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## GROWING & EXPANDING iRADIO OUM

This issue of TCX focuses on OUM's utilisation of technology in teaching-learning and operations from the viewpoints of two recent foreign visitors. The first, by Prof Emeritus Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy from India, looks at the achievements and potentialities of iRadio OUM; while the second, by Perpetual Joy from Zimbabwe, registers ICT as OUM's backbone.

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## ABOUT TCX

TCX (Tutor Connexions) is a non-profit OUM e-newsletter that provides a dedicated link between the University and its tutors. It serves as a channel for news and updates on tutor-related events and as a platform for the sharing of views, experiences and tips on best practices in university teaching and learning.

TCX is published electronically once every semester.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This September 2013 semester sees a more conspicuous rolling-out of iFEED or Intelligent Feedback Database System (see previous issue for more on OUM's iFEED). Be sure to check out the special announcement on iFEED in the regular Tutor Info column. Also, among other things, the Tutor Info column highlights the availability of Lesson Plans for selected courses which tutors and learners can download from myVLE as guide for tutorials and online discussions.

Aside from Tutor Info, this issue of TCX features articles from our recent foreign visitors: Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy, Professor Emeritus at ApeejayStya University, India; and Perpetual Joy, Financial Director of Zimbabwe Open University. Focusing on ICT, the two features are but a foretaste of what is to come at OUM: more intelligent technological leveraging to increase efficiency for the benefit of our learners.

On behalf of OUM, I wish all new and existing tutors a productive semester ahead.

Best

Dr David CL Lim  
Chief Editor

## TUTOR INFO

### IMPORTANT DATES

TUTORIAL 1	Existing Learners: 20-22 Sept 2013 New Learners: 4-6 Oct 2013
TUTORIAL 2	Existing Learners: 4-6 Oct 2013 New Learners: 18-20 Oct 2013
TUTORIAL 3	Existing Learners: 18-20 Oct 2013 New Learners: 8-10 Nov 2013
ASSIGNMENT DEADLINES	Existing Learners: 5-15 Nov 2013 New Learners: 16-19 Nov 2013 (Tutors should remind their learners to use the special assignment template and to submit their assignments online. This applies only to courses that require learners to submit their assignments online.)
TUTORIAL 4	Existing Learners: 16-19 Nov 2013 New Learners: 22-24 Nov 2013
TUTORIAL 5	Existing Learners: 22-24 Nov 2013
FINAL EXAMS	7-29 Dec 2013

### CONTACT INFO

E-TUTOR ISSUES & CONCERNS	ITLA Staff: 2773 2490/2493/2301, OR Email: safiah_mdyusof@oum.edu.my or aznam@oum.edu.my
F2F TUTOR ISSUES & CONCERNS	Learning Centre Directors, OR ITLA Staff: 2773 2490/2493/2301, OR Email: aznam@oum.edu.my
ASSIGNMENT ONLINE SUBMISSION QUERIES	Email: assignment@oum.edu.my
MYVLE TECHNICAL ISSUES	myVLE Helpdesk: 2772 2283, OR Email: mylms_admin@oum.edu.my or aznam@oum.edu.my

SPECIAL  
UPDATES

## FACULTIES RELOCATED TO LEARNING CENTRES

OUM has completed the relocation of selected faculties to learning centres in the Klang Valley:

- Faculty of Business Management (FBM) is now based at the Bangi Learning Centre
- Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (FONAS) is now based at the Petaling Jaya Learning Centre
- Faculty of Science and Technology (FST) is now based at the Shah Alam Learning Centre
- Faculty of Information Technology and Multimedia Communication (FITMC) is now based at the Wangsa Maju Learning Centre

Remaining at the OUM HQ are Faculty of Education and Languages (FEL), and Faculty of Applied Social Sciences (FASS).

For contact information on the faculties, please visit the OUM website.

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS

1. iFEED – Please note that selected courses have an iFEED link on myVLE. Learners can use iFEED to pose questions on content related to the module. The iFEED robot will respond to simple knowledge-based questions.

One of the main functions of iFEED is to help e-Tutors to focus more on initiating and responding to higher-level questions following Bloom's Taxonomy.

iFEED postings do not count towards e-tutor logins and postings, and subsequently e-tutor payments. Your claims are still based on your own postings and responses to learners.

2. LESSON-PLAN LINK – Some courses have a lesson-plan link which allows learners to access tutorial lesson plans. Learners and tutors may use these lesson plans as reference and guide for tutorials and forum discussions.
3. ONLINE TRAINING FOR E-TUTORS – e-tutor training is now being conducted fully online for existing and new e-tutors. The objective of the online training is to upskill e-tutors in online facilitation. Participants who successfully complete the training will receive a certificate of completion to help them secure future e-tutor appointments.

## FOR E-TUTORS

## REMINDERS

1. All e-tutors must be visible in their respective forums.
2. Log in to the Forum at least 4 times a week.
3. Respond to learners' postings regularly. Do not ignore requests for help from learners.
4. Post questions and redirect questions to learners to encourage and stimulate discussions.
5. Post additional content-related resources (web links, videos, articles, etc.) to stimulate interest and spark discussion.
6. If there is an e-schedule for your course, please refer learners to the e-schedule to help guide them with weekly activities for the course. The e-schedule appears within the course on the left sidebar menu of myVLE.
7. Forums are monitored daily. Regular reminders will be sent by ITLA staff, e-tutor mentors and the Head of e-Learning whenever necessary.
8. Please inform the Head of e-Learning at ITLA of any prolonged absence and inability to facilitate forum.
9. All e-tutors are required to use their OUM email account. Communication related to e-tutor matters will be made through your OUM email.
10. Email Notifications – When learners post in the forum, email notifications will be sent to your OUM mailbox. You can reply to the email, and your response will appear in the forum. Your responses via email will count towards your total number of postings and your number of logins into myVLE forum will be accounted for as well. Please do check your OUM mailbox often.
11. OUM Expectations:
  - Enter myVLE and check the forum every other day at the minimum
  - Put up at least 8 postings a week
  - Check OUM mailbox regularly for email notifications of forum postings

## FOR F2F TUTORS

Tutors are reminded **NOT** to:

1. Attend tutorial session unprepared
2. Reschedule the allotted tutorials
3. Cancel tutorial sessions
4. Arrive late for tutorials
5. Arrive late but record an earlier sign-in time
6. Leave tutorials before designated time
7. Read from module directly instead of highlighting or discussing the subject matter
8. Discuss non-academic matters during tutorials

## ON E-TUTOR FB GROUP

If you have an FB account, do request to join the e-tutor group on FB. Please email AP Dr Safiah at [safiah\\_mdyusof@oum.edu.my](mailto:safiah_mdyusof@oum.edu.my).

## ON ASSIGNMENTS

For courses with assignments:

1. Assignments, Assignment Rubrics and Assignment Templates for Learners have been uploaded to myVLE.
2. On online submission of assignments, do note that there are different deadlines for existing learners and new learners.
3. No late submission of assignments will be accepted.
4. Do remind learners to start working on their assignments early and not wait until the last day to submit their assignments online.
5. A list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on assignments is available on the left sidebar menu on myVLE.
6. F2F tutors and e-tutors can only provide guidance on completing the assignments based on the rubrics given. Please do not give any confirmation of marks for the assignments as the assignments will be graded by the e-graders.

## ON F2F & E-TUTOR COMMUNITY AREAS

Tutors are encouraged to log in to the F2F Tutor Community and e-tutor Community forums for continued support and development. The forums also give tutors and e-tutors the opportunity to exchange and share experiences with other tutors/e-tutors.



# GROWING & EXPANDING iRADIO OUM

By Prof Emeritus Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy (r.sreedher@gmail.com)

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Prof Emeritus Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy

The potential of audio, particularly radio, as a medium of communication had never really been fully exploited in the early days of open and distance learning (ODL). With the advent of the 21st century, however, audio is making a comeback and is fast becoming a lifestyle feature, especially among the younger generation.

As ICT technologies advance, improving bandwidth and compression technologies, audio diffuses into new forms, such as podcasts and internet radio. ODL institutions, including Open University Malaysia (OUM), are now leveraging on these to reach out to their learners.

**“OUM is perhaps among the first ODL institutions in the world to have started an internet radio which broadcasts live programmes from as early as 2007.”**

Most ODL institutions employ audio as downloadable or streamable pre-recorded programmes. OUM is perhaps among the first ODL institutions in the world to have started an internet radio which broadcasts live programmes from as early as 2007. Taking great pride in this, OUM’s

*(Continued on next page)*



President, Professor Emeritus Tan Sri Anuwar Ali, has highlighted that the OUM-branded iRadio is today accessed in over 100 countries.

OUM has since acted as technical consultant and partner for iRadio projects in the Maldives and New Delhi, both of which were funded by the Commonwealth of Learning.

Having laid a firm foundation for itself, iRadio OUM is now in good stead to further grow and develop, both in terms of increasing awareness and usage, as well as adding on new features.

OUM staff could spread the word about the existence of iRadio OUM so that more listeners would tune in. iRadio OUM could be broadcasted on the main campus and all learning centres in public spaces like the cafeteria, the lounge, the lawn and the car park. It could also be built into OUM's smartphone app to complement the existing iCast feature, which enables listeners to access archived recordings.




Prof Emeritus Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy

OUM may also explore the possibility of partnering with telecom operators to make iRadio OUM available on dial-up connection or in integrated voice response system (IVRS) mode.

iRadio OUM's live broadcast, which is presently limited to one hour per work day could ideally be increased. Better yet, iRadio could be upgraded into a full-fledge campus radio featuring such interactive features as live feedback and learner participation.

**“iRadio OUM is now in good stead to further grow and develop, both in terms of increasing awareness and usage, as well as adding on new features.”**

To reach out to more simultaneous listeners across the globe, OUM could consider upgrading its bandwidth by partnering with a service provider.

These are just some suggestions to take iRadio OUM to the next level. If iRadio OUM continues to grow, it can only enhance the OUM brand as an ODL leader. 

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Dr Sreedher Ramamurthy is Professor Emeritus at ApeejayStya University, Sohna, Gurgaon, India and until recently the Director of Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia. Dr Sreedher has over three decades of experience in public television and radio.

# ICT AS BACKBONE @ OUM

By Perpetual Joy Ndekwe (perpetual\_joy2007@yahoo.com)



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**M**y contact visit to Open University Malaysia (OUM) as Financial Director of Zimbabwe Open University (ZOU) has left me impressed with the many qualities and practices that make OUM a solid institution of open and distance learning (ODL).

What impresses me the most about OUM is its commitment and the gigantic strides it has taken in adopting information and communication technology (ICT) as the backbone of its teaching-learning practices and operations.

Even as OUM offers face-to-face tutorials and seminars, it places great emphasis in e-learning. We see this evident, for instance, in OUM's myVLE where tutor-learner online discussions take place, iLectures, iRadio, and smartphone app which, among other things, enables learners to download their learning materials.


**“What impresses me the most about OUM is its commitment and the gigantic strides it has taken in adopting ICT as the backbone of its teaching-learning practices and operations.”**

OUM also boasts an impressive digital library which is accessible to all learners and staff from anywhere in the world where there is internet connection. The digital library holds a huge collection of e-books and online databases.

OUM's learning centres are well equipped with internet-connected computer labs, including the recently opened Wangsa Maju Learning Centre which I visited.

Operations-wise, I am impressed by OUM's use of ICT to automate online applications to join OUM programmes, online assignment submissions, the processing of assessment results and learner queries, and so on.

The use of ICT in these innovative ways is a major contributor in cutting operational costs. Cost-savings are subsequently passed on to learners and reinvested to improve learner services.

With all that OUM has going for itself, I am confident OUM can only reach greater heights given time. 

Perpetual Joy Ndekwe is Finance Director at Zimbabwe Open University. She holds a Masters in Business Administration (MBA), a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management, and a Bachelor degree in Business Studies. Joy was recently on contact visit to understudy OUM's general and financial administration.



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