

Informed Scotland

Learning and Skills Digest

Special Issue 3 | 5 June 2014

LEARNING
TECHNOLOGY
SPECIAL



- ▶ relevant highlights from recent months
- ▶ open learning
- ▶ MOOCs
- ▶ knowledge exchange
- ▶ digital skills & inclusion
- ▶ big data

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Business

SKILLS, TRAINING & QUALIFICATIONS

■ **Skills Development Scotland (SDS)** published Skills Investment Plan for *Scotland's ICT & Digital Technologies Sector* and announced £6.6m Scottish Government funding for digital skills to make Scotland 'a world-leading digital nation by 2020'. There are particular skill demands in financial services, life sciences & health, and creative & cultural industries. Actions include:

- developing an 'industry-led talent academy'
- upskilling those in work and providing work experience opportunities for students
- attracting skilled recruits from overseas
- supporting ICT/digital technology related learning for young people in schools, colleges, universities and the wider community
- developing innovation and entrepreneurial skills and culture
- increasing female participation in the sector. (19)

As President of BCS Chartered Institute for IT, Crossover speaker **Prof Liz Bacon** highlights the shortage of e-skills, particularly the lack of women in the sector.

■ UK Commission for Employment & Skills (UKCES)

launched:

- *The Future of Work: Jobs and skills in 2030*
It considers four future scenarios and the implications for seven sectors including education, creative & digital, manufacturing and construction. It proposes a multi-generational, older, more international workforce, with women playing a stronger role, where continuous adaptation of skills will be fundamental. (19)
- *UK Futures Programme* with around £5m annual support for employers to develop workforce skills. It aims to 'encourage experimentation, learning and a culture of continuous improvement'. The first competition invites offsite construction businesses to bid for up to £600k to test ways of improving training and qualifications. (20)

UKCES provided an *Informed Scotland* guest blog on their *Employer Skills Survey*; have a go at their *Your Future Job Quiz*.

■ **The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)** is working with **FutureLearn** to sponsor Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) which will receive professional ACCA accreditation. The first MOOC, *Discovering Business in Society* developed with the **University of Exeter**, will launch in September 2014. (19)

In his *PlanB learning blog*, Crossover keynote **Donald Clark** commented on how employers' positive attitude to MOOCs is fuelling demand for courses.

BUSINESS CREATION & DEVELOPMENT

■ **Robert Gordon University** set up a new commercially focused *Digital Interactions & Visualisation Centre* based in its School of Computing Science & Digital Media. It will draw on expertise and skills from across the university to provide a resource for businesses and act as a hub for a new **Aberdeen City Council** digital business incubator. *Incubators, hatcheries, accelerators, hot houses, hubs... the language of supported business start-up, growth and coworking.* Crossover organiser **Insight Arcade** is based at *TechCube, home to a range of technology start-ups.* (19)

■ **HRH The Duke of York** and **Nominet Trust** launched the *Inspiring Digital Enterprise Award, IDEA*, to support 1m+ 16-25 year-olds in the UK over the next five years to create new digital businesses. The scheme will award 'industry-recognised badges' to recognise enterprise and digital skills developed in the process. (20)

In his *CETIS blog*, Crossover presenter **Simon Grant** explains why, when and how frameworks of skill and competence could be used, including for badges.

KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

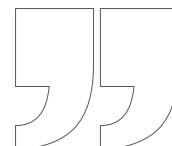
■ **The Intellectual Property Office** announced nine UK projects to share £660k *2014 Fast Forward* technology and digital innovation funding including:

- £86k for **Abertay University's** Investing in Digital Assets, encouraging investors to have confidence in games industry creations.
- £73k for **University of Dundee's** Technology Accelerator Programme, involving teams of students, academics, SMEs & wider industry, considering platform technology opportunities. (19)

■ **The Data Lab**, a new £11.3m analytics and 'big data' technology innovation centre, is to open later in 2014. Its focus will be on digital technology, energy, financial services, healthcare, and public sector markets, with Hubs based in **Edinburgh, Glasgow** and **Robert Gordon Universities**. It is funded by the **Scottish Funding Council** with **Scottish Enterprise** and **Highlands & Islands Enterprise** support, plus industry involvement including **ScotlandIS, Lockheed Martin** and **brightsolid**. (20)

'Big data' is the massive amount of information we are generating and storing thanks to digital technologies.

When you get experts from different fields together in the same room, interesting ideas emerge – that's the concept behind Crossover Edinburgh 2014.



ALLAN LLOYDS, FOUNDER & MANAGING DIRECTOR, INSIGHT ARCADE

Further & Higher Education

FUTURE LEARNING & DIGITAL LITERACY

■ **NUS Scotland** published an *Interim report* in its Imagine Tomorrow/Change Today campaign, asking students 'What should the ideal post-16 education system in Scotland look like?' The report focuses on parity of esteem, access, progression, and technologies and learning. (19)

■ **Jisc InfoNet** published a *Digital Literacies infoKit*, providing practical guidance, tools and approaches for developing digital literacies in universities and colleges. (19)

■ **Code First: Girls** launched free IT courses for young women students of all disciplines in partnership with **St Andrews** and **Edinburgh Universities**. The Edinburgh courses are run in partnership with **TechCube** and open to students from all of the city's universities.

Code First: Girls is a not-for-profit supported by Entrepreneur First, Bank of America Merrill Lynch, and City of London Corporation. (18)

MOOCS & OPEN EDUCATION

■ **Quality Assurance Agency** published a short *statement* on MOOCs explaining that as MOOCs are typically non-credit bearing and do not have formal entry requirements, QAA does not formally review them. However, providers can cite their work in developing MOOCs as evidence for QAA review. (19)

■ **Higher Education Academy (HEA)** published *The pedagogy of the MOOC: the UK view*, by **University of Edinburgh** researchers. 'The place and visibility of the teacher [in MOOCs] remain of central importance', although there is a need to 'rethink how certain teacher roles are enacted'. (19)

■ **GCU** and **Harvard University** researchers published *Professional Learning in Massive Open Online Courses* funded by the **Gates Foundation**. According to the study:

- MOOCs encourage passive learning among professionals.
- MOOC designers should focus on capitalising on the diversity of participants, and professionals should be encouraged to link MOOC learning with everyday work practice.

Interesting blogs and research sites include LittlebyLittlejohn and MOOCs@Edinburgh. (20)

■ Comments are being sought on a draft *Scottish Open Education Declaration* based on the *UNESCO Paris declaration*, which focuses on opening up publicly funded educational materials for public use. The Scottish draft looks more widely than resources; it was prepared by **Open Scotland**, which includes representatives of **Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA)**, **Jisc RSC Scotland** and **CETIS**. (19)
Crossover panellist Joe Wilson from SQA explains Open Education in his Informed Scotland guest blog. Speaker Grainne Hamilton's blog explores Open Badges including her work for Mozilla's Discovery Project.

BIG DATA

■ The **SQA Computing team** is developing Higher National Units in Big Data at *Scottish Credit & Qualifications Framework (SCQF) Level 7*, suitable for a range of HN awards, and Data Science at Level 8, suitable for more specialised, STEM (science, technology, engineering & maths) awards. The Units will be ready in June. (20)

■ **University of Glasgow** received **Arts & Humanities Research Council** funding for three 'big data' projects: compiling a historical thesaurus of the Scots language; creating an online resource to help phonetic training, language teaching and speech therapy; and developing new software to analyse large texts. (18)

COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

■ **Borders College Online Learning Transition (BOLT)** project, which aimed 'to embed technology enhanced learning', has been published as a *case study* by **Jisc RSC Scotland**. The College online *toolkit* is available for wider use.

Other case studies in the series include use of mobile technology for skills at Moray College, e-portfolios at Dundee & Angus College, and automated ICT skills self-evaluation at GCU. (19)

■ **Forth Valley College** and **University of Stirling** are to offer two new courses from August 2014 – *BSc (Hons) Applied Computing* and *BA (Hons) Digital Media*. Students will study for two years at the College then two years at the University. (19)

Community & Adult Learning

DIGITAL LITERACY SKILLS

■ **EE** is organising a first UK-wide *National Techy Tea Party Day* on 9 September, with events at its stores, offices and contact centres to 'build the nation's digital skills'. 'Digital champions' will offer support in basic online and device skills. EE wants charities, businesses and communities to get involved or organise their own events. (20)

■ **CoderDojo Scotland** is to expand its coding clubs for 12–17 year-olds across Scotland, with support from **SDS** and a £35k Scottish Government grant. The clubs will particularly focus on involving girls and those in 'digitally excluded' communities. (19)

Schools

COMPUTING & DIGITAL LEARNING

- **Abertay, Dundee, Glasgow, Heriot-Watt, Edinburgh Napier, Strathclyde, and Robert Gordon Universities** are to recommend Higher Computing Science as an entry qualification for undergraduate computing programmes. This resulted from a **Scottish Informatics & Computer Science Alliance** meeting involving teachers, academics and **SQA** representatives discussing the new curriculum. (19)
- The **SQA** Computing team published a Digital Literacy Competency Framework, setting out the 'knowledge, skills and behaviours' of someone considered digitally literate. It will be used as the basis for developing future related awards, and is described as 'evolving', with comments welcomed. (19)
- **SQA** and **Cisco** renewed their Memorandum of Understanding, involving Cisco delivering free online and hands-on technology training to students from secondary schools, colleges and universities signed up to the Cisco Networking Academy Programme. (18)
Fife Council and Fife College are collaborating via the *Programme to deliver computing technology to eight secondary schools*. (19)
- **Skyscanner** and **Young Scot** offered 500 Raspberry Pi kits to 12–15 year-old pupils in Glasgow secondary schools, in a pilot project aiming to encourage development of digital and coding skills. (19)

Informed Scotland

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Government & Wider Society

DIGITAL INCLUSION & PARTICIPATION

- The Scottish Government published Digital Participation: A National Framework for Local Action setting out how increasing digital participation and confidence opens up 'new possibilities in healthcare, education and economic development'. **Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)** has a leading role in delivering the strategy via digital access and training support. (20)
- The UK Government published:
 - Digital Inclusion Strategy aiming to reduce those who are offline by 25% by 2016 and by a further 25% every two years after.
 - Digital Inclusion Charter encouraging organisations from all sectors to commit their support and adopt a common definition of basic online skills and capabilities. (20)
- **The Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE)** published Spreading the Benefits of Digital Participation: Final Report, stating that the 'digital divide' is wider than previously thought and if not addressed will 'exacerbate existing social divides'. (20)
SCVO's Chris Yiu, speaker at Crossover, highlights the common ground and differences in the above major publications launched over a three-week period.
- **Carnegie UK Trust** published Making Digital Real: Case Studies of How to Help the Final Fifth Get Online. 20% of UK households (40% in Glasgow) and almost 70% of those aged 75+, do not have basic internet services. (20)
- **Nesta** published:
 - Who are the UK's Young Digital Makers?; 83% of 8–15 year-olds had made something using digital technologies. Boys were more confident than girls. (19)
 - Make It Local Scotland, a project encouraging collaboration between local authorities and digital media developers. There is often a lack of skills and shortage of trained staff who can analyse the data. (20)

SOME USEFUL ORGANISATIONS & LINKS

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| ■ ALT Scotland | ■ Digital Scotland | ■ Interface | ■ Our Skillsforce |
| ■ BCS in Scotland | ■ DigitalSkills.com | ■ JISC RSC Scotland | ■ Professional Learning for Colleges |
| ■ CALL Scotland | ■ e-Assessment Association | ■ MOOCs & the Scottish Parliament | ■ RSE Digital Participation |
| ■ CETIS | ■ eLearning Alliance | ■ My World of Work | ■ ScotlandIS |
| ■ CIPD in Scotland | ■ e-skills UK in Scotland | ■ Nesta | ■ SCVO Digital Participation |
| ■ Curriculum for Excellence: ICT to enhance learning | ■ HEA Scotland | ■ Open Scotland | ■ SQA workplace learning |