

Introduction

In this edition of Paddling Around we have the latest information about the 1st PebblePad Conference scheduled for June 2010 and information on the latest release of PebblePad.

1st PebblePad Conference

Preparations for our first PebblePad conference are in full swing at Pebble HQ and we hope you are all busy writing your interesting case studies and workshop proposals to submit for presentation at the event. Submission is now open and all proposals should be submitted [online](#).

The **deadline** for all submissions is the **5th February 2010** so hurry and don't miss the opportunity to actively take part in what looks likely to be a very exciting event. All proposals will be reviewed and you will be notified whether you have been accepted by the **5th March 2010**.



Park House Hotel

Registration has only been open for a couple of weeks and already over 1/3 of the rooms at the main conference accommodation at The Park House Hotel have been booked. Book early to avoid disappointment. There is plenty of other fantastic alternative accommodation available should you decide not to stay with us at The Park House, these are listed on the conference website under the 'venue' tab and 'other accommodation'. Registration is open until the **5th April 2010**.

To find out more about the conference, the themes, our keynote speakers and the latest updates continue to monitor the conference website <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/conference>

Ascilite 2009 Auckland

This year's Ascilite conference had a considerable number of papers focusing on personal learning systems and ePortfolios. This is the first time we've seen such widespread discussion around personal learning systems and how they are becoming an important part of the learning landscape for institutions.



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With the conference being in New Zealand we expected a strong Mahara presence and so were pleasantly surprised to see lots of interest in PebblePad, even from those institutions who helped develop Mahara.

Our workshop session was well attended and feedback from the delegates was excellent.

As for the conference proceedings, it's difficult to highlight particular papers which may be of interest but it is well worth taking time to have a look through the conference proceedings and papers which are available from the Ascilite website at <http://is.gd/67fm7>.

Alison Starts (Hooray!)

Alison Poot has started in her role as our Australian eportfolio consultant. Alison is based in Launceston, Tasmania, and all Australian and New Zealand customers can now contact her as the first port of call for any PebblePad related queries. Alison's primary role is to support organisations in their implementation of PebblePad. This could include demonstrations, training, assistance with strategic planning, or assistance with pedagogical issues involved in the effective integration of PebblePad into curriculum. Alison can also be contacted during normal business hours for technical advice and to report system issues.



Alison Poot

Alison's contact details (8:30am – 5:30pm EST Mon-Fri)

Phone: 0400 899 820

Email: alison@pebblepad.com.au

Issues can also continue to be logged directly into the customer support site or by emailing help@pebblelearning.co.uk

Training Opportunities: 2010

We have been very fortunate in recent months to have had the opportunity to run various different training and consultancy events all over the world with new and existing customers. Although the main features of PebblePad are pretty easy to use there are lots of powerful features lurking just below the surface. We are always surprised (and delighted) at how positively people react to our workshops particularly when we discuss learning and teaching scenarios and where different PebblePad features can be used. To help you help us with our delight quota, we are offering cost-effective on-site training for you and your users to help maximise your return on investment in PebblePad.

If training or consultancy events are booked between now and Easter 2010 we'll discount each day by £100/A\$200. Here is an opportunity to learn something new or challenge your thinking about how PebblePad could be used for you, your colleagues and your users.

For further information on the types of training and consultancy services available please contact your relevant ePortfolio Consultant:



Alison Poot - alison@pebblepad.com.au



Matthew Wheeler - matthew@pebblelearning.co.uk

Last Major Release of V2?

That's our hope anyway! Of course we won't stop looking after V2 and undoubtedly there'll be little delighters along the way but from now on most of our creative efforts will go into making PP3 'awesome' (a technical term we picked up in New Zealand)!

There'll be more about PP3 in future additions, and of course a preview at the conference, but for now let's not forget how good the current version is. The latest release makes it even more powerful in institutional contexts with features like anonymous submission, peer review, and group blogs. The major new features are listed in the release notes, which you can find, along with supporting tipsheets at <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/releases>

Release highlights...

Anonymity Tools

New gateway permissions allow users to make anonymous submissions, useful for blind marking. When used with the new peer permissions users can review each other's work, as named or anonymous reviewers. There's also a separate permission which determines whether or not users can see reviews left on each other's work.

If the assessment process demands it then it is also now possible to hide assessor details and the existing add feedback permission is augmented by a view permission, meaning that it's possible to hide feedback from other assessors where second marking is taking place.

Resource Blogs

Gateways are increasingly used as group spaces; no longer just a repository of work awaiting assessment they are also places to show examples, distribute templates, and share ideas. To further support this we've now added resource blogs. These are added to the resource panel on a gateway and can be accessed by any gateway member. Posts to the resource blog are saved to the user's asset store. We expect that the resource blogs will be invaluable for things like FAQs and for tutors/students to sign-post resources, hints and tips.

Accessibility and Personalisation

We got just as frustrated as you probably did with the accessibility checkbox on the log-in page! People who didn't want the avatar and big buttons often got them, and didn't know how to turn them off; people who needed these features might easily have missed them. For new users, on first log in, they will now be directed to a page allowing them to choose from all of the available interfaces. If any assistive technologies are detected on the user's computer PebblePad's accessible interface will be offered first.

Admin(y) Stuff

Lots of useful enhancements like: the ability to log straight into the customer support site, the ability to undelete gateways, and tools to manage forms and profiles across the institution.

iPhone App for PebblePad

The big news, of course, is the release of the iPhone version. View an overview at <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/mobile>. To help cover the costs of developing and supporting this app (and the cut that Apple takes!) users can purchase it from the iTunes store – for what we think is a very reasonable £1.79. Available from 20th January 2010.

There's also an updated version of PebblePDA to coincide with the latest release with a few enhancements including the option to list all assets tagged as mobile. One way of accessing the mobile tools is through the add-ons link on the tools menu.

Interview with a PebblePaddler; Becci Salt, University of Wolverhampton



Becci is studying Midwifery at the School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Wolverhampton.

Becci Salt

“ Throughout my studies, I have used PebblePad not only as my e-Portfolio tool, but also as my personal learning system. ”

Can you describe your experience of using PebblePad?

My cohort was the first group to be expected to produce a portfolio of evidence for each year of training in electronic format alone; no paper-based alternative was acceptable. A strong message I now give in my role, as a Student Mentor is how important good student PebblePad training is if the adoption and utilisation of PebblePad capabilities is to be realised.

Can you describe a good example of how PebblePad has helped you during your studies?

I like to think of it as a storage facility for various pieces of information, some that I have developed, others from external sources like useful web-links and journal articles. I haven't needed to keep folders of paper around because I know that everything I will need to recall has been stored in PebblePad.

Full interview online: <http://www.pebblepad.co.uk/paddlers>

Conferences

11th February 2010, **Leicester, UK** – The Learning Revolution and the Digital Revolutionaries

13th April 2010, **London, UK** – JISC Annual Conference

08 – 10 June 2010, **Shropshire, UK** – 1st PebblePad Conference

Online Meetings

If you would like to arrange a meeting, see a demo or just have a chat about PebblePad feel free to get in touch (enquiries@pebblelearning.co.uk) and we'll be delighted to organise an online meeting, showcasing PebblePad.

Contact us

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