

Workshop on Users, e-Research, and Web 2.0

18th and 19th January 2010

Oxford e-Research Centre Conference Room

With improved access to an increasingly mobile web 2.0 online environment, large numbers of users are creating content using a variety of tools, changing the ways in which members of communities interact, socialise, and collaborate with each other. The user centered, distributed nature of Web 2.0 technologies has implications for academic researchers as well as the general public, yet little is understood regarding how Web 2.0 and e-Research methodologies are changing the information environment, and how they are actively used.

The aim of this workshop is to highlight issues of use and users of web 2.0 and e-Research technologies. We aim to identify and discuss the main research areas that are becoming increasingly pertinent, while highlighting emergent issues regarding the use and users of web 2.0 technologies in both the academic and non-academic domains.

Monday 18th January

9.30 Registration and Coffee

10.00 Introduction

Mark Baker

Melissa Terras, Claire Warwick and Marina Jirotko

Session A

10.15 Paul Wouters

The Virtual Knowledge Studio for the Humanities and Social Sciences - VKS
Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

Interfacing and interaction in the social sciences and humanities

Abstract: The social sciences, as well as the humanities, represent increasingly important field to include in the design of new infrastructures for research because of their epistemic and social variety. All styles of research are represented in these areas. In this presentation I will discuss how research practices interface with research infrastructures, including social networking sites in the Web 2.0, in the development of new styles of thought and practice. I will base this presentation on the work developed at the Virtual Knowledge Studio. The Virtual Knowledge Studio for the Humanities and Social Sciences (KNAW <<http://www.knaw.nl/english/index.html>>) supports researchers in the humanities and social sciences in the Netherlands in the creation of new scholarly practices and in their reflection on e-research in relation to their fields. A core feature of the Virtual Knowledge Studio is the integration of design and analysis in a close cooperation between social scientists, humanities researchers, information technology experts and information scientists. This integrated approach provides insight in the way e-research can contribute to new research questions and methods. The VKS collaborates with the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Erasmus Studio KNAW <http://www.eur.nl/erasmusstudio> (in short: Erasmus Studio) based in Rotterdam and with Maastricht University in the Maastricht Virtual Knowledge Studio KNAW <http://www.fdcw.org/maastrichtvks/> based in Maastricht.

11.00 Mike Fulford

University of Reading

Introducing new (digital) technology into an archaeological field project: the VERA project reviewed.

Abstract: Over the last three years the JISC-funded VERA project, a collaboration between the University of Reading, UCL and the York Archaeological Trust, has experimented with various digital devices and methodologies, whose aim has been to speed the flow of information arising from the recording of the excavation of a complex (urban) archaeological site at Silchester, Hampshire into the project database (Integrated Archaeological Database [=IADB]). Before 2007 all site records - plan, context, finds and environmental records - had been created using conventional pen and pencil. These records were subsequently digitised between excavation seasons and entered on the IADB. Only once that process had been completed was it possible to begin the analysis of stratigraphic and spatial relationships of the individual contexts, the essential foundations of the publication process. Trials have included the use of a variety of handheld devices, among which digital pens have been the most widely used, as well as enhanced methodologies of capturing 2D plan information using GPS. The context is the University archaeological field school which runs for a 6-week period each summer. Among the challenges have been introducing the new technology to different audiences of students each year as well as to different site staff. The development of the project from year to year has been informed by a study of the users' reaction to their use of the new devices.

11.45 Coffee Break

12.00 Lucy Power and Eric Meyer

Oxford Internet Institute

Sharing ideas and sharing data: Researchers and Web 2.0

Abstract: In this presentation, two case studies will be used to illustrate the types of incentives and barrier researchers face when deciding to share ideas and data using Web 2.0 tools and resources. The first case, Friendfeed, is a tool used by life scientists to disseminate, filter and discuss research and professional issues and ideas. The second case is about geospatial map sharing, early efforts to share maps that were hindered by legal barriers, and recent successful efforts to change the law in a way that will enable much more sharing. In both of these cases, researchers had a number of similar incentives to share, but also barriers to doing so. Among the incentives were a desire for openness in science, the benefits of networks, advantages of scale, and the ability to share the effort it takes to filter complex ideas and data. Barriers to sharing, however, include cultural differences among fields and institutions, institutional and individual concerns about protecting intellectual property, and the challenge of changing research behaviours. In both cases, technological limitations were not a particular barrier to sharing, unlike some common perceptions of the challenges of engaging researchers with technology.

12.45 Lunch

2.00 Ian Rowlands

Department of Information Studies, University College London

Online reading and 'power browsing': some interesting questions for e-Research

Abstract: In a world where huge investments have been made in digital infrastructure and services, not least in e-Research, a fundamental question has gone largely unspoken: How do people actually read online, and what are the implications for information system design and use? A recent article (14 August 2009) suggests that we may be designing systems that encourage a highly strategic form of information seeking behaviour, the primary aim of which is to avoid reading:

"Scientists have always strived to avoid unnecessary reading. Like all researchers, they use indexing and citations as indicators of relevance, abstracts and literature reviews as surrogates for full papers,

and social networks of colleagues and postgraduate students as personal alerting services. The aim is to move rapidly through the literature to assess and exploit content with as little actual reading as possible. As indexing, recommending, and navigation has become more sophisticated in the online environment, these strategic reading practices have intensified [1]" This paper will reflect on that statement and assess some of the evidence from recent studies at UCL that seem to add weight to this notion.

1] Allen H. Renear and Carole L. Palmer, Strategic reading, ontologies, and the future of scientific publishing, *Science*, 14 August 2009, pp 828-332.

2.45 Shirley Williams, Sarah Fleming and Pat Parslow

University of Reading

Digital Identity and Reputation

Abstract: The This Is Me project (<http://thisisme.reading.ac.uk/>) has developed a collection of resources that can be used to help probe and understand the concept of Digital Identity. This Is Me was originally an Eduserv-funded project based at the University of Reading, which aimed to help people learn about their Digital Identities by producing and testing learning materials for use by individuals and groups. We are now working with the Centre for Career Management Skills (CCMS) to develop material to help individuals with career management.

We use the term 'Digital Identity' to describe the persona an individual presents across all the digital communities in which he or she is represented. Digital Identity is not only about the explicit information, but also the implicit which leads to concepts such as online reputation. Your Digital Identity as perceived by other people is made up of material that you put online yourself (for example a post to a forum), but it also is made up of material other people put there related to you (for example a comment on your post or a mention of you by name). In this session we provide more details of what a Digital Identity is, particularly in relationship to academia, and individuals' experiences of their perception of their own and others' Digital Identities.

3.30 Coffee Break

3.45 Claire Ross, Melissa Terras and Claire Warwick

Department of Information Studies, University College London

“Just Remembered I have binary M&M’s. Oh joy of Joy’s.” Academics Twittering on: Pointless babble or enabled Backchannel?

Abstract: Micro-blogging, a variant of a blogging which allows users to quickly post short updates to websites such as twitter.com, has quickly gained a lot of interest in the Web 2.0 community and it is beginning to emerge as a dominant form of information interchange and interaction for academic communities. To date, few studies have been undertaken to make explicit how such technologies are used by and can benefit scholars. Micro-blogging, with special emphasis on [Twitter.com](http://twitter.com)¹, the most well known micro-blogging service, is increasingly used as a means of extending commentary and discussion during academic conferences. This digital “backchannel” communication (non-verbal, real-time, communication which does not interrupt a presenter or event, Ynge 1970) is becoming more prevalent at academic conferences, in educational use, and in organizational settings. Frameworks for understanding the role and use of digital backchannel communication, such as that provided by Twitter, in enabling a participatory conference culture are therefore required. This paper considers the use of Twitter as a digital backchannel by the Digital Humanities community, taking as its focus postings to Twitter during three different international 2009 conferences. This paper poses the following question: does the use of a Twitter enabled backchannel enhance the conference

¹ Twitter was created by a San Francisco based privately funded startup and launched publicly in August 2006. <http://twitter.com/about>

experience, collaboration and the co-construction of knowledge, or is it a disruptive, disparaging and a inconsequential tool full of 'pointless babble'?

4.30. Sara de Freitas

Serious Games Institute, Coventry

The power of immersive experiences: using serious games and virtual worlds to enrich learning, social interactions and create new spaces.

The presentation will outline trends in serious games and virtual worlds, present a notion of immersive learning experiences and demonstrate case studies from current research being undertaken at the Serious Games Institute, with examples from practice. The presentation will question whether immersive experiences are indeed changing how we learn and the spaces that we inhabit.

5.15 finish

7.00 Dinner

19th January

9.30 Coffee

10.00 Annamaria Carusi and Marina Jirotko

Oxford e-Research Centre

Innovative Media for a Digital Economy Use and Usability Challenges

Abstract: Increasing use of social media of all kinds is creating a number of new opportunities in the digital economy. These media include social networking systems, services and platforms for creating, sharing, accessing and reusing content, and new ways of inter-linking digital, embedded and mobile technologies. The modes of communication, interaction and exchange that are facilitated or enabled through these media are in many cases extensions of models found in other media; but in many cases they are not. It is clear that although highly economically significant, these new media are not accounted for entirely from models drawn from economics, trading and finance. Social networking and related technologies are complex systems with interdependencies between technology, social practice, policy, material infrastructures and more, and an understanding of their use and usability challenges requires a consideration of socio-philosophical-legal issues relating to reputation, ownership, identity and trust.

10.45 Gary Graham

Manchester Business School

Web 2.0 and the creation of local news clusters

Abstract: At the heart of the Digital Britain report is the commitment to provide a 'free, independent and active press', and the key to this is the 'civic function' played by local journalism. Local news media is important to a functioning democracy, making government accountable to its electorate while offering community plurality. The guardian of local interests has historically been the press, but its survival is terminally undermined by the internet's threat to classified property, motors and job advertising compounded by recession and reduced public sector spending. As the existing commercial model of local news media organization fails thereby putting the basis of news gathering under acute strain, the ability of local news media to sustain a plurality of community voices will inevitably suffer. What is the threat? Is it (i) the risk of loss of competition to the BBC; (ii) a further

undermining of the democratic infrastructure; (iii) a weakening of local news media production and distribution; (iv) new social media and alternative platforms or a combination of all of these? These questions will be addressed during this workshop.

While Digital Britain's goal is widely agreed for local news media, its facilitation is frustratingly opaque. Rather than outlining detailed plans to change the current regional format, it asks for a co-ordinated response from government, business and citizens - including local ownership, community media, and non-profit organizations - on how to restructure news output on a local level. Hyper local news provision it argues will take hold among consumers given the right culture. I will present details of my own research in the US which revealed that in cities such as San Diego and Raleigh (North Carolina) volunteer journalists are already being trained by the Knight Foundation to become coordinators of user generated content. This workshop will go on to investigate the restructuring of the local news media 'ecosystem' and its transformation towards a multimedia 'news cluster' or 'bureau' which fuses together local and regional TV, newspapers, community radio, citizen journalism, blogging and community involvement into an online digital format.

The sustainability of business models, hyper-local news provision, community democracy, the societal watchdog, coordination of user generated content, new types of news provision, co-locating resources and training, cross media ownership and control are some of the issues touched upon throughout the workshop to stimulate participation and debate.

11.30 George K. Thiruvathukal

Associate Professor of Computer Science / Co-Director, Center for Textual Studies and Digital Humanities, Loyola University Chicago

Computing Now (CN) is a relatively new initiative of the IEEE Computer Society and celebrated its first birthday in the summer of 2009. Per our web page, Computing Now "is your one-stop source for new print and online content from the IEEE Computer Society's 13 peer-reviewed magazines, as well as selections from our journals and conference proceedings...CN also brings you tech news, book reviews, calls for papers from Computer Society magazines and journals, and podcasts and videos." In this talk, I will describe the efforts being undertaken by Computing Now to address matters of usability and engage users, in particular, members of the IEEE Computer Society. I'll address our efforts to engage users through a variety of mechanisms, including cross-cutting themes (addressing hot topics), social networking, and blogging and take a candid look at the current impact of these initiatives. I'll present the challenges that lie ahead for our efforts to truly flourish, including the critical need to bring content to users in whatever delivery mechanism best suits their needs (e.g. demand-driven publishing, e-Books) and how even modest adoption of emerging semantic web notions could play a key role in addressing these goals. I'll conclude with a discussion of how e-Research needs to consider usability not purely in terms of the academic tradition of HCI (which focuses largely on CS, psychology/sociology/cognitive science, and design) but in terms of other pragmatic challenges (business realities, technical expertise/support, etc.), without which true usability and sustainability cannot be attained. Time permitting, I'll address how usability is a critical component of access/preservation of knowledge, which is a topic of importance in digital archives and textual scholarship projects and work I'm performing as part of my work in our new center for digital humanities.

12.15 Meg Pickard

Meg Pickard, Head of Social Media Development, Guardian News & Media

Content, Communities & Collaboration: How GNM is making media social

The Guardian has had an online presence for over ten years, and is widely viewed as one of the most forward-thinking, innovative news organisations both on and offline. Over the years, we've used talkboards, blogs, podcasts and social media with interesting, effective and sometimes surprising results. I'm going to talk about some of the (editorial, organisational and technical) techniques and technologies, which are enabling a more mutualised approach

to media consumption, curation and distribution. I'll also talk about some of our thinking about user experience and engagement, and how that influences what - and how, and where - we create and publish content.

Bio

Meg Pickard is the Head of Social Media Development for Guardian News & Media, responsible for developing and supporting existing and new social web strategy and interactive experiences. She comes from a background in social anthropology and in the mid-nineties conducted ethnographic fieldwork into community participation and cultural identity first in Bolivia and subsequently online. Since then, she has worked in New Media including a long stint at AOL, plus consulting roles with a range of small startups, global brands and NGOs. Meg's particular areas of interest are community engagement and the emergence of new forms of collaborative and participatory media, which are inspired by her ongoing curiosity about the cultural, social and psychological aspects of online interaction plus an enduring personal passion for publishing and participating online. She describes herself as a creative geek, is one of the longest-running bloggers in the UK and lives in London and online.

1.00 Lunch

1.30 Web 2.0 Slam

2.30 Coffee

3.00 Discussion: Areas of Research in Use and Users of Web 2.0 and e-Research

4.00 Close