

Going digital for CPD

In this second article in our new technology series, **Suzy England** and **Paul Cooper** discuss the benefits and different ways of using technology to support your learning and development and suggest how learning to use the existing technology and identifying your own level of digital literacy could also be seen as a form of CPD in itself

In the latest article in the technology series we are providing a snapshot of how technology can be a supportive vehicle for your continuing professional development (CPD) and indeed equip you with the necessary skills to use technology as part of your everyday practice.

At the time of writing, the bi-annual Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) renewal window has opened for occupational therapists. You may have already received the letter from the regulator informing you to renew. You might be one of the 2.5 per cent of the profession who has been selected to submit a portfolio in order to demonstrate how you are meeting the professional standards.

Regardless of whether you are submitting a portfolio or completing the self-declaration, perhaps now is the time to consider how much of your CPD has been done using digital means in all its forms.

Dr Stephanie Tempest, RCOT professional development manager says: 'As HCPC registrants we are required to demonstrate we undertake a mixture of CPD activities, so a portfolio outlining

mandatory training and a couple of courses would be insufficient. The digital world provides an array of opportunities to help us learn.'

Given that we now live in the digital age and in an increasingly connected world, the virtual sphere has much to offer us and our learning.

With increasing demands at work and tightened budgets, practitioners need to seek more efficient ways to ensure continued learning and development in order to practice safe and effectively.

Within the profession there are multiple starting points for the level of knowledge, skills and experience in digital literacy, so before exploring some of the digital offers to support CPD, it is important to reflect on what comprises digital literacy and identify where you feel you are in your own skill and knowledge development.

Person-centred digital literacy

Often when people think about digital literacy they focus on the technical skills required to use technology. However, digital literacy spans a range of skills that include locating information, as well as communicating with others at a distance.



While digital technologies provide extended learning environments outside of the workplace, many of us need to develop online skills to capitalise on these opportunities.

The Health Education England (HEE) digital literacy framework (HEE 2018) can be used to consider what skills we need to develop.

Digital opportunities to support CPD

With a plethora of choice available in the digital world, the range of ideas in this article offer some avenues to explore or re-engage with digital learning to support your professional development.

The Career Development Framework (RCOT 2017) also helps you identify areas for continued learning, encouraging you to think about your learning needs across all four Pillars of Practice, as outlined in figure one.

Social media

Social media has become, for better or worse, many people's first point of contact for what is happening in the world. The impact that it has is substantial and its potential to enhance our practice should not be underestimated.

The creation of groups of likeminded people for practice and research and support for people in isolated roles are just two areas social media has opened up opportunities. As such, contributions to debates or enhanced learning through social media can be used as evidence for CPD (RCOT 2019 and HCPC 2018).

Consider what Facebook groups, Twitter hashtags to follow and contribute to, or LinkedIn groups that you could be part of.

Kirstie Hughes, occupational therapist and member of the Twitter group OTalk says: 'Statutory training is often generic to cater for the multidisciplinary team, but technology can taper that.

'Social media offers an occupational therapy specific forum that transcends our daily roles and geographical locations to offer a variety of learning and networks of sharing and reflection.'

Podcasts

Podcasts with a health and care focus have been steadily growing over the years. The audio format of the podcasts lends itself easily to be listened to at people's leisure and in a variety of situations.

Whatever your interests are there will be a podcast for you. Some places to start include:

- 15 minutes to develop your research career: <https://authorservices.taylorandfrancis.com/develop-your-research-career-podcast/>;

Professional Practice	Maintain occupation at the centre of practice. Deliver safe, effective, person-centred and ethical practice. Use of professional judgement, reasoning and decision making.
Facilitation of Learning	Teach, mentor, supervise and/or assess others. Facilitate placement learning. Create and evaluate learning environments, tools and materials.
Leadership	Identify, monitor and enhance own knowledge and skills. Guide, direct and/or facilitate teamwork. Design, implement and manage professional and/or organisational change.
Evidence, Research and Development	Influence broader socio-economic and political agendas. Create, use and/or translate evidence to inform practice. Design, implement, evaluate and disseminate research.

Figure one: Four pillars of practice (RCOT 2017)

- CIPD podcasts cover a wide range of workplace, management and leadership topics: www.cipd.co.uk/podcasts/;
- the MDTea podcast is a series aimed at all healthcare professionals working with older adults: <http://thehearingaidpodcasts.org.uk/mdtea-2/>; and
- RCOT has its own series of podcasts covering a range of topics across the four Pillars of Practice: www.rcot.co.uk/promoting-occupational-therapy/podcasts.

RCOT resources

The days spent in libraries may be ones you reminisce about or still get time to value, but now much of these resources can be easily sought from the comfort of your own home.

RCOT members have at their fingertips access to a plethora of databases of research journals, e-books, e-theses and reports: www.rcot.co.uk/practice-resources/library-resources/about-library.

In addition, the RCOT CPD@RCOT (www.rcot.co.uk/cpd-rcot) allows members to access a range of learning resources. Organised using the four Pillars of Practice, there is now an accessible place to provide inspiration for your CPD.

The site includes short courses, podcasts, downloadable templates to run debate sessions, action learning sets and so much more, as well as advice to prepare for the HCPC audit.

Apps

If your smart phone is littered with Apps, how many of those could be utilised in support of your CPD? There could be an App that you could use with the people you work with, in which case the NHS app library may be helpful (www.nhs.uk/apps-library/).

Maybe there is an App to pull together articles and websites, or one to make notes on? And while HCPC does not endorse a specific App for recording CPD, there are a number available, some of which require a fee and others, for example TRAMm CPD, that are freely available via a creative commons license (<https://trammcpd.com/>).



YouTube

YouTube is not just there to get easier access to cute cat videos or gamer ramblings. There are an endless amount of TED talks available to move your thinking on, or videos to instruct on any subject or practice you could imagine.

Also, have you seen RCOT's own YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/channel/UCoSD8eiHfMK6cWmPLYJY91w)? The channel includes CPD specific videos, which if audited are essential viewing (www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL_nbpD717j9etHMa83wAk28czTueo4mS4).

Newsletters

Who isn't drowning in emails these days? But with careful selection of what you sign up for an email newsletter can be a really helpful resource to open up other areas of information.

This could be linked to a specific subject area in your areas of practice or research. You may wish to consider the RCOTs research and development Bulletin e-newsletter (www.rcot.co.uk/rcot-e-newsletters) and are you getting the most out of reading our new communication Highlight (www.rcot.co.uk/sign-highlight)?

Live streaming and webinars

Now you don't even need to leave your office or home to be taking a course, or listen to a talk or lecture. Live streamed events, with questions and answers after, are becoming common place and provide a great deal of flexibility for people with limited time and budget.

Indeed just two examples of this include RCOT specialist sections, which are utilising webinars to provide CPD for their membership,

and the 2020 Elizabeth Casson memorial lecture by Dr Jenny Preston, which will be live streamed.

MOOCS

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are a form of distance learning and often provide both access to information as well as activities that support interaction with other learners. Sites such as Futurelearn and Coursera are good starting points.

We hope that you found this article useful, and although not an inclusive list, hopefully it provides inspiration to consider how digital opportunities can support your learning.

Please get in touch with us, as we would like to hear from members with their service examples for the up and coming technology series. Topics will cover clinical safety and ethical considerations of using technology, using practice data to improve services, digital leaders, and embedding digital literacy in pre registration education.

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RESOURCES