

Glow – Managing Work Flow  
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When I was asked to look at using Glow as an information tool for non-teaching staff I decided to take a closer look at it. I had used Glow and was a member of a few groups, however, I wasn't using it regularly and although I had uploaded the odd document here and there I had very little expertise.

I decided to experiment in My Glow. Initially I played around. I managed to upload a picture and a caption but I found this clunky. The picture was too big and I couldn't get the positioning of the caption right. I moaned and complained to colleagues that I needed a hard copy manual so that I could learn how to do things at my own pace. Between a bit of advice on, and printing off the instructions for, *text editor* I suddenly found my feet. Using tables within text editor has allowed me much more flexibility regarding placing images and text.

The tables were quite a Eureka moment because I started to see further possibilities. I run a number of projects in schools and each year I make up tables which include information which will generally remain static throughout the academic year e.g. names of schools involved; teachers' names; class sizes; class name. I also produce timetables which show dates and times of visits to each class. There may be a number of visits to a class throughout the life of a project and these timetables change accordingly. Once I discovered that I could rename the *text editor* boxes I started to place different types of information in different boxes. I had boxes which contained the types of tables mentioned above but I also had project detail boxes which, as the name suggests, contained information pertinent to a specific project. Probably my most important box was my To Do box. This was a *text editor* renamed To Do and it had a list of things I needed to complete. I liked the fact that as I completed items on my list I could score them out. This meant I was able to see what I had done as well as the in progress items.

By now I was making dedicated pages for different areas of my work. Each one had a heading and a variety of renamed *text editor* boxes containing to do lists, timetables, project details etc. My next step was to create customized document and contact lists. When I realized this was possible I started to see that I might be able to eventually dispense with my shelves of hard copy folders. I loved the idea that I could have so much information collected together in one place. At the click of the mouse I could check which schools were involved in a project, I could access the contact details of everyone connected with the project, I could open relevant documents, and, I could see what tasks were needing to be done and what had been completed.

Initially I hadn't realised that I could create dedicated document and contact lists but when I found out this was possible it made me think of something else. While my to do lists were a great help, they had some disadvantages. I had to open the 'modify the web part' every time I wanted to edit something, and, I had to visit each project page to see what was on each list. So I asked a colleague if it was possible to create task lists which could appear in more than one place and be edited anywhere they could be viewed. The answer was yes. This led to me changing all of my *text editor* To Do boxes to customised *task lists*. I now have a task list for each project placed on its project page, and, I have a TASKS page which contains all of my task lists. I can go

to my TASKS page and quickly get an overview of all the things I need to do for all of my areas of work.

During the time that I was learning how to make Glow work for me, one of my colleagues was looking at some other aspects. He discovered that he could incorporate hyperlinks to our internal telephone directory, our email (we do not use Glow Mail) and the internet. The addition of these hyperlinks in My Glow meant that I could do most of my work via Glow. I looked at my book shelves to see what would remain if I managed to move from hard copy project folders to placing everything on Glow. There were only two items, my dictionary and my thesaurus. I decided to make a hyperlink to virtual reference tools. The shelves beside my desk are now empty.

The work on Glow has happened at a particularly key time for me. Our department is investigating flexible working arrangements. Having managed to get the vast majority of information I require either on Glow or on to our corporate server, it is not essential for me to work at my desk. If I can gain internet access I can work. This is particularly helpful when I work with partners outside of Education, once on the internet I can go onto Glow and let them see a wide range of relevant information that I have brought together on a dedicated page of My Glow.