

# The maturing of MALTS from a mixed blend

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About Edinburgh University  
How the e-learning team started,  
Our structure & general approach  
Funding for e-learning  
(WebCT & e-assessment)  
General challenges we face

# About the University of Edinburgh

- 420 years old, traditional, research led
- Wide subject range including medicine, law, education
- Organised in 3 academic colleges plus 3 support groups
- City centre location plus many campuses
- International staff & students
- 7,000 staff & 21,000 students

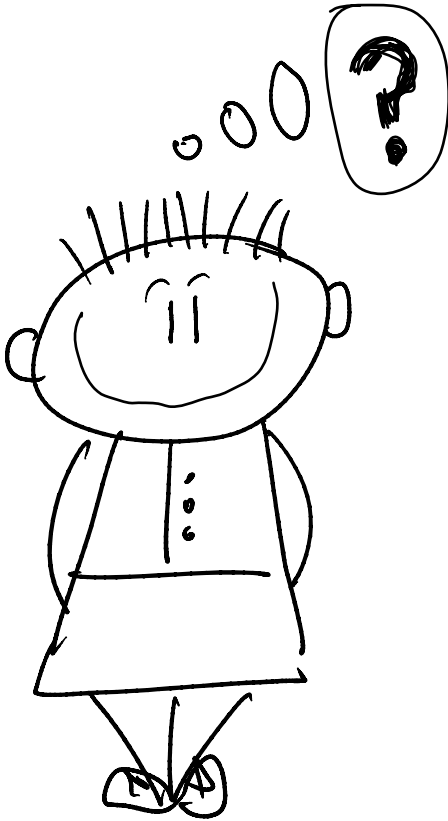


# About our Students

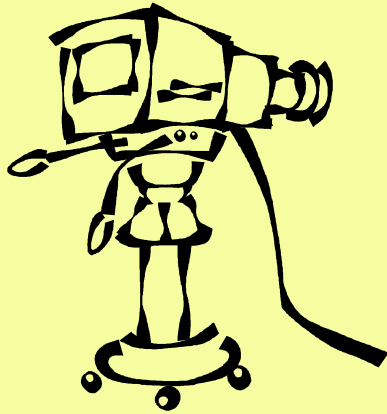
- Smart, successful
- Computer ownership >80%, broadband internet connection
- Good IT skills on entry
- Mostly school leavers
- EUSA (students' association) represented on uni committees and take real role in decision making



# About MALTS and the MALTS Manager

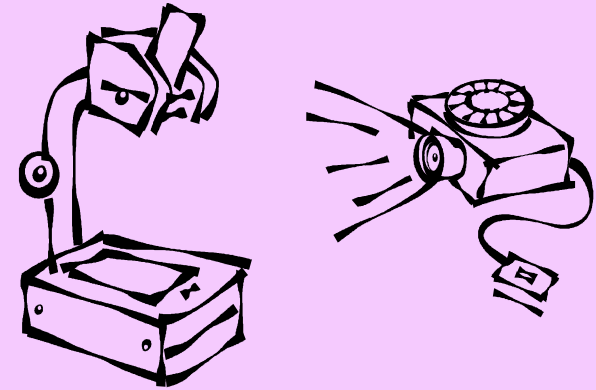


Institute of Education  
Educational TV



1998

University of Edinburgh  
Audio Visual services



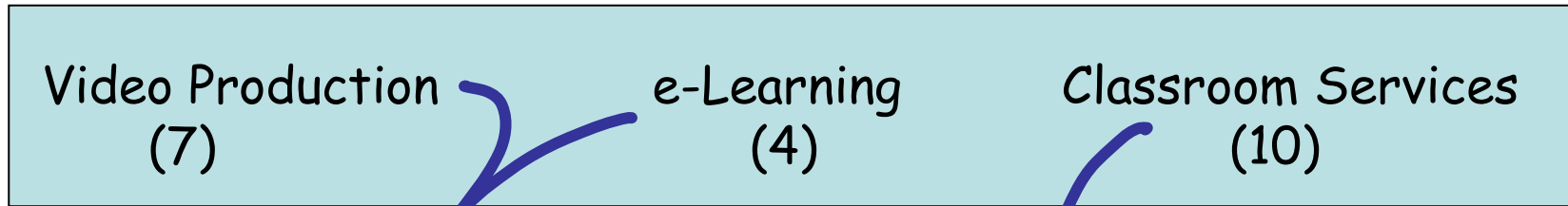
Video Production  
(7 staff)

e-Learning  
(4 staff)

Classroom Services  
(10 staff)

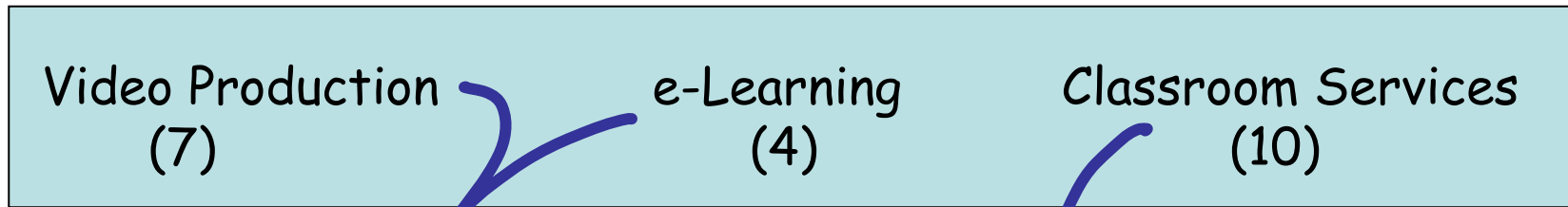
MALTS = MEDIA & LEARNING TECHNOLOGY SERVICE

1998



2003

1998



2003

Library Services

Computing Services



2007

Information Services



# Summary : the initial challenge

Staff from diverse backgrounds (not e-learning)

Highly dynamic environment (organisation & technology)

College of Medicine dedicated e-learning team

How to migrate from specialised local provision to  
sustainable campus wide services  
while maintaining quality?

# The team started out as

1 botanist \*

1 accountant

1 maths teacher

1 artist

1 TV cameraman

1 project manager

1 audio engineer (& pop star!) \*

1 librarian

1 photographer

1 computer scientist

1 graphic designer

1 electrician

1 linguist

How to develop a shared identity as an e-learning team  
And produce a useful service ?!

Director

E-learning

Classroom services

Services

Systems

Installations

Training

WebCT

Maintenance

Support

Perception

Loans & Hires

Dissemination

Video Production

Conferences

Course Design

Multimedia

Most activities need a team

These folk need to be innovators and communicators

These folk need to be more technical

# E-Learning team issues

Tension between individual interests/skills and needs of the team

Lack of deep embedded knowledge

New needs emerge faster than skills embed

Systems development comes before pedagogy ☹️

User support : shift system to respond to e-mails

Encourage personal development for team members:

- 1 new (part time) PhD student
- 2 Masters degrees completed, 1 underway
- Lots of professional development courses & conferences

# General Approach

All staff members 'lead' on something

Say "Yes" whenever possible

Work in partnership - with each other & with clients

Fit for purpose is good enough

It's OK to need to find out more

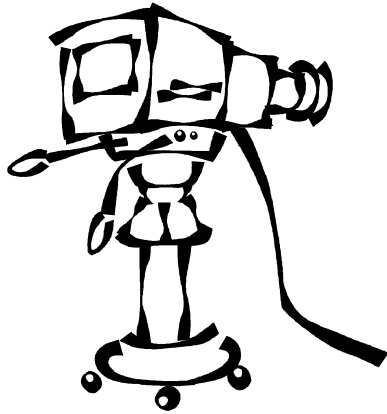
Admit to mistakes and warn of concerns

- WebCT Vista
  - Question Mark Perception
  - WebCT e-portfolio
- Streamed video  
Podcasts  
Weblog  
Media wiki  
Web-Poll Tool  
Respondus  
Audience Response System  
Turnitin  
Bristol on-line survey

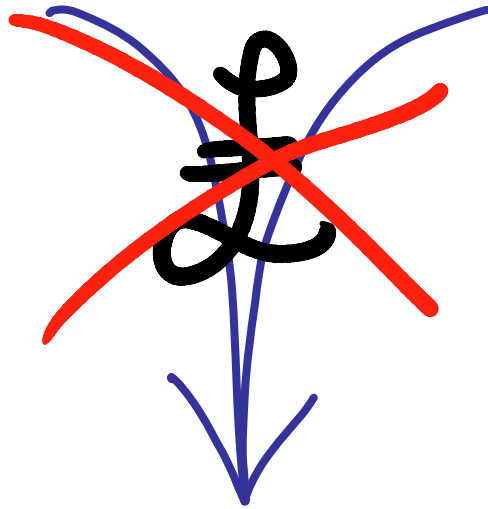
Website development  
Animation  
35mm slide Digitisation  
Multimedia authoring  
E-break programme  
Accessibility advice  
DVD authoring  
Educational Consultancy  
Impatica on cue  
OMR Processing

MyEd - Portal  
E-reserve

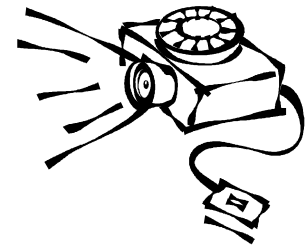
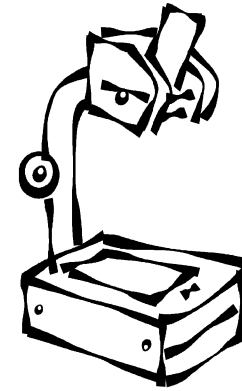
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# Funding e-learning

Staff funded centrally,  
No charge for work in support of learning & teaching

Transfer resource video production > e-learning

Request to annual planning process  
2005/2006 allocated almost £100k for licences etc

Some income generation, especially from video

Principal's e-learning fund - almost £5 million over 5 years  
.....but aimed at colleges, not central services





## projects

### the e-gallery

## University of Edinburgh E-Learning Projects

### Humanities and Social Sciences

**PeLF** Developing an online learning environment for the Doctorate in Education (EdD) Programme  
*September 2005 to September 2006*



**PeLF** INFRAR.ED, Interconnected Freeware Artefacts Edinburgh, lets students store virtually any digital media and make it available for sharing with others  
*September 2004 to December 2006*



**PeLF** e-learning@GSSPS, developing a set of modular web-based units to replace and enhance the existing course provision in research methods  
*October 2004 to October 2007*



**PeLF** The MSc in E-Learning, developing an MSc in e-learning delivered part-time and fully online  
*September 2005 to August 2007*



**PeLF** E-learning Support for Foundational Business Studies  
*August 2005 to June 2006*



**PeLF** People, Prelates and Purgatory: Religious Perspectives in Late Medieval Scotland, giving postgraduate students access to a specialist corpus of historical evidence and promoting collaborative research  
*May 2004 to April 2005*



**PeLF** E-portfolio Research and Development in Education at Edinburgh (ERDEE), exploring and developing the use of e-portfolios within the School of Education  
*May 2005 to June 2006*



**PeLF** SCROLLA, The Scottish Centre for Research into On-Line Learning and Assessment  
*January 2001 Onwards*



### Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

**PeLF** Cases, a project that has developed approaches to the online support of cases and virtual patients



**PeLF** Neuroimaging by e-learning, developing a programme to provide students from varying backgrounds



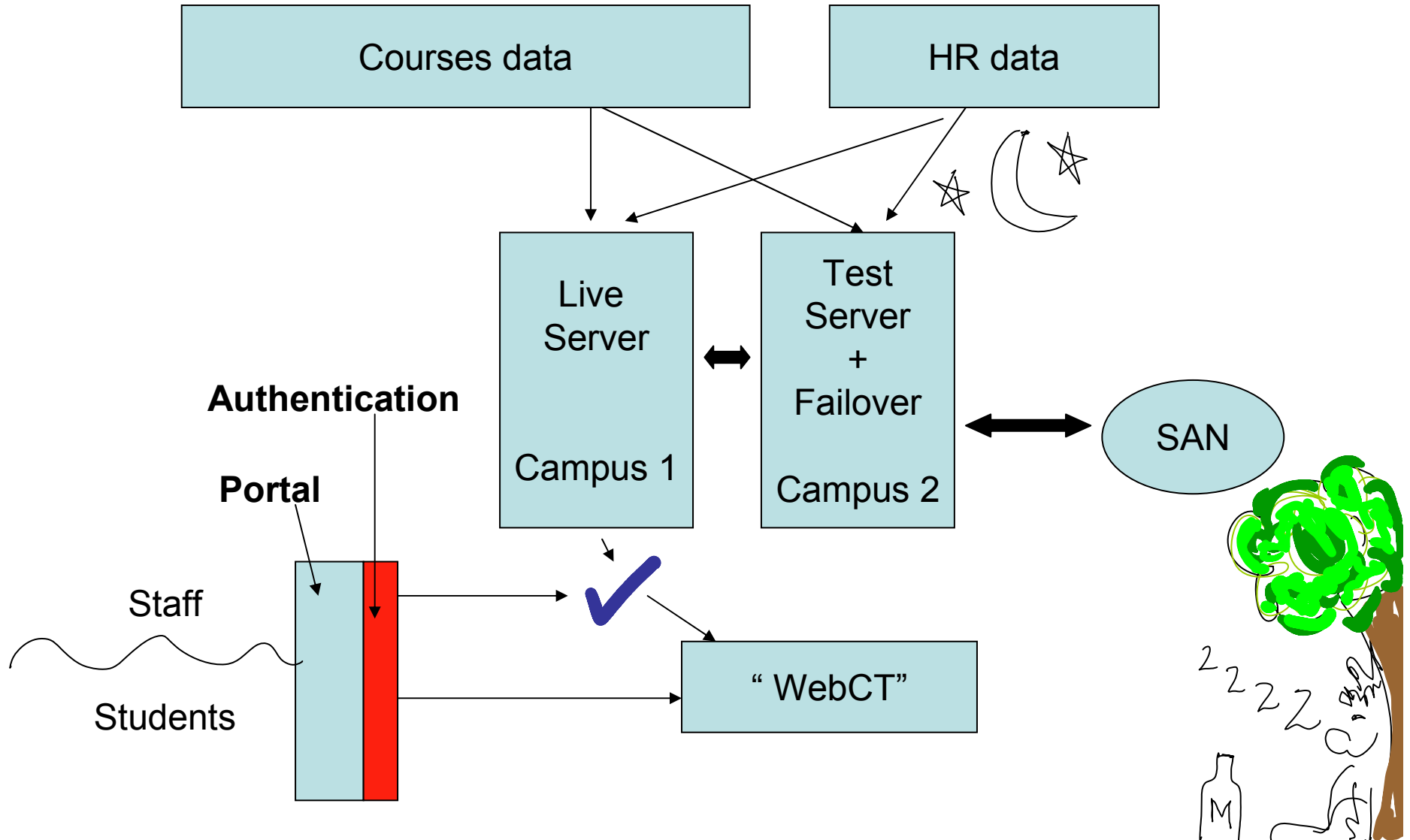
Principal's E-Learning Fund  
Over 45 projects so far

[www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/egallery](http://www.elearn.malts.ed.ac.uk/egallery)

MSc E-Learning  
MSc in pain management  
The virtual farm  
The virtual woman  
Virtual fieldwork in Iceland  
Using a Personal Response System  
Learning Object Repository  
e-learner tracking  
EePoP  
Infrar.ed  
Forging tools for e-assessment e-tutoring course  
e-map scholar  
  
and lots more

The next few slides are intended to offer some idea of how we run our systems and what we do with them for those who may be interested.

# WebCT - currently upgrading to VISTA



# How do we know if we are doing OK?

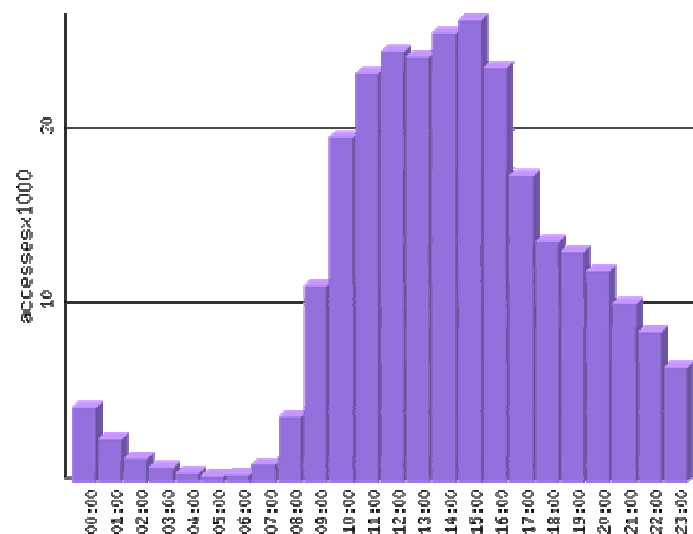
Target: The number of active undergraduate courses to increase by 10% per annum.

## WebCT Active courses:

2003/2004 = 650

2004/2005 = 641

2005/2006 = 926



## Server reliability since 1 Aug 2005

66 of 249120 minutes down = 99.974% reliability

But does it help the students ??

# MALTS Staff supporting WebCT

- 1 overall administrator (0.5)
- 1 back up administrator (0.5)
- 1 unix support (0.1, another team)
- 1 database support (0.1, another team)
- 1 training & user support (0.5)
- User support via e-mail helpline (shared)

It's not enough !!

# e-Assessment

## 1. Using computers to assist conventional assessments

OMR Processing of paper MCQ tests

Tablets for essay-exams

Student videos

## 2. Using computers to forge new assessment strategies

Online objective tests - multimedia

Distributed assessments for placement students

# Objective Tests : Issues

## Labs

Layout & size not ideal

Securing the desktop

Invigilation

Caution about experimenting

Time needed for designing questions



# MALTS staff supporting assessment

- 1 overall administrator & training (0.3)
- 1 backup administrator & technical author (0.2)
- 1 strategy & policy negotiator (0.1)
- 1 server administrator (0.1, another team)
- 1 training & user support (0.1)

It's not enough!!



# E-portfolios & PDP

Political pressure to introduce Personal Development Planning  
"It's not rocket science!"

Align with college Learning & Teaching strategies

Why Portfolios

Evidence? Reflection? Assessment ?

Who owns the portfolio ? Who directs its use?

What happens when the student leaves?

# General challenges + difficulties

- Open source vs commercial
- Empire building
- Balance between depth & breadth of knowledge/skills
- Career progression & recognition
- Innovation vs cost recovery
- Single point(s) of failure ☹️ very dangerous

We need lots of the generic blend but there is still a place for the specialist MALTS

Off the shelf  
Anytime, anyplace



WebCT

Special but  
multipurpose

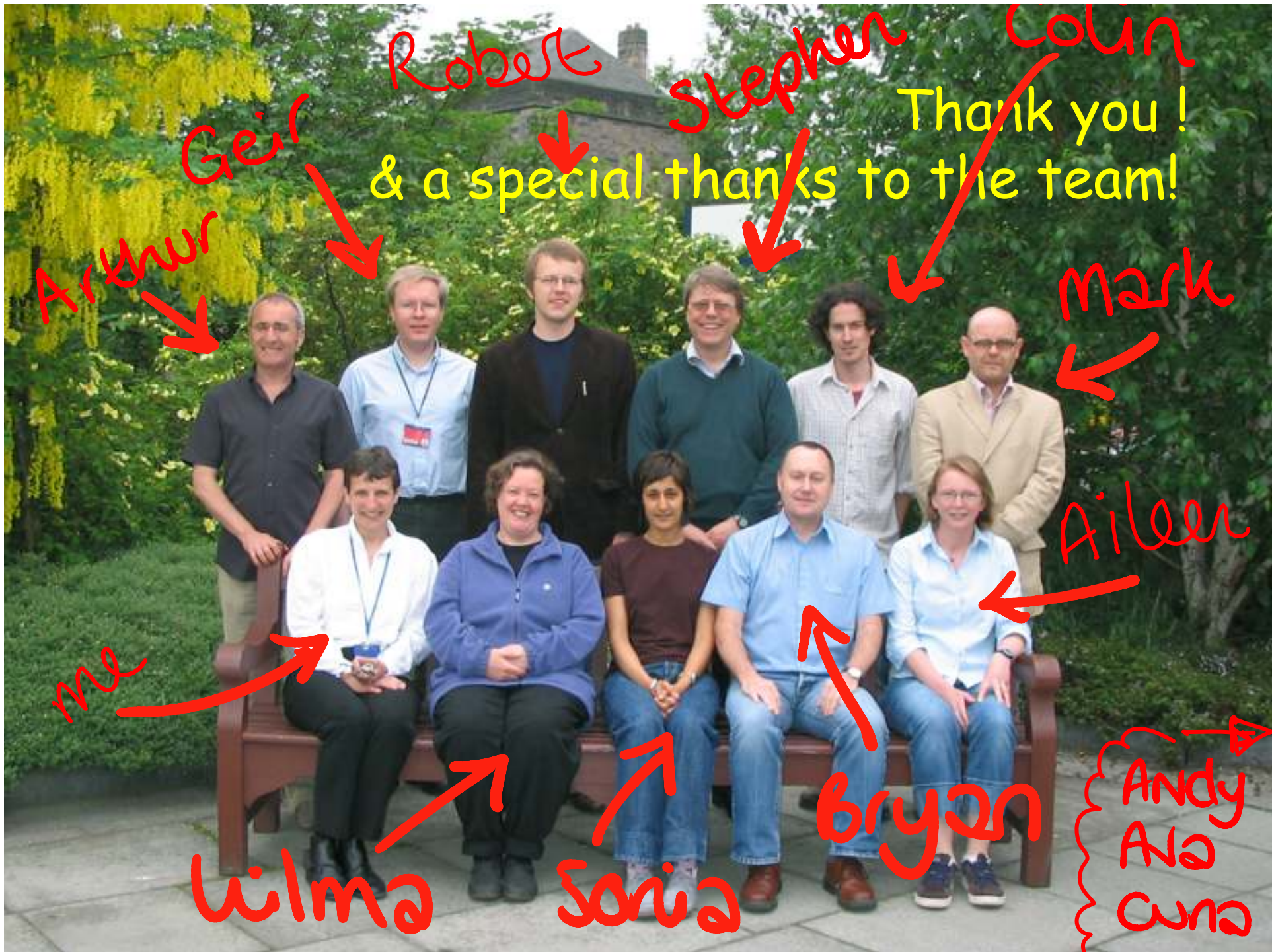


e-Portfolio

Perfect for the  
right occasion



e-assessment



Thank you!  
& a special thanks to the team!

Arthur  
Geir

Robert

Stephen

Colin

Mark

Aileen

me

Wilma

Sonia

Bryan

Andy  
Ana  
Cuna



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