Flexible Messaging for Flexible Learning, Teaching and Research

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Overview

• How do we communicate
• What users want to do
• New communication technologies
• Communications parameters
• Long-term trends
• Short-term technologies
• Ongoing issues
• Monash Messaging System
• Not just Email
How do we communicate

- We send messages
- Voice
  - including tone of voice
- Body language
  - non-verbal
- Writing
  - ‘frozen’ verbal

What users want to do

- Extend the spatial reach of the above
- Extend the temporal reach of the above
- Extend the durability of the above
  - although this can come back to bite you...
- Improve speed of communication cycles
  - although this is not always a good thing...
- Increase flexibility of messaging options
New communication technologies

- Keep getting developed
  - and probably at an increasing rate
- Almost never replace old technologies
  - but remember the telegram and the heliograph
- Often driven by technology rather than user need
  - and hence have a poor 'fit'

Communications parameters

- Synchronicity
  - synchronous (real-time) versus asynchronous
- Medium
  - used to transfer the message from sender to receiver
- Durability
  - of the message itself (partially dependent on the medium)
Long-term trends

- Greater range of media
- More computer-mediated communication
- Increasing richness of messages
- More targeted messaging
- Greater use of newsgroups versus email
- More use of document surrogates
  - Send someone a URL rather than a document

Short-term technologies

- Voice attachments to email (Eudora’s Purevoice)
- Instant messaging
- Desktop videoconferencing
- Universal Inbox: one place to check all your:
  - emails
  - voicemails
  - faxes
  - videomails
Ongoing issues

- **Message overload**
  - Smarter filtering
  - Getting the right messages!
- **Message security**
  - How do you know who sent the message?
  - How do you know you are reading what they sent?
  - How do you know what you are reading will be there tomorrow?
- **Message access**
  - Anytime
  - Anywhere

Monash Messaging System

- **IMAP**
  - so you can access it anywhere, including via the Web
  - so the messages are backed up
- **Integrated with browser**
  - so you can compose rich messages
  - so you can integrate messaging with Web and other resources
- **Implementing digital certificates**
  - so you can trust your messages
- **Evolving**
  - but in partnership with users
Not just Email

• Calendar
  - Provides for scheduling of people and resources
  - Enables ‘when can we all meet’ questions
  - Significant time saver for workgroups
• News
  - Enables more effective messaging to groups
• Instant Messaging (probably in 2000)
  - Netscape currently use AOL standards
  - Internet standards evolving
  - Not for everyone but surprisingly addictive