

GOING MOBILE: EXTENDING THE CONCEPT OF THE EDGELESS UNIVERSITY

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In today's interconnected technology-supported and driven world, we are seeing profound change in society, the workplace and how learners live and work with learning typically taking place in physical, virtual and remote places. Educational institutions worldwide have access to a range of information and communication technologies which is creating exciting new learning and teaching opportunities and is challenging existing practice. Using technology in innovative ways can be at the heart of institutional change but this does not mean building rooms full of computers on a university campus. The internet, social networks, and collaborative online tools allow people to work together more easily and the provision of open access to content can be both the cause of change for universities, and a tool with which they can respond. The function the university performs is no longer contained within the campus, or within the physically defined space of a particular institution, nor, sometimes, even in higher education institutions at all. The term "edgeless" has been used to describe this phenomenon. The University of Southern Queensland (USQ), a regional university, has been "edgeless" geographically for more than 30 years in that it has provided education outside of its physical spaces. The move to providing learning opportunities on mobile devices is a natural transition and contributes to open, flexible access to USQ course materials, giving students choice of delivery and access methods, and acknowledging and respecting difference and diversity in the student population. This paper describes USQ's exploration of mobile technologies including the repurposing of course content for mobile devices and reports on preliminary evaluation outcomes of a series of user trials conducted with both staff and students.

Regards

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