



**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
Westville Campus, PMB Campus, Virtual Campus**

**INFORMATION SYSTEMS & TECHNOLOGY HONOURS
MODULE GUIDE – Computer Mediated Communication**

2011

**MODULE CO-ORDINATORS
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WELCOME

Computer Mediated Communication is any form of communication between people where they interact via digital media through the Internet or other network connection. Virtual Reality Environments provide a very rich form of CMC in terms of providing asynchronous, high immersion and high engagement environments. As such much research has gone into the use of, and implications of, VR environments in education, business and entertainment.

The biggest developments, challenges and opportunities within the area of CMC that are being witnessed are in the phenomenon that has come to be known as Web 2.0. “Web 2.0 is the term given to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web that is focused on the ability for people to collaborate and share information online. Web 2.0 basically refers to the transition from static HTML Web pages to a more dynamic Web that is more organized and is based on serving Web applications to users. Other improved functionality of Web 2.0 includes open communication with an emphasis on Web-based communities of users, and more open sharing of information.”¹

According to Gartner ² “Web 2.0 technologies and business models dominate emerging technologies.” As such the major focus of the CMC module will be on the technologies and business models that are emerging with the Web 2.0 environment.



PLEASE NOTE: Due to Second Life resource constraints a maximum of 30 students (12 PMB and 18 Westville) across both campuses can be supported.

¹ http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/W/Web_2_point_0.html

² <http://www.gartner.com/it/page.jsp?id=495475>

TITLE OF MODULE

Computer Mediated Communication

MODULE CODE

ISTN730 and ISTN430

CREDIT VALUE OF THE MODULE

16 credit points

PREREQUISITES FOR THIS MODULE








Bachelor's Degree with appropriate IS&T majors, and acceptance on to the Honours Programme

PURPOSE OF THE MODULE

The purpose of this module is to provide students with the theoretical and practical know how to use Web 2.0 technologies to evaluate and develop Web 2.0 business models as applied to business, education and entertainment.

STATEMENT OF SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the completion of this module students will:

-  understand what CMC is and be able to discuss the principles that underpin CMC
-  be able to critically examine the implications and issues that arise from utilising CMC
-  understand what Web 2.0 is, its difference to Web 1.0, how it relates to CMC, and its application
-  be able to develop and discuss a Web 2.0 framework
-  understand the various Web 2.0 business models and critically discuss the role of Web 2.0 for business and education in particular
-  be able to discuss and implement a CMC system for either a business or an education environment
-  be able to discuss the future trends emerging in CMC

LIST OF CONTENT TOPICS

- Principles of CMC
- Communication issues
- Web 2.0 business models
- CMC in business and education
- CMC implementation
- Trends in CMC
- HCI in 3D virtual world environments

TYPES OF DELIVERY AND NOTIONAL STUDY HOURS

Types of Delivery

Students' learning experience for this module will include

- Preparation and participation in lectures
- Preparation and participation in tutorials and meetings, both in a face-to-face context as well as virtually
- Preparation and participation in assignments and other online tasks
- Self-directed study

Notional Study Hours

The anticipated number of hours that a student can expect to spend on this module is 160 notional study hours. This is made up of approximately;

- 20 hours of Bootcamp/ physical & virtual lectures
- 24 hours of tutorials (physical and/or virtual)
- 1 hour of virtual field trips
- 45 hours of resource-based virtual environment skill development
- 24 hours of self directed study
- 44 hours assignments (written & oral presentations)
- 5 hours tests (preparation is supplemented by tutorial time)



DULY PERFORMED (DP) CERTIFICATE REQUIREMENTS

There are no DP requirements for this module.

ASSESSMENT

This course is based on a continuous assessment method. As such there is no final exam, but rather students are required to complete a variety of assignments, virtual world tasks and tests.

Mark Breakdown

The final module mark is calculated using the following weighting factors

Part	Week	Dates	Description	% Mark Contribution
1	1	7 Feb – 11 Feb	Hello CMC – (1.5) Podcast	
	2	14 Feb – 18 Feb	CMC Intro – (2.5) Reading Pack	
	3	21 Feb – 25 Feb	Test Panel – (3.5) Speciality/eHello	
	4	28 Feb – 4 Mar	Panel/Personal orienting in SL	20%
2	5**	7 Mar – 11 Mar	SL Training	
	6**	14 Mar – 18 Mar	SL Communal Build	
	7**	22 Mar – 25 Mar	SL Communal Build	
	8**	28 Mar – 1 Apr	Communication in VW – Theoretical Review Report	10%
	9	4 Apr – 8 Apr	Communication in VW – Build and Individual Report	15%
3	10	11 Apr – 15 Apr	Virtual World Education Build (VWEB)	
	11	18 Apr – 22 Apr	VWEB - Report 1: Using VWs for Education (Individual)	
		21 Apr – 2 May	VAC	
	12	2 May – 6 May	VWEB	
	13	9 May – 13 May	VWEB -Report 2: VW Design Brief	15%
	14	16 May – 20 May	VWEB Build, Reflection & Presentation	30%
			Participation Mark (During Course)*	10%

** These activities may also host students from a 4th year module in the Computer Science Department, Daystar University, Kenya, as part of the NextEd-AFRICA initiative.

* Participation is based on your continual meeting of deadlines and participating in required tasks. Note that not all weeks and tasks are weighted equally.

Method of Assessment & Contribution

As mentioned above, the assessment takes place continuously through the module. The assessment is based on the student's ability to complete the various tasks set, Assignments, Virtual Worlds and Tests.



10% of your course mark comes from Participation. This is measured in terms of your participation in the course (through blogs, forums etc). This will be monitored and assigned a mark. Additionally, for group work there will also be a “percentage contribution” grading system. This is based on your level of involvement in the group (based against a 100% participation norm). This percentage of the group assessment will then serve as the student's mark e.g. student's performing 50% of the expected work (as adjudged by your group) will only receive 50% of the mark received by the group. If the group achieved 60% they will thus only be credited with a 30% mark. In all activities 50% indicates a pass.

Note. There is no exam for this module. Should you score a mark of between 40% and 49% for any assessment you will be given the opportunity to resubmit your work. The resubmission will only be awarded a maximum mark of 50%. There are no resubmissions for marks below 40%.

Computer Mediated Communication Credit

A credit will be granted for Computer Mediated Communication to students who have a final module mark of at least 50%.

LECTURES

The times for both the lectures, tutorials, virtual lectures and virtual tutorials will be made available once they are finalised. As this module is primarily about virtual environments, students should expect to spend most of their learning experience in these virtual environments. All communication, submissions etc will take place through the virtual environment. Details of how to accomplish this will be made available at the commencement of the module.

Activities are scaffolded (or build on each other) and thus participation (by stipulated deadlines) is **compulsory**.

PRESCRIBED & RECOMMENDED TEXTS

There is no prescribed text as students are expected to make use of a wide range of textbooks and online material that is available on this topic. You will be given a list of useful resources that will help you initiate your learning process.

COMMUNICATION MEDIA

Outside of lecture periods and individual consultations, communications between lecturers and students will take place electronically. Students are advised to contact the lecturers through their email;

- Craig Blewett – blewett@ukzn.ac.za - Cee Beattie (SL Name)
- Rose Quilling – quillingr@ukzn.ac.za - Resomyra Felwitch (SL Name)
- Zahra Bulbulia – bulbulia@ukzn.ac.za - Zahra Fallen (SL Name)
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A social learning network environment (nexted.ning.com) will be used as the primary communication medium. More information will be provided on this during the course.

Please note that you will be provided special Internet access privileges (Facebook, Twitter, You Tube etc) while on this module. You are also however warned that this is for academic purposes and should you be seen to be abusing the privilege in any way, you will be held personally accountable. You are also warned that removal of these privileges may make it impossible to complete the module successfully. The university has auditing software in place which allows them to determine your online activities.

During the semester it is necessary to ensure you check communications at LEAST twice a day. This requirement is not enforced over weekends/ holidays. **Team members may however negotiate their own rules during team activities.**

Except in the case of weekends and holidays, a period of 24 hours will be regarded as sufficient time for students to have acquainted themselves with any emails or notices posted on the Social Network Learning Environment.

