

Mobile in the UK

Mobile phones are not just a convenience anymore. They're a necessity. The University of Liverpool, Cardiff University, and University College Dublin all recognize this. Their perceived value is so great in fact that in a recent UK survey one in three people said they would not give up their mobile phone for a million pounds or more¹. Currently there are 5.3 billion mobile subscribers. That's 77% of the world's population². More than 85% of them believe having a mobile phone is vital to maintaining their quality of life¹. For institutions across the globe, being mobile is playing a substantial role in overall performance. Today, students rely on smartphones as their key social connector and a learning tool. It is a technology that has quickly weaved itself into nearly every aspect of life; and can go just about anywhere in the future.

Delivering On Student Expectations

Leading institutions are leveraging the growing power of mobile technology and customized apps to improve their campus experience, as well as their bottom line. The potential is exciting. The University of Liverpool, for example, found it easy to show the benefits of mobile to stakeholders on campus because of the tremendous possibilities it offers to their entire campus community—from students to faculty, educators, alumni, and more. The University of Liverpool is a pre-eminent research-based university with 27,000 students pursuing over 400 programs within 35 departments and schools. Although funding is a consistent challenge for any institution, the University of Liverpool didn't have trouble getting funding and buy-in due to the excitement that mobile generates at every level. They chose Blackboard Mobile™ Central to manage the demand.

"Our number one goal is to make life better for our students. But costs are rising as fast as students' expectations. Technology is quite an important consideration for students. They want to know they can connect to the internet in the

halls or log onto Facebook on campus, even access course content online. We wanted to offer not only the technology our students expect but to provide a more engaging learning experience, too. Blackboard is helping us deliver on that," says Jake Gannon, Head of Applications, Systems and Services, Computing Services for the University of Liverpool.

"The world is changing fast. There are more and more mobile devices being sold. Smartphones will outsell PCs. Tablets are on the rise. MP3 players can now access the internet. We expect to see thousands of devices on campus able to access via WiFi and 3G. The apps market is also exploding. We're working on the concept of a university app store. Blackboard Mobile Learn and Blackboard Mobile Central will be a part of that. Internally there is so much potential for a wide range of apps—from something course related or one that improves campus efficiencies such as an app for the technicians who fix computers around campus." Jake continues.



Keeping Up With Demand

“There are many aspects to get enthused about. We like the Events and Maps modules and the fact that we can create our own things in there like timetables. News is a big one. We have many fascinating guest lectures, so the Images and Videos modules will be great. Campus Maps and Tours will also be very helpful for prospective students. We’ll pull in local information like bus and tunnel information. Out of the box, there is more than enough to get us going, and we can use the Blackboard Mobile SDK to add even more.”

The university is considering having a tablet device at classroom doors so students can check in electronically. They are also putting in a proposal starting next year to provide every student with a tablet—pre-configured with all their electronic resources including Blackboard Mobile Learn and Blackboard Mobile Central.

The Blackboard Mobile Central team helped the university launch a clearly defined mobile strategy that was also cost-effective. “We’ve already seen positive impact. The Blackboard Mobile Central framework is great and helps us keep up with demand. Now we can provide the resources our faculty and students need. And that’s driving a lot of enthusiasm.”

Multi-Platform Support Is Key

Where other initiatives can get mired in academic committees, mobile is in everyone’s consciousness and generating quite a demand. At Cardiff University, reaction has been overwhelming. “We told our students we are going mobile and they’re knocking on the door waiting. I get regular emails asking when it will be rolled out,” says Peter Rayment, Information Services Learning and Teaching Manager for Cardiff University. With over 28,000 students and 6,000 staff, the Cardiff University academic community is the size of a small town. Research is undertaken in each of the 28 Schools, and at any one time there are more than 1,700 research contracts in operation. They needed a mobile strategy that will keep them agile and ahead of the game.

“One of the most important things for us is to have mobile available on a variety of platforms, and the fact that we can roll it out to BlackBerry, iOS and Android is key. This is definitely something that sets Blackboard apart from the competition. Plus, Blackboard’s solutions are focused on teaching and learning. We’re already realizing incredible potential across our campus,” Peter says.

Cardiff University’s biggest gain from going mobile is its ability to widen access for them, especially in regards to distance learning. Students worldwide can access their courses. They now have the capability to provide information to the widest audience possible.



Driving Engagement



Also looking to captivate a larger audience is University College Dublin, a research-intensive university with over 450 million Euro turnover annually. They are launching their mobile strategy with Blackboard.

“We keep an eye on trends worldwide and we certainly noticed the impact of smartphones. We saw an ideal opportunity to provide our services to students directly to their phones. So now at any given time they can easily access their learning materials or campus information. This is a big advantage because most of our students live off campus. With a laptop it’s not always easy for them to go online and check things, especially if they’re in transit. With their smartphone they can interact and access campus life regardless of time or location,” says Brian Morrissey, Head of Web Services for University College Dublin, Belfield.

For University College Dublin, it’s all about easy access to information that is meaningful to students. Now their community can quickly check in and see how the UCD rugby team did or browse the Events and News schedule, check classifieds, even email inquiries about buying a bike or sporting tickets while they’re on the fly. “This will satisfy an immediate need and give students the convenience they crave. Our students are really going to be keen about Maps. The GPS feature that shows you where you are on campus will be invaluable to first-time students,” Brian continues. “We are happy we partnered with Blackboard to implement our mobile strategy. It’s an excellent example of delivering things on time and within budget.”

As Head of Teaching and Learning IT Services for University College Dublin, Genevieve Dalton adds, “We are already live with Blackboard Mobile Learn and it is offering a huge level of convenience for our students. They don’t all bring their laptops to college due to the size and weight. Being able to access Blackboard on their mobile device is so much easier. One of the most important aspects to us is the impact this will have on learning. With added features like the ability to upload video, Blackboard makes learning content far

more engaging and interactive for our students. It will be interesting to see how it changes the way students learn.”

Whether it’s a lifeline to their social community or their new preferred learning tool, smartphones are a way of life for students today. When they’re considering which institution to attend, a key differentiating factor is whether or not an institution has easy access to services or information that is meaningful to them. Being mobile achieves that almost instantly. University of Liverpool, Cardiff University, and University College Dublin are just a few of the hundreds of institutions leveraging an effective mobile strategy to bridge the gap between the way students live and the way they learn. They are improving efficiencies across their campuses, engaging more students, creating excitement for their brand, and building a better education experience for everyone.

Are You Ready?

Can the amount of mobile phones on your campus determine the level of your institution’s success? Visit us at www.blackboardmobile.com, email us at askus@blackboard.com, or call your Blackboard representative to find out.

If you are interested to learn more on how Blackboard can help you and your organization increase the impact of education, please contact your account manager or visit us at blackboardmobile.com.

“Anyone who needs convincing to go mobile, probably needs a different job in a different field.”

Jake Gannon,
University of Liverpool

¹ Source: London School of Economics View Here

