

iTunesU proposal, November 2009
a note by Jonathan Silver, Deputy President (Education)

The e-Learning Committee have been exploring the possibility of the use of iTunesU as a learning and teaching tool in College. Pamela Agar, Head of Digital Media & Marketing, gave the following presentation to the e-Learning Committee about what it is. This is for your interest only, though if you would like to make a comment, send it to me and I will pass it on to the e-Learning Committee.

The e-Learning Committee resolved the following, following the presentation:

iTunes-U is a matter of strategic importance to the e-Learning Committee and the College. Omar Matar agreed to include this in his presentation to the Strategic Education Committee on 26 November.

Presentation to the eLearning Committee - November 2009 - iTunes U update

Pamela Agar (p.agar@imperial.ac.uk)

Head of Digital Media & Marketing, Communications Division

What is iTunes U and why use it?

- An area within the iTunes store for institutions to provide their own collections of audio and visual material for download – free of charge
- Bring all recordings into one place – in branded “channel”
- Will enable us to push Imperial content to a much wider, international audience – anticipate significant increase in downloads
- Our competitors are there!

How will Imperial use iTunes U?

(1) Public site

- a. Online lectures and events – including course lectures, inaugurals etc
- b. Existing science magazine podcasts
- c. Research news highlights (audio and video)
- d. Promotional films – student recruitment / general Imperial information
- e. Possibly unusual content – science challenges, schools outreach content etc

(2) College login only content if required in private area of channel

How are other Universities using iTunes U?

- UK institutions currently on iTunes U are Oxford, Cambridge, UCL, Warwick, Open and Coventry
- Oxford has over 500 recordings. Over 1 million downloads since launch. Popular items, 2,500 times per week (plus equal on University download page)
- OU had over 1 million downloads in 4 months
- Many iTunes U channels producing unique and unusual content which is proving very popular – e.g. Warwick Maths Challenges, Warwick films about human organs, bird song archive, school teaching material

Currently we get in region of 120,000 downloads per quarter (Comms produced material - podcasts, lectures, YouTube, embedded video) – so iTunes U should both increase traffic to those, plus enable us to showcase much more College content

Implementation plan for Imperial iTunes U – four main tracks of work:

(1) **Technical support**

- All content on iTunes U hosted within institution
- iTunes U populated by collection of RSS feeds – one for every category/course/topic
- Technical infrastructure not yet in place to cope with this:

- i. Flash streaming server now online – but capacity may not be enough for long run
- ii. No encoding server available yet – working with streaming server will enable us to provide College wide functionality for uploading, encoding and delivering multi format media files
- iii. Can we take the load?
- iv. What resilience do we need?
- v. iTunes U software will be needed on teaching clusters – plus question of storage levels for students needs addressing

***ACTION:** Working team meeting to map out technical requirements, solutions and financial implication (to include Karsten Seipp, Stephen Coe, Darryl Ryan, Nick James, Adrian Mannall, Paul Allatt)*

(2) Upload process and branding

- Acceptable formats for iTunes U:
 - Audio – MP3 or AAC
 - Video – MPEG4 with H.264 encoding
- How can we enable staff (and students) across the College to produce and upload content in the correct format? Online submission system open to all?
- How can we top and tail each item effectively without adding production time but maintaining our brand?
- Must ensure we allow alternative download option of content for those without or not willing to use iTunes store – within College website, publish RSS feed (e.g. <http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/>)
- Should not neglect design of public site and graphics

***ACTION:** Team to define publishing process, including developing tools to format and brand items (Karsten Seipp, Stephen Coe, Pamela Agar, Peter Gillings)*

***ACTION:** Comms to complete work on design and graphics (Karsten Seipp, Beth Elzer)*

(3) Content generation (primarily for public site)

- Apple advise that approx 70% of content should be audio and needed in region of 150-300 items available at public launch
- Must add to content regularly – cannot launch with everything and then leave for weeks. Keep some material in reserve, and have plan for more quickly
- Existing content audit of Comms produced material, includes just about enough for launch – but not yet completed ongoing plan
- Intend to do more topical news recording – plus series of unusual features. Often most popular content, and content promoted on the iTunes U homepage, related to an issue of the day – we must adjust our reporting to accommodate this demand
- Need to facilitate others recording material – lecture theatres/ hiring kit/support with editing?
- Utilise network of Learning technologists for help with content generation and ideas

***ACTION:** Communications Division working on central plan for new audio series plus feature plans (Communications Division – incl. Pamela Agar, Research Comms group, Colin Grimshaw, Martin Sayers)*

***ACTION:** Communications to prepare guidance on best practice recording and provide recommendations for achieving good quality outcomes.*

***ACTION:** What is existing content in departments that could move be published now? What is interest from academic departments for contributing to public site? What is demand for private site?*

(4) Policy and legal issues (particularly for public site)

Need to agree process for upload:

- Method for contributor and people featured in film to confirm *no copyright material* included (as far as known) – need to ensure community understand issues. If any risk, shouldn't include. But who checks that? Department? Comms? Individual submitting? Where does responsibility lie? (Oxford have speaker and Head of Department sign off every item)

- *IP issues*
- *Quality checking* – is sound/picture acceptable quality? Is content appropriate?
- Who decides what content can *move from private to public* – what is that process?
- *Branding* – everything on public channel needs to be clearly branded Imperial
- *Advising the end user of their rights* – Oxford content is released for personal use only. UCL publish under Creative Commons License (so it can be used for any non-commercial purpose if original speaker/institution is credited)

ACTION: Further discussions with Legal Services team regarding copyright and sign off process.

Timescales (very rough!)

- Working teams to define feasibility and way forward by end of 2009
- Formal project proposal prepared and senior buy in / funding achieved – January 2010
- Implementation, first quarter of 2010 – launch Easter at the earliest?

Useful presentations / links:

<http://www.apple.com/education/mobile-learning/>

http://www.apple.com/support/itunes_u/

<http://www.slideshare.net/BarryCornelius/time-for-itunes-u> (Oxford case study)

<http://www.slideshare.net/jeremyspeller/itunes-u-and-ucl> (UCL case study)