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An introduction to video-conferencing: Window to the World

ePioneers: Lynda Carter, Jean Truman

Mentor: Brett Bligh

Video-conferencing is an exciting ICT tool which has enormous potential within the educational context to stimulate and enhance learning and teaching. Students, staff and teachers were generally keen to explore this exciting, increasingly available and affordable, innovative medium but were apprehensive about training needs and technical support. In order to overcome these barriers and avoid 'white elephants' or lost opportunities, potential users needed to acquire new, technical knowledge and skills quickly and easily. This project aimed to better understand this process and to develop effective, clear, user-friendly guidelines in electronic form which would enable potential users with little or no previous experience of video-conferencing to set up video-conference links for a variety of purposes without over-reliance on technical support.

Quick Gains:
- Acquisition of new, technical knowledge and skills
- Opportunity to join a network of users
- Confidence to consider and use video-conferencing as a useful, pedagogical tool and as an integral part of learning and teaching
- Experience of working with innovative technology
- Opportunity to interact with teachers and learners over distance

Contribution to School\wider University e-learning development:
- Better understanding of the process of acquiring VC skills – skills which are transferable to other technical situations
- Examination of a relatively under-researched area to provide informative data and a set of VC guidelines
- More people able to use VC facilities with a minimum of support from technical staff leading to the creation of a network of regular VC users
- An opportunity to maintain a reputation for leading in this field and for knowledge and skills to filter into the local area through partnership schools
- Wider network of VC users increasing general expertise in this area
- Obtaining new technical skills resulting in greater ICT confidence generally and helping to develop a willingness to embrace other new technologies, creating/contributing to a positive, learning ethos within the School

++ This document is intended to be read as part of the ePioneers website ++
ePioneers: Taking ownership of e-learning
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