The Growth of a Blogging Community for Teaching & Learning at University of the Arts London (UAL).

Presenter: John Jackson (UAL).
Content: John Jackson and Mike Kelly (UAL).
University of the Arts London
A unique creative community bringing together six distinctive Colleges
Motivation

- multimedia-friendly medium for reflection
- best-of-breed software
- web facing
- capitalise on and build a UAL community of users
Featured

New set of screenshots with sunset lighting

by Wai Kin Lam from the blog Makonimation

Added a sunset light. Haven't decided whether I should add an orange feel to the final product since it might ruin the dark tone I'm trying to create. But it does give a clearer look at the Caliban's expression. And I do like the idea of a sunset mirroring Caliban's hopeless fight.

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Anatomy of a Pilot

- Option analysis
- Platform choice
- Pilot stage - 6 months
- Feedback gathering and analysis
  - focus groups
  - online feedback
- Sharing findings
- Launch across UAL
Building the Platform

What and why?
WordPress is web software you can use to create a beautiful website or blog. We like to say that WordPress is both free and priceless at the same time.

The core software is built by hundreds of community volunteers, and when you’re ready for more there are thousands of plugins and themes available to transform your site into almost anything you can imagine. Over 60 million people have chosen WordPress to power the place on the web they call “home” — we’d love you to join the family.

Ready to get started? Download WordPress 3.3.2

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WordPress Swag

News From Our Blog

WordPress 3.4 Release Candidate 2
The second release candidate for WordPress 3.4 is now available. Since RC1, we’ve made a few dozen final changes. Our goal is to release WordPress 3.4 early next week, so plugin and theme authors, this is likely your last chance to test your plugins and themes to find any compatibility issues before the final release....

It’s Easy As...

1. Find a Web Host and get great hosting while supporting WordPress at the same time.
2. Download & install WordPress with our famous 5-minute installation. Feel like a rock star.
3. Read the Documentation and become a WordPress expert yourself, impress your friends.

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WordPress Users

... and hundreds more
BuddyPress

Social networking, in a box.

Everything you need to start your own self-hosted and WordPress-powered social network!

Download BuddyPress 1.5.5
Blogging Platform

Wordpress + Buddypress

wordpress.org
buddypress.org
Customisations

- Image editing options
- Browse recent content
- Report inappropriate content
- Group blogs & individual blogs
- LDAP logins and custom urls
  e.g. http://mikekelly.myblog.arts.ac.uk [ + profanity filter ]
How were the Pilot Blogs used?

Uses included:

- Reflection
- Community building
- Archiving
- Overseas Collaborations
- Assessed essays
Feedback

**Staff**
- Positive peer-to-peer pressure
- Curation of work encouraged reflection
- Encouraged cross-course and cross-college exchanges

**Students**
- Usability could be better in some cases
- Time investment required
- Flexibility led to confusion

+ Opportunity to communicate and collaborate
  Easy to use
  Majority would like to keep using service

- Complexity
  Group blogs confusing
  Useability
  Already have a blog
Other pilot findings ...
Have you used blogs before using the UAL Blogs?

- Never: 18.2%
- Yes I have read blogs before: 9.1%
- Yes I have read & occasionally contributed to blogs: 18.2%
- Yes - I already have my own blog: 54.5%
For what purposes are you using the UAL Blogs? (Please select *all* the purposes for which you are using these blogs).

- **Collaborative working with other students**: 72.7%
- **Setting up & or contributing to particular interest groups**: 9.1%
- **For communications between students**: 27.3%
- **For communications between students & tutors**: 18.2%
- **As a showcase on the internet**: 45.5%
- **Documenting & reflecting on my work and practice**: 18.2%
- **Receiving feedback on my work and practice**: 18.2%
For what purposes are you using the UAL Blogs? (Please select *all* the purposes for which you are using these blogs).

- Collaborative working with other students: 65.8%
- Setting up & / or contributing to particular interest groups: 39.5%
- For communications between students: 39.5%
- For communications between students & tutors: 36.8%
- As a showcase on the internet: 26.3%
- Documenting & reflecting on my work and practice: 15.8%
- Receiving feedback on my work and practice: 10.5%
How are you accessing the UAL Blogs? (Select *all* the methods you use).

- From within the university on a university computer: 45.5%
- From outside the university on a computer/laptop: 90.9%
- On a Smartphone - eg. Blackberry, iPhone, Android phone etc.: 27.3%
- On a pad device - eg. iPad: 9.1%
- Other (please specify):

Staff
How are you accessing the UAL Blogs? (Select *all* the methods you use).

- From within the university on own computer/laptop: 33.3%
- From outside the university on a computer/laptop: 33.3%
- On a Smartphone - eg. Blackberry, iPhone, Android phone etc.: 66.7%
- On a pad device - eg. iPad: 12.8%
- Other (please specify): 2.6%
Have you needed support to use the UAL Blogs?

- Yes: 90.9%
- No: 9.1%
Have you needed support to use the UAL Blogs?

- Yes: 84.2%
- No: 15.8%

Students
What problems did you have uploading files?

- None: 54.5%
- File too large: 18.2%
- File format not accepted: 18.2%
- Connection timed out: 18.2%
- Other (please specify): 0%
What problems did you have uploading files?

- **None**: 71.1%
- **File too large**: 21.1%
- **File format not accepted**: 5.3%
- **Connection timed out**: 10.5%
- **Other (please specify)**: 0%
If you use Group Blogs do you find them easy to use?

- Yes: 45.5%
- Reasonably easy: 27.3%
- No: 27.3%
- Don't know - don't use them:
If you use Group Blogs do you find them easy to use?

- Yes: 28.9%
- Reasonably easy: 18.4%
- No: 18.4%
- Don't know - don't use them: 34.2%
If you have set up a Group Blog how easy have you found it to administer?

- Easy: 63.6%
- Manageable - with a learning curve: 27.3%
- Difficult: 9.1%
- Not applicable - I have not set up a Group Blog
Would you like to continue using the UAL Blogs?

- Yes: 60.5%
- No: 13.2%
- Possibly, depending on ...: 26.3%
Would you like to continue using the UAL Blogs?

- Yes: 72.7%
- No: 27.3%
- Possibly, depending on:...

Staff
**Featured**  
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by [Wai Kin Lam](#) from the blog [Makonimation](#)

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And I do like the idea of a sunset mirroring Caliban's hopeless flight.

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*See all recent...*

- [A Perfect Day (Paris)](#)  
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- [Processing and After Effects coding](#)  
  A few scenes in the R3C animation include a magical firefly swarm. The movement is pretty important so to get the best results I googled fly swarming simulations and found this impressive work. It's done with [here](#).
Improvements based on feedback

- additional help materials and training - including screencasts
- changes to image upload options
- additional themes and options
- increased individual storage space (1 GB!)
- can now create up to 3 'individual' blogs
- enhanced privacy options
Getting Started

Introduction

The myblog.arts blogging service allows UAL students and staff to quickly and easily create blogs within an online learning and teaching community specially created for the University of the Arts London.

Any member of myblog.arts can also create a group, with an optional linked group blog and discussion forum. All members of a group can post on a group blog, making groups ideal for project work.

Blogs at myblog.arts are open to the web by default, and searchable by Google, but for each blog there are extensive privacy options, so you can choose who to share your blog content with, and keep it private if you wish.
Optimising your images for the web

April 4, 2012 in Site updates

Thanks to Peter, who has put together a new screencast on how to optimise your images for the web. This very useful information will help your web pages load quickly to give the best experience for visitors to your web site, whether it's here on myblog.arts or anywhere else on the web. The video is available via the Help tab – or click here to visit it directly: Optimising your images for the web.

Tags: image optimisation, images, screencast, vimeo

New themes added

March 29, 2012 in Site updates

There are now 6 new themes to choose from in myblog.arts, including a couple of new ones designed to showcase image-based content. Look in your Dashboard, under Appearance -&gt; Themes, to explore the options. Most of the themes have their own options, also under the Appearance menu, which allow you to tweak them further.
Update – Image Optimisation

March 6, 2012 in Site updates

Now when you upload large images to your blog on myblog.arts, the image file you uploaded is replaced with the ‘Large-size’ version that WordPress automatically generates. This should save you disk space and help your blog pages to load more quickly.

So, if you upload an image directly from your digital camera, which is for example, 4000 pixels wide, the ‘full-size’ version on WordPress will only be as big as the ‘Large-size’ you have set in your blog, which is by default 1024 pixels wide.

1024 pixels is more than enough for viewing on-screen. However, if for example, you want to share an image for print, and you wish to upload the original unchanged, that is still possible!

Go to your Dashboard, then from the menu choose Settings -> Media. You will see an option called ‘Replace Uploaded Images’, which you can untick to switch this feature off. (Don’t forget to save your Media settings at the bottom of the page.)

You can also change the default setting for ‘Large-size’ images at the top of the Settings -> Media page.

Smaller images should not be affected by this change – only those with large physical dimensions.
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report content

← myblog.arts updated – 28th March 2012

Optimising your images for the web →
Current Uses

http://tags.myblog.arts.ac.uk/posts/
Statistics

- 1346 visible blogs
- 132 visible groups
- 2535 members
- 121,617 unique visitors
- 249,399 visitors
- 1,200,000 page views
Live Demo

http://myblog.arts.ac.uk
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