

One phone to rule them all – a case study

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Background

Within the New Zealand education sector initiatives in the digitisation of content, the provision of secure access to a full range digital learning and support services mean Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have a significant impact on a learner's educational experience. With the ever expanding penetration of mobile devices and applications, learners become "nomadic learners". In this nomadic environment learning is dynamic, contextualised and personalised. The challenge for further education institutions is to develop the applications and skills to participate in these environments

Approach

The Digital Learning Hub at the Waikato Institute of Technology (Wintec) have initiated a project, the *Near Field Communication (NFC) Project*, to investigate the potential of using the latest generation of smartphones in the provision of library services to users. NFC builds upon Radio-frequency identification (RFID) to establish a two-way communication channel between a user's mobile device and an institutional portal. This will allow the secure transfer of personal data (such as user information, history and passwords) between the two endpoints. Using the NFC feature, and a specially-written mobile application, users will scan the RFID tags embedded in Wintec library materials, and check out this material at the initial point of contact. In essence, the project will enable students to use their mobile phone as their library ID card.

If this project is successful it is anticipated further projects, such as loading printing machine credit, providing access to learner classrooms and buildings, paying for parking services, institutional fees and other miscellaneous transitions, will be initiated. In essence, one device, the smart-phone, already a familiar part of student lives, could enable full participation in all learner activities at Wintec.

Results

The presentation will report on results of the pilot project undertaken with a group of library users whose mobile phones include the NFC chip.