



Professional Development Showcase: Murdoch University and the Manukau Institute of Technology

"Wimba Classroom has enabled the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences to take continuing professional development to practising veterinarians in Western Australia and beyond... we have attendees to our monthly sessions from all around Australia, Switzerland and Malaysia"

-Professor John Edwards, Dean, School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, Murdoch University

Although Murdoch University and Manukau Institute of Technology are separated by over 3000 miles, they are both at the forefront of developing innovative professional development programmes that not only extend the range of learning programmes they offer, but use collaboration to enhance the quality of the experience as well.

With one of the best campus environments in New Zealand, the MANUKAU INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (MIT) offers more than 1500 full and part-time courses, as well as flexible learning options. The Institute attracts students from many countries around the world and currently has more than 25,000 students enrolled. Recognising and celebrating the diversity of its students is central to MIT's vision and identity and continues to shape the development of its course delivery.

The Institute wanted to enhance engagement and interaction between staff and students and needed a solution to enhance the flexibility and

its delivery to students who have many demands on their time and then cannot leave work or family to attend class. As part of the Institute's focus on delivering innovative and flexible learning a review was undertaken to find a solution that would meet these identified needs. Following the review, MIT decided to adopt Wimba Classroom as an integral part of its online course delivery, implementing a pilot in January 2009. The pilot was a success and MIT is rolling-out a full Suite licence from November 2009.

Speaking for MIT, Lisa Ransom Flexible Delivery Advisor said, "The Manukau Institute of Technology wanted a way to enhance the predominately text-based environment of Blackboard by the addition of tools which would support the addition of voice and other forms of interactivity, to cater for more learning styles, and enhance the flexibility of teaching and learning at the Institute. The use of Wimba Classroom enabled distance students to interact synchronously with other students, both on and off campus and bring some face-to-face



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WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Wimba Classroom
- Wimba Voice

KEY BENEFITS

- Enhancing the international student experience
- Enabling work-based learning for busy practitioners
- Convenient and timely professional development opportunities
- Meeting diverse learning needs and styles



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elements of teaching (desktop and application demonstrations, video and interactive learning materials) to our delivery of courses.'

Wimba Classroom and Wimba Voice are used in several key areas to support professional development and training:

MIT Service Centres

Wimba Classroom assists in the training for both internal and remote staff for features of software they use at MIT and for supporting students to obtain information. Students also use Classroom to learn about the MIT Library database.

Graduate Certificate in Applied eLearning

This online programme teaches teachers how to plan for and maintain interactive teaching in an online environment. Students on this programme come from all around New Zealand and use Wimba Classroom to engage directly with each other. A teleconference machine was also used instead of a single microphone for face-to-face/online meetings. Voice collaboration has also been incorporated into weekly course delivery using Wimba Voice.

School of Nursing

The School has used Wimba Classroom to conduct interviews with prospective students to assess presentation and interview skills.

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MURDOCH UNIVERSITY, one of Australia's leading research universities, prides itself on having staff and students with the desire to discover, develop and succeed. With more than 18,000 students and 1400 staff, including 2000 overseas students from about 90 countries, Murdoch University has three campuses in Western Australia and another two campuses in Singapore and Dubai. The University places great emphasis on developing excellent learning experiences, irrespective of location. However, one of the challenges is how to reach out to busy professionals, many of whom either work full-time, or are balancing study with other commitments.

The Office of Continuing Veterinary Education, part of the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences at Murdoch University, faced just such a challenge. The Office designs and coordinates a wide range of short professional courses, seminars and workshops for veterinarians, veterinary nurses on demand, and the animal owning public. Courses are delivered by speakers from both Murdoch University as well as interstate or overseas.

Initially delivering online courses via a video conferencing bridge, this method proved unsatisfactory in practice and was a 'technical nightmare' to manage effectively. The Office wanted a solution that would enable regional practicing veterinarians to attend monthly professional development sessions without having to leave their workplace and travel to Perth each month. In early 2006, Murdoch University selected Wimba Classroom as the preferred technology for teaching and meeting online. Since July 2008 the Office of Continuing Veterinary Education has used Wimba Classroom to provide its students with easily accessible professional development courses and workshops.



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Key benefits of using the Wimba Classroom for the Office of Continuing Veterinary Education:

- Remotely-located vets can readily attend professional development, which they are expected to do at least on an annual basis;
- Vets are not required to leave their practice, enabling them to combine work and study effectively;
- The international experience is greatly enhanced, and has enabled participants to attend from Switzerland, Malaysia, Hong Kong, WA, SA and NT (between 50 – 60 participants in each session)

Professor John Edwards, Dean, School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences, said, 'Wimba Classroom has enabled the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences to take continuing professional development to practising veterinarians in Western Australia and beyond. Indeed, we have attendees to our monthly sessions from all around Australia, Switzerland and Malaysia. The opportunity to receive practical relevant continuing education on a regular basis in the convenience and comfort of their own environment (home or clinic) is much appreciated by the busy professional veterinarians. We are now looking at using Wimba Classroom to deliver online courses to practising veterinarians in Singapore and Taiwan.'

About NetSpot

NetSpot is the value added reseller for Wimba in Asia Pacific region and provides Implementation, Help Desk / Support, Training and Hosting services.

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About Wimba

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, webpages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.