CloudBank allows students to collect, annotate and tag interesting or intriguing language- and culture-related content found in everyday life, including text, images, audio snippets and web links.

These content items are saved to an online repository, from where they can be syndicated in various ways. RSS feeds allow the content to be included in almost any website, including blogs and profile pages. Mobile alerts notify students when new content is uploaded to the repository by their peers.

In addition to syndication, the repository offers a web interface for adding, editing and discussing content in an online community.

The project employs a user-centred, iterative design methodology. Scenarios are used throughout the process to ensure that developers share the same vision of the system, and to ground the design in the reality of its potential users:

1. Explore scenarios and functionality with target users
2. Discuss paper prototype with the core user group
3. Test and refine functionality and interface with users

The process continues until functional specifications are met and users are satisfied with the application. Design guidelines for similar applications on mobile phones are derived from the experience.

International students in the UK typically have a high level of competence in English language, but they are still concerned with improving their facility in the language and with the native culture. In fact, advanced learners often find themselves unable to progress to native-like levels of language competence, a phenomenon known as reaching a plateau. The CloudBank project aims to support students in this situation.

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