



THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF MOODLE

Module Name

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to discuss the benefits and limitations of Moodle. The report highlights that Moodle is a very useful tool to universities, as teachers can provide course materials to students instantly, and students can access the materials wherever they are, on multiple devices. The report found that there are many benefits from the use of Moodle by universities, teachers and students. Conversely, many limitations were also identified that could detract from the desired function.

The report concluded that developers, teachers and students should be mindful of the potential limitations of Moodle to deliver the best user experience.

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1. Introduction

Moodle, which stands for 'Modular Object-Orientated Dynamic Learning Environment' (Muhsen, et al., 2013) is an open-source cloud-based software system used by education establishments world-wide to provide an online learning environment to students, teachers and administrators (Moodle, 2016). The software gives teachers the ability to provide course materials to their students in a layered structure that can contain varied information depending on the establishment. Moodle is an example of a 'Virtual Learning Environment' (VLE), which is deemed an essential tool to higher education establishments in the modern age (Costello, 2013).

Costello (2013) explains that Moodle is open source software, which means that it is free to develop and use by whoever downloads it. This is one of the reasons why it has become the most popular VLE choice in numerous universities world-wide (Monge & Escobar, 2011).

2. Main Findings

The use of a VLE such as Moodle can provide many benefits to students and teachers. On the other hand, there are some limitations to the system which should be considered prior to its use. These will be discussed in this section.

2.1 The Benefits of Moodle

A major advantage of using a VLE is the reduction in cost to the education institution.

Moodle, and other competitors such as 'Blackboard', provide a cloud-based open-source service that offers a significant cost saving to universities, as they do not need to develop their own software and they have no licensing fees to pay (Hand, 2015).

Monge & Escobar (2011) stated that students who frequently used Moodle to support their studies had better grades than students who rarely used it. This can be attributed to many key features that Moodle offers such as its excellent accessibility and interoperability. Due to its cloud-based nature, the platform is always up to date, no specialist hardware is needed to operate it, and it can be accessed on any Internet browser or device (Hand, 2015; Moodle, 2016).

Muhsen, et al. (2013) argue that a major advantage Moodle has over its competitors is its ease of use for students and teachers. Students find that the wealth of learning-based tools,

and its support of numerous file-types allows them to use the platform more intuitively. In addition, teachers find that they have lots of freedom to instantly provide their course materials to students (Monge & Escobar, 2011; Muhsen, et al., 2013).

2.2 The Limitations of Moodle

VLEs can have limitations compared to traditional learning methods. A factor that limits the reliability of a VLE service is the stability of internet and technology. As Moodle is a cloud-based system, it will only function while the technology it relies upon functions effectively (Hand, 2015). Any technology failures could lead to a situation where a student is unable to access the service at a critical time.

Monge & Escobar (2011) found that for VLEs such as Moodle to be used effectively, the teacher has a responsibility to explain the usefulness of the platform to students. Their findings show that students who have not been guided on the use of Moodle are less likely to continue using the platform as intended. Similarly, Roth (2015) found that in general, Moodle is not used to its full extent by students and teachers. It was shown that the continual removal of old learning materials from the platform is necessary to maximise the teaching and learning experience.

Due to the online nature of Moodle, and its ability to track the progress of students, it can be vulnerable to online attacks that could result in a breach of personal data. (Muhsen, et

al., 2013). It is therefore important that the developers keep the software up to date to defend against any potential breaches of data.

3. Conclusion

In conclusion, it is evident that when used correctly, a VLEs such as Moodle can be a very useful tool for teachers and students. It is evident that Moodle has become the primary choice for higher education establishments because of its ease of use, its high level of customisability, and its cost effectiveness. On the other hand, developers and users should be aware that there are also limitations to Moodle that should be considered prior to use.

From this report, it can also be concluded that a university that utilises Moodle needs a good team of developers to provide the best user experience for its teachers and students, and to keep the system secure from online attacks.

4. Reference List

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