



# Overall for Radiography the ALPS experience has been a good one, with ups and downs but a great deal of learning, for students and staff alike

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Diagnostic Radiography—ALPS has made it easier to assess what is needed in a mobile device for students and also to consider what is needed, what is unnecessary, and the limitations of any mobile device that we choose to work with.

## Diagnostic Radiography

Diagnostic Radiography students at the University of Leeds have been using ALPS tools and devices in clinical practice for the last three years.

Students from the September 2007 cohort were given ALPS mobile devices in their first semester at university ready to take out on placement in the October of that year. The students attended a briefing session on the ALPS programme and were taught how to set up and use the basic functions of the device.

The students took them out, with minimal software, on their first placement. In this time they were using the mobile devices for emails and web browsing, and also as a point of contact with the university and clinical staff. The aim was for the students to use the devices for accessing emails and web content without tying up the department computers.

Here the cohort encountered the first hurdle to overcome. X-ray departments, using radiation, are heavily shielded with lead and thick concrete/barium plaster walls. What this effectively creates is a very efficient method of blocking radiation, not just from inside but from outside as well. Unfortunately, radiation was not the only thing blocked and we found that in a number of radiography departments there was no viable mobile signal. This effectively cut the students off from web content.

This was overcome, from a content point of view, by developing a stand-alone, browser-based, interactive radiography positioning textbook. This ran within the mobile version of internet explorer, and was stored on the device. As this developed however, it became clear that the inclusion of images was increasing the file size considerably.

Fortunately, the devices came equipped with a memory card slot and inserting a 2GB memory card enabled the site content to be stored locally without affecting the operation of the devices.

Over the three years the students have also trialled the ALPS tools and custom packages for the radiography department. When these were trialled they worked very well and were completed in the departments quickly. However, one drawback was that the assessments were time stamped with the time and date they were uploaded to the server, which unfortunately due to the poor signal in some departments, could be hours or even days after the assessment was actually completed. Also, due to the small screen size, what were on paper short assessments, on screen became quite long.

Now in their final year, the students have been given logbooks for their CT (Computed Tomography) placements on the devices. Once the logbooks are completed, they are uploaded to the server meaning students do not then run the risk of losing their work.

Nick Crohn coordinates the clinical modules for the Radiography degree at the University of Leeds. He said:

*'Overall for Radiography the ALPS experience has been a good one, with ups and downs but a great deal of learning, for students and staff alike.'*

*'The use of the ALPS devices and software has informed discussions within the department regarding the use of mobile devices in the clinical departments. ALPS has made it easier to assess what is needed in a mobile device for students and also to consider what is needed, what is unnecessary, and the limitations of any mobile device that we choose to work with.'*

*'In addition, the use of the ALPS Assessment Suite has contributed greatly to our discussions regarding the development of electronic portfolios, particularly their advantages and disadvantages over paper-based portfolios.'*