

## Introduction To Online Learning

The Unit of Study you are currently enrolled in has some elements available online. What follows is a brief introduction to studying in this environment, including what equipment you will need to study online, how to find your unit of study, how to make the most of studying in this environment and where to go to find help.

### What Do You Need

To study online you need regular access to a computer with internet connection either at home or at the University or a local Internet Café. If you are using your home computer the minimum requirements are

- PC486 or better running Windows 95, 98 or 2000
- Mac 68030 or better running at least OS 7.5
- At least 16Mb RAM and 20Mb free disk space
- Modem 28k bps or faster
- A web browser IE4 or above or Netscape 4.\*\* (not Netscape 6)

### How to Get In

Open a browser (either Netscape or Internet Explorer and go the Usydnet site (<http://intranet.usyd.edu.au>) click on Learn Online and you will be taken to your online learning site (if at home you should probably bookmark this site). You will be asked for a Username and Password these will be the Unikey (Extro account) Username and Password that you were sent with your confirmation of enrolment. Once you have entered the appropriate Username and Password you will enter the online area for your Unit of Study.

### What to Expect

The web is a new learning environment for most people and it's probably a good idea to have a look around when you first arrive. Explore your online Unit of Study and check out what information and tools are available. Remember this is a new medium and will require some adjustment to use effectively – it is not a book and it is not a classroom though it has elements of both be prepared to play around until you feel comfortable and don't be scared of making mistakes.

The tool being used to support this learning environment is called WebCT if you wish to know more about it there is a CD available from your lecturer or the IT helpdesk.

Probably the most important tool in this environment is the Discussions area. This is a tool for communication between people separated by time, space or both. Using the Discussions area you can post read and search for messages. You will find messages from your lecturer here as well as the collected questions, answers and comments from other students in the Unit of Study. To get the most out of the Discussions it is worth remembering three principles **Think** about what other people have posted, **Ask** if things are unclear, and **Contribute** any ideas or information you have found useful.

When using web based communication tools it is worth remembering there are real people on the other end. As there are no accompanying physical expressions or vocal cues to enhance communication it is worth making extra effort to ensure our messages are clear and easily understood. Inappropriate and discriminatory comments which would not be tolerated in the physical classroom are equally unacceptable in the online environment.

### **Where to Get Help**

If you are in a WebCT session and you encounter problems the WebCT Help button will give you quick, simple answers to most straight forward problems.

If you are having trouble logging in or are faced with more complicated WebCT related problems email the ITS Help Desk at <http://helpdesk.usyd.edu.au> or by ringing 9351 6000.

If you are having trouble getting through to your online learning site from home you may need to contact your own Internet Service Provider or the ITS Help Desk.

If you have queries about the subject matter within the Unit of Study you should contact the academic(s) in charge.

**We hope you enjoy studying online and above for all have fun.**