SOLSTICE & CLTR Conference 2012

Edge Hill University

Enhancing employability through the use of 'real users' in computing modules

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Objective of Study…

- **Ascertain whether the use of 'real clients' in a core computing module can enhance a students' skills base and therefore employability**

"Employers getting involved in course design and delivery have a positive effect on the employability of graduates" (Evans, 2012:nk)

Background….

- **Core Module**
  - **Scenario**

- **2009**
  - **National Company (UK & N Ireland)**
- **2010**
  - **Individual Business user (UK)**
- **2011**
  - **Small Business (S Ireland)**
- **2012 (potential)**
  - **Small Business (UK)**

Today….

- **Describe the process - using real clients in an academic module**
    - **Who's involved?**
    - ***What's in it for them?***
        - ***Student***
        - ***Business (user)***
    - **How?**

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Who's involved?....

- **Module Leader**
- **Module Tutor**
- **Business user (client)**
- **Student**

What's in it for them?....

- **User**
  - **Acquires a custom built information system**

- **Student**
  - **Get relevant experience**
  - **Independent thinking**
  - **Experience to put on CV!**

How?....

- **Design & Build of application**
  - **Undertaken as an academic piece of work**

- **Creation of a prototype**
  - **Academic phase ends**
    - **Post Academic phase commences**

Academic….

- **Requirements specification provided**
  - **Client**
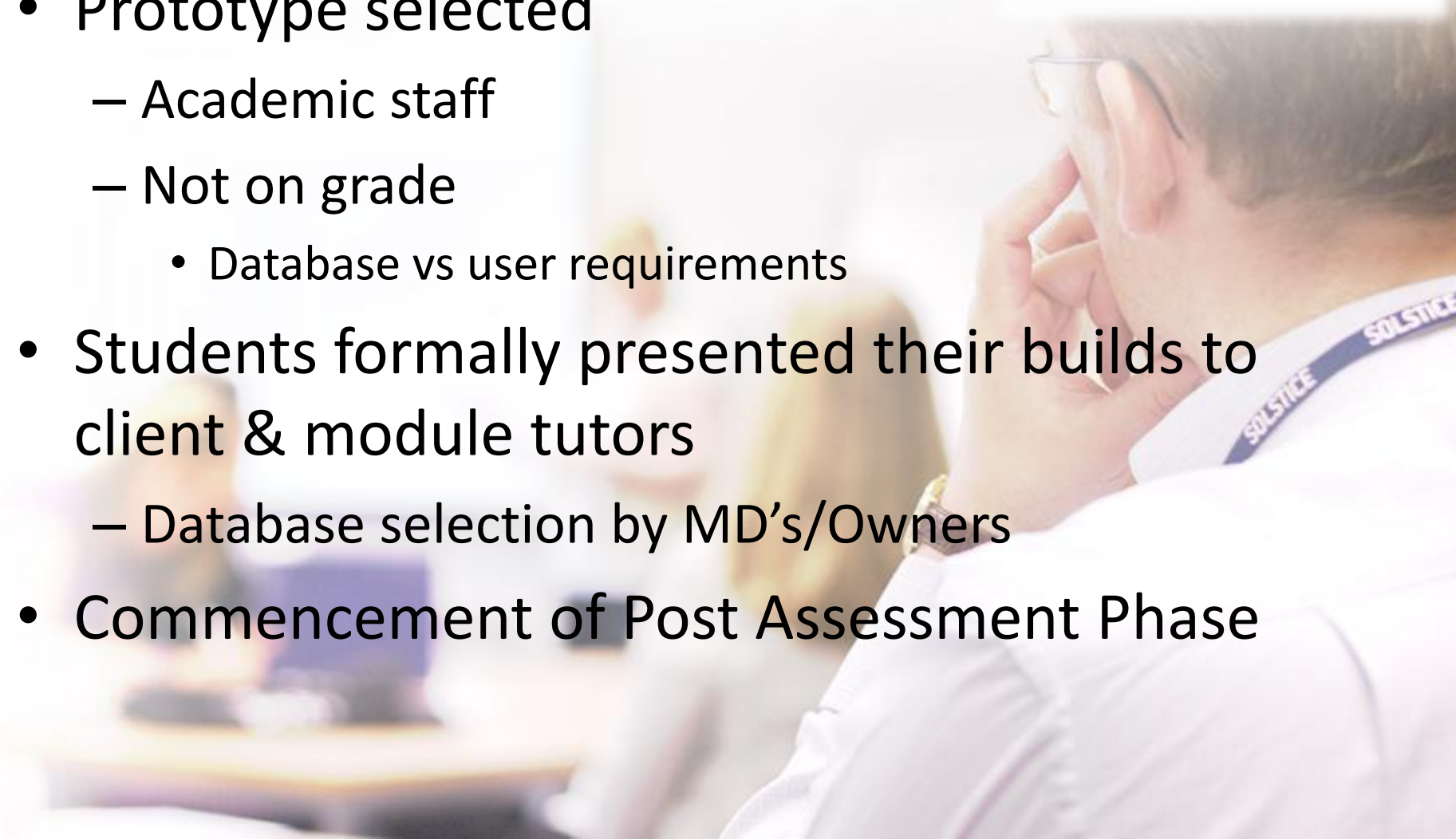 - **Written by module tutors**
- **Assessments**
  - **Academic**

"Learning new aspects of database design and implementing these within a database for an actual company" (2009)
"The chance to implement a system for a real client" (2011)
…"potential for client experience" (2011)

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Post Assessment

- Prototype selected
  - Academic staff
  - Not on grade
    - Database vs user requirements
- Students formally presented their builds to client & module tutors
  - Database selection by MD's/Owners
- Commencement of Post Assessment Phase

Student View

"Learning a variety of new database techniques and implementing these for a real world company based on their requirements"

"The chance to work on something that may end up getting used means that you tend to think harder about what other people may consider vital for their system"

"To meet a real customer with expectations other than academic, in this learning situation, is invaluable"

12th June 2011

"At MBE conference. Just met your student Jonathan at launch of database. You would be very proud. Everyone is signing up for it and he's shaking hands and talking to all these business men as though he's been doing it all his life"

store manager

20... ...ent formally handing over build

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Thank you…

Any Questions?