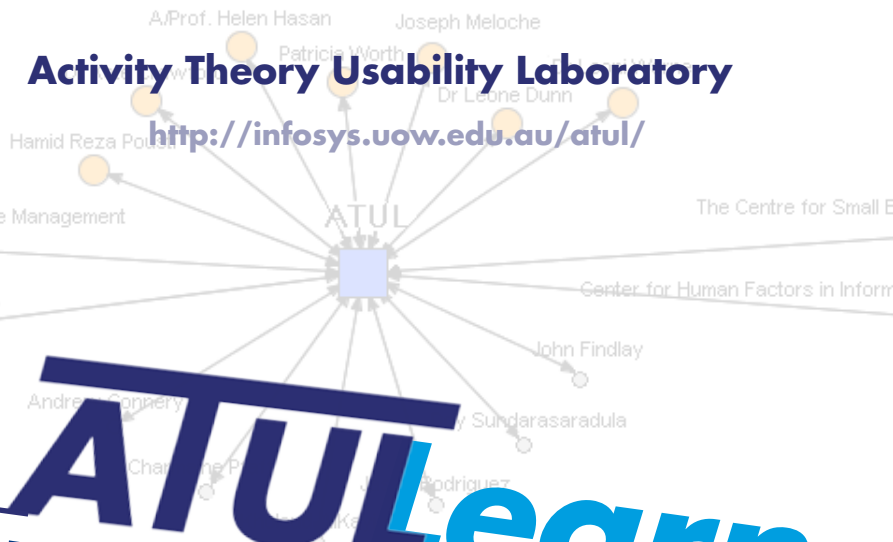




Activity Theory Usability Laboratory

<http://infosys.uow.edu.au/atul/>



FACTSHEET

ATULearn

Learning Together through Doing • Using Eviva Online



The Activity Theory Usability Laboratory (ATUL) provides insight into the many exciting areas in which information and communications technologies help, hinder or otherwise affect the way we do things. At ATUL we make these processes and knowledge available to people both within and outside the University in learning modules. These are conducted in a friendly, flexible and relevant setting that suits current busy lifestyles. Our model of short-course learning involves groups of 10–20 in modules undertaking a mix of face-to-face workshops interspersed with facilitated online group projects using our own web-based systems. These projects are tailored to the topic and the needs of the group.

In addition to traditional areas of the Information Systems discipline, some of our areas of expertise may initially sound a little off-beat but are, in fact, amazingly relevant to the many problems business people are currently facing. These include: ensuring the usability of systems, creating online communities, new conversational technologies such as blogs and wikis, understanding complexity, taking advantage of diversity, knowledge management, network-centric organisations, economic gardening. There are likely to be other topics that are important to your organisation and may or may not relate to these general areas so please let us know what they are and we will tailor our systems to your needs.

Through extensive research into learning in the current computer-enabled and connected environment, ATUL has devised flexible and innovative modes of running short courses. These courses use a model of *Communities of Practice and Learning* that combines different elements of experiential team-based learning into a program that suits the diverse needs of busy working people.

The basics of this arrangement are:

- **One- or two-day intensive** workshops where participants in the course join experts to set goals, agree on topics of interest and prepare teams for subsequent online, experiential learning activities.
- **Periods of online learning are supported by purpose-built Eviva software**, maintained at the University of Wollongong. Here, experts and learners work together in teams on projects to develop and enhance individual capability, exchange know-how and build community spirit.
- **Regular face-to-face meetings** where participants describe their progress and problems, celebrate achievements and plan future projects and events.

Short courses are delivered in this way so as to combine the many aspects of subject matter and maximise the use of ATUL's expertise. This type of learning is relevant, interesting, very flexible and fun for participants.

THE ACTIVITY THEORY USABILITY LABORATORY (ATUL) IS SET UP TO CONDUCT RESEARCH INTO HUMAN COMPUTER INTERACTION, ACTIVITY THEORY AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, AS WELL AS FOR PRACTICAL USABILITY TESTING OF SYSTEMS USING THE METHODS DERIVED FROM OUR RESEARCH. ATUL ALSO OFFERS AN ADDITIONAL SELECTION OF INNOVATIVE SERVICES DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE WAY PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS USE INFORMATION AND OBTAIN THE MOST BENEFIT FROM MODERN TECHNOLOGY.

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