LSIS Leadership in Technology (LIT) grant based intervention Impact study template

Provider name & contact details	East Durham College Ian Hall (Advanced Practitioner e-Learning) Houghall Campus Durham, DH1 3SG 0191 3754781
LIT Project title	Remote Observation of Animal Behaviour
The project	
What problem or issue you were trying to resolve or improve with this project	The East Durham College LSIS remote camera project stemmed from an initial idea the project manager had as preparations begun for the 2012/13 academic year. This involved the siting of web-cams at the animal unit and farm to record animal behaviour. This was deemed necessary due to a large increase in the number of animal care students using facilities at the unit and the projection for 2012/13 indicated a further 30% increase. The web-cam idea would allow students across college (and across the various campuses), and from their homes to access the unit/farm to record animal behaviour.
Why did you go for a technology-based solution	Our intention was to increase the use of technology in teaching and learning to then maximise and make more efficient use of existing resources. The camera would be central to this, but we would also utilise economically purchased tablet computers too. The various technology use would thus allow the department to reduce the stress on animals housed within the animal care unit whilst at the same time removing pressure (due to the increasing student numbers) on Animal Care Unit resources.
What did the project cost: LSIS funding + your	LSIS Funding = £6,002.90 College Contribution = £1,224.90 Total Project Costs = £7,227.80

organisation's contribution	
Describe what you did and what happened	The project manager, Ian Hall met with David Sugden, the appointed LSIS critical friend during the summer of 2012 to formulate an Action Plan and discuss the appointment of a mentor to help Ian navigate the project to its conclusion. Both of these aspects of the project have proved hugely beneficial.

Following the above meeting, David suggested that Mick Mullane might well be the right mentor for EDC. This proved to be correct. Through Mick's contacts, we were put in touch with a North Yorkshire company, C-Ways, who loaned us a CCTV camera as a proof of concept. With the help of Tech Services this was shown to be effective.

Working with our mentor and the College Technical Services team we eventually installed a CCTV web-cam within the Animal Care Unit at EDC Houghall Campus and purchased two hand-held video cameras. We were now able to record, remotely, animal behaviour in a more natural setting (without any humans present) and this has allowed many more students to have access to the resources within the animal unit, without causing the animals any undue stress.

One downside of our plan was that he fixed CCTV camera would be limited to one room at a time. However, the handheld cameras are able to go 'into the field' to record animal behaviours. Being waterproof they are also better suited to being out in all weathers - especially during lambing in the spring. Students are able to record footage that is then placed on the college VLE or used for their own assessment work.

The mentor's experience has been invaluable in tackling technical difficulties and has helped in liaising effectively with the EDC Technical Services Dept. We have been able to have the wireless capability at the college campus strengthened to allow the use of twelve economically purchased tablet PCs in teaching rooms that previously had no internet access. This has enabled the resources at the unit to be viewed during teaching sessions at the main college.

The use of the tablet devices has been so successful that our Student Services team have now acquired a further twenty tablet devices (Nexus 7) for use by students within the college resource centre. |

	We have also established the idea of an on-line hour whereby students have gone on-line at 7.30pm – 8.30pm on a Wednesday evening to discuss video footage obtained via the camera and video cameras, which have been placed on the EDC VLE. We have held three such sessions so far. This has been judged a success with 84% (voluntary) participation to date. A major benefit has seen the students accessing our VLE at times outside of the on-line hour and has encouraged staff to add more activities and resources. The VLE is now a place where animal care students go to do something active rather than just go to get some passive information. It has become a far more interactive destination. A training package for animal technicians and staff has been established.
The benefits and impact	
What benefits/ impact has the project had on:::	a. the work/ effectiveness of your organisation We have recorded a greater use of our VLE by students and staff, which will have an even greater impact as we begin to prepare for 2013/14. In the next academic year a proportion of each course will be delivered via the VLE and we will be introducing complete lesson packages for students to access on-line. The introduction and success of the "on-line hour" has brought into focus that the greater, planned use of technology in teaching and learning, across many areas of college can be a positive aid to student engagement and retention. As a result of our renewed confidence in, and ideas for the use of technology, we are now working with JISC TechDis to make accessible learning a key feature of our college VLE by embedding Xerte Learning Objects into course modules. b. the cost/ efficiency of activities The project has been financed with relatively little cost in proportion to the benefits seen. 30% more students have access to the animal unit than in previous years and more have done so via the VLE, meaning a stretched resource has coped with the increase in student numbers.

	The purchase of the Android tablet PCs has also been a great success as they have been used by many other curriculum areas as well as those involved in the LSIS project (via our successful booking system established within the learning resource centre). Teaching rooms that were not seen as technology rooms have been transformed and as a result our Student Services team have purchased 20 more tablet devices (Nexus 7) instead of fixed desk top computers.
	c. any other aspect of your work Another benefit has seen groups of IT students from our Peterlee Campus accessing the camera, visiting the animal unit and completing project work on the benefits of using IT in practical, working situations. We have already identified how the project could be extended: - placing video footage onto Xerte Learning Objects, - flipping classrooms and - the use of augmented reality will see benefits well into the future. We also aim to encourage the use of technology more pro-actively and productively in teaching and learning at East Durham College for the benefit of all colleagues.
What contribution to the success / smooth running of the project was made by:	LSIS funding essential Your mentor essential LSIS Associate essential
Do you have any comments on the funding, mentor or LSIS Associate	Mentoring has been key to the success of this project. David Sugden's help in formulating our action plan and keeping us on track has been hugely beneficial and Mick Mullane's experience and constant prompting and liaising with our Technical Services team has been invaluable in tackling a number of technical issues that have arisen as the project progressed.

What lessons did you learn / what tips would you give to other providers	That the appointment of a suitable mentor is key as well as a positive working relationship with the LSIS appointed critical friend. If the project is to be managed effectively ensure that the project is provided with the time and support required to achieve this. If you want success – be determined in reaching that goal.
Telling others	
What have you done to share /disseminate this project with others in the sector	We have used our Twitter account @EDCAnimalCare to promote the project extensively. This account has been enthusiastically embraced by our students. We have attended LSIS workshops and through our involvement with JISC TechDis Accessibility projects we have been able to bring the project to a larger group of organisations within the sector. The project has also being publicised on the LSIS web-site and on the LSIS newsletter. Locally we have used the Twitter account to contact local papers and we have featured several times in the Sunderland and Northern Echo's. We have also featured on our local station Radio Newcastle when we named three of the animals at the unit after the Breakfast Show presenters. The project has also being heavily publicised via our own college marketing department.
Provide a quote on your experience of the LSIS LIT project.	"Our VLE is now a place where animal care students go to do something rather than just go to get something and has become far more interactive." "The choice of the correct mentor is key to the success of your project"
Are you happy for us to use this	Yes

and your contact details for marketing and publications?	
Contact details for further information	Ian Hall (Advanced Practitioner, e-Learning) Ian.hall@eastdurham.ac.uk 0191 3754781

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