Student Generated Podcasts: Learning to Cascade rather than Create

Joseph Maguire, Susan Stuart and Steve Draper

April 24, 2009
Introduction

- Podcasts are popular, 125,000 in iTunes Podcast Directory.
- Initial barriers broken: recording, editing and distribution.
- Explosion in exploratory uses, e.g. education [1].
- Scope limited, main focus has been on experts and/or students in science and technology [2].
- Former Arts student, Gordon Brown released a podcast.
- No reason why a collection of digital natives, such as Arts students, couldn’t create a podcast [3].
- Challenge is content.

Definition
Digital content **syndicated** over the Internet that can be consumed at **anytime** in **anyplace**.
Education Rationale

- Critical rehearsal, re-expression or application of content.
- Learning by teaching [4]
- Deepen personal understanding
- Communication, in multiple formats.
Example
Student spends time crafting a high-quality video but submits it without an RSS feed or $0 \times 1 \times 3 \times 7 = 0$
The Study

- Third-year philosophy course, 24 students.
- Assessed exercise worth 25% of final module award.
- Six weeks to complete.
- Access to state of the art equipment but advised they could use their own.
- Six hours of one-to-one technical support.
- Submission includes: RSS feed, Video in MP4 format and Log report.
- Log report included several questions, some personal, some feedback and some aimed at extracting any technical or group difficulties.
- Log report asked students to produce a score for each group member, optional.
Performance of students was no better or worse than previous years. Interesting responses from log-report include:

(a) all students own a dedicated mobile phone and music player  
(b) majority perform poorly at basic digital tasks  
(c) majority of students enjoyed exercise

Interesting quotes from staff and students...

"Good, challenging. Very technical and for people who didn’t like technical things... quite hard”

Student 3
Conclusions

- Unclear what students found more challenging: technically creating a video or cascading content to an audience.
- Assessed exercise introduced **two** new elements for non-technical students: technical tools and cascading content that can be assessed in terms of pedagogical worth.
- Strong performance from students who completed a comparable exercise in a preceding module.
- Unique, unrepeated types of assessment lead to generally poor results.
- Given the employability-related learning aims of exercising communication skills and especially in multiple formats, then introducing more such exercises rather than dropping them would seem to be the way forward.
[DRAPER, S.W. & MAGUIRE, J., 2007]
Exploring podcasting as part of campus-based teaching

[LEE, M.J.W., MCLOUGHLIN, C. & CHAN, A., 2008]
Talk the talk: Learner-generated podcasts as catalysts for knowledge creation.

[PRENSKY, M., 2001]
Digital natives, digital immigrants.

[SPIRES, H. & MORRIS, G., 2008]
New Media Literacies, Student Generated Content, and the YouTube Aesthetic.