

Peer Instruction in the Humanities website

One of the stated aims of the *Peer Instruction in the Humanities* project is to create a website:

AIM #2: To create and maintain a freely accessible 'Peer Instruction in the Humanities' website. The website will contain information for all educators in the sector on the details of the method, the way it is being used in philosophy at Monash and reports on our evaluations of its effectiveness. Most importantly, the website will provide free access to the crucial resource for PI, the bank of ConcepTest questions.

The website will provide free access to the bank of ConcepTest questions for philosophy that we will create and test. We will also invite people who have adopted the method to contribute their ConcepTest questions and to share their experience and results. In this way, the website will serve as both a repository of knowledge and resources and as a forum for discussion and dissemination of the method.

Ideally the website should also be hosted on a Monash University server, preferably associated with the Arts faculty, be freely accessible from outside the university, and be relatively straightforward to maintain. It may also be good for there to be a restricted section in the website only accessible to people who have registered for access. Additionally it would be advantageous if the website could directly incorporate contributions from interested parties (eg. As a wiki).

1. Monash Hosted

There seems to be very limited options available for hosting at Monash: the Monash Web Hosting page at <http://www.its.monash.edu.au/staff/web/hosting/> is blank.

The simplest option would be to host the site under the <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/> domain using the Monash CMS as per departmental and personal staff pages. This could be maintained and updated by the project investigators or other administrative staff. This would have open access and would emphasise association with the Arts faculty. However it would be limited in functionality, requiring external participants to communicate via email with the webmasters to contribute.

A better option may be to set up an externally accessible wiki hosted on a Monash server. There are currently a number of wikis hosted at Monash which may be suitable for the purposes of this project:

- Medicine faculty: <http://wiki.med.monash.edu.au/>
 - Uses TWiki platform, which is powerful and flexible but not very user friendly
 - Is only accessible to people with an Authcate login (ie. Monash personnel only)
 - Is designed primarily for collaboration amongst Monash staff members
 - Would associate the project with Medicine rather than Arts
- BusEco: <http://intranet.buseco.monash.edu.au/twiki>
 - Uses TWiki platform, which is powerful and flexible but not very user friendly
 - Is only accessible to people with an Authcate login (ie. Monash personnel only)
 - Is designed primarily for collaboration amongst Monash staff members
 - Would associate the project with BusEco rather than Arts
- Engineering has a TWiki: <http://ctieware.eng.monash.edu.au/twiki>
 - Has very little content and not been active for some time
- The Science Faculty host an externally accessible TWiki site for the Monash Cluster Computing (MCC) Group: <http://www.mcc.monash.edu.au/Main/WebHome>
 - Is freely accessible from outside the Monash community
 - May allow registration of non-Monash users
 - This site seems the best template for the Peer Instruction website

One course of action could be to set up a meeting with Peter Stagg from ArtsWeb exploring the possibilities of setting up something similar to the MCC TWiki.

- ArtsIT ArtsWeb: <http://arts.monash.edu/artsit/artsweb/>
- Contact Peter Stagg: peter.stagg@arts.monash.edu.au

Monash's Integrated Collaboration Environment (ICE) Programme was also mentioned in the last meeting of the project reference group. This project is only in the early stages, and seems to be solely about collaboration *within* the Monash community, so does not seem all that useful for the purposes of this project. See: <http://www.monash.edu.au/staff/collaboration/>

2. Externally Hosted

The other option is to set up a *Peer Instruction in the Humanities* website hosted on a server external to Monash University. This would require registering a domain name and hiring some shared server space, both of which have a low cost associated with them.

The main advantage of external hosting is that it would allow far more freedom for the project website. It would, for example, allow the use of open source platforms such as MediaWiki (the same system that Wikipedia uses), which are designed for the sort of open access that would be beneficial for this project.

The main disadvantages are:

- it would dissociate the project from Monash (although there could still be a Monash page that links to the external site)
- it requires a degree of expertise for maintenance, requiring technical knowledge for backups and software upgrades
- as with any wiki it would require constant monitoring for vandalism or misuse

Eg: <http://www.jpaarons.net/pi>

Conclusion

At this early stage in the project it may be simplest to have the Peer Instruction site hosted in the School of Philosophy and Bioethics at <http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/phil/research/pi/>

NB. This page needs to be linked to from somewhere. It does not even come up when searching for "peer instruction" in the Arts Faculty search, although this page does:
<http://www.arts.monash.edu.au/phil/research/thinking/>

It would be worth exploring the option of setting up a wiki-style site in the Arts Faculty utilising the resources of ArtsWeb. In this regard it would be good to explore the possibility of setting up a MediaWiki site, although TWiki seems to be the preferred platform for other wikis in Monash. MediaWiki would be a much better platform than TWiki because it is more user friendly and more people would be familiar with it from their experience with Wikipedia.