

THE WEBSITE: A RESOURCE FOR AND BY TECHNICAL STAFF

Introduction

The HEaTED web site is up and running. The feedback on its design and content has been well received. The HEaTED Project Team has turned its attention to future content, purpose, and the source of articles and features.

The primary purpose of HEaTED is succinctly expressed on the web Home Page:

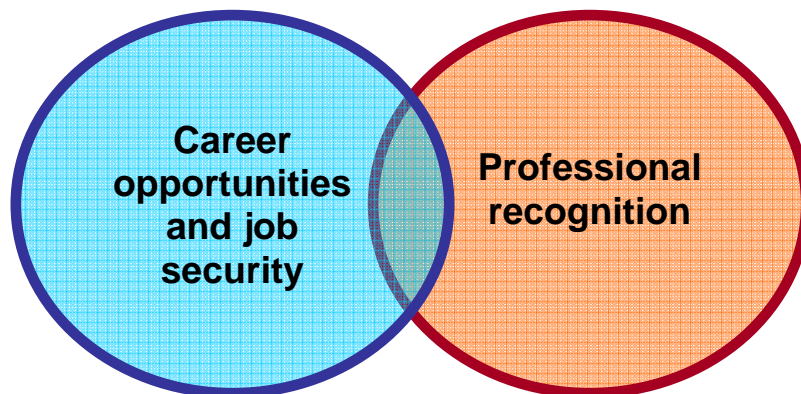
<http://www.heated.ac.uk>

The focus is on technicians, specialists and technical resource managers (TSMs), particularly their skills and personal development, and how these impact on the future requirements of UK HEI's, and the constantly changing education sector. Furthermore HEaTED is unequivocal about the role of TSMs. *"Its core mission is to gain their direct involvement in the [HEaTED] project as users and, crucially, as providers."*

So, what is the nature of this direct involvement, and how would their contribution benefit the individual?

Technical and Specialist Staff Concerns

These are two of the well documented concerns, expressed nationally by TSMs



This is not surprising. It is also clear that professional recognition enhances reputation, and this in turn can have a positive effect on the ability of the individual to compete for job or promotion opportunities. There are many factors that contribute to professional recognition, one being personal profile, in other words how, where, and whether the individual's expertise can be perceived and acknowledged. A low profile does not contribute usefully to personal recognition in the context of career enhancement.

Raising Personal Profiles on the Web

The HEaTED web site is a national resource. The next phase of development will entail researching number of sources for material relevant to its mission. The cornerstone of its success will be the extent to which TSM's participate in making its content qualitatively informative, developmental and lively, based on their experience, knowledge and skills.

Every published contribution will be fully and publicly acknowledged. Contributors (authors) will increase their personal profile by their willingness to take part in this initiative. This may also serve as a means of advertising what they do. This may well serve as a positive indicator in what is a highly competitive career and job market.

Publication options

a) Networking

There are already a number of email groups such as supt-link, NABBS, UBMA and EMU that enable and encourage subscribers to network, for example, by raising a simple enquiry for technical advice, or seeking more complex information concerning joint research on a specific topic. HEaTED via its web site, intends to network specialised groups across an appropriate range of disciplines and fields. This means that the information that is sought and given would be relevant to, and focused on those taking part. Whatever the requirement, such inquiry and response is a fast and effective way of achieving collaboration. Contributing constructively to such national forums is one way that individuals can make themselves known across the nation.

It is envisaged that if the original enquirer decides to collate the responses, this will become a highly valuable reference source that can be published on the web site.

b) Discussion fora

These will be initiated by HEaTED. These will be centred and web organised around specific topics or fields of expertise. HEaTED members would sign up to relevant fora, and so be kept updated with developments, or issues raised in each forum.

Discussion topics would normally be initiated by individuals. They may be launched for finite time, or for the longer term. The latter would usually be designated around a particular area of expertise, for example a Cell Respiration Forum. Such groups can organise conferences or symposia as a means of in depth examination of, say, technique.

c) Submitting learning materials

HEaTED has proposed that TSMs be given the opportunity to submit written materials for publication on the web site. Such articles based on skills and procedures that they use in their day-to-day work, will form the nucleus of a Virtual Learning Environment.

This will become a significant route to the attainment of professional distinction via acknowledgement of authors, whether individuals or groups.

d) Web site feed-back, and ideas for improvement.

The HEaTED web site will ultimately be in the hands of TSMs. So the most immediate way of raising the individual's profile is to contribute towards its development, now.

Summary

Career advancement and job security is enhanced when individuals adopt a high profile within their professional community. Publication of material on the web site, a nationally recognised quality resource, will serve as a means to that end. The dividend for the HEaTED project will be access to the collective expertise of TSMs, nationwide.