Using Learning Management Systems to Support Students' Collaborative Learning in Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

LMS are web-based systems used for the distribution and management of course materials and to support communication between students and instructors. An LMS can also support peer collaboration by allowing students to create their own project sites. In our campus' LMS use we found a wide proliferation of student-initiated project sites created specifically to support learning activities taking place outside of the classroom and outside of the course website.

Here we present data from system logs, surveys, interviews, and case studies to investigate how students use project sites to facilitate peer learning.

WHY USE PROJECT SITES

Providing project space inside the LMS provides students with the convenience of having one integrated environment for both course and project work. Students use project sites to:

Broadcast information (resources, announcements)

Build collective knowledge (chat, discussion, wiki)

NOT as a replacement for other modes of communication with group members

94% still use email

92% still meet face-to-face

73% still use the phone

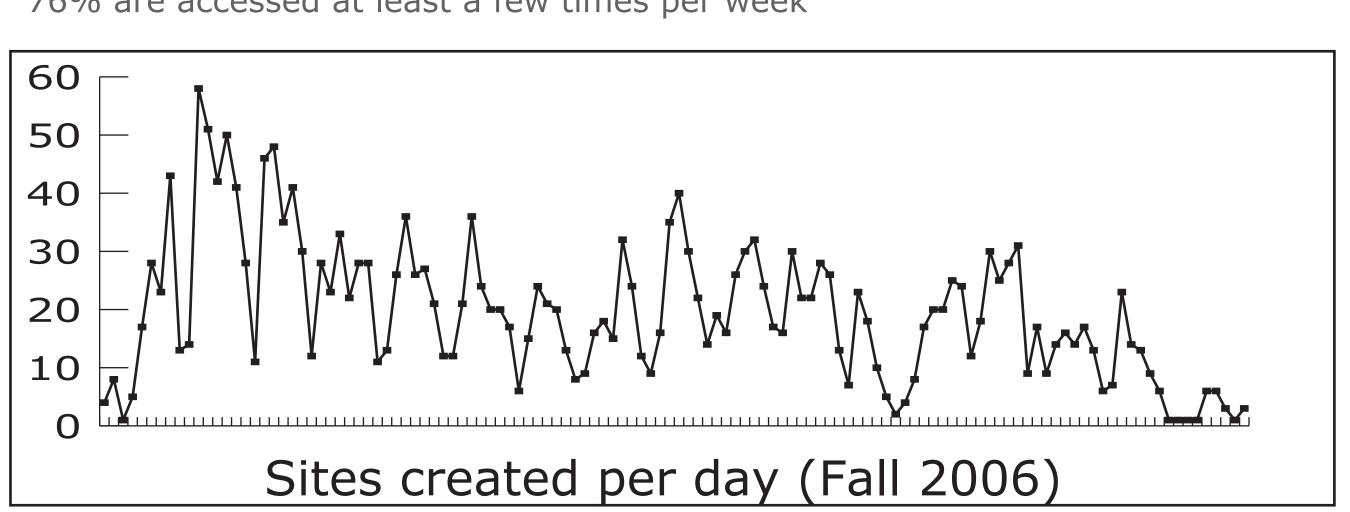
PROJECT SITE USE

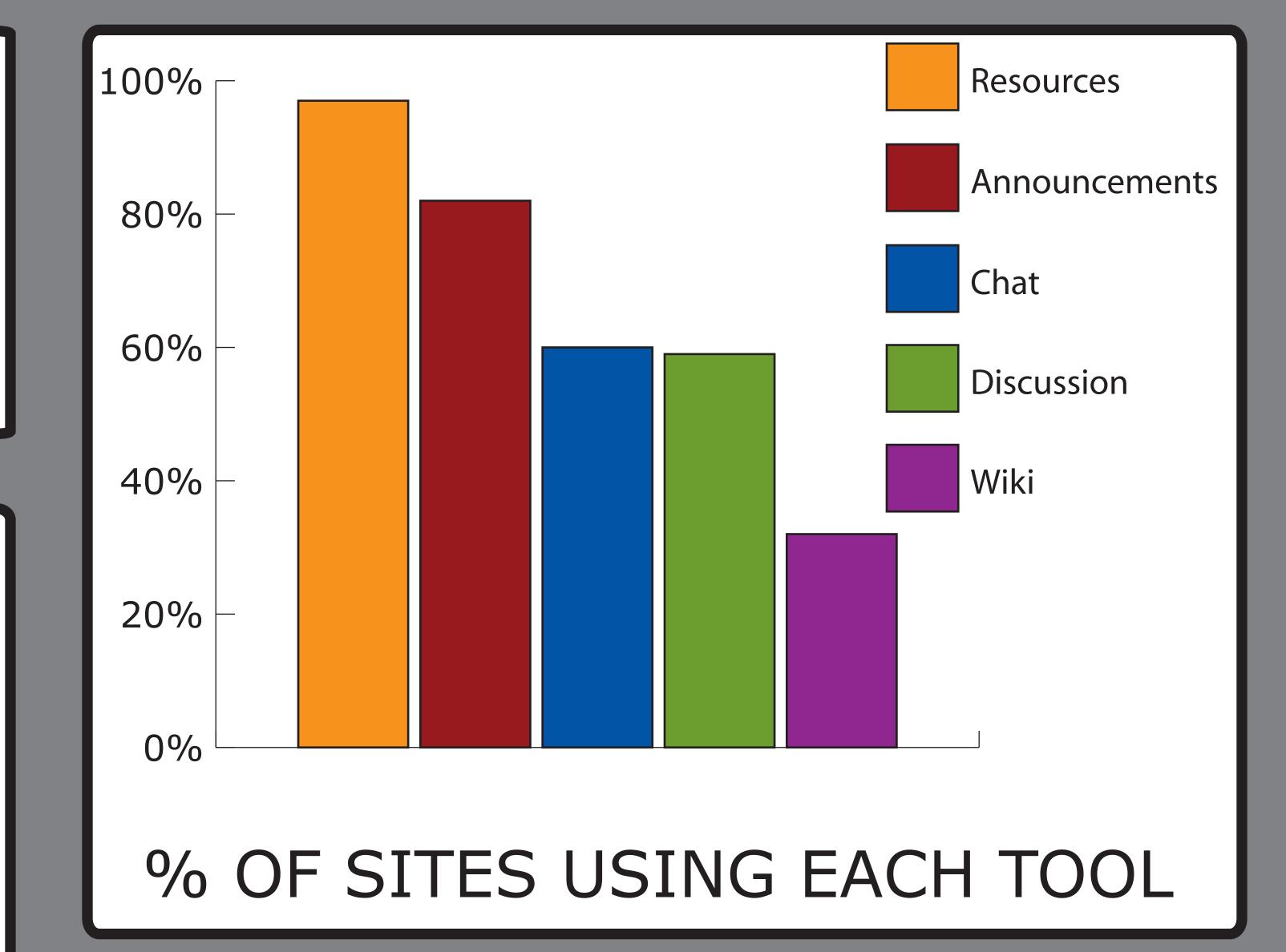
1,110 new project sites were created by students in Fall 2006

70% are used for course-related projects

62% are used for just one term

76% are accessed at least a few times per week





TYPICAL SITES HAVE

62 resources

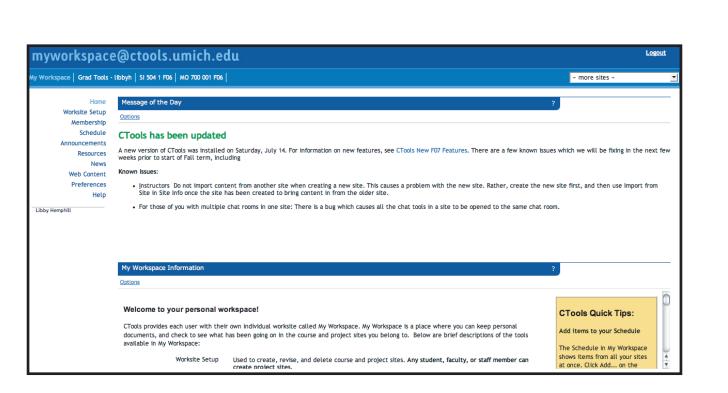
9 announcements

61 chat messages

9 discussion posts

25 wiki revisions

4 registered members



MOST VALUABLE BENEFITS

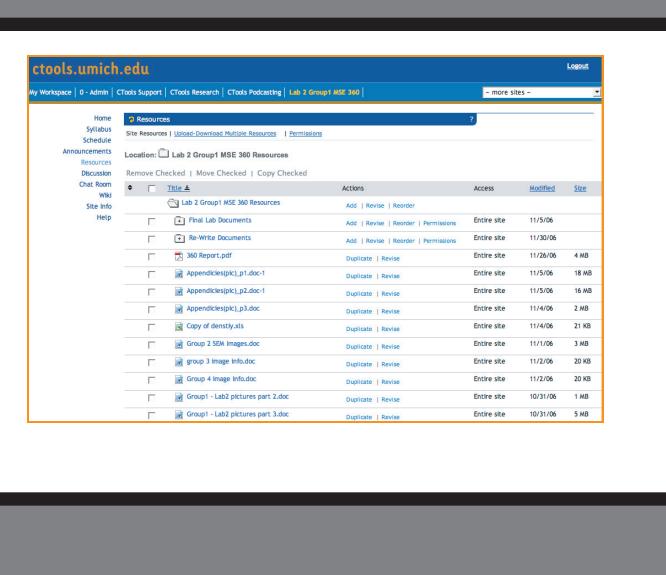
52% "helps us manage project-related activities"

25% "improves my communication with other participants"

14% "saves us time"

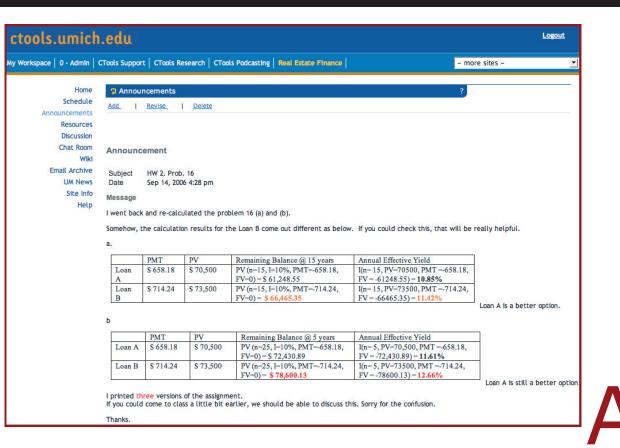
FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

As LMS become ubiquitous in higher education, it will be increasingly important to move the focus from faculty use to student use to determine how students can best leverage the capacities of LMS in service of their own learning.



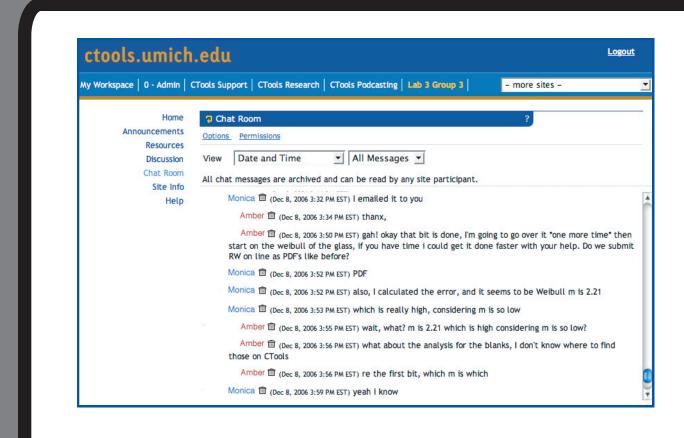
"I think because [in] email it is very difficult to see the history of a document and the history of what you got. [Resources] was like a central place where [we] could post it and everybody could access it."

RESOURCES



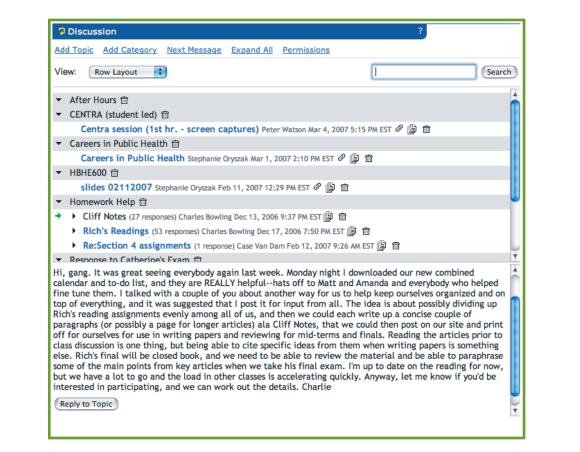
Groups used the Announcements tool not only to schedule face-to-face meetings but also to retain a record of their completed work and to discuss future plans (i.e. who would speak first in a group presentation). This allowed site participants to keep a shared record of conversations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS



"[During] our final project and a couple other reports where it was really tough, and we really needed to be working on it all the time we would be on the chat room working on it constantly. [We] wanted to be sure we were doing the right thing or other people had answers or stuff like that."

CHAT



"The Discussion helped because we were not always able to make decisions about certain issues at our weekly meetings, but we could post our opinions on discussion threads so that we could come to a decision before meeting again."

DISCUSSION

Home View Edit Info History Search:

Revision of Instal Client Visit Questions - Mission Statement - Interview questions/Interviews Questions/Work - Interpretation Seasions - Grap Meeting Minutes - Mome - Questions For Instal Client Visit

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FOR INITIAL CLIENT VISIT

To help focus our questions, I am adding the project description below (emphasis mine):

Project Description: Examine the process currently used by ForeSee to manage customer contact information, gathered from trade shows, webinars, direct contact, etc. Identify problems, break-downs, and un-met needs in that process and make recommendations for ways to improve this process.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT FORESEE RESULTS

We sense a strong culture of "scientific professionalism" - is this pervasive throughout every aspect of the company? (e.g., Google values professionalism, but it also encourages play time? and provides a released environment in which its employees can do what they do best). How does this translate to your process of collecting

What do you consider to be ForeSees strongest attribute? What do clients tell you when you ask them why they chose you?

Added by Jack

Is it possible for us to interview other employees and your client?

What to you look for in your client?

What types of clients do you typically strate?

Describe the technological capacity of your typical client?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THEIR PROCESS OF COLLECTING CONTACT INFO

What is, your rationale for revising / reviewing the process of collecting contact information?

How long have you been using the current method?

Are there security currences specially with regard to your government customers?

What they are the contact information stored (custom CRN or a commercial one)?

What primary role does contact information for a variety of projects and task?

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"The Wiki feature enables active editing that doesn't result in lost drafts or changes on large co-authored pieces."

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