

Virtual worlds in Journalism Education: creating effective distance and blended learning courses.

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UCF L&T Fellowship paper Audio/Video VLE Survey Part two **June 2009**

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Part two contains the results and conclusions of an empirical survey into audio/video use on VLEs.

The aims of the research aspect of project: *To examine the potential for distance learning, blended learning and enhanced VLE of audio/video technology by creating a range of sample and evaluated packages for e-learning delivery. These will be used in the wider context of investigating pedagogies for nuanced e-learning in journalism education.*

Methodology included: creating instruction videos or podcasts, recording keynote and core lectures as either videos or podcasts which will be evaluated through alumni survey; researching current use of pedagogies in e-learning, and a literature review.

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PART TWO OF REPORT - Research

Research: a set of seven audio/video packages were produced for the project. The author evaluated the technical aspects of producing material for the VLE. The material was survey of former MA students.

Technological context

Virtual Learning Environments first appeared in numbers in HE in the early years of the decade. By 2005, 95% of HE institutions in England used learning environments. Their initial success was their effective function as a noticeboard and repository for course notes. Tutors quickly noticed that students were using material remotely, often for revision or having missed lectures. They are now innovating VLE use for quizzes, FAQs, feedback and other approaches which student report as effective. Traffic is often at times outside of normal campus hours and reflects students working from home or elsewhere

The basic format of most VLE's was initially simple. Staff are now trying to develop VLE's into attractive sites as students are used to high quality in their normal internet use.

The author notes that in his experience of VLEs across universities that ease of navigation and logical design is absolutely vital in the student take up and benefit from VLEs. Few institutions have really mastered the basics of VLE use. Fragmented, complex and un-refreshed VLE sites simply lead students to ignore this potentially powerful learning tool.

At the start of this research there was a question mark over how useful students find videoed lectures. In a small research project by Bennett and Maniar (2006) observed, "Students can watch the videoed lecture to revisit any points that they did not understand whilst watching the lecture face-to-face. Furthermore, they can stop, start and rewind the video to address their specific needs."

But they pointed out:

"Despite these suggested benefits, few evaluations have been conducted. Furthermore, the evaluations that have been conducted show conflicting findings. Some indicate that videoed lectures can improve students' grades and increase their overall level of satisfaction and confidence with the course (Chiu, Lee and Yang 2006; Day and Foley 2006; Harley et al. 2003; Zupancic and Horz 2002). However, other work found that the availability of videoed lectures made no significant difference (Brotherton and Abowd 2004; Bell, Cockburn, McKenzie and Vargo 2001).

There is also conflicting evidence surrounding whether providing video recordings of lectures has an adverse affect on attendance (Brotherton and Abowd 2004; Bell et al. 2001)."

Bennett and Maniar's conclusions from their own project were largely negative: "Ultimately, a student only has a limited time to spend on a course outside of class. Whilst using videoed lectures does have some merits, a student's time is probably better spent answering questions that require them to do some independent study and focus their attention on key aspects of the course."

The author felt the question was whether videoed lectures can provide a range of benefits that would not otherwise be available to a given group of students including access to lecturers not regularly in attendance, inspiration by leading industry figures and the delivery of useful material for essays and dissertation writing. Part of this research project was to test the Bennett and Maniar assertion by a survey of alumni.

The Technical elements

The author is experienced in television techniques having made and edited programmes as far back as 1976 and has gone on to produce many national current affairs' programmes. One of the criteria of the project was to see how much could be conducted with the equipment that is likely to be available to the lecturer rather than the broadcast professional.

Four of the survey items were videos recorded on broadcast standard cameras. The author noted that many of the lectures that are available online are of a relatively low standard. iTunes U (U for University) which is a free part of iTunes stores delivers lectures in audio and video recorded by some of

the United States leading institutions such as MIT, Harvard, Stanford, Berkeley and many more.¹ iTunesU has added material from some UK institutions including Oxford and Cambridge and most recently Coventry University.² Lectures by some of the world's leading academics and commentators can be readily accessed and there is no doubt of the power of that access. On the negative side the technical quality can be poor.

In the recording of the lectures for the survey the author used one or more trained student camera operators. This worked quiet well but there are moments when the camera operator did not respond to movement by the lecturer. Tighter framing would have been better on a number of recordings. On one occasion the camera operator forgot to switch to record the radio mike but luckily a reasonable quality of sound was picked up by the camera's inbuilt camera.

Most lecture rooms have sufficient light. Bright sunlight can cause problems for editing.

Videocasting

The author made a videocast recording at home using home standard equipment to establish how difficult that would be for any lecturer wishing to make their own videocasts. Equipment used included a Canon home mini DV recorder, (cost approx £300), a Sony microphone (cost £40), a 500w lighting unit (cost £30), Pinnacle Studio 10.6 video editing software, (cost approx £100), edited on a Dell home PC (value £1000). The results were burnt to DVD discs.

The intention was not to make a broadcast standard packages but something that conveyed the information, looked reasonably attractive and did not distract any viewer with technical quality issues. The process was difficult.

The first problem is that it is very important that the reader looks directly at the camera to give their talk. It is noticeable from other examples from iTunesU that where the lecturer does not look directly and consistently at the screen it is off putting for the viewer who is conditioned by professional newsreaders. In the professional environment the solution is the autocue.

Very few people can remember or freely improvise a high quality ten minute talk. It is very distracting for the viewer to see the reader looking down at the script. Editing in small sections is not ideal as the edits are irritating.

¹ The author's own personal favourites are the lectures of Professor Walter Lewin from MIT

² Curtis, Polly (2008) *Oxford v Cambridge: battle of the podcasts Venerable universities enlist big guns to help display their wares on iTunes*. The Guardian, Tuesday October 7 2008

Lighting is also a problem. Using natural or home lighting does not work. A strong light needs to set slightly off centre to the lecturers face. This is quite hard to do.

The subject of the videocast was 'how to write a news story'. The author's observation while students are instructed in journalism courses early on how to write news stories, the lecturers themselves rarely ever show how they themselves approach the writing process and produce a story. So, on screen the author wanted to show a press release from which the story should be taken and then the author actual writing the story on screen.

The author wanted to incorporate videoed material from the computer screen. To attempt this, the author used a free trial edition of a basic screen video capture software called Easy Screen Video.³ This worked well. To write a story of even 150 words would take more than the videocast's intended 10 minute time. One of the useful features of ESV was that it could be set to effectively time lapse the recording of the story. Once the author had the hang of the settings this worked quite well.

The biggest problem with ESV was the low resolution of the video capture. Though the author used ESV for the videocast further research suggests that Camtasia Studio Video capture programme has a greater resolution although it does cost £200. It allows you to highlight parts of the screen, zoom in and even add captions but this takes some skill acquisition. There are range of proprietary screen video capture programmes ranging in price and including Captivate and Matchware. Some recommend Adobe Flash for recording on screen lectures but the programme was not available to the author to test. The whole process took well over one working day to write, record and edit. The author takes the view that the finished product was acceptable, any future videocast will benefit from the lessons learnt. The author also recognizes that the videocast contains some errors that would require reshooting if it was to be used permanently. The author's view is that lecturers really need help in the process from technical staff with the right equipment, programmes and skills.

Podcast

The author also made a completely separate podcast (audio only) on the subject of writing for broadcast. The script was written in advance. It was recorded at home using Roxio Media Creator 9 programme which gave all the control over recording needed. The recording took a number of takes but the author was able to edit this reasonably quickly. The author is happy with this finished product. The author's conclusion is that lecturers can make podcasts either at home or on campus using fairly basic equipment provided they have had some training on recording and editing.

³ This costs £9.99 to purchase on line

Instruction Video

Perhaps the most professional piece of work was an instruction video designed to explain the art of the two way interview to students. This was recorded from script in the Tremough TV studio. This was a double handed effort by the author and lecturer George Matheson. We were limited in time as we begged and borrowed time and assistance incorporating a student as a camera operator. While the edited and finished version is not perfect it was a useful learning experience and does the job reasonably well. Ideally instruction videos need proper resources to achieve acceptable standards.

Prior research

One of the best known experiments in the use of podcasting and videocasting in HE took place at Duke University in the United States in 2004. Duke distributed 20GB Apple iPod devices; each equipped with Belkin voice recorders to 1600 entering first year students. (Belanger 2005) The result was considered successful but it is not clear whether it has been repeated and if not whether on the grounds of effectiveness or costs or that students now have the technology personally available.

Jonathan Copley of the University of Southampton designed a simple cost effective and file size efficient method for producing video podcast. He researched the impact on campus based students of the pilot scheme for delivering supplementary materials to students.

"These results reveal students enthusiasm for podcast recording of lecture material and their primary use by students in revision and preparation for assessments. Survey responses also showed little likely impact on lecture attendance as a consequence of podcasting, but indicate that podcast recordings of lectures may not be effective in facilitating mobile learning." (Copley, 2007)

Copley used Blackboard to track students downloading. "There was overall enthusiasm for podcast lecture materials, with 93% of survey respondents indicating that they would like to see more lecture material available in podcast form, including respondents who did not download podcasts during the experiment. In addition to having access to podcast records of lecturers, 86% indicated they would also like podcasting of supplementary 'stand-alone' materials such as short revision summaries and briefings for assignments." Some 12% of respondents said they might not attend lectures if they knew a podcast would be available. He concluded that they were at least as useful as standard handouts. "So in a very conventional non-vocational context podcast seem to have been very effective." (ibid)

Data rich development in the sector

Meanwhile the development of audio and video material for intrinsic use in the courses continues at many universities. It is also becoming professionalised. As part of the project the author met and talked with executives of a publishing house that has great ambitions in the sector. Henry Stewart Publications are a well academic and specialist journal publishing house. Under the title of Henry Stewart Talks they are now producing, what is generally know as visually augmented podcasts, to academic institutions. Their first two areas are microbiology and marketing. They produce a 'box set' of ten or so lectures by leading lecturers in the field accompanied on screen by the lecturer's notes. These are then sold as a package to relevant university departments. Their first set on microbiology includes lectures by leading figures in the discipline such as Professor Steve Jones. The author believes that there will be a niche market for the development of sector specific lecture series.ⁱ

The author discovered that there are a number of companies selling new technology support packages that promise a great deal but produce considerable problems in practice. Automatic studio recording of lectures for posting on line does seem to be one example of this problem. Oversimplification of the process often results in serious technological error.

Current Moodle and WebCT VLE interfaces can often seem "clunky" and dated in comparison with the interfaces students are used to in social and gaming environments. There is a general trend towards more visually-rich media in all areas of society and it can enhance learning, as this quote from a Sheffield Hallam student shows; *"Sometimes I find it easier to retain information on a topic if I have a visual memory of it. Also, I believe the visual representation of a topic can provoke an emotional response within an individual which in turn helps them connect with the subject and stimulate interest. I am very much in favour of video/visual methods within teaching, and I think it should be used more frequently."*

More developed VLE programmes are emerging from the United States such as Droople and Jumla, though their reception has varied.

Survey Results – April 2009

Over the opening months of 2009 alumni from the postgraduate journalism course at UCF took the time to watch and listen to material on the UCF's VLE. They then completed questionnaires.

A minimum of 36 former students participated. Alumni were from course years from 2003 to 2008 and were volunteers. While most alumni gave their names with their comments there was at least one

anonymous contribution so it is not possible to know the exact number of individuals contributing. Some engaged with all the material but most with part of the material. I have redacted the names.

To complete all the survey would have been a considerable amount of work taking around four hours. It is not surprising that few respondents completed all aspects of the survey. The individual surveys were stand alone and included 8-9 questions. Item number one was the option for the respondent to give their name. Other questions included:

- Would this lecture have been useful to you while you were on the course?
- What might you have used this video for?
- What do you think about the length of this item?
- What did you think of the speaker or the presentation?
- What did you think to the technical standard?
- As a former student did you find this item of current interest?

Alumni were given the choice of four to five answers to choose an answer from.

There were also questions that requested written answers.

In addition there was an overall questionnaire to be filled in at the end. Eighteen respondents chose to fill that in. This was also designed to elicit each respondent's existing usage of podcasts and video casts. As can be seen from respondent's answers they are used to dealing with video and audio material and considerable number use podcasts. Thirteen of these respondents thought video casts were a good format for learning but four did not. This does seem to slightly contradict the overall positive response for the material.

The author is aware that four of the seven items for evaluation are entirely or partly his work. This was purely a resource issue. There is no evidence that the students were reluctant to objectively criticise the work as a result. It does remain possible that student responses were influenced by the author being someone known to them. Two other lecturers in the videos were known to students (Matheson and Taylor) and two were not (Gilligan and Steward).

In the first instance the alumni were asked to view the material to judge whether they felt it would have been useful had they had access to such audio-visual material when they were on the course. The responses were very positive.⁴ The most obvious question was how useful and I have produced a grid of the responses. As you can see nearly all responses for all material fell into the very useful or useful category.

Grid 1 – Question to alumni – Would this item have been useful to you while you were on the course?

| Video/podcast | respondents | Item length | Very useful | useful | Useful in parts | Not useful | No opinion |
|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------|-----------------|------------|------------|
| Gilligan – Investigative/Political | 21 | 30 mins | 10 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Steward - Music | 13 | 33mins | 5 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| Lashmar- Investigative | 16 | 45 mins | 7 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Taylor - Science | 8 | 30 mins | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Writing for Broadcast video | 16 | 10mins | 8 | 5 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 Way interview technique video | 11 | 11mins | 7 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Writing for Broadcast podcast | 8 | 10mins | 6 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

As can be seen 83% found the material either 'very useful' or 'useful'. Only 2% (two responses) found the material 'not useful' and only 1% (one response) had 'no opinion'.

Respondent 6 noted: *"As the guest speakers and staff lectures came from all different areas of journalism - it is useful in so far that it provides the students with an almost full picture of many types of journalism - giving them an insight into a variety of areas which they could focus on. Perhaps include a sport one too."*

Respondent 2 said: *"As many guest lectures as possible. I wanted to hear from people doing the job. Not only is it inspiring but it's an*

⁴ There are a set of appendixes available covering responses to all questionnaires.

excellent way to begin the contact building process - that's how I got work shadowing at Channel 4 news, for example."

It is important to recognise that the choice of the content for the survey has qualitative issues. Therefore the responses must be seen in that context. It is entirely likely that had the quality of the material been different the response percentages would have altered. The quality of the guest lecture was dictated by the lecturers available to the course in the two first two terms of 2008. The instruction videos and podcasts were based on a choice by the author of subjects that would benefit students. The author does feel they are typical of what could be produced by any university media staff.

Given the qualitative issue it did seem appropriate to also ask alumni whether they found the material personally interesting. Again the results were extremely positive. The level of enthusiasm was surprising given that many of the alumni are now working in the media.

Grid 2 – Question 7: As a former student did you find this item of current interest?

| Video/ podcast | respo ndent s | Very interestin g | interestin g | Interestin g in parts | Not interestin g | No opinio n |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Gilligan - guest | 21 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Steward -Music | 13 | 4 | 3 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Lashmar - Investiga tive | 16 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Taylor - Science | 8 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| W4B video | 16 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 |
| 2 Way video | 11 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| W4B podcast | 8 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

This suggests that 66% found the material either 'very interesting' or 'interesting'. Three responses (less than 3%) found the material 'not interesting' and one response declined to express an opinion.

The comment of Respondent 1 exemplifies the enthusiasm: *"I've really enjoyed watching these videos and listening to the podcasts. I've learnt more without a doubt, and they've consolidated learning as well as being further inspirational: it's nice to get 'journo boost' when out in the real world!"* Respondent 1 went on to say: *"They were all just really clear and to the point and a super useful learning tool. More please! And please let ex-students log in. thank you!"*

In a similar vein, Respondent 6 said: *"The interviews with both the staff and guest lectures are very engaging - when I was watching them I found them very inspiring and remembered some of the real reasons as to why I wanted to get into journalism. I believe these talks for the students provide encouragement and drive."*

The subject interest expressed seemed to centre on the hard news lectures (Gilligan and Lashmar), then Music and then Science. Again somewhat surprisingly alumni seemed to have found the instruction videos and podcasts and perhaps show that there is place for 'refresher' material in continuing professional development.

The comments strongly indicated that this was the type of material that they would have liked to have had available to them as students. The surveys for each of the individual items produced a great deal of response about the alumni's view about the quality of each item in terms of length, speaker, content and technical standard.

As might be expected in a profession based alumni, some did criticise technical aspects. No doubt they are required in their professional broadcast roles to produce material of a much higher standard than can be achieved on the limited facilities and resources that were available.

Unfortunately for a period of time during the survey there were technical problems with the sound which resulted in it intermittently cutting out on video after 10 minutes or so. Comments about this problem are to be found in the appendices. Fortunately technical staff worked hard and eventually overcame the problem.

Some respondents made a useful suggestion for course improvement. Respondent 1 said: *"I think it's REALLY important to spend some time*

talking to students about how to actually FIND news. Andrew Gilligan talked about how important it is to be able to come up with your own stories and dig news out, but at no point does he/the course really explain how this is done. Even when I was taking the course I found this to be an area covered in passing."

Respondent 7 said: *"I think the greatest need on the computer side of the course is for students to become learned in the systems they will be using in the work place.... e.g. Inews (used by Sky and many others) and ENPS (used by AP and others). Knowledge of this will give them an excellent head start and also a good understanding of how news works on a practical scale, and how it is all put together."* Many alumni clearly saw the material as an aid to revision but not a substitute for attending lectures. There was also a theme of extending VLE lectures to cover the more practical areas of law or editing programmes.

Respondent 14 said: *"Guest lectures are useful so you can refer back to them if you missed a point they made or you want to clarify something. Same for staff lectures - but I suspect, and I'm being cynical perhaps, that it allows people not to attend lectures. Illness is one thing but, frankly, if you can't be bothered to turn up for interesting guest speakers then you're probably not going dedicated or passionate enough to do the job very well anyway."*

The most interesting comments came from the final overall questionnaire and that is reproduced in an edited version here. (Full version in the appendices).

Answers to General Survey completed after watching/listening to material

1.) Names (redacted)

2.) Tick which of the following you would have found useful to have on the university intranet when you were a student

- Guest lectures:  12 (66.67 %)

- Staff lectures:  13 (72.22 %)

- Instruction videos/podcasts:  16 (88.89 %)

3.) What do you think this kind of material is useful for?

- Guest lectures were good to get the insiders' point of view, those in the industry who weren't teaching us. They brought everything to reality.

Staff lectures were good but often weren't accompanied by any extra material. That's why this extra audio/visual online material would be good,

The few instruction videos we had were good - they helped you focus on things in your own time outside the classes.
- The podcast are good for students, maybe not so much after.

The lectures are interesting and nice to refresh with and be inspired.
- Instructional videos for AVID and Final Cut (and to a lesser extent Audition) would have been useful - especially if they incorporated screen captures, etc.
- much easier to review and integrate knowledge when presented in this form, as it can also be saved, it is useful as a referral when looking back over work that you have done
- It'd be good for looking back over lectures you had already attended - particularly law, which you don't always get the first time, and for demonstrations.
- Learning in a slightly different way. I learn better when listening....in an environment where I can pause, relisten and relisten again. The instruction videos/podcasts were also of a more appropriate length than the guest/staff lectures.
- As well as refreshing one's memory in the run-up to exams and the like, the material would be useful to go back to as the year progresses to place it in the context of everything else that's been learnt/taught.
- Reinforcing the most important points about a given subject.

On-demand access to a range of lectures/instructions, for revision before exams.

Catching up with things missed because of absence.

The chance to get added value by experiencing presentations by high quality speakers, which maybe could not all be fitted in to the schedule during term.

- All the items that I've listened to on the learning space have reinforced my learning. I don't feel that the lectures and podcasts should be used as substitutes for being present at the actual lecture: being there and able to ask questions are essential. I also feel that the tight timetable and long day at Falmouth were crucial to the training. However, to be able to listen again compounds and so strengthens learning. One cannot always take full notes in lectures and so to these also enable you to check key facts. These were also of a nice length, perfect to encapsulate the key points.

These materials are also good for people who respond to the visual/audio better than the written (notes were always available on the learning space) and again, complement the notes on the LS.

4.) What material do you think would have helped you while you were on the course? Include any course elements you think would have lent themselves to video or audio supplementary material.

- I thought the course was excellent. I think having a speaker 'live' so you can ask questions is better than a recorded video.
- I remember in my exam not really being sure how to structure a two way so that is def helpful to see it.
- A podcast / video for media law would have been tremendously useful!
- All of the videos, podcast and online material, anything that can back up the theoretical work with reusable resources.
- Good and bad examples of TV and radio pieces and walkthroughs of software or writing techniques.
- I would say the step by step guides would have been very useful as a quick referral and refresh. I think a lot of the technical aspects of the course would also benefit from having an instruction guide on video and podcast. A round up of say avid, or working the desk would have been useful - instead of the written guides.
- I think all sections of the course would benefit, I think personally that Law for journalists would particularly benefit as the static info such as paperwork/handouts involved are daunting and difficult in their current format and this seems much more student friendly.
- The law lectures would have been useful in a shorter, summarised form.

Maybe a series of pieces akin to the 'writing for broadcast' one by Paul Lashmar, where you are taken through the process of doing a particular job, such as TV news magazine

producer, radio bulletin reader, location reporter - moment by moment, decision by decision, how you should approach the role from start to finish in an assignment.






- Law lectures would have been useful. A lot of information was imparted during these and be able to 'watch again' would have been wonderful.

One on scripting for TV would have been super useful as well as the talk on freelancing. In fact, dare I say it; I think all the lectures would be great on the intranet!

- Video and audio supplementary material like that displayed here would have been brilliant - to have the chance to have a tutorial outside the classroom as well as in.

Physical information sheets are also good because sometime you can't catch or take in everything said/shown to you.

5.) I listen to podcasts

- very often:  3 (16.67 %)
- often:  1 (5.56 %)
- occasionally:  9 (50.00 %)
- rarely:  3 (16.67 %)
- never:  1 (5.56 %)

Edit

10.) Any other comments?

- I thought the choice of guests for this was very good - although I would probably only watch them once. I think it's important to keep them on the intranet though for future students and then add more guests every time one comes to visit. Maybe you could also include a video on how to actually upload the podcasts and videos - as journalist have to also deal with the technical side of things more and more nowadays. Maybe get the students to also produce their own news pages for a mock radio station website and do a guide for that too. As again this is something we have to do in the newsroom on a daily basis.

I think having this type of facility on the intranet shows just how good the course in Falmouth is and that the staff are encouraging this format as it reflects the types of media (i.e. podcast and video cast) journalists use all the time.

- I think as a form of learning this is important, relevant specifically to the course and student friendly, it helps in retaining and understanding concepts and ideas much more, and as a supplement leads, I think to a better learning environment.

Conclusions on all survey material

The use of videos for showing guest lectures and instruction was very popular. The choice of guest speaker, subject area, quality of lecture delivery and technical quality all impacted on the appreciation of those who watched or listened. The evidence gathered for this survey suggests that video and audio material will become a vital supplement to HE teaching. Such material can provide a range of uses including inspiration, essay and dissertation material, career guidance, impressions of the wider industry, instruction and revision in a time-shift environment that suits the student.

Alumni clearly believe that videos and podcasts should not replace but supplement lectures, teaching and contact with tutors. The advantage of guest speaker videos is they allow for an accumulation of useful online material over a period of years in addition to the guest speakers made available to any one year of MA students.

What also emerged from this survey, as with other similar ones, was that podcasts are distinct and different to video casts as a delivery format. While online videos are easily accessed and tend to be watched in situ online, podcasts are used in a more varied way. The method of delivery of podcasts is important. They should be easy to download or even produced on a subscriber feed system (delivered to say, iTunes) as there is evidence that respondents like to have them to available anytime on their iPods or mobile phones. The research confirms the work of (Bennett 2006 and 2008).

One unexpected positive result from this exercise was the enthusiasm of the alumni to the material, although many are now seasoned professionals. Many found material inspiring and enjoyable. The exercise also shows the good will towards their alma mater of alumni.

Survey conclusions:

The results contribute to a growing body of evidence that data rich video content and podcasts are already useful supplementary methods of delivering key course material. They suggest video and audio content will become increasingly essential as the technology and VLE programming improves and as student expectations increase for the quality of course delivery. There appear to be parallels with changes effected with traditional media.

There appears to be parallels with changes effected with traditional media. Newspapers, TV and radio can no longer stand alone but must deliver across a range of multimedia platforms. Traditional media that do have not met these criteria are already falling by the wayside.

It is hard not to see the same happening in HE. Students increasingly expect multimedia delivery of which the ability to timeshift is vital. It is hard not to conclude that universities that do not keep pace with the technology will also fall behind in the competitive HE market. There were some principles for the production of video and audio content that could be derived from the survey answers:

- Guest lecture videos should be edited to 30 minutes or less. Alternatively broken up into sections.
- Automatic video recording without an operator is to be discouraged as it produces boring and poor quality video content
- Instruction videos should be a maximum of 10 minutes
- A linked handout is useful for instruction videos
- If possible videos broken up into clearly defined elements or chapters
- Good technical quality is vital to success
- Instruction videos that show the tutor's own professional logic when scripting are valued
- Podcasts should be easily downloadable onto mp4 devices or available on a subscription feed

The author believes that based on his own person practical experience and the literature in the area that enhanced VLE is going to be vital and key in the development of distance and blended learning. Lecturers can do a great

deal themselves especially with audio. But it will require a specific technical team with a dedicated studio and editing facilities to develop efficient data rich delivery.

Key point: Videos and podcasts will be an integral and important part of course delivery across HE in the future.

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