Mobile eLearning and Technology (MeLT)

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Background: Although mobile devices are widespread, the full potential for teaching and learning has yet to be exploited. A recent survey (n~1200) indicates that:

- 92% of undergraduates have a mobile phone and around 36% have a tablet.
- Mobile apps are strongly desired by students. This includes apps for library services, past-papers, lectures, e-books, timetable and quizzes.

Method:

1. Identify apps desired by students
2. Build apps for phone/tablet delivery on Android and iOS platforms
3. Trial apps with undergraduates

Results: A number of 'app-store' type apps have been developed and evaluated with Pharmacy students. This includes a timetable app, campus map and apps for two first-year units - Introduction to Microbiology and Pharmaceutical Analysis. These unit-apps include lecture slides and interactive quizzes together with note-taking facilities for annotating the lecture slides. The Timetable app was released for Android in April 2013 and trialled with students (n~67) from all year groups. Results indicate that it is accurate, easy-to-use, and popular with users. The app 'Introduction to Microbiology' was released for Android in November 2013 and trialled with a small number of first-year students (n~15). The evaluation results indicate:

- 93% find the app useful
- 93% find the app easy-to-use
- 100% would use the app for private study

Recently, a private app-store capability for both iOS and Android has been implemented. This facility will enable roll-out and evaluation to all first-year pharmacy students next semester.

Conclusion: Apps help to provide an integrated educational experience: Learning is available anytime, anywhere, even when there is no wi-fi or mobile connection. By integrating apps into the MPharm degree, it is hoped to deliver learning materials in a way that is both intuitive and effective for students.