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A Honeypot of rich ideas – Building online communities to promote knowledge exchange and collaboration between creative arts and engineering

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A project case-study is presented which uses an innovative platform to promote the development of entrepreneurial activity between engineering and design students at the University of Huddersfield. The principle of the networking-platform is formed on the open-innovation principles: increase capacity, research engagement, entrepreneurship, knowledge, understanding, employability and impact on learning (JISC, 2009). It provides a network for potential collaboration between second-year students across 8 subject areas and the opportunity to co-develop knowledge and skills. The open aspect of the platform is that it is situated outside the curriculum and provides the opportunity for UG programmes with no formal engagement to form multi-discipline teams to co-construct knowledge (knowledge building), share ideas (knowledge exchange) and build networks (knowledge communities).

Honeypot - The Huddersfield network for enterprise, creativity, prototype design and test embraces the concept of open-innovative platforms within the constraints of the university, by providing an online platform which provides the opportunity for students to create sustainable networks providing new skills and knowledge generation "…because not all the smart people work for you" (JISC, Oct 2013). There is a growing need to combine high-level specialism and expertise with the ability to work collaboratively into the undergraduate experience. Thus, breaking the traditional disciplinary barriers across science, engineering, creativity and business to challenge current practice leading to new, novel and innovative ideas (Cox, 2005; Lawton et al., 2013). "Honeypot" is designed to bring together students, who value innovative-thinking and ideas generation as part of their under-graduate experience. The Honeypot builds on the notion of a 'trap' in which all forms of ideas can be brought together, dismissed or debated in both a physical and on-line environment. The unique aspect of the project is a bespoke piece of software that captures ideas and promotes the development of multidiscipline teams to enable the innovative ideas to be realised through a combined skillset.

The presentation focuses around the success and challenges of designing and implementing this platform for innovation. During the two-cycles of the honeypot 112 students registered with the project and 12 project ideas were initiated. Whilst the project was a success in terms of achieving the project outcomes a number of key challenges where identified during the setting-up of the platform. The first relates to motivating and innovating students and staff to create shared value and the opportunity to learn from others. The second, was the balance of protection of intellectual property and the barriers this places in terms of open innovation, these will be discussed within the presentation.

The case-study will be of interest to other institutions that are keen to establishing on-line communities to promote multidisciplinary networks to facilitate a pipeline of ideas/concepts which could translate into future projects/ventures and the development of entrepreneurial skills.

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JISC (2009) Facilitating open innovation landscape and feasibility study, JISC.
JISC (2013) Making use of open innovation practices and principles, JISC Business & Community Engagement.
Lawton, W., et al (2003) Horizon scanning, Leadership-Foundation Research series /12.