Learning through Simulations: SIMPLE

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Abstract

It is generally acknowledged that professional learning can, under appropriate conditions, be considerably enhanced by the use of simulation. Over the last five years Glasgow Graduate School of Law, has constructed a virtual simulation environment for professional learning in law, using proprietary software. Postgraduate students on a professional legal education programme, formed into virtual firms, use this sophisticated online environment to carry out entire legal transactions on behalf of virtual clients – for example purchase and sale of property, litigation in the Sheriff Court, and winding up the estate of a deceased client.

UKCLE & JISC have always known the value of what became known as the 'transactional learning environment' and in 2006, began supporting a major project which will result in the eventual development of an open source, open–standards web-based simulation engine, now called SIMPLE (Simulated Professional Learning Environment) for use by UK Law Schools- or indeed by any professional discipline, such is the versatility of the application. The SIMPLE project addresses two fundamental sets of issues in the use of e-simulations:

1. The design and implementation of an online professional learning environment that can be used in a wide variety of professions
2. The educational, organisational and management issues that arise from the large-scale implementation of this environment

Five UK Law Schools (Glamorgan, UWE, Warwick, Glasgow & Stirling) are participating in the project. They will be piloting a suite of tools which will allow the creation of transactional content by academics and professionals. This session will present progress on the project through short presentations showing the range and depth of the initiative, together with video presentations of students commenting on their work. The discussion session will continue the process of building a community of practice around the initiative.