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# Implementing Iolis.

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# Abstract

Developed by the Law Courseware Consortium (LCC) between 1992 and 1995, *Iolis* is a multimedia rich interactive cd-rom for law students. It contains over 100 workbooks written by academics, and more than 3,000 full-text printable cases and statutes. The City Solicitors' Educational Trust has supported the LCC since 1995 providing funds for the continued development of *Iolis* and ultimately in it achieving financial self-sufficiency. Additional funding was requested in 1999 for a project that would concentrate on assisting lecturers to implement the courseware. They needed support to develop effective implementation strategies, and time to explore ways of realising the pedagogic and resource-saving potential of *Iolis* in legal education.

This paper gives an overview of the project, highlighting the successes and identifying barriers that still exist to the effective integration of *Iolis* into the curriculum. It also describes the actions that are planned by the LCC to address the issues identified by the project.

**Keywords:** Legal education - Iolis - CAL - computer-based learning.

# Introduction

The `Implementing *Iolis*' project was funded for two years and began in August 1999. The focus of the project was to work in partnership with seven law schools to explore ways of integrating *Iolis* into the curriculum alongside traditional teaching methods. Partners were chosen to reflect as diverse

a range of teaching and learning approaches as possible. A variety of methods have been used within each law school including:

* The introduction of relevant *Iolis* workbooks into current tutorials and teaching and learning strategy.

* Student centred learning - replacing a lecture with a `directed study' exercise referring to a specific workbook and working through additional questions.

* Lectures using *Iolis* to go through a particular point in law and to test / reinforce the learning.

* Preparation for tutorials where students are required to refer to a workbook to augment their preparation.

* Formalised evaluation of students' use and perception of *Iolis*.

* Training programmes for both staff and students

* Focus groups to identify the expectations and attitudes of staff.

* Using WebCT and *Iolis* to create an electronic learning environment.

# Project Update

## Birkbeck College

### Project leader - Sharon Hanson

The project at Birkbeck concentrated on two diverse cohorts of staff and students. Those involved in the undergraduate programme in the School of Lawand those involved in the part time sub degree Certificate in Legal Method. The Certificate in Legal Method is a successful preparation for Higher Education programme, it is primarily used as an access pathway to Law Degree courses and carries an award of 90 CATS points. Students study part time for one academic year, attending one three hour session a week. The majority of these students obtain offers from university departments to read law.

A computer literacy audit was conducted that explored the following areas:

i. Familiarity with computing and level of competency, in terms of word-processing capability, use and familiarity with the Internet, and use of and familiarity with cd-rom resources.

ii. Access to computing facilities at home and at work. This indicated that there was a significant cohort who had no access outside college.

The response of students was excellent, however it was clear that staff awareness / support from the project was essential. Also it became clear that given the constraints placed on attendance by part time students that the best way forward was to concentrate on evaluative measures. Students were reminded of the availability of *Iolis* throughout the second term during the LMLI course. These same students were given a questionnaire at the beginning of the second year to allow them to reflect on their use or non-use of *Iolis* during the course of their first year. A questionnaire would be designed to explore why they considered using it or not.

At the end of 2000 it was clear that the most important aspect of the *Iolis* project at Birkbeck was to

encourage serious staff endorsement of the product through the route of introducing staff to the customising functions of *Iolis*. This would inevitably improve awareness of and usage by thestudents. A researcher has been employed to develop a programme of support activities for staff, a detailed plan is available on the project website

## University of Birmingham

### Project Leader - Peter Moodie

The project focussed on three aspects that would need to be addressed if *Iolis* was to be successfully integrated into the law school at Birmingham. These were:

* expectations of students

* attitudes of staff

* possible need to customise the chosen workbooks for Birmingham

The results of the student questionnaires and focus group discussions can befound on the project website.

Currently, the use of *Iolis* is being evaluated using the second and third year EU course. An assignment has been set that requires students to critically analyse two of the workbooks making notes and comments in the scrapbook. A full evaluation will be undertaken considering both the practicalities and the pedagogic objectives set for this exercise.

## University of Lancaster

### Project Leader - Sefton Bloxham

The project at Lancaster consists of two parts:

**Students** - A formalised evaluation of students' use and perception of *Iolis*. This is based on data already collected (using questionnaires) in1997-98 and 1998-99, and continuing to be collected in the subsequent two years. Additionally more subjective information will be collected during focus group meetings. An analysis of the questionnaires and the focus groups can be found on the project website.

## Staff

* Encourage staff to utilise the Resource Book within *Iolis* and include this in their reading lists.

* Identify articles that staff consider essential/important that might be added to the Resource Book.

* Use focus groups to identify what are the current constraints and what would encourage the use of *Iolis* within the law school at Lancaster.

## Liverpool John Moores University

### Project leader - Kathryn Wachala

At LJMU three main areas were highlighted in the *Iolis* Implementation Project.

* Raising student awareness of *Iolis*.

* Raising staff awareness of the potential of *Iolis* and also to attemptto break down negative perceptions of *Iolis.*

* Implementation of *Iolis* in teaching and learning.

*Student Awareness* - Level one students were `introduced' to *Iolis* at the start of their undergraduate studies. A training session was organised for all level 1 law students. Whilst the attendance was disappointing, those taking part gave favourable feedback. It has also been noticed by tutors that the use of *Iolis* in the preparation of a Foundations 1 coursework assignment was quite high. This is encouraging. The current situation will be monitored and developed.

*Staff Awareness* - The staff questionnaire distributed last academic year indicated a very mixed response to *Iolis*. With the conclusion reached that if *Iolis* was to be further implemented into teaching and learning at LJMU staff needed to be "persuaded" of its advantages as a teaching and learning tool.

A staff training session was organised which focussed on how the functionality in *Iolis* may be applied in a teaching and learning context. This session was given in June 2000. The attendance of the training session was quite good and was met with a favourable response. Positive feedback was given particularly by one teaching team (the Equity Team) who saw the potential of *Iolis* and have since used some *Iolis* workbooks in a teaching environment.

*Implementation* - As part of workshops for Foundations 1, students have been specifically directed to certain work books in *Iolis* to augment their preparation. In one instance a lecture was replaced by a "directed study" exercise on the Court Structure. Students had to specifically refer to one of the workbooks in *Iolis* and to work through certain additional questions.

Problems encountered with this pilot scheme included:

* Bad time management by students of the set exercises led to an oversubscription of computer use in the library. Thus leading to "ready made" excuses by some students as to why they had not completed the given exercises.

* Some members of staff were not easily convinced of the educational usefulness of the directed study time exercises.

* Difficulty in "monitoring" student participation in this exercise.

The advantages of the pilot scheme included:

* The use of *Iolis* to augment certain workshop activities proved useful.Students who bought their own copy of *Iolis* were very pleased to find exercises built around the use of it included in the curriculum.

* The use of *Iolis* for a directed study exercise proved useful on various fronts. Educationally it was found that the *Iolis* work book on the Court Structure made a potentially tedious subject much more interactiveand interesting. Students could work at their own pace. Normally this subject would be taught in a traditional lecture situation with the lecturer working through the court structure. However it was decided that the *Iolis* workbooks could replace this lecture with something more interesting and still impart the requisite knowledge.

**Manchester Metropolitan University**

**Project leader - Diane Hughes**

Manchester Metropolitan University were interested in introducing *Iolis* into the LLB course in the subject of Trusts. Trusts is taught at Manchester on 6 different courses. Relevant workbooks have been introduced into current tutorials and the teaching and learning strategy. Third year students now all use *Iolis* as part of the Trusts course, it has been incorporated into the manual and tutorial questions. One tutorial requires students to use *Iolis* in order to answer a set question.

Investigation is under way into the use of WebCT to teach the introduction to Equity and Trusts online, with the assessment taking place on the computer to replace coursework if at all possible.

*Iolis* is also being used in the first year in the front loaded course Introduction to the Study of Law. This course already has a large amount of WebCT material and makes use of *Iolis* as part of the assessment / one of the tasks in this subject.

There is also some interest in using the *Iolis* Law for Social Workers workbook.

Student questionnaires have been issued to students from all years, analysis of these will begin when the final questionnaires are returned.

## University of Warwick

### Project Leader - Roger Leng

Originally Warwick planned to focus the project on the Property Law Workbooks. Lecturers teaching property law had identified several problematic areas of the course as taught at Warwick which were to be addressed by this project. Additionally an introduction to and training on *Iolis* was planned for first year law undergraduates.

Whilst the training and awareness element of the project was completed successfully, resourcing problems meant that the new Property Law workbook was not completed. Other ideas for the project were considered at length and a new plan has been developed .

The revised plan is focused on first year law undergraduates.

* Revise the training provided for the new intake of undergraduates .

* Work with first year tutors to develop a variety of potential ways of implementing *Iolis* in a more integrated way than before.

* Increase staff awareness of the opportunities provided by *Iolis* to enhance the teaching and learning environment.

An evaluation of the effectiveness of this approach will be undertaken towards the end of the project. Initial indications are positive with a significant increase of individual sales of *Iolis* to first year students at Warwick.

## Integrating Iolis at Coventry University

Whilst Coventry University were not one of the seven institutions participating directly in the project, the work done by David Grantham provides an excellent example of how *Iolis* can be integrated with other applications to develop an interactive learning environment.

IOLIS plus can be viewed at:<http://home.edu.coventry.ac.uk/iolisplus/>

It has four elements:

1. The *Iolis* workbooks and resource book.

2. David's own web pages. Typically these pages include:

* A section defining 'What you need to know before you start'

* A list of learning outcomes

* Annotations and comments

* Additional questions (graded for level of difficulty ranging from 'fairly easy' to 'quite challenging')

* A section on 'Frequently occurring misunderstandings' which are based upon his own experience of assessing students work.

* An estimate of the time it will take to complete the section.

3. Links to useful web resources and Coventry University files.

4. A link to a discussion forum. This area encourages students to work collaboratively, specific tasks are set that require a response to be posted to the forum

## Conclusion

Itis clear from the case studies that whilst students find *Iolis* easy to use and a valuable learning tool, a number of barriers prevent its effective integration in legal education. Constraints include issues relating to academic expertise and familiarity with *Iolis*, and the need to provide continuously updated, relevant and high quality IT-based materials. To begin to address these issues, a programme for updating existing workbooks and for commissioning new workbooks has been established. The lessons emerging from the project are being thoroughly investigated to develop a clear understanding of the extent and the type of support that law schools need.

Funding from the City Solicitors' Educational Trust has been granted for a further three years, this new grant will be used to support two key initiatives;

* the implementation of a co-ordinated programme of communication with the authors of workbooks ensuring that *Iolis* courseware materials are kept up-to-date and relevant to the undergraduate curriculum. Appropriate mechanisms will be established for promoting discussion and for the sharing of best practice throughout the legal academic community.

* The provision of support and assistance for law schools to improve awareness of the functionality of *Iolis*, and promote strategies for integrating courseware with traditional teaching methods.

To support these implementation strategies, a range of materials are being developed. They are available for anyone to use or adapt to meet their own lawschool's needs, and can be found on the project's website at http://www.law.warwick.ac.uk/lcc/iolis/citysol/resources.html

The support of the City Solicitors' Educational Trust has been invaluable in starting the process of supporting law schools develop their own implementation strategies. Their continued assistance will allow the LCC to broaden its approach and provide the support that the UK legal academic community require.

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**Implementing Iolis -** City Solicitors' Educational trust project website
http://www.law.warwick.ac.uk/lcc/iolis/citysol/

**Law Courseware Consortium -** website http://www.law.warwick.ac.uk/lcc/