

# Enhancing the digital experience for staff and students

## Piloting the digital capability discovery tool: University of Derby

The **University of Derby** ([derby.ac.uk](http://derby.ac.uk)) decided to participate in the **digital capability discovery tool** (<http://bit.ly/digcapdiscovery>) pilot to complement a range of other initiatives already underway. These include:

- » The launch of a new technology enhanced learning (TEL) strategy in April 2017 which has the development of digital capabilities as one of its five key goals
- » The Digital Derby steering group, an institution-wide project focusing on learning enhancement and the development of digital capabilities for staff and students
- » The introduction of new digital practice programme baselines to aid programme teams to review and annually enhance their digital practice with the target for every programme to exceed the university baseline expectations
- » Participation in the **student digital experience tracker** (<http://ji.sc/student-tracker>) in 2016
- » A digital experience survey rolled out to all staff to inform future digital service enhancements which achieved a 63% response rate
- » A network of student digital champions to promote the use of digital resources and spaces across the university



*"All staff and students to have an appropriate level of digital capabilities with extensive practical application in the curriculum."*

**TEL strategy 2017-2021, University of Derby**

A key aim of participating in the pilot was to raise awareness of the importance of digital capabilities for as many staff as possible, encouraging discussion and greater understanding of the terminology and exposure to a variety of digital opportunities.

In addition, the university hoped that the data generated by the pilot would contribute to the wider data set from all their other TEL initiatives. Collectively, the data is being gathered and analysed to identify target areas where dedicated support is required and the development of additional resources. The intention is to build a bank of digital capability resources to support each of the role profiles for **learners** (<http://ji.sc/learner-profile>), **teachers** (<http://ji.sc/HE-teacher-profile>), **researchers** (<http://ji.sc/researcher-profile>), **leaders** (<http://ji.sc/leader-profile>), **library and information professionals** (<http://ji.sc/library-info-prof-profile>) and **learning technologists** (<http://ji.sc/learning-tech-profile>). The profiles will also be refined through work with subject areas to identify an agreed definition of 'appropriate' digital capabilities for students and staff.

## Pilot approaches

All staff were invited to participate in the pilot which was widely promoted through the university communication channels including the all staff Derby Daily newsletter, departmental newsletters, at the launch of the TEL strategy, through TEL team activities and also via the institutional staff engagement survey. College deans were asked to cascade the invitation to participate to engage heads of department and their teams.

The pilot ran alongside a staff survey asking staff about their digital experiences. The survey asked staff how they rated their digital capabilities; whether they understood the digital agenda and had the skills they needed; and included questions on the digital learning experiences they support. A link was included on the last page of the survey to the discovery tool, encouraging participation and reflection.

A short promotional **video** ([https://youtu.be/JUqFSnrw\\_c](https://youtu.be/JUqFSnrw_c)) discussing the importance of digital capabilities for both staff and students and how they can work together to support institutional change was shared with staff. The video features Sarah Knight, head of change: student experience at Jisc and Lisa Gray, senior co-design manager at Jisc.

Staff were made aware of the potential to use the personal profile and further development suggestions generated by the discovery tool in their professional development and performance review discussions. They were advised that this was voluntary and a personal choice. It was also suggested that the information generated could be used to inform team training and development needs.

## Outcomes

A total of 322 participants from the University of Derby participated in the pilot of the discovery tool including academic staff from 21 subject areas, professional services personnel and senior managers.

The tool was generally well received and feedback from the pilot is being used to inform the next release of the tool due in December 2017. Not all participants were familiar with the language, but exploring this and seeking meaning relevant to individual staff context is part of the process.

Staff appreciated that the tool and the language used is supportive and is not judgemental but affirms existing capabilities and suggests future areas for development with a focused playlist of resources to explore.

## Key lessons learned

- » The availability of a tool developed using the expertise of Jisc colleagues and the profiles linked to professional development frameworks represents a huge saving in time and adds weight and credibility to the initiative
- » The timing of the pilot came at a point when several other initiatives were already underway but not yet complete. This includes the development of a series of micro-learning resources due for release in September 2017. The hope is that future iterations of the toolkit will allow institutions to customise the playlists to include their own resources

## Next steps

The data generated from participation in the pilot is being used to inform the wider TEL strategy and initiatives designed to support staff and students in developing their digital capabilities.



*"The data from the pilot will strengthen our position in terms of informing the areas we need to concentrate our efforts on by providing insight into areas where staff most need support."*

**John Hill, TEL manager, centre for excellence in learning and teaching, University of Derby**

Some of these initiatives include:

- » The development of a suite of micro learning resources aligned to the six elements of the digital capabilities framework and the different role profiles made available through a web platform with a plenary quiz
- » A new digital practice handbook to support staff to embed enhanced digital learning experiences in the curriculum
- » Working with subject teams to identify digital capability profiles pertinent to their subject specialisms
- » Work with human resources colleagues to include digital capabilities requirements in job descriptions and embed digital capabilities development within professional development review processes

- » Inclusion of digital capabilities development as a requirement within student and staff induction processes
- » The introduction of a student version of the digital capability discovery tool for students to self-audit and reflect on their digital capabilities and understand how to further develop their capability
- » Embedding digital capabilities within graduate attributes

### Find out more:

John Hill, TEL manager at the University of Derby gave a presentation at the inaugural launch of the Jisc digital capabilities community event in May 2017. Our digital capabilities blog includes a **summary of the event** (<http://ji.sc/community-of-practice>) and links to a downloadable copy of John's presentation together with a Periscope recording of the presentation itself.