Afternoon everyone. The title of this presentation, Targeted Virtual Engagement and it’s insights from a fairly large first year course.

To put it in to context, the course itself is called Information Systems For Service Industries. What it does is supposedly facilitate the technological literacy of students within business contexts. They are supposed to develop and understanding of how different technologies can be applied to achieve specific business goals. They develop technological skills in a whole range of different software applications. But they also learn how to use a website publishing platform.

The course is focused on developing their capabilities so that they can generate not only innovative but effective information management solutions in their future careers. The challenge, now I’m not sure if any of you have noticed this, but sometimes students can be tough to reach, let alone engage. And my perception on this is that a lot of them actually do not attend lectures, they do not attend tutorials and they also do not use their Griffith e-mail address. And so for us, what it means is any sort of announcement that you’re putting in to your lectures, in to your tutes, or firing out via a bulk e-mail to Griffith e-mail addresses may not actually be heard at all.

What I’ve seen, however, is that most students seem to be very technologically proficient interacting within a converged environment. And by this, what I mean is they seem really comfortable existing and interacting on-line, using a multitude of different devices, iPhones, iPads, PCs, computers, and also using a multitude of different internet connections. So wireless, at home, anything like that.

In this area they seem to be extremely well connected. We know this, this whole place is a wireless network. They are very capable and they are also very, very confident in accessing information and communicating on-line in this manner. Now we actually don’t know what the potential out, or fall out for this is, because they’re actually the first generation, or part of the first generation to routinely post intimate and personal details and information and images on-line. From my perspective that’s irrelevant, because it opens some doors for us. As lecturers, convenors and tutors.

And so the innovation within this specific course, and this is one thing that we’ve been doing, is focused strongly on on-line communication and engagement techniques. The idea is that it combats the lack of physical presence that I see and we, most likely, all see. And it also exploits their proficiency in on-line interaction.
So a brief timeline of changes in this specific course. The first one, semester two, 2010, not that relevant but I put it in there anyway because I think it has an impact. Is we just revamped the way that we taught in tutorials. Back to the technology theme, in semester one, 2011, we just implemented extensive use of the current Griffith Learning At Griffith blackboard. And all we did was put everything up there in a very clear, organised manner. So lecture content, lecture recordings, assessment information, announcements. A lot of announcements. We would put two to three per week and also sent bulk e-mail to students.

In semester two, 2011, we extended on this and implemented a live website called www.1220hsl.com. And the associated social media pages, so Facebook and Twitter. So right now, this is what’s in this course, in terms of on-line interaction with students. There is learning at Griffith on the far left, there’s the 1220hsl website. The thing that they have in common is that they’re exactly the same. Whatever’s on learning at Griffith is also on this website. The social media is down the bottom, 1220hsl Facebook and Twitter pages.

This is purely a marketing ploy. If students are our clients, then we need to actually provide the information and announcements to them in the environment, in this case on-line, in which they are existing and interacting. The idea behind the website too, this is not specific to everyone because this course, they’re actually supposed to generate that in their second assignment. It’s a major piece of assessment. So the website actually does two things for them. One, it’s an example of what they’re supposed to do. And the standards required. It’s also an example of how information can be widely disseminated to a huge audience and very quickly.

The impact. And all I’ve done here is put the changes in average student perception to three of our stock standard SEC questions. And it’s done over a two year period. The first question is the engagement one, that’s the lightest colour column. The question is, this course engaged me in learning. The second one is satisfied, overall I am satisfied with the quality of this course. The third one, effective, which is the black column. Overall how effective was this course in helping you learn?

Basically what the graph shows is there is a trend of increasingly positive perception from students about this course. If you broke it up a little further, the course at one point was rated very poorly by students. We revamped the teaching in a certain way. It seemed to have an impact. We implemented a very organised Learning At Griffith website and announcement system. It seemed to have another positive impact. And then we also put in this live website and social media thing and it seemed to go again.

What the graph doesn’t show is that there is also a lot of other things going on within here. So to say that that trend is resultant purely because of a website and social media would be incorrect. But what I do believe is that the amount and quality of the on-line interaction being used within this course definitely is having some form of positive impact. And that’s it. Thanks.