

Remote Authoring of Mobile Blogs for Learning Environments - RAMBLE

RAMBLE is a JISC-funded project, part of the [E-Learning Tools programme](#). RAMBLE is investigating the use of mobile blogs and their integration into Learning Environments.

In this project the process of blogging has three stages:

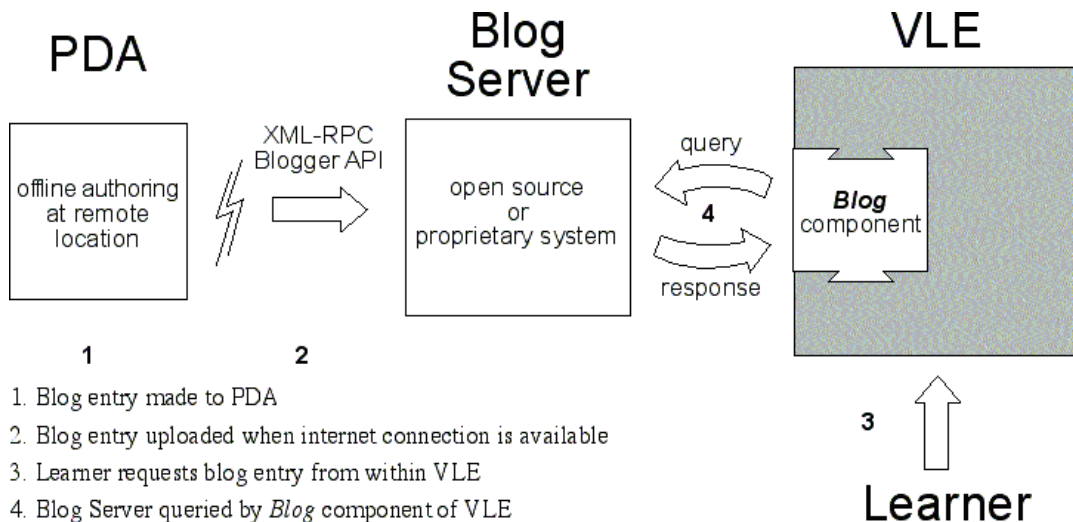
- **Blogging on a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA)** - where students can use handheld devices to reflect on their learning experiences, provide feedback on lectures, tutorials, practicals etc at a location, time etc. that is convenient to them.
- **Upload the blog to a blog server** - on return to their desktop or wherever there is access to the Internet, the students can press a button and upload the blogs to a local blog server.
- **Integration into the Bodington VLE** - VLEs can provide an environment in which the blog can be shared among selected groups, typically peers or tutors within a focused context as can be provided by VLEs. (Usually, blogs are made public and are not highly contextualised). The main development for this project will consist of tools to read the blogs via feeds (probably RSS and Atom) and to render them in various ways in the VLE.

RAMBLE has been investigating the use of *Web logs* (or *blogs*) as a reflective authoring activity in an educational context. The project's work is divided into two strands:

1. The off-line authoring of Web log entries on a PDA and subsequent upload to a Web log server.
2. The creation of a blogging component that allows Web log content to be integrated into Bodington, an open source VLE.

The first strand investigated mobile blogging for students who do not have immediate access to an Internet connection. Various PDA-based blogging clients were adopted for three case studies used for requirements gathering (as befits this call's focus on software tools only) - in the fields of Medicine, Chemistry and ICT (this project).

Informed by the gathered requirements, the second strand has seen the development of a tool enabling blog content to be presented in the wider educational context of a VLE. The tool is able to query any blog server that provides standard syndicated feeds. The architecture is as follows:



The component-based approach makes for a lightweight solution that allows mixing and matching as suits local requirements. For this project, we aimed to provide reasonable coverage of common scenarios by using two kinds of PDAs for requirements gathering - **HP iPaq 1940**, based on MS Windows Mobile 2003 (Pocket PC) and **Palm Zire 72** running Palm OS 5.2. The blog server that was installed is [Pebble](#), which supports XML-RPC-based communications using Blogger API and MetaWebLog API; and several standards-based feeds including RDF1.0, RSS2.0, Atom0.3.

The main development has been a [new Blog Resource](#) (tool) for the [Bodington VLE](#).

Further information: <http://ramble.oucs.ox.ac.uk/>