# IOE Digital Literacies Baselining Report

## Project Information

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<th>To be completed by JISC</th>
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<td>Digital Literacies as a Postgraduate Attribute</td>
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<td>Start Date</td>
<td>July 2011</td>
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<td>End Date</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Director</td>
<td>NA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Lesley Gourlay</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:l.gourlay@ioe.ac.uk">l.gourlay@ioe.ac.uk</a></td>
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<td>Programme Manager</td>
<td>Paul Bailey</td>
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## Document Information

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Lesley Gourlay and Martin Oliver</th>
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<td>Project Manager, Deputy Project Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Filename</td>
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## Document History

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide a description of current policy, practice, infrastructure and questions relating to digital literacies amongst staff and students at the Institute of Education, University of London. The report is a deliverable from the JISC funded project, “Digital Literacies as a Postgraduate Attribute”, which forms part of a national programme of projects on digital literacies.

The report has been compiled by reviewing existing documentation (including the learning and teaching strategy, reports from change consultants, the outputs of previous projects and so on), and complementing this with data generated through the first phase of this new project. Its structure follows the headings identified at programme level, although the headings of infrastructure and support have been combined.

The primary conclusions from this report are that the project contributes to an ongoing commitment to supporting staff and students’ digital literacies, for example through programmes of support and training, but that (i) our current activities in this area are fragmented and (ii) our understanding of what this entails has been limited by relatively poor empirical data. The preliminary phase of this project has begun to address this gap, and the report concludes by outlining how the project will build from this initial situation.

2. Institutional context, policy and strategy

The Institute of Education (IOE) is the largest university centre of Education research in the UK and one of the largest UK centres of Social Science. Each year over 1,000 graduates train as teachers at the IOE on PGCE courses and over 4,000 embark on postgraduate degrees. However, historically, these students have either been based in the London region, or have been international students resident to study full-time. Teaching provision was primarily face-to-face; the IOE did not pursue opportunities for distance education in an active way, although there was a small number of collaborations with the University of London International Programme.
Early groundwork for considerations of staff and students' digital literacies was provided by a series of projects, funded by the JISC and Higher Education Academy. The first of these, in 2006, was an institutional benchmarking project that sought to document quality processes and measures associated with institutional uses of e-learning. This project concluded that while there were pockets of excellent practice - notably in areas such as the London Knowledge Lab where pedagogic uses of technology was a primary focus for research – such practice was not widely shared, and indeed little information existed at all about technology use more generally. In particular, senior managers did not receive, nor ask for, information about such issues.

To build on this, the IOE undertook a follow-on Pathfinder project (PREEL), the purpose of which was to build connections between researchers and practitioners across the IOE so as to share approaches to using technology. The project was successful in several respects: it led to several modules being re-developed to incorporate ideas from research work, and brought practitioners who had previously expressed little or no interest in using technology together with those who were researching this area. It also provided an opportunity for framework documents to be developed that synthesised research and presented it in a way that make it accessible to a wider readership; particularly notable in this respect was a report in 2007 that described a series of models ("pedagogical templates") for incorporating technology in ways that made teaching progressively more flexible and able to support learners at a distance. This became a common point of reference during institutional course design processes. The other main conclusion from the project concerned the importance of specific individuals who were able to work credibly with both researchers and teachers, embodying the links between these otherwise separate groups. The conclusions from this project informed the development of subsequent institutional support.

In 2009, the IOE commissioned a strategic review by PA Consulting, with the intention of diversifying income streams while building on its reputation for excellence. This review identified possible areas for new thematic developments; reviews of internal structures, mission and processes; plans for
international and local development; and proposals for developing "Open Mode" provision. This strand of work sought to expand the IOE's teaching portfolio by supporting the development of courses offered in an open, flexible, online or distance format.

This strand of development was undertaken as part of a year-long Strategic Review Implementation Programme. The Programme operated at an institutional level, governed by a programme board and chaired by the IOE's Secretary. The Open Mode strand, led by Professor Diana Laurillard, consisted of several projects: one to convert face-to-face modules and programmes to new, flexible formats; one to support the development of staff capacities for teaching in distance, online or in flexible formats; and one to update the IOE's technical and administrative infrastructure to support remotely-based students. A parallel strand of the Programme of initiated a complete review of the curriculum, intending to rationalise and update the institution's taught offering. The curriculum review process has since led to 'clustering', which involves bringing programmes together so as to reduce the total number of modules on offer and ensure programme viability. There are close links between the review of curriculum provision and the conversion of face-to-face modules to "open mode" formats.

One element of the training and support project in the Open Mode strand is particularly relevant to this project. A survey was undertaken, asking staff (academic and administrative) involved in course delivery and support about their experiences of using technology, and about their priorities for its development. This included direct questions about the forms of training and support they found most useful. The survey received a good response (116 returns; since a request had been made to pass the link to the online questionnaire to any staff involved in teaching and support, it is impossible to calculate the percent of the total teaching-related population, but this is 10% of the IOE's total staffing). The primary concern was for better use to be made of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE); other common concerns were for wider use of synchronous conferencing to support activities like tutorials and exam boards, and an interest in audio and video capture of teaching. Existing patterns of support were endorsed as helpful and appropriate, with particular
value being attached to on-demand, one-to-one support, as provided by the Learning Technologies Unit in relation to course design and the Library and Media Services' drop-in helpdesk.

Although the Strategic Review Implementation Programme only lasted one year, when it ended, it was agreed that Open Mode should remain a priority for the IOE. Diana Laurillard was made Associate Director for Open Mode, creating a structural responsibility for this area. A new Learning and Teaching Strategy has been launched this year (2011-2014). This includes several statements that have implications for staff and student digital literacies. For example, there is a commitment to supporting internationalisation and diversity in the student body "whether as part of an online community" or otherwise. It states:

"The IOE will continue to explore and develop approaches to e-learning and distance learning through the work of the London Knowledge Lab and the legacy of the IOE’s Centre for Excellence in work-based and professional education, as well as the innovative work in specialist areas such as that of the London Science Centre which develops and delivers science CPD for London schools, the London Centre for Excellence in Teacher Training and the London Centre for Development Education."

Further, the library commits "to extend the range of resources in digital form to support open mode delivery, to provide training in information skills for academic and professional staff as well as to develop the critical and ethical information literacy skills of students." Finally, the strategy identifies the following as a key objective:

Further develop and support e-learning, open mode and digital technologies, in order to provide a flexible learning environment, undertaking this where appropriate with other Bloomsbury colleges and developing new initiatives and relationships with national and international partners.

Other related developments have focused on students. The Student Handbook

(http://www.ioe.ac.uk/studentInformation/documents/About_Policies/StudentHandbook_2011-
(12.pdf) contains a section entitled, Student Entitlement to Teaching and Support. This has been updated so that the information that students receive can be provided either in print or through the institutional VLE; similarly, tutorial entitlement "may include email communication", although the same is not specified for dissertation supervision. The entitlement also specifies that "you are entitled to standard, consistent provision of course materials, information and services via a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE)". Entitlement to support from the Library and IT Services is also specified, although is focus is on access and information.

A Student Charter has also been made available (August 2011). This includes a section on the Learning Environment, but the only direct reference here to technology is to the provision of an IOE email account. There is a commitment to publish core information (e.g. a prospectus) on the IOE’s website. The section on the Student Support Environment additionally includes a commitment to provide a computing service, including access to computers that can be used for writing and communication.

Discussions continue about the possibility of developing the Charter and Entitlements, but it is fair to characterise the current position as a commitment to support basic and generic forms of digital literacy, with the understanding that more specific literacies will be addressed in the context of particular programmes of study.

3. Infrastructure and support

The IOE has a range of structures in place to support staff and student use of technologies. In order to provide some structure when describing these, the four-level tiered structure for digital literacy adopted across the JISC programme will be used. This structures discussions of digital literacies in terms of access; skills; practices; and identity.
Access

At the level of access, all staff are provided with a desktop PC (sometimes, a Mac), with a suite of Office applications, browser, JANET connection and access to a shared filestore for cross-IOE work. Exceptional access to software or equipment usually involves securing budget and managerial support. A wireless network is also provided, and this allows authentification via Eduroam. Students are provided with access to computing cluster rooms and terminals in the Library, although we know from student experience surveys that there are issues with access and speed with these machines; additionally, wireless is unavailable in student halls.

Staff and students are given a user account and an IOE email address, and these are used to access further secure services (such as the VLE or student databases). A recent IT Services Review has proposed a number of developments, which include moves to outsource and virtualise a range of services. The implications of this for non–standard PC builds – as might be needed by software developers, say – have not yet been fully worked through. We also know from surveys of the student experience that at least some of our students would prefer to use an existing email account instead of their IOE one, and that they find the frequency of password changes (driven by security concerns) to be an issue.

The Library provides access to a world-leading collection of resources. In recent years, the library has dramatically increased access to electronic texts, including online journals, e-books, electronic copies of theses and a pre-print collection of publications by IOE staff. Access to these is via IOE login, sometimes with an additional step (e.g. Athens verification).

The Institution’s VLE is currently being replaced. For the last few years, the IOE has used a hosted service from Blackboard, with a licence shared across the Bloomsbury Consortium (the IOE, Birkbeck, SOAS, the RVC, LSHTM). A year before the expiry of this licence, a business case was developed and accepted to replace this service with a cluster of Moodle instances (one per college, plus one shared instance), hosted by ULCC. This was intended to achieve slight pedagogic advantage, along with a
more responsive hosting environment and considerable cost savings. The new VLE is currently being deployed; this process involves separate projects at each college, coordinated by one cross-college Programme Board. The IOE’s project follows a modified PRINCE II methodology; is being project managed by the Head of the Learning Technologies Unit (Dr Martin Oliver); reports to a board chaired by the Associate Director for Open Mode (Professor Diana Laurillard); and includes representation from IT Services, the Learning Technologies Unit, the Library, Administrative staff, Teaching staff and students. Linked to this, the Bloomsbury Consortium is now embarking on a review to replace its synchronous conferencing application (Elluminate/Blackboard Collaborate).

Skills

At the level of skills, various groups are involved in providing support for staff and students. Staff Development at the IOE coordinates the work of IT Services, the Learning Technologies Unit and others in providing training. ("Others" include external consultants providing training in areas such as finance applications, database systems, etc.) The majority of workshops, 'taster' sessions and lunchtime discussions (aimed at awareness raising or discussing ideas) that are offered can be characterised as operating at the 'skills' level, addressing the "how to" of technology use. This includes recurrent training around commonly used applications (including Office applications, for example) as well as training offered in response to identified demand (e.g. current training in the use of Moodle, which is being deployed as a replacement to Blackboard). Additionally, self-study resources are available to staff and students for a variety of applications. This includes access to a training module from Epigeum entitled, "Learning and Teaching with Technology"; however, a recent review of this showed that the number of staff who had chosen to use the resource was minimal (a finding consistent with the preferences for training patterns expressed by staff in the Open Mode survey referred to above).

The Library also provides support and training in relation to information literacies, including online resources such as a virtual library induction. However, these might be better categorised as part of
the 'practice' level of support. IT Services also provides staff with access to Media Services, a team that can undertake media production work. This division of labour means that staff who do not have media production skills themselves can still find ways to create tailored resources for learning and teaching.

Practices

At the level of practices, patterns of provision are somewhat different. Students receive support primarily in the context of their programmes of study, which will introduce them to any specific applications or resources that they need to use. Other areas of support are provided by groups such as the Academic Writing Centre, which will introduce them to technologies used in the context of academic literacy development, and the Library, which provides support and instruction on the use of search engines and databases in the context of developing information literacy.

Staff are supported primarily through peer-led sessions, including faculty learning and teaching committee discussion sessions, programme team meetings, workshops on institutional policies and processes, lunchtime discussion groups (such as a faculty-specific group discussing e-learning, facilitated by a learning technologist), and so on. Support for curriculum design, development and delivery is also provided by the Learning Technologies Unit. The Unit works with around seven module developers (usually individuals, but sometimes small teams) each year to provide support and guidance on appropriate uses of technology in learning and teaching. The Learning Technology Fellows in the Unit draw on these consultancy-style meetings to share practice across the IOE, using previous work as case studies that can inform new developments. (Some of this is formally documented in written case studies, available via the LTU website; however, these case studies are primarily used as a point of reference in LTU conversations with staff, rather than standing as self-contained instructional resources.)
Identities

Digital literacy at the level of identity is primarily expressed through formal roles. For example, LTU staff members are designated as Learning Technology Fellows; the Head of the LTU is a standing member of committees such as the Validation Sub-Committee of Teaching Committee, or Corporate Systems Programme Board, with responsibility for advising on uses of technology in learning and teaching. The Faculty of Policy and Society has an e-learning Manager, who works in a similar role to the LTU Fellows. The Academic Writing Centre has just appointed an elearning specialist tutor tasked with developing digital resources to support writing. The Library supports a range of technologies for digital literacies such as Endnote, has been innovative within the institutional context in terms of implementing technologies such as Twitter, developing online ‘Campus Guides’ and implementing QR codes. There is a dedicated librarian specialised in supporting research students. In addition to the formal roles, many individuals have developed a reputation on the basis of specific areas of expertise, which they have shared with their peers.

Students’ digital literacy is less visible; for example, the Students’ Union has a website and Twitter feed, but these operate on a collective basis rather than being associated with an individual. Since students’ digital literacy practices are predominantly contextualised within their programmes of study, they are hard to identify at an IOE-wide level.

This lack of visibility and the level of digitally literate identities will be considered further in the sections that follow.

4. IOE student practices, identities and needs

The IOE is a predominantly postgraduate institution, and as such the student body exhibits particular features and needs in terms of digital literacies which may be different or more pronounced than those found at a large undergraduate university. One significant feature is the fact that the student body is composed almost entirely of mature students, which has implications for the support and
development of their digital literacies in general, and with regard to educational process in particular. In most cases IOE students have been out of formal education for several years, and as a result may never have used digital technologies currently regarded as mainstream in UK higher education, such as virtual learning environments, online library catalogues and electronic journals – or at least, may have not used them for some time. However, the fact that the students are mature professionals means that in many cases they come to their studies with years of experience of using digital technologies in the workplace; which may be a school, college, university or educational authority. In this regard, the students might be confident users of technologies common in other contexts, including in their personal lives, and are likely to have well-established digital identities, repertoires of digital practices and habitual domains separate from those offered by the IOE.

A further particular feature of the institution is that it is a specialist HEI focused on Education. In this regard, many of the students bring with them well-established identities as teachers, lecturers, classroom assistants and other types of educational roles which they regard as central to their identities. Many students attend on a part-time basis, while continuing to work full-time or part-time in their professional contexts. In the case of PGCE students, large chunks of their course are spend on school placement, with classes at the IOE taking place one day a week. The Masters and PGCE programmes are either one year full-time or two years part-time, which means that students are engaged with the IOE for a shorter period than the period undergraduates would attend an honours degree course. The distance students are based in locations all over the world and may never visit the IOE or meet a lecturer face-to-face. For all of these reasons, the degree of investment in the identity of ‘IOE student’ is likely to be somewhat lower than that of a school-leaver attending university full-time, and their relationship to the institution is different as a result. On the basis of our first-hand knowledge of the IOE and the student body, we anticipated at the beginning of the project that IOE students would have a hybrid, complex set of roles and identities and that this would be reflected in their digital literacy practices, developmental needs and priorities.
A related feature of IOE students is the varied demographic spread of our student body. The majority of our students are female, and many of our students - male or female - are likely to have family responsibilities in addition to work and study commitments. Significant numbers of our students come from black and minority ethnic communities, and many students are first generation entrants to higher education. Many students live and work in areas of London which suffer significant social and economic deprivation. As such, the IOE is in no sense an ‘elite’ institution, and the student body reflects its deep engagement with the complex multicultural social and educational landscape of London. However, it should be noted that the student body includes a significant proportion of international students from a large number of countries, with a broad range of educational cultures, and varied experiences of digital literacies. In some cases, our international students may have had little or no experience of the technologies required for study at the IOE, and are required to familiarise themselves with these while also adapting to an unfamiliar system, language, culture and set of educational values and expectations.

Student baselining research

It was recognised at the outset that IOE students can be identified as four main groups in terms of broad course type or mode of engagement, and that these differ in several important respects. These are Masters students, Doctoral students, PGCE students and Distance students. The nature of these courses of study is markedly different in terms of focus, mode of staff and student engagement, priorities, balance of theory and practice, assessment tasks, and the extent to which students are expected to work independently. Due to this, the baselining research around student practices and needs was conducted treating each of these groups separately in order to investigate their distinct priorities in detail.

The first step in the process was to review and reanalyse existing institutional data relating to student uses of technologies and their experiences of it. As a postgraduate institution, the IOE administers the iGraduate Survey biannually. We requested and were granted access to recent IOE
iGraduate returns, and reviewed these results. On the basis of the first analysis, we determined that the quantitative data would not be informative for our baselining exercise in term of digital literacies, due to the fact that there is little explicit focus on educational technologies in the questions posed, but more seriously due to the fact that it is effectively a feedback exercise, asking respondents to rank their degree of satisfaction with a range of aspects of their experience, and as such did not offer us any useful data regarding student uses of technologies or developmental needs with respect to digital literacies. We also reviewed the qualitative comments made by the survey participants and reanalysed these, focused only on comments which related to uses of technologies or learning spaces more generally.

Several themes were found to emerge from the data, which coincided with the model developed by Sharpe & Beetham (2010), and so were classified in terms of access, skills, practices and identities. However, these primarily confirmed known issues or else failed to identify problems with sufficient precision. For example, there were many comments about gaining access to Blackboard; Registry is already reviewing its business processes to try and address this problem, and the IOE’s supported VLE is being replaced (by Moodle), which may change the licensing issues that led to some of the previous delays. Some modest issues were identified – such as poor use by some staff of PowerPoint – which would be easily amenable to skills training. However, useful information about practices or identities was notably absent. (A full copy of the report is available in Appendix 1.)

On the basis of this re-analysis of the iGraduate data, it became clear that the institution was not in possession of a meaningful data set which provided insights into our students’ practices and needs surrounding digital technologies for their studies and future careers. This was seen as a cause for concern, given the central role that technologies now play in higher education teaching and learning, research and writing, and also given the fact that the IOE is tasked with producing world-class postgraduates capable of assuming positions of responsibility in teaching and learning, curriculum development and a range of other functions - or in the case of PhDs making a significant
contribution to research – all of which now takes place in contexts of practice where confidence and capability with a range of digital technologies is essential.

In order to address this lack, it was apparent that in-depth qualitative data would be required, focusing on day-to-day student practices, needs and experiences. As a first step in that process, ethics clearance was granted for focus groups, which were conducted with the four groups of students identified above. Volunteers were sought via the Students’ Union, with the incentive of a £20 shopping voucher offered to each participant. Participants were given information about the project and the purpose of the research, and were given assurances regarding the ethical standards being used in the project to protect identities and secure data confidentially, going on to give informed consent. (See Appendix 2.) The face-to-face focus groups were run by Jude Fransman – it was felt that as a recently-graduated PhD student she would be seen as a more ‘neutral’ and perhaps more approachable facilitator than either Lesley Gourlay or Martin Oliver, who are members of academic staff and heads of services at the IOE, although Lesley attended these to assist Jude and introduce the project. The focus groups were video-recorded, to allow for accurate transcription of the group discussions. In the case of the distance students (who were spread across several countries) the focus group was conducted and recorded via the virtual classroom Elluminate, utilising voice chat. As Jude was known to these students as a tutor, Lesley conducted the online focus group with Martin assisting.

Table 1 provides an overview of the profiles of the students who participated in the focus groups.
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<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. M</td>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Overview of focus group participants

For each focus group, the students were first asked to draw a ‘map’ representing their uses of technologies, including domains of use, devices and purposes. This was intended as a warm-up exercise to help each student focus on the topic. These maps were collected to form part of the initial analysis. An example map can be seen below:
The maps were varied in style, with some students simply writing a few words across the page, and others using colours and drawings to represent their uses of technologies. The maps identified multiple physical domains of practice, including the IOE, transport, the home and the school (as a site for work practices). They also highlighted the differentiated nature of these domains, with subsets of devices being used for particular purposes according to the domain – such as mobile devices being used on trains, certain academic tasks being avoided in settings where login procedures were slow, social networking being used in some settings but not others, and so on.
The focus group facilitator went on to pose a range of questions and topics for discussion, using a semi-structured schedule designed to investigate students’ domains, practices, identities and development needs. (See appendix 3.) Clearly, there was significant variation within each of the focus groups in terms of student background, course of study, digital literacy practices, identities and preferences. However, it was also possible to discern some patterns and differences between the four groups in various respects. The next section will provide an overview of the main findings of the focus groups.

*Masters students*

This group discussion covered a range of topics, but a recurrent theme was the IOE VLE (Blackboard) as a central site of technological engagement for these students in their studies. Access to the VLE, and in particular navigating it in order to find resources posted by tutors, were raised as issues. This suggests a central position for the VLE as a key interface and source of access to texts such as slideshows and reading materials in the IOE’s provision of taught Masters courses:

> Well, I think something [unclear]... quite difficult for under pressure. Like, when I was, um, I was new here, it takes maybe two weeks to get access to Blackboard because a lot of times they said that, er, password is not valid, or user name is... Yeah, it's pretty much confusing for the freshers. And I think there should be a little more induction or, like, instruction on how to use these.

> I think that happens a huge amount, to be honest. A lot of times, people, you know, they'll find something and they'll post it on, on Blackboard saying this is an article. I know you'll have difficulty because I did, then everyone, kind of, gets it. And, and the one or somebody will have it and then they'll photocopy it a few times. And it's strange because it varies depending on different modules. We've got one module that's brilliant, absolutely fantastic, I've absolutely no problem at all; everything is right there. And the other one that seems, for some reason, consistently to have problems.
Issues of access to resources more generally were also evident in this discussion:

Like, before you get on the internet or on the computer, you have to wait, like, ten minutes before it's starting up. It's, like, I'm doing nothing for ten minutes... It takes a really long time before the computer is accessible. And then if you go on the internet, the internet at the IOE is also not that great because sometimes, like, oh, it crashed and you have to wait again and then you have to log in again. It's, like, I like the library for copying books and when you're studying, like, reading my things I have to read for the lecture, but going on the internet it's, like, not my favourite space to go on the internet.

Aside from covering access and practices, the discussion also touched on identities, with some students reporting that they had more than one digital identity, that of a teacher but also of a student:

I do use Facebook for both purposes because I'm a lecturer back home, I teach at a university. And most of my students who use Facebook are in my friends list. But I have, sort of, separated them into two groups. I do share some things with only my friends, I don't share those with my students because they're in a student group and they can't see everything I share. And in that way, I, actually, use Facebook for all of these purposes.

I have two digital identities. And, sort of, for my friends, I am a dedicated friend, and for my juniors, I'm a, er, dedicated mentor. And I try to maintain that identity to all my accounts, Facebook, all my email, to those, I try to carry on those impressions.

PhD students

In contrast, the PhD students focused a significant proportion of their discussion on library online databases, issues related to gaining access to other academic libraries, and using electronic journals. This focus reflects the nature of their course of study, which is characterised by independent and original research into original areas of enquiry. The discussion focused on detailed practices to
finding information and navigating large and complex academic libraries, both physically and virtually:

I go there knowing what, but then I have a habit of, well, advice from my supervisor is pick a section and then I’ll walk through that section for a good half an hour and look at the other books, because then usually they're in, you know, in the same area.

It’s quite funny ’cause when I started, I did my Masters here and I figured it out by myself how to use the library. And I never made sense of how they did it, I just, you know, would search on the catalogue and then follow it and find the books I needed. And because I liked to wander around the shelves and see what's around, that was very helpful for me. Um, but then when I had the PhD induction, then they explained how the catalogues worked and what it means, and I was like, ah, there is a logic behind it. [Laughter]

It was apparent that for this group of students, technologies could be transformative for their practices as researchers:

But my whole way of working changed as I... I’d been doing my MSc and I'd been writing essays in a sort of traditional way by printing things out and then notating and then typing it, blah, blah, blah, writing my little references list. And then I suddenly like got into EndNote and I suddenly became this person who just was like, phew, [unclear] [overtalking] put it all into EndNote, print it out and I was like, whoa, this could be really, really quick, like wow, you can seriously get some stuff done this way, um, because it’s like you can be so fast, you can read the abstract and go, no, don’t need that. Or you can read the abstract and just quote a little bit from the abstract and straightaway it’s in your bibliography and it’s just like you can work like a demon, you know, you really can.

Technologies had also enabled more effective supervision for this student, who thought that the IOE should provide Skype booths for students:

My, my supervisor, he lives in (town in Midlands) and he said to me, oh, can we do our supervision on Skype? And I was like, no. And I thought, that’s silly, why not, you know. And it’s like a lot of
companies nowadays have video conferencing facilities and it’s just, it wouldn’t even take up much space, you know.

When asked what they had struggled with, databases were mentioned:

Sometimes the databases don’t really work in the sense that you’re searching for an article and then you have to go a huge amount of steps until you actually get to the article. And sometimes it’s, uh, something that happens in the network system so it doesn’t give you straightaway the [coughing]. And that’s sometimes is a bit frustrating.

Some of the PhD students also expressed the view that social life and study should be kept separate in technology use:

I think despite all the Twitter and everything, people are still using email like for a lot, most things really I think… I keep quite a distinction between my private life and my, um, and my work life so I don’t really like using Facebook for work things because I think, well, yeah, there’s like pictures of me doing stupid things on Facebook, you know. I don’t want to… I want to keep them separate and it’s… I know people who have got two Facebook profiles and then that’s really confusing ‘cause then when you search for the person it comes up with two and it’s just not, oh, where do you draw the line, you know. I mean, I do think it can be quite dangerous. I’ve worked for the government and we were very much told to be very careful about Facebook.

**PGCE students**

It proved extremely challenging to recruit sufficient numbers of PGCE students, reflecting the peripatetic nature of their engagement with and attendance at the IOE. At the December focus group we had several no-shows and more than one student who had to leave early, which forced us to conduct a shorter discussion, skipping the mapping exercise. At the time of writing, we are finalising a second PGCE group, which is also proving marginal in terms of numbers available to attend.
However, despite the shorter time of one hour, the discussion with the 5 participants demonstrated some striking differences between this group and the others. In particular, the central role of the school placement and the relatively marginal position of the IOE emerged as a significant finding. This was apparent in the fact that the students seldom check their IOE email accounts. It emerged that for these students, the school was the main site of learning and also of technological engagement and the development of digital literacies, such as learning to use interactive whiteboards and visualisers:

Ah, I’m doing a PGC in secondary mathematics and, ah, outside here... because now I’m working in a school and, ah, I think the interactive board... interactive whiteboard [?], it was really useful and, ah, I learned how to create different slides and how to use it because I didn’t use it before. And I think that’s quite useful for students to keep them focused on what you are going to say and then... yes, it’s quite nice to have a new technology nowadays.

Well, at our school [unclear] we have... um, every classroom has a visualiser where you put a piece of paper on and it projects it. And that’s a really good resource because you can use it either for your own sheets or you can easily project a student’s work and talk about it.

The theme of moving between contexts was apparent in this discussion, and how devices and applications enabled that:

Um, and then I guess just both for work and outside of that, I... it’s really useful just to have, like, a USB stick on you all the time so you can move things around from every computer

I’ve just recently got a new, um, new phone, the iPhone. ... before I used to write notes and email addresses everywhere and I used to lose my notes and everything, so it’s integrated... it’s, it’s my home use as well, but then it’s also made my life easier as a student because I can put all my contact details and it’s got an apps for notes, it’s got an apps for the calendar and everything. So it’s done both my jobs really well as a student and as well, like, maintaining my house.
Um, for work purposes, I've just discovered Google Docs and it's just made my life so much easier, rather than having to worry... because if I'm working here and then going to school, I don't have to worry about whether I've emailed it to myself or which USB stick it's on or whatever.

The discussion also focused on using Blackboard, and strategies for locating files or information on complex Blackboard sites:

[Laughter] My first experiences, I think... because I started mine last year, and I've just got used to Blackboard. And I used to think, oh, my God, it's like Pandora's box, you open... click on a, um, folder and then, you know, three different folders come up. And then you click on another one and there's a whole list of readings; you click on that reading and there's another sub, sub-readings.

Well, I was in a placement with another colleague... um, student, and, um, she said to me, did you know we've got our results for that assignment? And I said, where? You know, I'd been looking on there as well. And then she goes, now, you go in there and you go in there. And I said, yes, I did that. And then she goes, oh, when I get home, I'll talk to you and I'll tell you exactly where I went.

Throughout the discussion, it became apparent that the school was seen as the primary site of practice, and that the IOE was seen as rather peripheral in virtual terms:

Once you're in school, you tend to kind of prioritise that as being kind of the real stuff. [General agreement] And then, like, in... I do now. I mean, at school I get emails... just such a vast quantity of emails that I'm, I, I am checking it really regularly. And I think that you just... I, I mean, I don't check my IOE email very much during the week, maybe... because I come in only on Fridays, I maybe check it on Thursday to see what the timetable is for Friday. But other than that, I don't really check it, and I think that's probably the case for most people.

I find it... I think, I think part of the reason why I don't check the IOE email as frequently is that it's a bit of a, um, lengthy process to get into it from remote access because you have to go into, like, the IOE website, then into Blackboard, and then you have to log in again.
Distance students

The distance focus group was not part of the original project plan, but after discussion we decided to add it as we felt this was an important and under-researched group. This focus group was conducted in January. The group differed from the others in that the students were on the same programme, so already knew each other from the online contexts of their course. They had interacted previously in the medium of Blackboard discussion boards and Elluminate using voice and text chat. They are based in a range of countries around the world, and study their Masters programme entirely online. (At the time of writing, we are awaiting the transcription, so verbatim quotes are not available.)

This discussion centred particularly on issues of connectedness and community. For these students, the nature of the online contexts exerts a powerful influence on their experience of being a student, shaping and to some degree constraining the nature of the interactions that they can have with each other, the tutors, the material and the institution itself. However, it was also noteworthy that participants also used other ‘unofficial’ channels of communication online in order to strengthen their sense of community where the official spaces were felt to be inadequate. Another emergent theme from this discussion was the view that the role of the tutor is in a sense magnified in the online context, as the tutor acts as the sole point of the contact with the institution.

Summary

Taken as a whole, these focus group findings reveal significant differences between these four groups, and highlight the need for the IOE to provide spaces for online engagement which recognise the context-specific access needs, practices and identities of our diverse groups of students. This initial analysis reveals several themes. They suggest that for the Masters students, Blackboard is the primary technological site of practice - in this case, the salient technology is acting as a key interface between the institution and the student. The PhD student data, in contrast, suggests that technologies for them are primarily about investigation, detection and sourcing of information individually, primarily through library systems. For the PGCE students, the role of technologies
seemed to be largely to enhance teaching practice on school placement, or to enable smooth transitions between contexts of school, home and the IOE. Finally, for the distance students, technology appeared to represent a space which could enable – or present barriers – to the formation of an online community.

*Multimodal journaling*

In order to gain a more in-depth understanding of these four groups and their uses of technologies, a further in-depth stage of baselining research is currently being conducted. This is designed to investigate the day-to-day practices and needs of these four groups of students in an ethnographically-oriented way, focusing on the complexities of lived experience over six months, as opposed to replying solely on self-report data from interviews, surveys or focus groups. Longitudinal multimodal journaling using handheld devices was chosen as an appropriate methodology for this purpose. This is a generative approach to exploring day-to-day practices, as it does not require onerous written reflection, but instead requires the participant to document day-to-day engagement with technologies in the form of photos, videos, short notes, sound files or other formats, as appropriate.

These images or videos might focus on devices, domains of practice, activities or identities in a range of ways. An example is given below which was used in the pilot as the stimulus for in-depth discussion in the interview about the interviewee’s use of Skype:
Both Lesley and Jude have had experience of working with longitudinal visual methodologies in this way, and so the team had the appropriate expertise to use this approach. However, to ensure that the methodology would generate the right type of data, a pilot was conducted over approximately a month within the team, with Martin, Jude and Lesley documenting individual practices using iPod Touch handheld devices. We then piloted both the first second interview schedules (together), recording the interviews and reflecting on their degree of success. This demonstrated that the methodology worked well, allowing day-to-day practices to be described, ‘curated’ by participants as a student-led form of analysis, but also reinterpreted by researchers in relation to institution-wide themes and concerns.

The interviews used in this approach began with another, more detailed mapping exercise and then went on to a ‘digital literacies biography’ where the interviewee was asked about their background, experiences and attitudes towards educational technologies. The rest of the pilot interview focused on the images and videos, with the interviewee interpreting them and explaining their significance.

Volunteers were sought from the focus group participants (three per group) and selected to maximise representativeness in terms of gender, nationality, ethnicity, age and programme of study.
At the time of writing, three initial interviews have been held, with others scheduled over early February. Participants have been matched with one of the three researchers for the duration of the project. They receive guidance on how to use the device to capture and store data (see appendix 4). A meeting will be held after one month to ensure all is progressing, with two further full interviews over the six month period (and email, online or face-to-face support available if needed). Data analysis will take place throughout, using an approach which allows participants input into lead the interpretation. Dissemination of results and recommendations to the institution as to how to develop digital literacies for these four groups will be developed on the basis of these in-depth case studies, along with the broader data outlined above.

Institutional cultures surrounding change

The final element of baselining on the project consists of a small-scale qualitative exploration of the IOE’s readiness for change around technologies and its institutional cultures surrounding change, focusing on contextual feature which might enable or inhibit lasting innovation. This work will consist of a series of interviews with key individuals in the institution closely concerned with technological change projects in recent years. The focus is on narrative exploration of what worked (and perception of why), what was sustained, what barriers or unexpected outcomes were experienced, and the lessons learned for future projects. This strand of baselining has begun, and will be completed alongside the student journaling project. Early themes to arise have been the importance of grassroots work and relationship building for ‘buy-in’ and sustainability, and the need for clear governance structures and senior management support.

5. Conclusions

The baselining work for this project confirmed that there is an established base of practice across the IOE, but more importantly identified a number of gaps in our understanding. Specifically, students’ digital literacy practices are frequently contextualised by their programmes of study, work
contexts, personal lives and so on; their relationship with the IOE is varied and can be fragmented; and institutional approaches and services that assume a homogeneous student body are unlikely to satisfy their diverse needs.

The empirical work being undertaken within this project is, however, helping to develop our understanding of students’ needs. Particular issues include the separation of different kinds of technology use across sites of personal, professional and study activity; and the way in which individual systems or tutors can come to ‘stand for’ the institution, because they mediate the majority of the student’s interactions with the IOE.

The next phase of the project will develop this preliminary analysis, identifying specific issues that arise for groups of students. These will be used to specify the four interventions undertaken in the second year of the project. This will be complemented by the ongoing work on institutional readiness for change, which will inform the processes adopted by the interventions in current support structures and systems, to ensure embedding and sustainability.
Appendix 1: iGraduate Data Analysis

An analysis of existing data about students’ experiences of technology at the IOE
Martin Oliver and Lesley Gourlay

Introduction
This report is an output from the JISC-funded project, “Digital Literacy as a Postgraduate Attribute”, based at the Institute of Education, University of London (IOE). The project is part of a programme of work on digital literacies funded by the JISC (see http://www.jisc.ac.uk/developingdigitalliteracies).

The first phase of this project involves ‘baselining’ activities, intended to assess the IOE’s current policies, students’ needs and staff practices. This document is a report on the first part of this baseline work: an analysis of an existing data set to identify issues and priorities that could inform the remainder of the project.

The methodology, including a description of the survey that produced the data set, is presented below. This is followed by an overview of the findings, organised in relation to a programme-wide framework for conceptualising digital literacies. The report ends by drawing conclusions about digital literacies at the IOE, and identifying implications for the project.

Methodology
The IOE undertakes surveys of students’ experiences during their studies twice each year. Data collected from the Autumn 2009 and Summer 2010 surveys was made available to the project team. These data consisted of quantitative responses to Likert-scale items and qualitative responses to open questions about experiences of arrival; living; learning; and support; as well as recommendations to the IOE for improvements.

The quantitative data, being responses to questions about the entire student experience, did not address the project’s focus on digital literacy. Consequently, these data were discarded.

The qualitative comments, by virtue of being open responses, did contain responses that were, at face value, relevant to the project. Consequently, the entire qualitative data set was reviewed.

The first review of this dataset selected all responses that made any mention of technology, the library, access to information, or technology-mediated contact with staff or students. This subset of comments contained both complaints and praise, relating to areas that included infrastructure, patterns of use, administration, teaching and so on.

An attempt was made to code the data set against these categories, and this identified five areas about which comments were made: learning and teaching; administration; the library; personal (“living”) technologies; and the institute’s infrastructure. However, it should be noted that these areas reflect the questions posed in the survey (around arrival, learning, living, support and ‘recommendations’), rather than students’ spontaneous, unprompted accounts of their experiences.
Within each of these areas, it was possible to distinguish different kinds of comments – for example, comments focused on access as opposed to personal development. This distinction rapidly began to resemble an existing framework in use in the programme (Sharpe & Beetham, 2010), which distinguishes between functional access; skills development; situated practices; and identity work (‘creative appropriation’ in the original model, modified in later presentations for the JISC programme). Given the fit between this model and the preliminary analysis, it was decided to use this as a framework to analyse the comments in relation to each of the five areas. This provided the added advantage of ensuring the comparability of the work undertaken here with that of other projects in the programme.

Where separate sentences within comments addressed two or more of these themes, they were split and each part categorised separately; where two or more themes seemed to be addressed within the same sentence, they were classified in terms of the ‘higher’ category (prioritising identity relative to access). Statements were classified as being about identity where they made statements about what people or services are (e.g. “is excellent”); as practices where they described patterns of interaction or activity; as about skills and guidance where they discussed competence, advice or development; and about access where they described finding things, logging in or directly used the term ‘access’.

In the following section, the data are described, using the five themes and four levels.

**Results**

In total, 103 relevant comments were made. These were classified as followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learning and Teaching (inc. resources)</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Library (and reading resources)</th>
<th>‘Living’ technologies</th>
<th>IT services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The comments made in relation to each of these categories are summarised in the sub-sections that follow, organised primarily using Sharpe & Beetham’s framework and secondarily by thematic area. This decision reflected the intention to make these findings usable across the programme.

**Identity**

Comments in this category included claims about what things were, or were not. Few, if any, were about the students themselves – having been asked to comment on their experiences of the institution, most were about people or things with which they had come into comment.

When students did refer to themselves, it was usually an indirect reference. For example, one student described themselves in passing as “mature” and another as someone who was only studying online (an ‘online learner’). There were also two comments that suggested some kind of developmental trajectory: one asserted that they “were starting to feel like a real academic”, while another added, “I wish we will remain students and not become customers in future.”
Learning and Teaching

Comments about teachers were predominantly positive, whereas comments about teaching resources – primarily Blackboard – were critical. Interestingly, some settings in which learning and teaching took place were also singled out for comment.

Students asserted that teaching was “good”; that a supervisor was “high quality”; that lecturers were “experienced” and “recognised internationally”.

It terms of settings and resources, lecture halls as classrooms were described as “very poor”; and Blackboard was “very confusing” (a recurrent comment), “very disorganised”, and not “user friendly” (also repeated several times).

Library

The library staff were described positively: as “fantastic”, “experienced and helpful”, “always willing to help” and “very patient and tolerant”; the library was described as “world class” and “excellent”.

IT services

IT services were described on one hand as “great”, but on the other, as “not very qualified for the job”.

Practices

Learning and Teaching

There were comments about various aspects of teachers’ interactions with learners that involved technology. All of these were critical of current practice.

Many comments focused on a lack of dialogue. In particular, these described Blackboard as a barrier to communication or as a missed opportunity (“Feedback is just a letter on blackboard, nothing more constructive”; “It would be good to use Blackboard more, as a means for students sharing and staff responding to students”; “One of our modules was condensed due to the lecturer's research commitments abroad. […] We can now only access our lecturer via Blackboard yet it is supposed to be a face to face module.”).

There has been so much confusion on this course with regards to tasks going up on Blackboard, finding them, trying to access them, understand where they are and how they relate to the handbooks, it has been more about learning how to understand the way the course is taught that the actual content of the course which has been extremely frustrating and time wasting for a lot of us.
Also related to this issue were comments about use of email, and particularly, the lack of a timely response (for example, “my mentor did next to nothing to sort out the issues and very rarely even replies to my emails”).

Further comments focused on poor uses of PowerPoint (there were several such comments, such as, “Lecturers seem to just read what is on PowerPoint which means we switch off and just read the slides”; “We had a professor who came with 40 slides, only went through 20, left at break having just touched the subject and referred to the rest of the slides for further information”). There was an expectation that slides should be made available through Blackboard in advance of the session.

There was also the suggestion that staff are re-using resources as a way of teaching beyond their expertise (“many seem uncertain when asked questions or unfamiliar with their material, maybe because there are shared Powerpoints or lectures to create consistent teaching”).

Administration

Like the comments in relation to learning and teaching, many comments about administration practices focused on failed communication. Some of these were very general (“Communication systems don’t seem to work like they should”), but some specifically concerned the use of email. Particular criticisms included the institutional policy to email information to students’ official IOE addresses (e.g. “you must send us information to our preferred email addresses, not your preferred email addresses, like this one. We don’t check it, it is clunky and it isn’t student friendly”; there were several similar comments), and failure to respond to emails in a timely manner (“I have had problems with ‘admissions’ losing my information, entering incorrect information into the computer, taking a long time or ignoring e-mails”). It may be worth noting that comments about a lack of response were, primarily, in relation to queries about the administrative processes for securing accommodation.

There were also demands to overhaul enrolment and allow online registration.

Finally, there were comments that, implicitly, suggested that the IOE is over-estimating some students’ digital literacy. For example: “some of the information was very difficult to find […] just having guides available online can be confusing for people who have just arrived”; and, “there has been an over reliance on electronic systems to communicate information”. These could be seen as being in conflict with the previous comment, asking for more of the processes to be moved online, suggesting variability in students’ digital literacy.

Living Technologies

The small number of comments in this section focused on the lack of a welcome email from societies, and also included a comment about accommodation.
**IT services**

Of the three comments in this category, two were critical of the institution’s policy on passwords (“Over zealous password changes for the ICT systems is ridiculous”), while the third focused on the delay in getting a username and password set up at the point of registration.

**Skills**

**Learning and Teaching**

The two comments in this category asked for orientation to the online services available; there was also a request for staff to be trained in “VLEs accessible and useful for their students, they shouldn’t be treated as just dumping grounds for reading.”

**Administration**

Of the two comments here, one concerned the skills of administrators who had failed to accurately input student data, and the other concerned an introduction to the institution’s systems and support.

**Library**

The only comment in relation to the library concerned the desirability of library induction. (This is, in fact, already provided – for groups, individuals, and also as an online self-study resource.)

**IT services**

The only comment in this category concerned a student’s problems with passwords and Blackboard; this was classified as a skills issue as the IT Services support staff were described as being “friendly and helpful” while helping the student to learn how to address the problem.

**Access**

More comments were classified as being about access than any of the other three categories. In particular, for both the themes of administration and IT services, there were more comments about access than there were for any other category. This may be because barriers to participation were seen as operational concerns, although access issues were visible in relation to all areas of institutional activity.

**Learning and Teaching**

Access issues in relation to learning and teaching were almost exclusively about Blackboard. These included numerous comments about initial delays in getting access to the Virtual Learning Environment as a result of delays with enrolment; this problem delayed students’ access for up to two weeks. In some cases, students were issued with guest logins as a work-around for this issue.
Other problems with Blackboard included its layout (so that, for example, tasks or readings could not be found), and “malfunctions” such as down-time for maintenance.

The only other comment in this category concerned access to computers:

There are not enough computers in the Institute, especially in areas where you can talk in groups/plan a presentation etc.

**Administration**

Comments relating to administrative access primarily criticised the decision to provide information online, and particularly in Blackboard. Again, while these comments are explicitly about institutional issues, they also reflect students’ views of their own digital literacy.

So much is online and there is an assumption we know what to do, where to go. We all (the students) have to glean it from each other.

However, another student commented that “in this day and age” processes such as registration should be possible online.

Related comments concerned things like accessing course handbooks.

I wanted to get the Programme Handbook of my own and a related course online but was unable to do so. This limited my choice of option modules because I was unable to get the information I needed in sufficient time to make an informed choice.

**Library**

Unlike the other categories within ‘access’, there were positive comments about access to the library and its resources.

The experience of being in the library and having access to articles and researchers is fantastic.

There were, however, a majority of comments that were negative. These include insufficient access to computers (a repeated concern), slow sign-on, limited number of books (when recommended to whole course cohorts), limited access to databases, and having to log in separately to Athens. There was a request for “more access to online books and journals”.

Alongside these comments were points made about the temperature, noise, crowding and so on that influenced what people felt that they were able to do within library spaces.
Comments here all concerned the way in which institutional systems were ‘locked down’ to prevent certain kinds of activity (e.g. “downloading music and television programmes, talking to friends on Skype”). Students comments that this “makes the communication of students difficult”, so that one student reported that “I had to purchase my own WiFi”.

The Internet in Woburn Square is horrible. We pay the same money, why we have bad Internet quality?

IT services

Within this category, some comments focused on a lack of access to hardware, such as computers, printers and scanners. There were also criticisms of the speed of the institutional network, and “that IT support was so rigidly in office hours and no weekend support. For a part-timer that’s difficult to access.” However, there was also one positive but very general comment (“The university is well equipped”).

Conclusions and recommendations

Few of the comments made in the iGraduate survey are directly useful to the project, or even to informing the development of practice at the institution. The most prevalent issues – such as problems with passwords, the organisation of Blackboard and access to computers – are well known already. Some of these have already been addressed (e.g. Blackboard is being replaced with Moodle, partly because users preferred this alternative), or are in the process of being addressed (e.g. ‘business process reengineering’ is taking place within registry, partly to support the development of online registration). Others cannot be addressed under current economic circumstances (e.g. creation of more spaces with computer access). Even with the other issues, caution remains prudent: there is no real indication of the prevalence of any given concern, for example. (Examples of such cautious development are suggested below.)

However, for this project, the primary problem with the data is that they reflect the survey that generated them rather than the aims of this owrk. For example, the topic areas identified by analysing the quotes are primarily a reflection of the topic areas in the survey (e.g. “learning”). Moreover, they focus on students’ experiences of the institution – not on the students or their actions per se. It remains possible to infer some things about students’ digital literacies – for example, from the comments that putting information online is undesirable, or the request to support online enrolment. However, these two examples point to differing levels of digital literacy, but the data provide no clues about the prevalence or characteristics of respondents who want more or less online engagement.

In spite of these issues with the data, there are some specific areas that can be used to develop institutional practice, such as the problems of poor PowerPoint presentations, which could be addressed by further promotion of training for teaching staff. Similarly, some of the problems with passwords and locked-down network use could be considered as part of a revision of current IT
policies, as could the decision to direct correspondence to an official student IOE email account rather than their preferred address. Administrators dealing with student enquiries could also come to an agreement about response times to emails, and communicate this more clearly to students or enquirers.

In terms of supporting the development of students’ digital literacy, there are passing references that suggest particular processes or forms of engagement are of use. For example, there was reference to support from peers and ‘on demand’ support from librarians or IT staff. Such comments do not answer the project’s concerns, but they do at least raise questions about students’ support networks and their personal development that the project could explore in later parts of the baseline work. Similarly, there were several comments that suggest that the environment – not just the computer or system, but the material and social setting – had some influence on their ability to engage with learning and teaching. This aspect will be explored further, within the longitudinal, ethnographic phase of work.

In summary, while the analysis here is reassuring – in that it confirms existing expectations and ideas about students’ needs – the data set is too limited to advance the project in any substantive way. It is, however, helpful in clarifying topics that warrant further investigation in later phases of the baseline work.

References
Apples 2: Consent form

Jan. 2012

Dear ______________,

Thank you very much for volunteering to take part in the JISC-funded ‘Digital Literacies as a Postgraduate Attribute’ research project, which focuses on your experiences and attitudes towards using technologies as part of your studies.

The focus group will focus on these themes, and will be recorded and transcribed for analysis later. We will not inform any other party of your participation in this research. The recording and transcripts will be held securely, and accessed only by members of the research team. All transcripts will be fully anonymised, with any identifying names or details removed, and your real name will not be used at any stage, or your identity or those of others disclosed*. The quotes and findings of the research may be used in conference / seminar papers or published articles. We may contact you via email to ask if you would be willing to take part in further data collection as part of the project, but you are under no obligation to consent to this.

You will receive transcripts of the focus group. You may ask for more information about the project or withdraw at any time without giving a reason. If you wish to make a complaint about any aspect of this research process, you are welcome to contact: Dr Mary Stiasny, IOE Pro-Director Learning and International m.stiasny@ioe.ac.uk If you would like more information, please consult our website http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning/developingdigitalliteracies/ DigLitPGAttribute.aspx or contact me at the email address below. Please sign below if you give your consent for the research,

Many Thanks,

Dr Lesley Gourlay (Project Director)

Director, Academic Writing Centre
Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London WC1H 0AL
l.gourlay@ioe.ac.uk

I consent to the proposed research

Name: _____________________________________________

IOE programme: ___________________________________

IOE email address: _________________________________

Signature: _________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________

* All procedures used in this research project will conform to the UK Data Protection Act (1998) and the British Educational Research Association Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011).
Appendix 3: Focus group schedule

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT AND FOCUS GROUP
   - Introduction to the project to be adapted from informed consent form
   - Aims of the focus group (including ‘this is not a consultation’)
   - Call for volunteers for the ethnographic study

2. WARM-UP QUESTIONS
   - What are the key digital resources (devices, technologies, platforms etc.) you use in your daily life?
   - What are the key digital resources you use for your studies?

3. ACCESS
   - What are the spaces (inside and outside of the IOE) in which you access digital resources?
     OR DRAW A MAP OF YOUR DIGITAL ACTIVITY IN THE IOE TO IDENTIFY SPACES AND RESOURCES
   - Where do you find information on and support in accessing these resources?
   - Who controls these spaces and how much freedom do you feel you have within them?

4. PRACTICES AND LEARNING
   - What types of changes have there been in your experience with digital resources since your last educational experience?
   - When have you really struggled with using technologies in your studies?
   - How have you dealt with or resolved these challenges?
   - What do you feel you would still like to learn?
   - How have digital resources shaped your social experience at university?

5. IDENTITY
   - How would you describe your student identity?
   - How would you describe your digital identity?
   - Is your digital identity as a student different from in your social or professional life? In what ways?
   - What student or digital identities have felt others have imposed on you?
GUIDELINES FOR JOURNALLING WITH THE IPOD TOUCH

1. GETTING STARTED

The complete user’s guide to the iPod Touch is available at the following link:

You can also view the guide on your iPod touch once you are connected to the internet through wifi.

View the guide on iPod touch: In Safari, tap 

Add an icon for the guide to the Home screen: When viewing the guide, tap , then tap “Add to Home Screen.”

The iPod touch User Guide is available in many languages.

View the guide in a different language: Tap “Change Language” at the bottom of the screen on the main contents page, then choose the language you want.

To set up your iPod Touch you will need to:

- **Register your iPod**: The first time you switch your iPod on you will be guided through this process. You can choose your own level of privacy.
• **Sync your iPod with your computer:** You can specify the content that you would like to sync.

• **Connect to the internet via Wi-Fi:** You must have access to Wi-Fi to connect to the internet. At the IOE go to ‘settings’ and select ‘Wi-Fi’. Choose the ‘eduroam’ network and enter your username (e.g. pkbddlq@ioe.ac.uk) and your regular IOE password

2. **USING THE IPOD**

The following pre-installed apps should be particularly useful for the journaling:

• **Camera and video**
  Select the mode by switching between the camera/video settings and zoom in/out by moving your finger and thumb towards/away from each other on the touch screen. You can photograph/video yourself by selecting the reverse camera icon at the top left-hand corner of the screen. You can record short video diaries with this tool.

• **Voice Memos**
  Select the ‘utilities’ icon to access the voice memo app. You can record audio diaries with this tool or add an audio commentary to slideshows or videos.

• **Notes**
  Use the notes app to write lists or memos. This can be helpful for organising your data.

• **Messages**
  The researchers will send your instructions for data collection through instant messages.

• **FaceTime**
  You can communicate with the project researchers through this video calling app

You can use the camera, voice memos and notes apps without an internet connection, however, you will need to be connected to the internet to use ‘messages’ and ‘faceetime’.
3. INSTALLING APPS FOR JOURNALLING

To organise your data you may find it useful to install additional apps which will allow you to edit your data, annotate images or videos, and classify your data into different folders. To install new apps select the ‘App Store’ icon. If you know the name of the app you can search for it using the magnifying glass icon at the bottom of the screen. To browse all the available apps browse for free apps using the ‘categories’ icon at the bottom of the screen.

You may want to start by installing one or more of the following apps (but do feel free to try others if you want):

- **OneNote**
  This is a user-friendly app that allows you to organise ‘notes’ into ‘notebooks’. Each note can contain a photograph with a title and description. You can use the bullet-points and check-lists to create lists too. Unfortunately you cannot store video data in OneNote.

- **EverNote**
  This app is similar to OneNote but with a few more options – you can also record and add audio recordings to annotate your notes and tag your notes to make them more searchable.

- **Awesomenote (lite)**
  Again similar to OneNote and EverNote, this app offers even more options. You can customise your folders and set the ‘type’ and ‘theme’ of your notes. It works through Googledocs so you will have to set up an account if you don’t already have one. There is no video option, however, there is a ‘draw’ option for simple doodles.

- **Posterous**
  This is really a blogging app but through ‘posterous spaces’ you can set up your own private, shared or public spaces. You can also include video data through this app.

- **Doodlebuddy**
  You can annotate photos with this app or create your own doodles with a range of backgrounds, shapes, stamps and text. While this app doesn’t have the organisational advantage of the others (e.g. files, folders, notes) you can save your pictures in photo albums.
You will need an internet connection to connect to the App Store to install these apps.

4. **JOURNALLING ACTIVITIES**

Every 1-2 weeks you will be sent a set of simple data-collection activities to complete in the allocated time. The minimum requirements for these activities should not take more than 30 minutes per week to complete. However, you are very welcome to spend longer on these activities or to collect additional data if you wish.

The data you collect is likely to take the following forms:

- Inventories of the digital resources you use as a student
- Maps of the spaces you inhabit as a student
- Examples of your digital practices (captured through photo, video or audio recordings)
- Diaries of ongoing experiences with digital resources as a student

You will also be asked to edit and present your data in a form of your choosing. Further information will be provided on this after the initial phase of data collection.

In addition to the induction/introductory interview, you will be asked to attend two additional interviews at the middle and end of the data collection. In these interviews you will discuss your data and your experiences of data collection with the project researchers. All interviews will be conducted on a one-to-one basis.