Plugins Usage Survey, 2015

Purpose of the survey

Moodle is open source and users use it in many different ways in places all over the world, without any central control. As such, there is no clear picture of which plugins, both those distributed with the standard Moodle distribution and those distributed separately via the Moodle Plugins Directory, are actually used.

This survey is part of our research to help discover what plugins Moodle users use, in order to focus development efforts and to determine how Moodle is used in different educational sectors. Results from this survey will also complement download and update information from the Plugins Directory.

Research questions

The survey and its results analysis were driven by a number of research questions.

- What standard plugins are not used and may be removed, deprecated or fixed?
- What standard plugins are used a lot and may need more attention?
- What additional (third-party, contributed) plugins (if any) should be added to the standard distribution?

Methodology

The survey contained 17 questions, predominantly focussed on capturing usage of different types of plugins on Moodle sites. The survey did not attempt to capture the relative scale of sites or the scale of use of individual plugins within sites, only whether plugins were used or not. The survey also captured some related demographic information such as respondent's educational sector, professional role, location, institution/organisation and length of time using Moodle.

The survey was designed to be easy to fill to maximise responses. A Moodle Feedback activity was used. To access the survey, respondents were required to log in using their moodle.org accounts. Responses were not anonymous, which was felt to ensure reliable, accountable responses, but it may have reduced the response rate.

The survey approach taken was to test the initial design internally within Moodle HQ first, followed by piloting with invited members of the Moodle community. After this, the survey was opened to all. The survey was mentioned on Twitter and later announced in a newsletter, primarily targeting administrators of registered Moodle sites.

Results

The survey was closed on Wednesday 21st October, 2015. No fixed closing date was announced. Responses had peaked during the week prior and had tapered off, so the survey was closed to allow analysis and reporting.

Respondents

At the closing of the survey there were 353 responses. It is difficult to estimate a response rate as the survey was open to the entire Moodle community. Some respondents may have been representing a single institution or organisation, hosting a single or small number of Moodle sites, while others were representing companies hosting many Moodle sites, such as Moodle Partners. All responses were weighted equally. It is worth noting that a separate survey of plugins used by Moodle Partners is being conducted.

Sectors

Respondents were asked to identify the educational sectors their site or sites were used in. It was possible for respondents to nominate multiple sectors, which in some cases indicates the broad range of education at an institution or organisation (such as a K-12 school covering both primary and secondary) while other overlapping responses indicates hosting for multiple institutions or organisations.

Educational Sectors

Primary (K-6)	26
Secondary (7-12)	82
College/University	204
Vocational/Technical	61
Workplace (Corporate, Govt.)	59
Healthcare	23
Non-profit	35
Defense/Armed Forces	1
Other	26

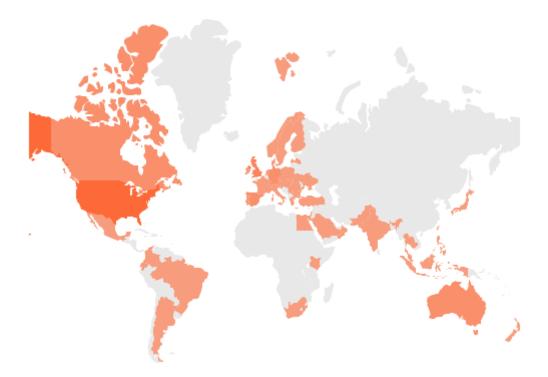
To simplify analysis, sectors were grouped. Where a respondent selected more than one sector, it is possible their responses could fall into more than one sector group.

Grouped Educational Sectors

Schools (Primary, Secondary)	86
Higher-ed (College/University, Vocational/Technical)	238
Workplace (Corporate, Government, Healthcare, Non-profit, Defense)	85
Other	26

Locations

Respondents reported to be from 57 countries around the world. Because the survey was only provided in English and promoted by Moodle HQ in English, this may indicate a bias.



https://infogr.am/plugins_survey_respondents

India 4

Hungary 1

Indonesia 1

Ireland 4

Israel 2

Italy 4

Japan 7

Kenya 1

Latvia 1

Malta 1

Mexico 4

Norway 1

Oman 1 Pakistan 2

Poland 3

Netherlands 11

Philippines 1

New Zealand 5

Malaysia 1

Portugal	3
Romania	2
Russian Federation	6
Saudi Arabia	1
Serbia	2
Singapore	1
Slovakia	1
Slovenia	1
South Africa	5
Spain	17
Sweden	7
Switzerland	15
Taiwan	1
Thailand	1
Turkey	1
Ukraine	2
United Kingdom	39
United States	81
Viet Nam	1

Argentina 5 Aruba 1 Australia 30 Austria 4 Brazil 6 Bulgaria 1 Cambodia 1 Canada 16 Colombia 3 **Czech Republic 2** Denmark 3 Ecuador 2 Egypt 1 Finland 2 France 9 Germany 21 Greece 2 Guam 1

Hong Kong 1

Roles

Respondents were asked to nominate their role or roles within their institution/organisation. It was possible for a respondent to select more than one role.

Respondent Roles	
Teacher	173
Instructional Designer	155
Administrator/Systems Engineer	303
Developer	104
Trainer	143
Decision-maker	131
Researcher	43
Student	26
Other	5

The results show that respondents were mostly administrators, some of whom undertook other roles.

Time using Moodle

Respondents were asked how long they had been using Moodle at their institution/organisation. This was both an indication of the maturity of the site and the experience of the respondent.

Length of use

Eeligtii ol doo	
Considering using Moodle in	
future	2
Piloting Moodle	7
Less than 1 year	11
1 to 3 years	33
3 to 5 years	73
More than 5 years	227

Results show that most respondents had been using Moodle for a considerable period of time with mature sites.

Plugins reported

Plugins were grouped according to their plugin type. Because it was not certain respondents would be able to distinguish standard plugins from additional plugins (contributed plugins from the <u>Plugins Directory</u>), these were presented together, but additional plugins were identified in lists.

Not all plugin types were surveyed. The choice of which types to include was based on:

- relevance to most users (teachers, students),
- issues reported on the Moodle Tracker, and
- types of popular plugins on the <u>Moodle Plugins Directory</u>.

Additional plugins included in the survey were taken from the <u>top downloaded plugins for the</u> <u>last year on the Plugins Directory</u>.

Respondents were able to list other plugins in a free-text response, which may have included other plugin types and additional plugins not listed.

In each of the following sections, additional plugins are noted using an asterisk and are highlighted. Tables are shown with an absolute number of reported uses. Blue bars show relative use in relation to the most widely used plugin within the plugin type. Relative figures are also provided as a percentage compared to the number of overall responses and within each educational sector. Yellow bars graphically represent this percentage.

It's worth noting that responses indicate plugins that respondents say are in use on their site. There may be other plugins that are installed or enabled, and possibly used to a small degree, but responses show what respondents recall and may be biased by their experience and preferences.

Except for 5 responses, all respondents who selected "Other" as a educational sector chose this together with other sectors. For this reason, there is no results for the Other group shown in charts as it would not be relatively equivalent to other groups. It is also not clear why respondents chose other, so drawing conclusions from results for this group would not be meaningful.

Due to the fact that respondents could choose multiple sectors and the Other group is not show, figures shown in results will not sum accurately across groups. However, overall figures and figures within groups are accurate.

Activity modules (including Resources)

	Ov	erall	Schools		Higher-ed			Workplace		
Quiz	316	89.5%	78	90.7%		215	90.3%		74	87.1%
Assignment	307	87.0%	75	87.2%		214	89.9%		66	77.6%
Forum	301	85.3%	70	81.4%		206	86.6%		65	76.5%
File	298	84.4%	71	82.6%		205	86.1%		62	72.9%
Label	292	82.7%	71	82.6%		201	84.5%		61	71.8%
Folder	279	79.0%	71	82.6%		194	81.5%		56	65.9%
Page	277	78.5%	68	79.1%		187	78.6%		62	72.9%
URL	273	77.3%	63	73.3%		189	79.4%		58	68.2%
Glossary	250	<mark>70.</mark> 8%	64	74.4%		172	72.3%		51	<mark>60</mark> .0%
Lesson	242	<mark>68.</mark> 6%	60	<mark>69.</mark> 8%		165	<mark>69.</mark> 3%		51	<mark>60</mark> .0%
Book	2 <mark>32</mark>	65.7%	61	70.9%		160	67.2%		48	56.5%
Wiki	212	60.1%	50	58.1%		154	64.7%		33	38.8%
Feedback	210	59.5%	44	<mark>5</mark> 1.2%		150	63.0%		49	57.6%
Choice	205	<mark>58</mark> .1%	51	59.3%		145	60.9%		41	48.2%
Database	201	<mark>56</mark> .9%	49	57.0%		138	58.0%		40	47.1%
SCORM package	182	<mark>5</mark> 1.6%	35	40.7%		133	55.9%		45	5 <mark>2.9%</mark>
Workshop	164	4 6.5%	37	43.0%		123	51.7%		25	29.4%
Survey	161	4 5.6%	36	41.9%		117	4 9.2%		33	38.8%
Questionnaire*	160	4 5.3%	32	37.2%		114	47.9%		39	45.9%
Chat	145	41.1%	32	37.2%		109	45.8%		21	24.7%
Certificate*	109	30.9%	21	24.4%		71	29.8%		46	54.1%
LTI (External tool)	102	28.9%	16	18.6%		80	33.6%		11	12.9%
HotPot*	88	24.9%	28	32.6%		62	26.1%		11	12.9%
Checklist*	80	22.7%	28	32.6%		48	20.2%		16	18.8%
Lightbox Gallery*	77	21.8%	20	23.3%		51	21.4%		16	18.8%
IMS content package	75	21.2%	17	19.8%		59	24.8%		11	12.9%
Journal*	64	18.1%	12	14.0%		47	19.7%		10	11.8%
Game*	52	14.7%	24	27.9%		25	10.5%		13	15.3%
BigBlueButton*	46	13.0%	6	7.0%		32	13.4%		14	16.5%

Quiz, Assignment and Forum are the most used activity modules, followed by a list of resources.

Questionnaire is the most widely used contributed activity module or additional plugin of any type. This plugin duplicates the functionality of the standard Feedback module. Reasons for the Questionnaire plugin's popularity may be that Feedback is disabled by default and that Questionnaire includes a number of features missing from Feedback. A project has been underway for some time to combine the features of Survey, Feedback and Questionnaire into a single plugin.

The Certificate module is used relatively more in Workplace sectors. The Hotpot, Checklist and Game activity modules are used more in Schools than other sectors.

Blocks

	Overall		Scho		Highe	er-ed	Workplace		
Calendar	280	79.3%	75	87.2 <mark>%</mark>	191	80.3 <mark>%</mark>	57	67.1%	
HTML	248	70.3%	62	72.1%	16 <mark>7</mark>	70.2%	5 <mark>0</mark>	58.8%	
Activities	236	66.9%	55	64.0%	172	72. <mark>3</mark> %	48	56.5%	
Online users	2 <mark>05</mark>	58.1%	51	59.3%	1 <mark>41</mark>	59.2%	47	55.3%	
Courses	201	56.9%	50	58.1%	138	58.0%	4 9	57.6%	
Latest news	188	5 <mark>3.3%</mark>	41	47.7%	136	57.1%	34	40.0%	
Recent activity	173	<mark>4</mark> 9.0%	43	50.0%	123	5 <mark>1.7%</mark>	32	37.6%	
Main menu	171	<mark>4</mark> 8.4%	45	5 <mark>2.3%</mark>	117	<mark>4</mark> 9.2%	35	41.2%	
Login	166	47.0%	40	4 6.5%	112	<mark>4</mark> 7.1%	46	<mark>5</mark> 4.1%	
Messages	165	46.7%	39	4 5.3%	117	<mark>4</mark> 9.2%	34	40.0%	
Logged in user	161	45.6%	41	47.7%	110	46.2%	35	41.2%	
Course overview	159	45.0%	33	38.4%	112	<mark>4</mark> 7.1%	36	42.4%	
Course completion status	146	41.4%	31	36.0%	101	42.4%	42	<mark>4</mark> 9.4%	
Upcoming events	146	41.4%	34	39.5%	107	4 5.0%	25	29.4%	
Search forums	139	39.4%	34	39.5%	100	42.0%	26	30.6%	
Course/site summary	130	36.8%	30	34.9%	88	37.0%	27	31.8%	
People	127	36.0%	29	33.7%	92	38.7%	26	30.6%	
Admin bookmarks	124	35.1%	31	36.0%	85	35.7%	18	21.2%	
Remote RSS feeds	124	35.1%	28	32.6%	87	36.6%	16	18.8%	
Private files	115	32.6%	30	34.9%	80	33.6%	20	23.5%	
Progress Bar*	113	32.0%	33	38.4%	70	29.4%	31	36.5%	
Comments	107	30.3%	31	36.0%	75	31.5%	21	24.7%	
Random glossary entry	102	28.9%	30	34.9%	69	29.0%	15	17.6%	
Activity results	92	26.1%	21	24.4%	66	27.7%	13	15.3%	
Latest badges	86	24.4%	28	32.6%	51	21.4%	15	17.6%	
Section links	86	24.4%	17	19.8%	68	28.6%	13	15.3%	
Feedback	81	22.9%	17	19.8%	60	25.2%	19	22.4%	
Configurable Reports*	80	22.7%	15	17.4%	53	22.3%	29	34.1%	
Self completion	75	21.2%	15	17.4%	52	21.8%	13	15.3%	
Quickmail*	68	19.3%	10	11.6%	57	23.9%	8	9.4%	
Tags	67	19.0%	22	25.6%	42	17.6%	10	11.8%	
Blog menu	63	17.8%	20	23.3%	40	16.8%	9	10.6%	
Youtube	62	17.6%	18	20.9%	37		17		
Blog tags	47	13.3%	15	17.4%	30	_	6		
Network servers	45	12.7%	10	_	33		5		
Recent blog entries	43	12.2%	10	_	33	_	7		
Mentees		10.5%	13	_	24		5		
Social activities	33	9.3%	12	_	19		6		
Community finder	23	6.5%	8	-	17		3		
Flickr	15	4.2%	3	3.5%	10	4.2%	2	2.4%	

Unless modified by an administrator, the default blocks added to a new course, the Site home and the Dashboard are shown in the table below. This may have had an effect on the blocks reported as being used.

Blocks added by default

Dashboard

Course overview

Private files

Default course

- Search forums
- Latest news
- Online users
- My latest badges (2.8+)
- Calendar (2.8+)
- Upcoming events (2.8+)
- Upcoming events
- Recent activity
- Calendar is reported as the most widely used block. This may indicate the importance of scheduling within courses. This block appears by default on the Site home and Dashboard pages, but other default blocks were not reported as being used as much. This usage suggests

that the default blocks should be reviewed, especially on the course page.

Between sectors, blocks are used more in schools and less in workplace settings. Within the Workplace sector, the Login, Course completion and Configurable reports blocks are used relatively more than in other sectors. The Progress Bar is the most widely used contributed block, used more in Schools and Workplace sectors than Higher-ed.

		Overall			Schools			Higher-ed			Workplace		
Topic	s format	296	83.9%		73	84.9%		198	83.2%		72	84.7%	
Weekl	y format	167	47.3%		36	41.9%		120	50.4%		32	37.6%	
Collapsed	Topics*	125	35.4%		30	34.9%		86	36.1%		30	35.3%	
Single activit	y format	107	30.3%		26	30.2%		70	29.4%		23	27.1%	
Grid	Format*	88	24.9%		24	27.9%		55	23.1%		23	27.1%	
Socia	l format	61	17.3%		14	16.3%		42	17.6%		7	8.2%	

Course formats

The Topics course format is the most widely used course format. Currently the Weekly format is the default course format. Considering that the Topics format is reportedly preferred, this should change.

The contributed Collapsed Topics course format is relatively widely used by over a third of respondents. This course format could be considered for inclusion in the standard distribution or its features could possibly be incorporated into the Topics format.

Site home

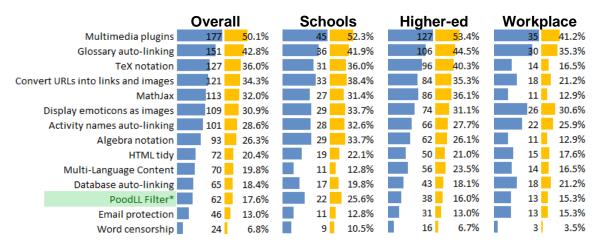
Calendar

Question types

	Overall		Sch	ools	High	er-ed	Workplace		
Multiple choice	323	91.5%	82	95.3%	219	92.0%	75	88.2%	
True/False	294	83.3%	75	87.2%	199	83.6 <mark>%</mark>	66	77.6%	
Short answer	271	76.8%	71	82.6 <mark>%</mark>	186	78.2%	58	68.2%	
Matching	263	74.5%	75	87.2%	175	73.5%	54	63.5%	
Essay	219	62.0%	56	65.1%	160	67.2%	39	45.9%	
Numerical	204	57 .8%	61	70.9%	142	59.7%	35	41.2%	
Calculated	192	5 <mark>4.4%</mark>	51	59.3%	140	58.8%	33	38.8%	
Description	191	5 <mark>4</mark> .1%	48	55.8%	136	57.1%	41	48.2%	
Embedded answers (Cloze)	188	<mark>5</mark> 3.3%	52	60.5%	128	5 <mark>3.8%</mark>	31	36.5%	
Random	178	5 <mark>0.4%</mark>	47	5 <mark>4.7%</mark>	129	54.2%	24	28.2%	
Calculated multichoice	161	45.6%	44	51.2%	120	50.4%	27	31.8%	
Calculated simple	149	42.2%	36	41.9%	109	45.8%	24	28.2%	
Drag and drop onto image*	131	37.1%	44	51.2%	83	34.9%	33	38.8%	
Drag and drop markers*	129	36.5%	42	48.8%	83	34.9%	29	34.1%	
Random short-answer matching	120	34.0%	33	38.4%	85	35.7%	15	17.6%	
Select missing words*	98	27.8%	29	33.7%	63	26.5%	25	29.4%	

Schools tend to use question types slightly more than other sectors.

Even though they are near the bottom of the question types list, the contributed Drag-and-drop question types are used by over a third of respondents. The Select missing words question type is also widely used. These OU question types are to be added are already being added to the standard distribution in Moodle 3.0.



Text filters

Text filters are not as widely used as other plugin types. In the Workplace sector, filters are generally used less. Mathematical text filters are used less in workplace settings as they are used in school and higher-ed contexts.

Enrolment methods

	Overall	Schools	Higher-ed	Workplace		
Manual enrolments	276 78.2%	68 79.1%	190 79.8%	66 77.6%		
Self enrolment	223 63.2%	52 60.5%	158 66.4%	51 60.0%		
Cohort sync	129 36.5%	27 31.4%	90 37.8%	33 38.8%		
Flat file (CSV)	120 34.0%	31 36.0%	82 34.5%	33 38.8%		
Guest access	117 33.1%	30 34.9%	76 31.9%	38 44.7%		
Course meta link	110 31.2%	13 15.1%	90 37.8%	15 17.6%		
LDAP enrolments	100 28.3%	25 29.1%	72 30.3%	21 24.7%		
External database	69 19.5%	8 9.3%	58 24.4%	18 21.2%		
Category enrolments	58 16.4%	12 14.0%	44 18.5%	13 15.3%		
PayPal	25 7.1%	3 3.5%	13 5.5%	15 17.6%		
MNet remote enrolments	17 4.8%	2 2.3%	12 5.0%	4 4.7%		
IMS Enterprise file	10 2.8%	1 1.2%	7 2.9%	1 1.2%		

Enrolment methods are dominated by Manual and Self enrolments. IMS Enterprise file is not widely used.

Authentication methods

	Overa	Schools			Higher-ed				Workplace		
Manual accounts	232	65 <mark>.</mark> 7%		61	70.9%		150	63.0%		63	74.1%
LDAP server	140	39.7%		32	37.2%		105	44.1%		23	27.1%
Email-based self-registration	107	30.3%		27	31.4%		70	29.4%		41	48.2%
No login	42	11.9%		6	7.0%		29	12.2%		14	16.5%
Shibboleth	41	11.6%		2	2.3%		38	16.0%		4	4.7%
External database	35	9.9%		6	7.0%		26	10.9%		19	22.4%
CAS server (SSO)	33	9.3%		3	3.5%		29	12.2%		8	9.4%
Web services authentication	31	8.8%		4	4.7%		22	9.2%		12	14.1%
MNet authentication	29	8.2%		5	5.8%		20	8.4%		5	5.9%
No authentication	13	3.7%		3	3.5%		6	2.5%		6	7.1%
IMAP server	9	2.5%		2	2.3%		6	2.5%		2	2.4%
POP3 server	7	2.0%		2	2.3%		5	2.1%		1	1.2%
RADIUS server	6	1.7%		1	1.2%		5	2.1%		1	1.2%
PAM (Pluggable Authentication Modules)	3	0.8%		0	0.0%		1	0.4%		0	0.0%
NNTP server	2	0.6%		0	0.0%		1	0.4%		0	0.0%
FirstClass server	2	0.6%		0	0.0%		0	0.0%		1	1.2%

The LDAP, Shibboleth and CAS authentication methods are used more in the Higher-ed sector. Email-based self-registration is use more in the Workplace sector.

A number of standard authentication methods are rarely used. These include the IMAP server, POP3 server, RADIUS server, PAM, NNTP server and FirstClass server. Manual account authentication is the dominant method. Workplace instances use LDAP less, but self registration and external database authentication more.

Reports

	Overall		Sch	ools	Highe	er-ed	Workplace		
Logs	252	71.4%	59	68.6%	179	75.2%	54	63.5%	
Activity report	244	69.1%	58	67.4%	169	71.0%	58	68.2%	
Activity completion	234	66.3%	49	57.0%	165	69.3%	59	69.4%	
Live logs	195	55.2%	50	58.1%	136	57.1%	41	48.2%	
Statistics	187	5 <mark>3.0%</mark>	42	48.8%	131	55.0%	40	47.1%	
Course completion	181	<mark>5</mark> 1.3%	39	45.3%	121	5 <mark>0.8%</mark>	51	60.0%	
Course participation	176	<mark>4</mark> 9.9%	40	46.5%	120	5 <mark>0.4%</mark>	40	47.1%	
Course overview	159	45.0%	34	39.5%	115	48.3%	32	37.6%	
Backups report	119	33.7%	29	33.7%	84	35.3%	23	27.1%	
Performance overview	110	31.2%	21	24.4%	82	34.5%	28	32.9%	
Security overview	103	29.2%	23	26.7%	74	31.1%	19	22.4%	
Config changes	101	28.6%	20	23.3%	79	33.2%	20	23.5%	
Events list	100	28.3%	18	20.9%	75	31.5%	25	29.4%	
User sessions report	92	26.1%	20	23.3%	67	28.2%	20	23.5%	
Question instances	77	21.8%	19	22.1%	54	22.7%	15	17.6%	

Reports are used slightly more in Higher-ed than in other sectors, except the Course completion report, which is used relatively more in the Workplace sector.

	Overall		Schools			lighe	er-ed	Workplace	
Upload a file	238	67.4%	58	67.4%		163	68.5%	52	61.2%
Server files	184	<mark>5</mark> 2.1%	44	51.2%		125	5 <mark>2.5%</mark>	38	4 4.7%
Recent files	177	<mark>5</mark> 0.1%	42	48.8%		122	51.3%	36	42.4%
Private files	172	<mark>4</mark> 8.7%	42	48.8%		117	4 9.2%	33	38.8%
Youtube videos	156	4 4.2%	38	4 4.2%		108	45.4%	37	43.5%
Google Drive	154	43.6%	43	<mark>5</mark> 0.0%		104	43.7%	30	35.3%
File system	139	39.4%	36	41.9%		96	40.3%	31	36.5%
Box	125	35.4%	29	33.7%		86	36.1%	24	28.2%
Dropbox	124	35.1%	29	33.7%		85	35.7%	24	28.2%
Embedded files	73	20.7%	15	17.4%		50	21.0%	13	15.3%
URL downloader	66	18.7%	18	20.9%		43	18.1%	18	21.2%
Microsoft OneDrive	61	17.3%	18	20.9%		38	16.0%	8	9.4%
Wikimedia	59	16.7%	17	19.8%		36	15.1%	11	12.9%
Legacy course files	51	14.4%	16	18.6%		36	15.1%	10	11.8%
Flickr	48	13.6%	5	5.8%		35	14.7%	8	9.4%
PoodLL*	36	10.2%	10	11.6%		25	10.5%	6	7.1%
Flickr public	30	8.5%	4	4.7%		21	8.8%	6	7.1%
Picasa web album	28	7.9%	10	11.6%		13	5.5%	6	7.1%
WebDAV repository	20	5.7%	5	5.8%		14	5.9%	4	4.7%
Amazon S3	9	2.5%	2	2.3%		6	2.5%	3	3.5%
Alfresco repository	9	2.5%	1	1.2%		7	2.9%	3	3.5%
EQUELLA repository	7	2.0%	0	0.0%		7	2.9%	0	0.0%
Merlot.org	6	1.7%	2	2.3%		3	1.3%	1	1.2%

Repositories

Use of repositories is varied with the workplace sector using repository plugins relatively less. A number of repositories associated with commercial services are rarely used, including the Amazon S3, Alfresco, EQUELLA and Merlot.org repositories.

Portfolios

	Overa	Overall		Schools			Higher	-ed	Workplace	
Mahara ePortfolio	65	18.4%		11	12.8%		51	21.4%	11	12.9%
Google Drive	61	17.3%		15	17.4%		38	16.0%	12	14.1%
File download	36	10.2%		5	5.8%		25	10.5%	10	11.8%
Picasa	10	2.8%		3	3.5%		4	1.7%	2	2.4%
Box	7	2.0%		1	1.2%		6	2.5%	2	2.4%
Flickr.com	4	1.1%		1	1.2%		2	0.8%	0	0.0%

Portfolios are the least used plugin type within the scope of this survey. Some portfolios are rarely used, such as the Picasa, Box and Flickr repositories.

Additional plugins

Respondents were able to provide a list of additional plugins they use. Some respondents did not add any additional plugins while others added a large number more.

Plugins mentioned in this field were cleaned, sorted and counted. A number of plugins were mentioned more than 10 times.

Voluntarily Mentioned Plugins

Attendance	45
TurnltIn	33
Group choice	22
Scheduler	20
Essential	18
Sharing cart	16
Onetopic format	15

The Attendance activity was the most mentioned with many mentions coming from the Highered sector, possibly because of the inclusion of vocational education within this group. The number of mentions, being 45, is still less than other activity modules offered in the survey, however, voluntary mentions may count for more than nominating an offered choice.

TurnItIn plugins were mentioned 33 times. This includes a number of plugin varieties including multiple plugin types, so it is difficult to compare. TurnItIn plugins are proprietary and supplied by the vendor.

General comments

Respondents were also given the opportunity to offer general comments. No suggestion was given to how respondents should use this field, so a variety of responses were provided. Responses were cleaned, categorised and are paraphrased below.

- Some institutions don't allow additional plugins, so adding more plugins to the standard distribution is desirable.
- Some respondents want fewer plugins enabled by default.
- Some institutions create and use their own plugins.
- Wishes for some contributed plugins to be updated were shared.
- Some respondents delay updating Moodle until supported plugin versions are available.
- The current state of the plugins system is viewed favourably.
- Security of additional plugins is a concern to some.
- Open University plugins were endorsed.
- General thanks to developers for their efforts were provided.

Conclusions

The large number of responses from the Higher-ed sector dominates the results. It does mean other sectors are less clearly distinguishable, but some distinctions can be made.

The self-paced nature of learning in the Workplace sector is reflected in a number of plugins used there, such as those related to completion, mentoring, progress and certification. Fewer plugins are used in the Workplace setting, possibly due to a desire for simple, professional courses.

The Schools sector tends to be slightly more exploratory, adopting more blocks and other plugins. However, in many cases, the Schools sector is less distinguishable from Higher-ed.

Research questions

Motivating this survey were a set of questions that can now be answered.

What standard plugins are not used and may be removed, deprecated or fixed?

All plugins in the survey were selected by at least a couple of respondents. Plugins used by 3% of respondents or less were as follows.

- IMS Enterprise file
- IMAP server, POP3 server, RADIUS server, PAM (Pluggable Authentication Modules), NNTP server, FirstClass server
- Amazon S3, Alfresco repository, EQUELLA repository, Merlot.org repositories
- Picasa, Box, Flickr.com portfolios

These plugins could be considered for relegation to the Plugins Directory, but it could also be that these plugins are not used because they are broken or unusable and require attention. Where plugins listed above are integrations with other systems, interested parties should be involved in decisions and future maintenance.

What standard plugins are used a lot and may need more attention?

Some plugins are used relatively more than others in their plugin type and overall. Plugins used by 75% of respondents or more are as follows.

- Assignment, Quiz, Forum
- File, Label, Folder, Page, URL
- Calendar block
- Topics format
- Multiple choice, True/False, Short answer question types
- Manual enrolments

These plugins could be given additional attention to benefit more of the community.

What additional plugins (if any) should be added to the standard distribution?

A number of additional plugins were included as they were popular on the Plugins Directory. No plugin was used more than the most popular standard plugin within each plugin type, but some are used widely. Plugins used by 25% of respondents or more are as follows.

- Questionnaire (45.3%)
- Certificate (30.9%)
- Progress Bar block (32.0%)
- Collapsed Topics (35.4%)
- Drag and drop onto image (37.1%), Drag and drop markers (36.5%), Select missing words (27.8%) question types

People clearly want the functionality of the Questionnaire plugin. The Questionnaire plugin duplicates functionality of the Feedback module, which is a standard plugin. There is a current project to revise and combine Feedback and Survey and include features from Questionnaire.

The Certificate plugin is popular, particularly in the Workplace sector. The functionality of this plugin is clearly desirable. If this plugin were to be included in the standard distribution, significant recoding would be required. A "Simple Certificate" additional plugin exists.

The Progress Bar block is widely used. This plugin's functionality is similar to that offered in the Course completion status block and it is possible that some of the functionality of the Progress Bar block could be incorporated there.

The Collapsed Topics course format is the most popular contributed course format. It offers additional functionality to the Topics format. A Collapsed Weeks format is also available. The Collapsed Topics course format could be considered for inclusion in the standard distribution or its functionality could be added to the regular Topics format, which dominates the other plugins in the course format type.

Four of the OU question types, including the Drag and drop onto image, Drag and drop markers, and Select missing words question types, are to be included in Moodle 3.0 (<u>issue</u>), which seems justified based on the results of this survey.

Additional changes based on usage

The list of default blocks should be reconsidered based on current usage, particularly on the course page. The Calendar block should probably be added and a number of lesser used blocks could be removed.

The current default course format is the Weekly format, however the Topics format is used far more. This default should probably change.

Recommendations based on general comments

Encouraging and assisting developers who have contributed additional plugins to keep their plugins up-to-date, as Moodle versions progress, would put people more at ease.