

Title	Digital literacy, employability and placements in SHES: understanding student's everyday experiences
Short Description	This study will explore the digital literacy skills, experiences and expectations of current SHES undergraduates. Digital literacy, for example using social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter effectively, is increasingly a career and employability skill. In this project, we aim to identify gaps in students' knowledge of digital media and create opportunities for enhancing student's digital experiences.
Principle Investigator (Supervisor)	Dr Sally Lloyd-Evans and Dr Steve Musson
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PI telephone	Internal 7293
Long Description	This study will explore the digital literacy skills, experiences and expectations of current SHES undergraduates. Digital literacy, for example using social media such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter effectively, is increasingly a career and employability skill. However, the majority of undergraduate students see these media as an extension of personal friendships and social networking. In this project, we aim to identify gaps in students' knowledge of digital media and create opportunities for enhancing student's digital experiences. This research will provide a timely insight into the current student experience in the Departments of Geography and Environmental Science, and Archaeology, and connect with the wider University of Reading agenda on improving digital literacy (www.reading.ac.uk/digitallyready) Specifically, we aim to: 1. Harness the experiences of newly returned placement students, to understand their experiences of digital and social media in the workplace; 2. Explore the relative merits of providing University-wide generic digital literacy training and subject-specific training in Schools and Departments; 3. Create baseline data on digital literacy skills in SHES, including qualitative information on the everyday experiences of students and staff; 4. Identify barriers and opportunities for enhancing student employability and satisfaction within the School and beyond.
Outcomes	The project team will produce a report that presents the project findings and makes recommendations for enhancing teaching and learning in digital literacy for undergraduates. The findings may also be disseminated via workshops, publications and presentations. The University's Digitally Ready Team, the Faculty of Science and SHES will use the report to formulate appropriate policy. The team will also share their experiences and findings on the Digitally Ready website via a blog.
Tasks	This multi-method pilot study will comprise of three main elements: i. Questionnaire surveys, to assess the level of digital literacy skills held by all current Part 2 Careers Students in SHES (approx. 200 students). This will provide benchmarking data on current engagement with range of digital media, as well as employability, employment and career development information. The survey will be based on similar work being undertaken elsewhere in the University to enable cross-campus comparisons; ii. Qualitative interviews with academic and support staff in SHES and key staff around the University (for example CPEC), to understand attitudes towards enhancing digital literacy; iii. Focus groups and in-depth interviews, with recent placement and work experience students, focusing on their experiences and reflections of digital literacy in different spaces of study and work. The placement student will be involved in preparation and delivery of the questionnaire survey; assisting with in-depth interviews and focus groups and analyzing survey and interview data. They will have the opportunity to contribute to the Digitally Ready blog, contribute to the writing of the final report and assist with the dissemination of key findings.
Skills required	Good verbal and written communication skills are essential, along with knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research techniques, data analysis and sound IT skills (MS Word, Excel). We will provide further training and support in these areas. An interest in digital technology and experience of using social media would be an advantage.
Skills developed	This placement provides valuable experience in project management and allows for the development of both qualitative and quantitative research skills and experience in data

	analysis. Verbal communication skills will be developed through the interaction with a range of students, administrators and academics and writing skills will be enhanced through the presentation of the report and a blog. In addition, the placement will provide an ideal opportunity for a student to develop his or her digital literacy skills and social media profile.
How to apply	Please send a covering letter (maximum one page) and CV (maximum two pages) to s.lloyd-evans@reading.ac.uk by 22nd March 2013.
Start Date	01/06/2013 00:00:00
End Date	01/11/2013 00:00:00
Hours of work	We require six weeks research assistance from a UROP student working part-time hours during the Summer term after their May/June exams, with further work during the summer vacation/beginning of the Autumn Term by arrangement
Place of Work	Department of Geography and Environmental Science. The project will be managed by Dr Sally Lloyd-Evans (SHES Placement Officer), while the Geography Degree Programme Director Dr Steve Musson will act as project advisor.
Access to facilities	
Inductor	
Progress review	
2nd supervisor	Dr Steve Musson (s.musson@reading.ac.uk 0118 378 7753)