

## EDITORIAL

# Ideas in Mobile Learning

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The contributions for this Special Collection on 'Ideas in Mobile Learning' expand on the trends explored in the successful 'Bristol Ideas in Mobile Learning Symposium' which ran on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2014 (see Cloudworks, 2014; BIML, 2014). Four papers in this Special Issue are expanded versions of presentations at the Bristol Symposium. Taken with the additional papers obtained from an open call we have a timely overview of mobile learning state-of-the-art research.

Contributions offer a combination of conceptual, critical, design, empirical, theoretical and/or experimental work that addresses at least one of the following three phases of mobile learning state-of-the-art research:

- (1) Focus on new patterns of connected social learning and work-based practices.
- (2) Focus on designing for 'm-learning' at scale.
- (3) Focus on the boundaries of learning that the 'm' in m-learning forces us to explore.

For details of the above phases see Cook and Santos (2015). In our overview of the papers in this Special Collection below we have grouped related papers.

Two of the papers in this Special Collection have in particular examined phase one, i.e. new patterns of connected social learning and work-based practices. *Holley and Sentance* (2015) explore the attitudes and habits of trainee teachers using their own mobile devices when working full time in a school setting. Their findings indicate that students have complex and interwoven narratives that relate to issues of identity, personal and private space and their involvement in an emergent community of practice. In a related paper, *Andrews and Jones* (2015) deploy a range of research methods in an exploratory way to develop an understanding of a sample of undergraduate Education students' practices and preferences in using mobile technologies in their learning.

*Farley et al.* (2015) explore the practice of 'bring your own device' (BYOD), providing a snapshot of student ownership of mobile devices at a regional Australian university; they conclude by proposing some practical, low-cost tactics that educators could potentially employ to begin

engaging with mobile learning, leveraging what students already do and hence explore how we can address designing for 'm-learning' at scale. *Jalil, Beer and Crowther* (2015) present a review of the MOBIlearn task model framework and its contributing factors in an attempt to capture appropriate design requirements by generalizing the current state of understanding and hence attempt to discover common grounds and similarities from previous research publications. These authors go on to derive a set of pedagogical requirements identified from the literature by categorizing them on the basis of the task model factors in order to answer research questions and design a technological tool based on what they have learned in the review. *Crompton* (2015) describes how a study of context-aware ubiquitous learning was used to support 4th grade students as they learn angle concepts. On the basis of this study, the author derives four design guidelines and a full set of context-aware ubiquitous activities.

*Bachmair and Pachler* (2015) propose that the successful introduction of mobile learning into education is arguably premised on sustainability in the sense of an ability to maintain innovation over time and to become embedded into mainstream practice. Their paper argues that such an endeavour requires a discursive approach, decoupling sustainability from the notion of unambiguity tendentiously inherent in technological paradigms. This paper epitomises the 'Ideas' exploration that this Special Collection called for and the boundaries of learning that the 'm' in m-learning forces us to explore.

We conclude that from a research perspective all three of our phase driven inquiries have proved a powerful lens through which to drill down into the state-of-the-art of m-learning and also as a vehicle to make connections. We base this conclusion in the contributions contained in this Special Collection and the additional research presented in Cook and Santos (2015). For example, take the *second phase exploration* (focus on designing for 'mobile learning' at scale); we are fully convinced that design research allows us to bring out 'never-seen before possibilities' of mobile learning. Designing for 'mobile learning' at scale, beyond pilots and content-centric approaches, is a big challenge that is worthy of our attention. If we link across to our *first phase* (focus on new patterns of connected social learning and work-based practices) we see that designing for augmented social learning has the real potential to take us beyond content-centric views of learning, and that this has the potential to revolutionise sustainable equity of

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access to learning where key issues include complexity and interwoven learner preference. However, although a new educational paradigm is emerging, there exists a need for more debate and further research, particularly around notions of sustainability, scalability and equity of access to opportunities to build social capital. Finally, with respect to our *third phase* exploration (focus on the boundaries of learning that the 'm' in m-learning forces us to explore) our strong belief is that not only do the twenty-first-century structures of mass communication provide a wide range of augmentations to communication but in addition, through the agency of users, the context within which communication takes place is being augmented by users to suit the needs of the individual and the conversational community and we predict that augmented social learning will give rise to a stream of sustainable innovations that will shape the modern society and culture.

Guest editors

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### Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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