MOODLE FAQ - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Moodle FAQ - Frequently Asked Questions 1
- Starting with Moodle 3
  - What is Moodle? 3
  - Where is the funny name from? 3
  - How do I start using Moodle? 3
  - I just want to try it out 3
  - I want to use Moodle as an individual teacher or educator 4
  - I want to set up Moodle for my organisation 4
  - Do I have to be really good with technology to use Moodle? 4
- Cost 5
  - How much does it cost to download and use Moodle? 5
  - How much does it cost to run Moodle? 5
  - How much does it cost to have Moodle hosted? 5
- Technical queries 5
  - Do I need my own server to run Moodle? 5
  - Do I have to install Moodle myself? 6
  - Can I customise a theme to make it relevant to our school? 6
  - Can you use Moodle from anywhere and on any device?? 6
  - Can access to Moodle be restricted to just our organisation? 6
  - I've come from a school that used a different VLE/LMS. Can I transfer my stuff over to Moodle? 6
- Help and support with Moodle 7
  - How do I use Moodle? 7
  - I don't understand the MOODLE SOFTwARE terms 7
  - Is there an official support desk for Moodle? 7
  - What about people with disabilities? 7
  - Are there any comparisons of Moodle with other Learning Management Systems? 7
- Security 8
  - How secure is Moodle? 8

Can Moodle get hacked into and student data stolen? 8
What if I did something wrong and accidentally broke it - could it be easily fixed? 8
Is my student data safe on a cheap or free webhost? 8
Can I track and search what people do and post in Moodle? 8
Can I backup Moodle so I don't lose things? 8
Teaching and Learning 9
What is the best way to use Moodle? 9
Can Moodle be used for..... ? 9
Are there any good examples of Moodle use I can see? 9
How do I share ideas and content with other Moodlers? 9
Can Moodle be used in different subjects? 10

STARTING WITH MOODLE

WHAT IS MOODLE?

- Moodle is a free online learning management system, or LMS (also known as VLE.)

  A learning management system (**LMS**) is a software application for the delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning), documentation, tracking, reporting and administration courses or training programs.

  Moodle is hands-down the most popular LMS in the world with 65 million users worldwide, 60,000+ registered installations, translated in 120+ languages (as of Oct 2015).

  It is suitable for all ages and all sectors. Anywhere learning takes place, Moodle can be used. It is usually used online but may also be used on an 'intranet' within your organisation.

WHERE IS THE FUNNY NAME FROM?

- The word Moodle is an acronym for **M**odular **O**bject-**O**riented **D**ynamic **L**earning **E**nvironment, which is mostly useful to programmers and education theorists.

- It's also a verb (in the bigger English dictionaries) that describes the process of lazily meandering through something, doing things as it occurs to you to do them, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity.

- A sort of cross between "muse" and "doodle". As such it applies both to the way Moodle was originally developed, and to the way a student or teacher might approach studying or teaching an online course in an ongoing, iterative way. Anyone who uses Moodle is a Moodler.

HOW DO I START USING MOODLE?

I JUST WANT TO TRY IT OUT

- ***Simplest way***: If you just want to try it out for yourself to practise, you can use one of the accounts on the Moodle Demonstration Site. To see a site with example content, visit the School Demonstration site.

- THIS COURSE provides Bonus lessons on how to install Moodle on your workstation. Download your own copy and install it "locally", i.e, on your own computer. Caveat: You

need to be more than a casual user of Windows. Especially, it is helpful if you are experienced installing open source projects.

- You can set up a site for free using MoodleCloud if you only have a small number of users.

- Please note first that Moodle.org is not the place for setting up your courses, but for finding out information and asking questions.

I WANT TO USE MOODLE AS AN INDIVIDUAL TEACHER OR EDUCATOR

- If you want to use Moodle in a real situation with students, you need either to download and install an instance of Moodle to a server online (which you are free to do if you have the technical knowledge)

  or

  engage a hosting company such as a Moodle Partner to do this for you, freeing you then up to focus on creating courses.

  MANY webhosts offer Moodle as part of their hosting packages, although these vary in reliability. Other webhosts offer Moodle for free but this usually comes with conditions attached; for instance, your site might have adverts on it.

I WANT TO SET UP MOODLE FOR MY ORGANISATION

- If you have the technical knowledge you can download and install an instance of Moodle on your organisation's server, or you can engage a hosting company such as a Moodle Partner to do this for you, freeing you then up to focus on creating courses.

DO I HAVE TO BE REALLY GOOD WITH TECHNOLOGY TO USE MOODLE?

- To use Moodle, you only need the basic web browsing skills. To install it you need a little more knowledge, but guidance is provided.

COST

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO DOWNLOAD AND USE MOODLE?

- By way of its GNU General Public License, Moodle is and will remain free to download and use in any way you like. Consider it free like a 'free puppy' that needs care and attention to grow, not free like a 'free beer'.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO RUN MOODLE?

- Nothing to install, use and change. Of course, there are costs if you have your Moodle hosted with someone, and costs associated with maintenance and training in an organisation (like any other software). But no royalties, fees or user charges.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST TO HAVE MOODLE HOSTED?

- There are many options for hosting. Cost is usually related to services provided and capacity (eg. a university site with 10 000 users will naturally cost more to host and maintain than a small community school). Ask your local Moodle Partner and keep Moodle going that way too!

TECHNICAL QUERIES

DO I NEED MY OWN SERVER TO RUN MOODLE?

- Only if you are going to host it yourself. (See the section on 'Starting with Moodle' above.) Moodle needs a web server.

- There are lots of options. See Moodle Partners, Complete install packages for Windows or Complete Install packages for Mac and Installation FAQ.

DO I HAVE TO INSTALL MOODLE MYSELF?

- Only if you want to and feel confident enough to do so.

CAN I CUSTOMISE A THEME TO MAKE IT RELEVANT TO OUR SCHOOL?

- Yes, see Themes. You can customise themes down to a single course. There are many ways to make Moodle looks great too.

CAN YOU USE MOODLE FROM ANYWHERE AND ON ANY DEVICE??

- Moodle works well in all standard, modern browsers and different operating systems. If you plan to run a Moodle site, you should be aware of your audience, their typical bandwidth and web browsers.

- Yes, if it is on a web server attached to the internet and you have a computer, mobile device or tablet. Or if it is on a web server attached to the same intranet (internal network) as a computers or tablets which need to work it. There is an official Moodle mobile app.

CAN ACCESS TO MOODLE BE RESTRICTED TO JUST OUR ORGANISATION?

- Yes, several ways to do this. For example, it can be installed on your school's internal network, or limit the IPs to those assigned by your school, or only manually enroll your students are just a few ways.

I'VE COME FROM A SCHOOL THAT USED A DIFFERENT VLE/LMS. CAN I TRANSFER MY STUFF OVER TO MOODLE?

- Some VLE/LMS-specific activities may (not) be compatible, but you can zip your content files and unzip them in Moodle.

HELP AND SUPPORT WITH MOODLE

HOW DO I USE MOODLE?

This course will teach you how to use Moodle right from the very beginning – to an advanced stage.

You can ask your doubts on this course's discussion forum.

You can also seek advanced help on Moodle.org's community forums – to get great advice from several experts.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE MOODLE SOFTWARE TERMS

Moodle uses jargon words that you may be familiar with from other, non-Moodle contexts. Within Moodle, These words have specific (and potentially different) meanings, which you can read about on the page Moodle key terms

IS THERE AN OFFICIAL SUPPORT DESK FOR MOODLE?

- Moodle.org Community forums serve as an excellent support desk. Ask your question any time, in any language.
- Moodle Partners may offer paid-for support as part of their service.
- Often, your school or consortium will maintain a help desk similar to the higher priced commercial learning management systems.

WHAT ABOUT PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

- Moodle supports many assistive technologies such as screen-readers, screen-magnifiers, alternative mouse and key use, disabling of AJAX and Javascript, and more.

ARE THERE ANY COMPARISONS OF MOODLE WITH OTHER LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS?

- See the Comparisons and Advocacy forum and also Moodle buzz

SECURITY

HOW SECURE IS MOODLE?

- Moodle is designed to be very secure. However, a lot depends upon the webserver, the way Moodle is setup and regular updates of the package by the Moodle Administrator.

CAN MOODLE GET HACKED INTO AND STUDENT DATA STOLEN?

- Highly unlikely if your Moodle site has up-to-date security and the site administrator has not given away the keys. Anything is possible on any website, but Moodle makes it difficult for nasty people to cause havoc.

WHAT IF I DID SOMETHING WRONG AND ACCIDENTALLY BROKE IT - COULD IT BE EASILY FIXED?

- Moodle can be backed-up at any point. If a backup was made 5 minutes before you broke it, chances are it can be fixed easily.

IS MY STUDENT DATA SAFE ON A CHEAP OR FREE WEBHOST?

- While you do have some control of the security of a Moodle site on a free or cheap web host, the question is: How much do you trust your web host?

CAN I TRACK AND SEARCH WHAT PEOPLE DO AND POST IN MOODLE?

- Assuming you are a teacher and it is your course, yes. Moodle Admin can do that for the entire site.

CAN I BACKUP MOODLE SO I DON'T LOSE THINGS?

- Yes, you can backup a Moodle site or as a teacher you can back up your course and download it (if your role permits it). With appropriate permissions, you can restore your course and/or import parts of courses elsewhere on your site or beyond. This can be particularly useful with Community Hubs

TEACHING AND LEARNING

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO USE MOODLE?

- The best way to use Moodle is the way which helps your students learn most efficiently. Moodle was designed on the principles of Social constructionism - see the page on Pedagogy for more information - but you do not have to use Moodle in that way if it is not appropriate to your needs.

CAN MOODLE BE USED FOR..... ?

- Short answer - yes. Below is a list of just a few ways Moodle may be used. A dedicated forum Teaching with Moodle exists to discuss different ways of using the many Activities and Resources of Moodle to enhance your teaching.
    - Peer assessment: see Workshop
    - Discussion and debate: see Forum
    - Sharing files and media: see Working with files
    - Collaboration: see Glossary and Database
    - Independent and personalised learning: see Lesson
    - Submitting work online: see Assignments
    - Assesment, summative and formative: see Quiz

ARE THERE ANY GOOD EXAMPLES OF MOODLE USE I CAN SEE?

- Try the Mount Orange School demo, a working demonstration site full of examples for you to see and play with.

HOW DO I SHARE IDEAS AND CONTENT WITH OTHER MOODLERS?

- By participating in many ways, either through events, forums on Moodle.org and networks elsewhere.
- You can find and share courses and activities on our Moodle Community hub. You can download courses to use in your own site and publish course content to share with others.
- Within your own Moodle site, you can share courses with colleagues by using the Course import or Restore features

CAN MOODLE BE USED IN DIFFERENT SUBJECTS?

- Yes. Moodle is used in a variety of fields. Users in some subject areas may benefit further from standard or compatible third-party modules and plugins:
    - In maths, Tex notation filter (standard) or DragMath equation editor (third-party plugin)), and more than 10 third party question types. You can also use PhET simulations
    - For language teachers, the contributed Hotpot and Poodll plugins are very popular.
    - For chemistry there are may plugins for displaying molecular structures and making questions about them. You can also use PhET simulations
    - For music there are question type plugins for key signature, music theory, music interval and musical scale.
    - For computer programming there in an interactive assignment package and several question types.