A VLC in Your Future?
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Canadian Learning Commons Conference
It’s All About the Carrot...
A Different Kind of LC

- No need to define a Learning Commons to this crew
- Traditional view of a LC is a single (sometimes very large) physical facility, often in a Library, generally with lots of computers and support
- Key development in the evolution of partnerships with Computing Services
How do you build a LC when the most common iDevice is the iPod?
Virtual Learning Commons

- Virtual Learning Commons is a phrase I use to represent a continuum from the physical to the completely virtual (or online) - VLC
- Many of the ideas behind VLC are in use with traditional LCs - mostly a matter of degree
- Sometimes defined as an “general” online learning environment outside the context of a course
U of Manitoba is a commonly cited example of a VLC, but we use term for different concepts.

UofM VLC equates to a Virtual Learning Community, similar to an online social/learning networking site.

Elements of a social networking site can be an important part of a broader VLC concept.
Undergraduate Community

Search the VLC

Recently Added discussions

View discussions as... Alphabetical List Top 20
Random Cloud Activity Feed By Category

Input on Intro to Philosophy/World Religion??
Need goods tickets to see Oasis in September.
who wants to play tennis?
The tuition thaw
how do you like workshops?
Are you studying for your exams??
I there anyone else out here that is taking computer usage 1 ?

TEXTBOOKS FOR SALE!!!
Hey guys I was just wondering who here was interested in learning German. I'm going to be taking a course in the summer but I am already looking to learn a bit on my own.

St. John's College event?!?
gym partner??
about mechanical engineering and manufacturing engineering?
any paintballers (woodsball) out there?
THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT FACEBOOK!!!
Student Moms
looking for some people who study accounting
does anybody take ENGL 1310?
did anybody take ENGL 1310 before?
Anyone know a good (being quiet/comfy) place to sleep in the U of M?
get Aurora to work for once
Whither Social Software?
LMS and VLC?

- LMS can be integral part of VLC, but is just a part
- VLC assumes that most (if not all) learning resources (specific and generic) are delivered via the LMS
- Requires close collaboration between Library and LMS unit
Why a LC?

- LCs have emerged from a landscape of digital information and the desire to keep physical library
- Reflect need for students to have access to technology and tools for study/research
- Opportunity to use Library space/expertise is hard to resist, as is opportunity to “herd” the noise
Why a VLC?

- Distributes LC concept to a wider scale
- Forces update of campus IT/support services to support both fixed and mobile resources
- Supports learning via technology everywhere, including the LC
VLC - Characteristics

- Assumptions: silicon is distributed, OSs are Windows/Mac/Linux
- Does not distinguish between fixed and mobile
- Delivers identical services to fixed and mobile devices
One advantage of LC is the noise herding.

With a VLC program, need to pay attention to designating zones in the Library.

Advantage elsewhere.
VLC - “Plugged In”

- Providing power and Ethernet connections throughout Library and other areas on campus is key
- Attention to creating zones in appropriate places
- Devices would need to be registered for security/service delivery
VLC - Wireless

- Wireless needed for devices without Ethernet as well as for locations where power/wires difficult
- Assumes 2 levels of wireless
  - "airport model" - anyone
  - secure, full service - authenticated users
- Mobile wireless hubs for dynamic learning communities = "plugged in"
VLC - Printers

- Need to provide ubiquitous printer access to all
- Novell legacy is holding this one hostage
- Known user should be able to print to any appropriate device on campus
- Default to specific printer based on proximity
VLC - Files & Storage

- File storage should be “unlimited”
- Students encouraged to store on network
- Accessible via “drive letters” and web login
  - WebDAV instead of proprietary file sharing systems
  - Links to LMS/CMS/Repository
- Follows regardless of device
VLC - Chat/People Finder

- Use network to provide internal Chat and social services
- Similar to Bonjour iChat service on Mac
- Optional “network registration” for People Finder
- “Where’s Waldo” service to locate colleagues
- Recognizes opportunity to provide social context without duplicating Facebook et al
VLC - Apps

- Provide OS-agnostic online apps (GoogleDocs, Zoho)
- Easy download of appropriate apps via campus network (OpenOffice, SPSS, etc.)
- Support for apps should also be provided
VLC - Laptops

- Personal laptops
- Loaner laptops vital part of service
  - Manageable in same way as lab PCs
  - Consider multi-loan (e.g. 3 hour, 3 day)
  - Custom desktop based on login credentials
- Mac superior laptop for this purpose
VLC - Laptop Clouds

- Collections of devices gathered around power/wires
- Restricted to specific zones
- Can be single, small (a few people) to large (dozens)
- Use of sound dampening solutions
- Furniture conducive to laptop use
VLC - iPods/Phones

- VLC should support integration of iPod
- Including all appropriate services
- Podcasting of Learning Resources in addition to access via a LMS
VLC - Fairies

- Support resources in a mobile/online framework
- Traditional vRef/Help services, with addition of tech support as a minimum, Student Services ideally
- Mobile/Roving support resources for specific Laptop Clouds, Group Study and other
VLC - Peers

- Facilitate the identification and integration of peers into the support services
- Online version of traditional “Lab Monitor”
- “Paid” for time they monitor help queue
- UPEI GI 151/400 Mentors and Information Desk technicians good examples
UPEI Experience
UPEI Current LC

- No LC, but in Robertson Library building there are 3 computer labs
- Public access PCs with standard environment, some with specialized SW and HW (scanners)
- Labs in other areas of campus, 1 (soon to be 2) open 24 hours during academic term
- Printer/network support limited to Ethernet
UPEI VLC - Physical

- Currently in a review of zones and costs for a VLC throughout the Library and associated areas
- Laptop loaner program a success and growing
- Wireless access to be extended across campus
- Some study rooms to be updated as VLC clouds
- Reviewing printer/file services
UPEI VLC - Services

- vRef launched in 2008 + integrated into LMS/VRE
- Combined Ref/Tech Help desk in Sept + Roaming
- Global Issues 151 Mentors as Peers
- Building Free Software CD for distribution
- CDs in vending machines
- Library integration in the Moodle LMS
UPEI VLC - Coming?

- On-demand “document delivery” to desktop
- Meeting package (laptops, data projector, router)
- Language Lab and Collaboratory - Macs
- eReserve RSS Subscriptions
- Print requesting for pick-up/delivery?