

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of Paddling Around. In this edition we review the user-groups which have taken place across the UK in recent weeks, we look forward to the next release of PebblePad and we focus on a couple of features which you may not have had a chance to take a look at yet. We try to make the newsletter as informative as possible and accessible for users of PebblePad, so if you know someone who maybe does not yet [subscribe to the newsletter](#) either send it on or ask them to submit their details online.

Pebblegogy: a guide to effective practice

The burden of demand became too much to bear and so, finally, we're knuckling down to write a book designed to help you make better use of PebblePad. We really need you to help with this endeavour, as you're the people using the tool with real students. You can find out much more about the book [here](#) and find out how to submit a learning design – there are three examples to help get you started.

Designs must be received by 31 December to stand a chance of getting in the book.

Visit www.pebblepad.co.uk/pebblegogy

PebblePad User-Group Review (UK)

Throughout September and October the PebblePad team has been travelling up and down the UK hosting a series of user-groups – thank you to everyone who attended, and those institutions who hosted us. The meetings gave us all a chance to catch-up with each other and find out what has been happening in each others worlds, it also enabled us demo the new features of 'version 2.5' which were released in July.



We wrote a little about the new features in the [previous newsletter](#), but people found the opportunity to ask questions invaluable. One interesting outcome from these meetings was that tools and features made available in former releases do not always cascade down to users. For example, quite a few people did not know about the anonymity features on Gateways and how to manage them. This highlights that we need to work harder (or smarter) to get tips and information into the hands of you, the user. One approach is the online seminars we will be running in the new year. If you [register your interest](#) we'll keep you posted once details become available.

For some attendees it was the first glimpse they had of the future - a future we are referring to as PP3. The development of PebblePad version 3 is well underway and although only a mock environment was available to show the feedback is always very positive - indeed overwhelmingly enthusiastic. This was just one of many chances to help shape our direction – look out for more

events in due course.

This year's user-groups also had an important first for us; we hosted our first user-group aimed specifically at our professional organisation customers. The professional organisations user-group, which took place in London, again provided us the opportunity to discuss issues around implementation, user support and the future directions these customers are heading-in with their adoption of PebblePad for amongst other things supporting and monitoring CPD, appraisal management and course development. We're starting to see a cycle of university graduates presenting PebblePad portfolio's for employment and continuing their development as part of their professional communities and then re-presenting them for post-graduate studies!



Finally, it is a real challenge for us to organise events at times that are suitable in the academic calendar or that don't clash with school holidays. We try to give you as much lead time as possible so you can make arrangements to attend – we look forward to welcoming you to future Pebble events.

Australian PebblePad User Group (APpUG)



The first Online Meeting of the APpUG was held on the 12 October in Elluminate. We had 20 participants from 8 different institutions. The topic of the meeting, 'ePortfolio Security and Privacy Policy', produced some interesting discussion and a [recording of this meeting](#) is available from the APpUG Webfolio.

Our second meeting, focussing on 'PebblePad in Education', will be held on Thursday 25 November, 2:00 – 3:30pm (Sydney time). Further details of this meeting and joining instructions are also available in the User Group webfolio or on our [website](#).

100,000th REFLECT User!

One of our customers reached a landmark 100,000th user in early November. The [Institute for Learning](#) (IfL) has its own version of PebblePad called REFLECT, which its members use for recording their CPD and for applying to become qualified professionals. The IfL's Director of Professional Development, Dr Jean Kelly, said that this was excellent news and that the *"next challenge is to work with members to encourage ever more sophisticated uses of the tool"*.



Preview of V2.5.2

The next update of PebblePad is 10 January 2010. Version 2.5.2 will importantly fix some bugs that have been lurking in the system and will enhance some of the tutor focused areas. As the update is appearing mid academic year for UK customers there are no changes to the main interface. Below are just some of the new features:

Gateways

When viewing the list of published items on the gateway the screen may be busy with columns of icons and the functions they support, some of these options may not be relevant across all gateways. In V2.5.2 you will be able to hide specific columns if they are not needed.

PebblePad 2.5.2

In the summer release of PebblePad (V2.5) a new Tutor-Group feature was released enabling the creation of groups on gateways. In V2.5.2 this feature has been extended to enable self-subscription to tutor-groups, particularly useful in your students choose their own project groups. The enhanced functionality of this feature now also allows you to limit the group sizes.

Organising Assets

In V2.5 the 'tools' menu was tidied up by combining certain functionality under the Organise Assets button. This functionality has been extended further now to include bulk deletion of assets, bulk printing of assets and the ability to create an activity report that can also be saved as an individual asset itself.

'Fifth Pebble'

Some of you may have heard about the magical, mythical fifth pebble, but you may not have ever seen it! Well, now you know the myth is true... On some installations of PebblePad there has been a fifth navigation toolbar, known as the fifth pebble, this enables a series of external links to be made from within PebblePad. For example, you might want to have links to internal websites (careers, students union), learning management systems, or associate organisations. The fifth Pebble will not be enabled by default but can be added and amended from the Administration area in V2.5.2.

Profiler

The profiler has been enhanced in a number of ways. Firstly a evidence threshold option is now included in the builder so that where a multiple number of evidence items are required, you can set a value and the profile will indicate when elements have the required evidence and are therefore ready for validation/assessment. There is also a more logical process for the adding of evidence, easier validation for tutors, including a quick validate option. To top off the profile enhancements reporting from Gateways has also been improved with speedier and more details report options for individuals and groups.

Additional Help in Gateways

Did you know that there is now additional help in Gateways? In the [previous newsletter](#) we spoke about the addition of the help icons on Gateways, there are now little information icons on all of the main panels in gateways that provide hints and pop-up help right where you need it. The help also contains links to the comprehensive tipsheets that have been rewritten to appeal to general users, teachers using gateways for assessment and for administrators.

ePortfolios Australia Conference



3-4 November 2010
Angliss Conference Centre
555 La Trobe Street, Melbourne

PebblePad was well represented at this inaugural conference that brought together educators from across the Higher and Further Education sectors in Australia. There were some excellent presentations about the theory and practice of ePortfolios, reflecting the growing maturity of ePortfolio use in Australian institutions. Fellow 'PebblePaddlers', including Sandra Stewart a student from Charles Sturt University, who presented a paper and poster at her first conference. Her student perspective was greatly appreciated by the audience. In the absence of a conference dinner, 15 PebblePaddlers from across the country took the opportunity to enjoy a meal together and discuss PebblePad over a glass (or two) of wine. Papers from the conference will be available from the [conference website](#).

Customer Support Area

Are you an administrator of PebblePad? If so, you might like to know that you can now access the PebblePad Customer Support Area from within PebblePad. Simply click on the Customer Support Area link from within the Administration panel and you can report issues, access the latest information about PebblePad and download our useful tipsheets.

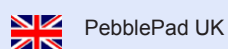
Conferences / Events

- 25 November 2010, **APpUG Elluminate meeting** - PebblePad in Education
- 28 November – 01 December 2010, **Adelaide, Australia** - NAGCAS Conference
- 05 – 08 December 2010, **Sydney, Australia** - Ascillite 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.

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