some of the areas defined above
- Incorporation of any current self-evaluation (eg through 'Generator'), or facilitation of this if required
- Consultative engagement with members of the RSC Northwest Team (usually no more than one day). This will involve an agreed schedule of dialogues with appropriate managers, staff, and students.

The process will enable you to:

- understand and meet the expectations of national policy makers
- Use technology effectively within the Common Inspection Framework and Framework for Excellence
- Use technology appropriately to ensure Safeguarding

The RSC will also support a learning provider with the use of on-line self-assessment tools, such as The Generator.

The RSC e-Progress Review is customised according to your needs.

It involves:

- Production and delivery of a confidential report to your management team, within three working weeks of the review
- The provision of appropriate RSC support for the Learning Provider Technology action plan
- A follow-up visit six months after the review report

Please e-mail me if you wish to discuss a review:

aq@rsc-northwest.ac.uk.

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- delegate confirmations, and to collect feedback.
- Whenever possible, select venues which are within walking distance of public transport links.
- Provide delegates with links to websites, which will enable them to make informed choices about their method of travel.
- Where possible, ask venues to provide tap water, rather than bottled water – have you ever thought how far your bottled water has travelled? What will happen to the bottle containing it?
- Where possible, use generic event signage, that can be reused.
- Continuing to reduce the amount of printed material generated and used for events.
- When purchasing items for events, consider

**'Reduce-
Reuse –
Recycle'**

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What can you do

- Think about the small changes you can make to improve your own sustainability – Print double-sided; powerdown and switch off at the end of the day....
- Consider the impact of your travel arrangements. Visit sites like www.transportdirect.info/Web2/Home.aspx ** which show comparisons between various methods of travel.
- Take a look at the sustainability page on our website: <http://www.rsc-northwest.ac.uk/sustainability>

“No-body makes a greater mistake than he who does nothing because he could only do a little”

Burke, quoted by
Seventeen Events

Please let us know what you think about....

? If the RSC NW provided a facility, at face-to-face events, for delegates to return unwanted USB

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Core functions – JISC Advance

JISC Advance is responsible for:

- advising learning providers on the role technology can play;
- creating, and making available to the sector, materials to support the use of technology across learning providers;
- contributing to the development of national and regional technology related strategies;
- assisting with the development of provider technology related strategies within the context of their business objectives and the wider application of ICT to ensure effective organisations;
- advising on implementation of these strategies;
- facilitating the sharing of best practice and innovation;
- facilitating regional collaboration;
- acting as a gateway to expert advice, information, other JISC services and research outcomes from JISC and partners; and
- utilising innovative

ways of delivering advice and support.

JISC Advance does not have responsibility for:

- defining how individual learning providers should use technology;
- making judgments about the validity of learning providers' use of technology; or

the services provided by JISC Collections and JANET, though the RSC service will facilitate interaction with all parts of JISC and its services.

Core functions – Learning and Skills Improvement Service

LSIS's mission is to accelerate the drive for excellence.

LSIS' vision is that:

- every learner acquires the skills, knowledge and appetite they need for learning, living and working; and

every provider is valued by their communities and employers for their contribution to sustainable social and economic priorities.

LSIS will aim to support the sector's drive for excellence in ten priority areas.

1.Improving overall organisational

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- performance.
2. Developing the governance, leadership and management skills of the sector.
 3. Raising the quality of teaching and learning.
 4. Improving success rates for learners and raising aspirations.
 5. Developing better relationships with employers.
 6. Improving the range and quality of learning support.
 7. Contributing to greater equality and diversity.
 8. Supporting community development and cohesion.
 9. Increasing the amount of collaborative improvement activity.
 10. Increasing the efficiency of the sector.

LSIS does not have responsibility for:

- assessing the quality of provision or the validity of self-assessment reports; and
- making judgements about the need for individual colleges and providers to improve.

Shared objectives/ outcomes and mutual obligations

- Supporting a professional self-improvement culture in every provider.
 - Promoting and supporting best practice in the use of ICT in every provider
 - Working together to identify sector improvement needs through consultation and sector engagement.
 - Supporting the sector to define, deliver and assess its own demanding standards for improvement.
 - Ensuring coherence across JA's and LSIS' support programmes to simplify the offer to the sector and maximise value for money.
 - Working collaboratively on the design of improvement programmes that address sector needs and support the rollout of government reforms and sector improvement.
 - Achieving equality, equity and respect for all.
- Reducing unnecessary bureaucracy.

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sticks for recycling or donating to a charitable organisation – Is it something you would use?

? If the the RSC NW Used Bluetooth technology to communicate information to delegates mobile devices at face-to-face events – would you find this useful?

? What things prevent you from using public transport to travel to face-to-face events?

Email your thoughts, comments or ideas to events@rsc-northwest.ac.uk



Helen Metcalfe

**** RSC NW cannot accept responsibility for content of external websites.**

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New member of the JISC RSC Northwest team...

A warm welcome to eLearning Adviser Judy Bloxham, who, since our last Newsletters, has joined the JISC RSC Northwest team to cover Kevin Hickey's FE responsibilities as well as John Davey's responsibilities

for the Excellence Gateway's Case Studies.

Kevin, as I'm sure you are aware, is now responsible for Inclusion and John has taken on a new post here at Lancaster University.

NEW for you!

The '*RSC NW Event News*' blog is now live.

Subscribe at <http://rscnweventnews.wordpress.com/>

On 31 March 2011, Helen, our Events Coordinator posted her very first blog entry! Check it out and be amongst the first to find out about events in planning and other snippets of event news. Use the 'comments' to let us know what you think



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Northwest

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Please send any feedback about the newsletter to **John Dalziel**, Editor, at: jd@rsc-northwest.ac.uk

"please don't print this unless you really need to!"

