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Executive Summary

Student participants in three countries across the planet collaborated to make movies, with their mobile phones, about environmental sustainability. The thirty-nine participants - film & television students at Unitec PASA; acoustics and sound students at Salford University in Manchester, UK; and graphic design students at Université de Strasbourg in Strasbourg, France - divided into four international teams (each of which consisted of students from all three countries). They used a variety of Web 2 tools – Google Docs, Google+ Hangouts, Twitter, Dropbox, WordPress - to collaboratively determine the specific subject matter and the story of each team’s film, the shots they would need to tell each story, and in which country each shot would be taken. In the end, they delivered four mobile movies that looked at different sustainability sub-topics. The project was capped with feedback from the lecturers involved and by video reflections from the students.

ELVSS broke new ground in the usage and purposing of new media tools, and was a global project around a global issue. Many lessons were learnt and many realisations made, most of which can be found on the master blog [<http://elvss2012.wordpress.com/>]. ELVSS also was an experiment in progressive pedagogy, as the students joined the lecturers in journey of discovery, pioneering pathways in international collaboration with emerging communications technologies.

Background

Over the past few decades, the Western world’s relationship with information has been changing at an ever-increasing rate. Multiple daily information outlets have now replaced the single source of yore (the newspaper). Where once we were handed the content, now we, the users, share the content-generation controls with the professional information/entertainment disseminators. Distance is no longer a challenge – the planet is connected.

Concurrent with this shift comes an evolution in teaching and learning theory and application. Where once lessons were focused on delivered content, now authentic learning is proactively engaged in by the learner. Indeed, in many social constructivist models, the learner has substantial degrees of stewardship over the learning journey itself. Students are handed a map and the car keys, and are encouraged by their teachers to set out on an unknown route. The specifics of the learning journey (the strategies employed, the tools used) become an integral component of the learning itself. Pedagogy gives way to andragogy.

So these parallel lines - the explosion in the quantity of available information/entertainment, the democratization of content creation and delivery, the internationalization of information delivery, the burgeoning of wireless mobile devices and the respectful empowerment of the student as an active participant in their learning journey – are themselves now converging.

At PASA, we mentor a relatively conventional model of filmmaking, leading students through the process, from go to whoa, using the techniques and approaches to storytelling that the film industry have evolved over the last 100 years. Whilst some of the traditional still retains its relevance in today’s landscape, the sands are shifting beneath us. This shift began when the tools for acquiring, manipulating

and delivering image and sound began to grow faster, better, cheaper and more ubiquitous, which enabled those who are traditionally the consumers of story content to become the creators as well. With the incorporation of the HD camera into the smart phone, the hardware employed for both creation and consumption have also converged into one tool. We shoot and edit on the same device with which we watch. With this convergence has come a shift in the way we approach and interact with story. No longer pinned to place and time like we were in the pre-videotape broadcast TV days (and as we still are with theatrical features), we can now create and view content any time and any place. We integrate the stories into our lives. With this change comes a possible shift in the very structure of story itself. Research on viewing habits suggests that whilst an increasing number of people are getting used to viewing feature-length entertainment content on mobile devices, a larger proportion prefer to watch in shorter bursts - killing time while waiting, while in transit or even sneaking some TV time at work. (Winslow, 2012) As people tend to consume mobile content in their “in-between” times, a move has been on to package stories into smaller units that accommodate this pattern.

These same devices have other applications that have emerged from an equally profound set of shifts. Web 2.0 phenomena, including social networking, have given rise to collaboration and sharing of information on a global scale. We can now share pretty much anything any time with anybody. So what are we doing with these new powers? What is the nature of the discussions taking place?

These were some of the questions in my mind as I designed ELVSS.

Aims and Objectives

The objectives of ELVSS12 were:

1. To create new narratives around the overarching theme of SUSTAINABILITY;
2. To forge new pathways for international creative collaborations using wireless mobile communication devices;
3. To formulate a structure for the creation/operation of narrow-focus global communities of practice [that is, centered around a very specific issue (in the social change/digital communities sense) and/or a particular creative endeavour (in the creative/entertainment content sense).];
4. To explore and to articulate *new* narrative and visual conventions emerging from *new and under-explored* platforms for digital audio/visual storytelling;
5. To develop new knowledge exploring the cultural shift amongst end-users from passive entertainment consumers to active entertainment content creators and publishers;
6. To stretch existing parameters for smart phone use by growing a new model for social community based on trans-national content co-creation; and
7. To generate four globally-created “mobisodes” (dramatic episodes created, and intended for viewing, on mobile phones), each of which incorporate the locations, languages and sociocultural ethos of four countries.

I can clearly attest that all the above objectives have been met to varying degrees, and are now functioning in various phases of development. Objectives 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7 were thoroughly addressed through the project, and are now generously informing our practice in formulating and operating ELVSS13. New narratives are continuing to emerge; ever newer narrative and visual conventions have been developed, and are continuing to be ever more deeply explored. The new pathways forged and the new structures created for international collaborations using WMD’s on ELVSS12 were not only successful, but they have set the blueprint for practice on ELVSS13 (which is covering an entirely fresh terrain) - and have also informed others attempting similar ends, resulting from ELVSS12’s international research outputs.

As regards new knowledge that explores cultural shift amongst end-users (from passive entertainment consumers to active entertainment content creators and publishers), what’s clear is that ELVSS12 was a solid early-days entry in what has revealed itself to be a richly unfolding, dynamically shifting area. I refer you to the two peer reviewed papers that are shared on the ELVSS12 blog (under “Papers”). [<http://elvss2012.wordpress.com/>]

Overall, ELVSS12 has more than reached its objectives in most respects, and, in others, has been set firmly on a longer path of discovery and revelation.

Methodology

- Student participants in the three countries were divided into four international teams (each consisting of members from each country). To introduce themselves, students in the UK and in NZ each made a single video where they passed the camera around and said their name and specialization. Then, we held one massive G+ Hangout, where all participants (39) were together in their respective countries and were all online at the same time. During this event, the teams each stood up in front of the camera, so they could meet one another properly.
- Each team ran a Google Doc through which they discussed their creative ideas and then formulated their story and their shot list (including in which country each shot would be taken).
- All participants were either lent, or had their own, devices for shooting video. All NZ participants were lent iPads for editing the films.
- Each team also ran a blog, in which they journalled their processes, posted stills and rushes, and, ultimately, their final product.
- Twitter was used quite a lot, as a synchronous/asynchronous communication tool. It functioned as a back-channel during every class. The students would post links related to the topics under discussion in class – doing research on the spot and sharing it with the international participants. They would also ask questions or make comments on the class discussion. Their international collaborators would frequently chime in to the discussion via Twitter during class as well. Additionally, participants (student and lecturer alike) would be constantly contributing relevant links and comments from anywhere at any time – thus extending the class across space and time. Through Twitter, the ELVSS12 course was no longer restricted to the four walls or the three weekly hours of the classroom. It became part of our lives.
- The project had a single Dropbox, in which all raw footage was stored, and into which all participants had access.
- Final edits were posted on YouTube then embedded into the team blogs.
- Student participants summarized and reflected on their experience in the project via VLOGS, they posted on their individual pages of their team blogs.
- Lecturer/organisers also made reflective feedback videos with their own WMD's, which they also posted on the ELVSS12 YouTube channel, as well as embedding them in the lecturer's ELVSS 12 blog (referenced several times in this document).

As to why these methods were chosen over others considered, this is a huge question, sort of beyond the scope of this document. The short version is this: Lecturer/organisers had many G+ Hangouts prior to the launch of ELVSS12, during which myriad options were considered and several possible approaches/solutions to each step were poured over. We seriously weighed all the options for each micro-phase of the process, and, through these discussions, always arrived at a clear consensus for how the project would proceed through that stage.

As an example, on the subject of how the decision would be made about how the footage would be edited, we pondered: a) each country in each team editing their country's footage, then one of the team members assembling those sections; b) each country editing the footage of the other country within each team; c) one team shooting and another team editing each bunch of footage; d) one pair of team members in a given country editing all that team's footage; and e) the online collaborative editing platform www.wevideo.com, which is like Google Docs for video editing. The collaborative editing option seemed attractive and appropriate. But after knocking that idea around, we decided that the project was already complicated enough and that collaborative editing (given the short timeframe we were faced with) could add a layer of confusion from the overabundance of choices and options (editing by committee never works). So we chose option (d).

There is another example in my paper "Mobile In Global Out – International Collaboration in Wireless Moviemaking" (in the section titled "Involvement Scheme") – on the blog.

But from this one example, I hope you agree with me that to go into every decision we made and why we made it would be excessive (a short book in itself), and, I'm imagining, not really what you're looking for in this report.

Outcomes/findings

Achievement against the aims and objectives set are addressed in other areas of the document. One aspect of the findings was realized in the videos themselves. Another aspect began to be explored in the student comments, a small sampling of which can be found here: <http://bit.ly/ZqYs4i>.

Whilst a healthy variety of both mobile apps and web-based platforms were trialed throughout the planning and the implementation of ELVSS12, only a few actually proved useful or relevant to the goals of the project. It is imperative, in future internationally collaborative mobile moviemaking efforts, to carefully choose the tools and to keep the procedure as simple as possible.

Conclusions

Internationally collaborative mobile moviemaking is in its infancy. Its potentials are huge and far-reaching, offering great possibility as an interactive tool for pedagogy, entertainment and advocacy. Whilst much trial and error is ahead, ELVSS12 took a huge leap forward in this regard, deepening and broadening the knowledge-base.

Implications

Based on the consensus of reaction – based on an informal poll amongst attendees at international eLearning and mLearning conferences - this research has already begun to provide new models of pedagogy amongst forward-thinking educators. One also hopes that it will further broaden the artform of filmmaking and that it will open up new channels of international social advocacy amongst communities where more conventional filmmaking tools are not accessible.

One possible next step could involve the development of a dedicated mobile app which gathers the variety of platforms required for collaborations of this nature into one unified platform, thus easing the way for participants who find it particularly challenging going from platform to platform in order to create and share documents; shoot, store and edit footage; and deliver the program content to the world. This will require a bit of forward-thinking startup investment, but, if done in a timely fashion, will secure the innovators a solid place in the next generation of interactive content creation – for education, advocacy and education. It's not outside the realm of possibility that Unitec could step into this light.

Publications and dissemination

Virtually-delivered oral presentation.

Wagner, D. (2012). Mobile In Global Out: International Collaboration in Wireless Moviemaking International Conference of Education, Research and Innovation ([ICERI](#)) - Madrid, Spain.

<http://wp.me/P2f9No-5W>

Oral Presentation

At the 2nd Mobile Creativity and Innovation Symposium, held by Mobile Innovation Network Aotearoa ([MINA](#))

<http://bit.ly/XsOb4N>

Poster Presentation

Wagner, D. (2012). Mobile In Global Out: International Collaboration in Wireless Moviemaking Australasian Society for Computers In Learning In Tertiary Education ([ASCILITE](#)) – Wellington, NZ
Won BEST POSTER for this conference!

Poster - <http://bit.ly/ZqYs4i>

Certificate - <http://wp.me/P2f9No-60>

Sole-Authored Paper

Wagner, D. (2013). Pocket Auteurs: Student Uptake of an International Collaboration in Wireless Moviemaking

International Technology, Education & Development Conference (INTED) – Valencia, Spain
[Paper accepted, conference dates are 4th-6th March, which is in the week prior to the submission date of this report. Therefore, the proceedings publication has not yet been generated by the conference. Here's a link to search for the list of accepted abstracts. Just enter Wagner in "Search by Author's Name".] I'll happily send proof of its ISBN publication in the proceedings following the conference.

Co-Authored Paper

Cochrane, T., Antonczak, L. and Wagner, D. (2012). Heutagogical Approaches to mLearning: From Student-Generated Content to International Co-Production.

Published in the proceedings of the [MLEARN 2012](#) Conference – Helsinki, Finland

http://ceur-ws.org/Vol-955/papers/paper_17.pdf

Faculty Symposium

Audio/visual presentation at the "Communication for Social Change and Digital Communities Research Foci Symposium" [C.R.E.]

Conference Symposium

Presented on ELVSS12 on the "Post Web 2.0 Pedagogy: Mobile Social Media" Panel at ASCILITE
<http://bit.ly/XTgRiF> [see 6th page down, Symposium 1.1 (Monday 26 Nov 2012: 1545-1645)]

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- In **Heutagogical Approaches to mLearning: From Student-Generated Content to International Co-Production** (see above):
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Appendixes (optional)

<http://elvss2012.wordpress.com/>