# Teaching & Learning with/on the Open Web:
## Exploring the Potential of Domains of One's Own for Web Literacy Development at Coventry University.

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## Overview

Domains of One's Own (DoOO) initiatives entail providing students and staff with the opportunity to have a **personal cyberinfrastructure** (Campbell, 2009), namely **web-hosting space** and a **domain name** (or sub-domain), which they can use to build websites and experiment with a wide range of open source applications for online publishing and much more.

The premise underpinning DoOO is that "faculty and students must have a domain and web hosting of their own if they are to truly understand and engage the deeper possibilities of the open web" (Groom, 2013). By doing so, institutions can empower their communities to take more ownership of their online presence and improve their levels of web literacy (Burtis, 2016; Ian O'Byrne and Pytash, 2017).

## Web Literacy

**Coventry.Domains** is aligned with Coventry University's Education Strategy 2015-21, as one of its six pillars focuses on **Digital Fluency**. In particular, by adopting the DoOO approach, the **Disruptive Media Learning Lab** (DMLL) aims to explore ways of providing **staff** and **students** with an opportunity to develop their Web Literacy levels.

The possibility of using **open source self-hosted Content Management Systems** (e.g. WordPress, Drupal, Joomla, Grav, Scalar) to build a web domain, along with having access to **support** for doing so, enables users to develop a broad range of competences – those covered under the **'Write'** and **'Participate'** dimensions of Mozilla's Web Literacy framework are particularly relevant.

Moreover, users can take more ownership of their **online presence** by adding components that do not rely on platforms controlled by third party companies (e.g. social media), which in turn can help users to gain awareness of mechanisms underpinning the political economy of the current media ecosystem.
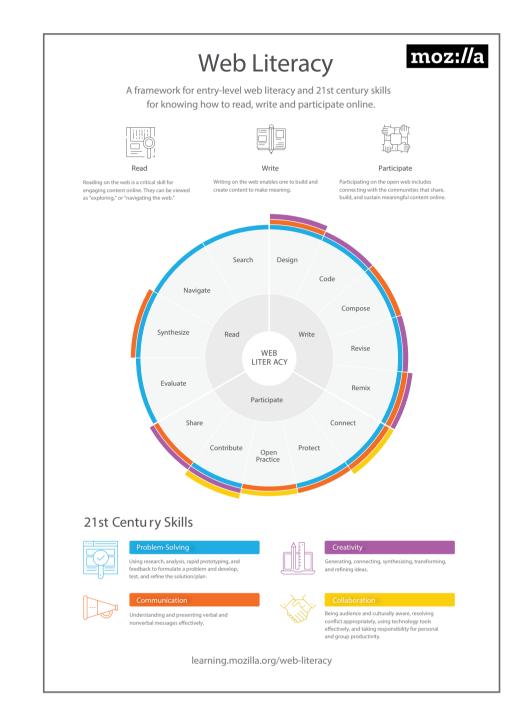


**Fig 1:** Mozilla Web Literacy Framework. Available at learning.mozilla.org/web-literacy/.

## Potential for Students

*"For the students I think it's a really good point between leaving here and joining the real world. I think it's a great transition activity for them, and activity. And the fact that they can maintain it, use of it, if they want, once they've left the university, is an added bonus. But I think it just helps them to begin to make that step from the security of the university to being an independent person."*

**Senior Academic Member in Health & Life Science**

*"I think I need to use it more with my PhD students, and encourage them to have their own, as well as to have a shared space, because I think that sort of community of students, at different stages of PhD, would be another really good way to… Because a lot of the students I'm working with are part time and not on campus, and perhaps feel a bit isolated, so…"*

**Social Sciences Senior Researcher**

*"For students I think it gives them that professional platform in which to create their profile of what they want to be and the kinds of… You know, specifically targeting particular employers and particular industries […] I think for Coventry University it just creates a real good opportunity to give students something like that, like a professional-looking blog – a blog that has their name in the URL and doesn't have adevans123, or… Which, to me, is part of… and particularly in [my field], you have your own web presence."*

**Senior Academic in Arts & Humanities**

Watch interviews with course teams on their experience embedding use of Coventry.Domains and the DoOO approach into curriculum by using the QR codes below:

[QR code] **Scan me**

**Thamu Dube**
*BA Media and Communications, and MA Communication, Culture and Media in Arts and Humanities*

[QR code] **Scan me**

**Linda Martin**
*BA International Leadership and Management in Health and Social Care in Health and Life Sciences*

## Timeline and User Types

The Coventry.Domains initiative began in September 2016. Stage 1 (2016-17) focused on raising awareness of Coventry.Domains and the DoOO approach, and supporting academics to develop their digital skills so they could experiment with creating their own online spaces with a view to up-skill before offering accounts to their students. Stage 2 (2017-18) has focused on the embedding of the DoOO approach into curriculum. Coventry.Domains has now grown to 1000+ user accounts, involving users from all faculty areas and other Coventry University central services.
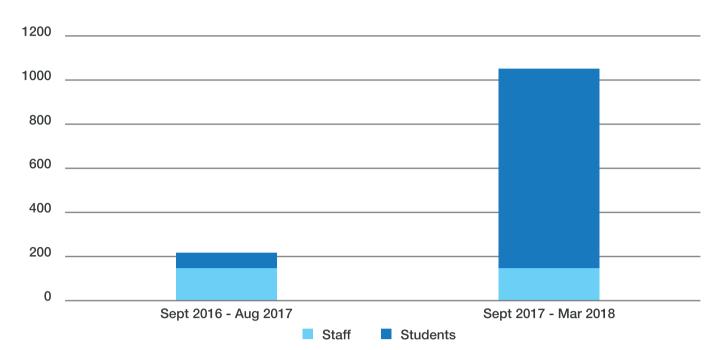


**Fig 2:** Coventry.Domains user growth - staff and student user numbers across the first two years of the initiative.



**Fig 3:** Course titles of users, with size of title indicating the size of user groups from each course and faculty.

* Course groups who were introduced to Coventry.Domains by their course lecturers

## Resources and Support

**Documentation:** Detailed information related to setting up and managing a domain. A derivative of the Create Documentation by Oklahoma University's Center for Teaching Excellence.

**Video Tutorials:** Walkthrough of how to start building a website using WordPress.

**Domain, Paper, Scissors:** A printable paper-based activity to help those new to WordPress and web design to plan what their website could look like.

**WordPress Templates:** Pre-populated WordPress themes loaded with content to help people get started building their own website, including SPLOTs created by Alan Levine.

**Reading List:** A collection of texts on the philosophy behind Domains of One's Own and how it can be embedded in learning and teaching.

**Open Content 101:** An introduction to openly licensed content, including how to use other people's work and how to license your own work under Creative Commons.

Available at coventry.domains/support/

**Staff Development Training:** 1-2 hour workshops where staff can learn how to build their own online spaces using Coventry.Domains, and discuss how to introduce students to Coventry.Domains.

**Developing Digital Fluency through the Open Web & Connected Learning:** workshop series led by Alan Levine as part of his visiting fellowship at DMLL - alanlevineetal.coventry.domains/

**Why 'A Domain of One's Own' Matters (For the Future of Knowledge):** talk given by Audrey Watters as part of her visiting fellowship at DMLL - hackeducation.com/2017/04/04/domains/

## References

Burtis, M., 2016. Making and Breaking Domain of One's Own. Hybrid Pedagogy.

Campbell, G., 2009. A Personal Cyberinfrastructure. EDUCAUSE Review 44, 58–59.

Groom, J., 2013. A Domain of One's Own: Jim Groom at TEDx USagradoCorazon.

Ian O'Byrne, W., Pytash, K.E., 2017. Becoming Literate Digitally in a Digitally Literate Environment of Their Own. Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy 60, 499–504.

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