- Isthmus
  - Pilots
    - 1. Persistant Community: Facilitating a community of students which exists across terms/years
      - Using FaceBook
        - Pros
          - Social Networking sites are becoming more popular http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2007/nov/12/internet
          - Saga open 'Silver Social Networking' site
          - Oportunities for socialising
          - Our surveys indicate that students may want to stay in touch
          - Run by the students
        - Cons
          - Low pecentage of retired users signed -up for SN sites in 2007 (2% in OxIS)
          - Lack of control?
          - Students may come to us for support anyway
          - Too complex for our demographic? No clear goal or outcome?
          - Third party software, need to get the balance right for admin and legal reasons
      - Using a standard discussion forum
      - Using a Virtual World
    - 2. Persistant Identity: Studnets profiles and personal postigns (blogs and forums) are avaiable beyond the course
      - Pros
        - Students stuff doesn't dissapear when they finish a course
        - Students have an ongoing relationship with us
        - Students can refer back to earlier notes/postings
        - It may be possible to 'feed' material in and out of moodle
      - Cons
        - Some students seem to want each course to be a sealed event (PP survey Oct 07)
        - Privacy + data protection issues if we feed material around the web
        - Broken threads on forums if some people opt to make posting private
    - 3. Further Communication: Broadening the range of communication opportunities for students, creating 'fringe' areas around courses
      - Pros
        - Indications that the use of informal communication tools on the rise (PP Suvery Oct 07 - OxIS 07)
        - Increase in people who see the web as a good way to socialise/keep in contact
        - Possibly creating a fringe area around a course for informal learning and socialising
      - Cons
        - Sychronous, so not so good for a global cohort
        - Not that many students have microphines for voice chat
        - Will probably involve a thrid party software with all the implications
    - 4. Mobile Participation: Delivering online learning via mobile technologies
      - Pros
        - Directly requested by the telecoms forum people
        - Web on mobile now affordable
        - Good bridge into liflong learners day-to-day life?
      - Cons
        - Too early: not much take up of mobile web yet
        - Technicaly complex?
  - Interview Questions
    - What do you generally use the internet for? (shopping, communication, learning, banking etc)
    - Do you like using the internet to keep in contact with friends and family? If so what do you use to do this (email, text chat, social networking sites, voice etc)(Links to pilot 1 & 3 and RQ 1, 2, 3)
    - Did you enjoy chatting with the other students on the course? If so did you feel this helped you learn the course or was it a distraction?(Links to pilot 3 and RQ 3)
    - What are your favourite sites for gathering information or news?(Links to RQ 1, 2, 4)
    - Have there been websites that you have started to use and then given up. If so why?(Links to RQ 5)
    - Are there technologies that you suspect would be useful to you but you don't feel confident enough to get started with them?(Links to RQ 5)
    - How long are you prepared to play with a new website/technology before you decide if it's worth using.(Links to pilot 4 and RQ 1, 4)
    - In general, how did they get on with the course they took?(Links to RQ 5)
    - Would it be useful if their work (postings into blogs and forums) were available after the course?(Links to pilot 2 and RQ 5)
  - Themes
    - Intergrating external technologies into our online courses
    - Understanding students use of web technology outside our courses
    - Understanding students expectations for online learning. Are they broader than simply 'learning'
    - Taking advantage of a new generation of web technology and principles
    - Providing more 'fringe' areas around courses for informal learning and socialising
    - 'Bridging' to user owned technologies
  - Our Students
    - They are located all over the world
    - They are often retired
    - Older Demographic (40% older than 55, 77% older than 35)
  - Evaluation
    - Quantitive
      - VLE logs
      - Survey data
      - Polls
      - Evaluation forms
    - Qualititative
      - Interviews
      - Forum activity
      - Chat transcripts
      - Anicdotal
  - Research Questions
    - 1. Do learners appropriate freely available web-based tools and resources (in particular Web 2.0 technologies) to support learning? If so why and how do these technologies meet their needs as learners?
    - 2. How do learners experience the use of tools and resources they are required to access in order to participate in courses provided by the University of Oxford?
    - 3. In what ways might students' existing use of web-based media interact with the tools and resources that they are required to use when participating in courses? What opportunities are created? How are these experienced by learners in everyday life and what strategies do they use to exploit these?
    - 4. Which opportunities (identified in question 3) could be enhanced by integrating the use of freely available web-based tools into courses? How would the new integrated environment enhance existing course provision?
    - 5. How might integration of the tools identified in question 4 be achieved? Would integration require the development of additional 'bridging technologies'? How could this integration be accomplished?