



JISC Mobile Reflections – Case Study

Overview

The mobile reflections project invited students to try out the use of mobile devices to capture multi-media reflections 'on the move'. It was funded by [JISC Elevator](#), and run as an extension to the [Digitalis](#) project during June and July 2012. Participants were mainly from the [School of Performance and Cultural Industries](#), and included undergraduate and post-graduate students.

Objectives

The project aims were (i) to develop students' digital literacy; (ii) to encourage reflection in environments where students aren't near a computer; (iii) to explore the value of spontaneously caught, visual/audio reflections; and (iv) to explore the benefits of creating an edited reflective video to review and arrange the material. By creating the edited video, students are reflecting twice – once as near to the actual source of learning stimulus as possible, and then again with some distance from the event. The material they are reflecting upon will contain visual and auditory traces of the place that they actually were at the time, and bodily traces of how they felt (through voice). This may make more 'embodied' information available to them for the 'second' iteration of reflection. By reflecting 'twice', this may deepen the level of reflection through the presentation, re-presentation, organisation and framing of experience (Moon, J.A. (2004). *A Handbook of Reflective and Experiential Learning*. Oxon: RoutledgeFalmer)

Implementation

Students were invited to participate in the project through a blog post and Twitter, and second year students were invited to take part during their dissertation briefing meeting. However, the most effective recruitment method was by personal approach (through staff recommending particular students). Due to the time of year (teaching had finished and many students had left) there was not a huge response. We recruited seven participants initially, and four completed the project. However, those four were very engaged - by their own report they derived a lot of value from the project, and they contributed rich insights to it.

The participants were given a simple video tutorial on using an iPhone to video, and a briefing document which invited them to take part as co-researchers. [This post](#) contains the briefing notes and link to tutorial, and also has a summary of questions I asked the participants together with their responses. Throughout the project, participants were sent a weekly email with prompts and reminders, and suggestions as to different ways that they could use their mobile to reflect. Some of them found the structure and prompts were useful for ideas and motivation.

Throughout the project, I documented progress and insights on the [Digitalis website](#). After four weeks gathering mobile reflections 'in the field' I created a [WordPress space](#) (set up by our Blended Learning Support team) for the participants to take part in an asynchronous online workshop on video editing. We took the decision to hold the workshop online because of the time of year, with many students not being based in Leeds (in the event, our final participants were all in Leeds!) The WordPress space invited the participants to introduce themselves to each other, and provided resources and guidance for them to create an edited video from their reflective material. The video

tutorials were created by me, using Camtasia for screen capture, and Articulate as the presentation 'wrapper'. The participants were asked to upload their videos to YouTube (unlisted) and post the links to the WordPress site.

In the 6th week, we ran a live workshop using [Adobe Connect](#), supported by a Staff Development e-learning specialist. The aim of this live online workshop was for the participants to share their reflections and videos with each other, and to generate some discussion on the process. After the workshop, participants were asked to fill in a more detailed questionnaire.

Reflections

Running the live workshop was challenging, although effective. I captured my key learning in [this blog post](#) which also contains a copy of the design structure for the workshop.

From the participants' discussion during the live workshop, I pulled out key themes. For mobile reflection, the comments that seem to be repeated are **self-consciousness** and awareness of people in the environment, and this restricts freedom to record reflections. A strategy employed was to take a photograph as a reminder and prompt to reflect later. Awareness of a **future audience** and of the need to select from the material later put some constraint on perceived freedom to reflect freely and without pre-judgement. And **the camera itself** caused some feelings of constraint and self-consciousness. These feelings seemed to recede with **practice**, with the participants becoming **less 'precious'** about their recordings. The **spontaneity** and 'handiness' of the technology enabled the participants to capture key reflections '**in the moment**' and in the environment, which they could then revisit and remember. Having their video reflections felt more **tangible**, they could literally look at them and **analyse** their thoughts and process over a period of time. A process of **layering** went on, with spoken reflections being recorded whilst watching footage of movement, for example. It enabled them to see a **new impression** of the footage, or see it with '**new eyes**'. It was also used to **capture thoughts from reading**, as well as practical work.

In terms of the video editing process, it made the participants **look back** at the footage which they wouldn't normally do. This enabled them to select the most **revealing** moments, and helped to **analyse and structure** ideas for their research. Again, **consciousness of an audience** played a part, with concerns about the video flowing for a viewer, or about aesthetic quality. The fragments selected for the video represented **key moments** of emotion, insight or reflections on process. For this exercise, participants were conscious of **comparing** their videos with each other, and this came out in feelings of vulnerability or concerns for how well the video 'flowed' for a viewer. However, they also **learned from watching each others'** videos about different ways of using mobile reflection, and about techniques for structuring the video.

Participants completed a detailed questionnaire, and the full summary of responses can be [read here](#).

Technical issues

Processing video can be very **slow**, and in one case this forced the participant to be selective about the footage that she chose. She saw this as something that could have been a positive outcome, but the process was time consuming and frustrating.

Another participant used Final Cut Pro and encountered **file format issues**. Video on the iPhone is designed for distribution, not editing. When using **professional editing tools** such as Final Cut Pro, the video needs to be **converted** from iPhone codex to Apple Res422.

The initial intention had been to use a **digital storytelling app** as part of the project. However, my initial tests suggested that there is not currently an adequate digital storytelling app for iPhone. StoryRobe was the only one that I could find and it was liable to crash, took a lot of space, and a long time to build. Given the participants' feedback that they found it helpful to take photos in environments where they felt uncomfortable to speak, a digital storytelling app may have been useful as they could take the photo and then go to a quiet space to capture their spoken reflections – thus doing this sooner than they could necessarily get to a computer to do the video editing.

Accessibility challenges, issues and benefits

As seen above, using video and audio provided an effective reflection method for students who are more comfortable working with images and movement than they are with words or writing. Being able to narrate over video footage provides a way to layer their reflections more easily over the type of visual material that they are reflecting upon.

Links / Documents / Resources

- Project Archive: <http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/category/jisc-mobile-reflections/>
- Recruitment: <http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/2012/05/30/opportunity-to-try-mobile-digital-reflection/>
- Briefing document - <http://www.pvac.leeds.ac.uk/digitalis/files/2012/06/Notes-for-Briefing-Participants.pdf>
- WordPress learning space: <http://www.pvac.leeds.ac.uk/mobilereflections/>
- Questionnaire: <http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/files/2012/07/JISC-Mobile-Reflections-Questionnaire.pdf>
- Video Editing Tutorial Package: <http://www.digitalis.leeds.ac.uk/resources/resources-new-page/video-editing/> Individual video tutorials available on Youtube under creative commons license for reuse:-
 - Checking orientation and volume for recording on a mobile: <http://youtu.be/1BbKJU98yTQ>
 - Downloading files from your iPhone/digital device to your PC: <http://youtu.be/m1q0w0MJ6NI>
 - Managing files and folders on your PC: <http://youtu.be/NfPZJsl41Ec>
 - Download Movie Maker and import files: <http://youtu.be/i9uXlOrLDHI>
 - Video editing - trim and split: <http://youtu.be/VP6dv-kHml4>
 - Video editing – adding text: <http://youtu.be/J4eBBFzXAYU>
 - Video editing – adding audio narration: <http://youtu.be/VJgWVLzOMmk>
 - Video editing – credit and save: <http://youtu.be/Naw3liVIHkY>
 - Video editing – adding music: <http://youtu.be/Qk0o4cTlvfk>

Carole Kirk, Digitalis Project Assistant. July 2012
c.kirk@leeds.ac.uk