

Application form

Workshop attended

Title: Use of Social Media in Science and Technology Learning and Teaching

Your details

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Project proposal

Title: **Developing Podcasts To Assist Students With The Production Of A Professional Online Presence**

The project involves the development of a series of eight podcasts for students. The podcasts will be promoted directly within Birmingham City University and used in the Professional Practice 2 module on the BSc Computer Science, BSc Business Information Technology and BSc Information Communications Technology courses. They will also be made available for colleagues within the wider university and at other Higher Education Institutions to use with their students.

It is essential that students now have their own Professional Presence on the web that tells other people about them. When students come to apply for jobs, employers often search for students online. In disciplines such as Computing, students are expected to provide urls directly on their application forms. Many students do not consider the implications of an online Professional Presence being missing, being negative in tone, or not accurately selling what the student can do beyond the pages of a CV. A Professional Presence may be as simple as a LinkedIn profile, but generally a web site with portfolio elements and a set of interlinked social media profiles would be recommended.

The project builds upon a set of eight PowerPoint presentations created as part of a previous HEA workshop (Enhancing The Employability Of Computing Students Through An Online Professional Presence) as well as existing teaching practices used at Birmingham City University:
<http://www.bcu.ac.uk/tee/events/previous-events/employability-workshop>

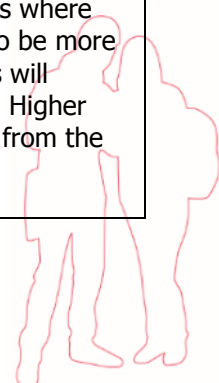
The intention is to repurpose the existing materials to provide the structure for the eight podcasts. Some reorganisation of the presentations will be required to make these work in a manner suitable for the audio medium. The eight topic covered are shown in Table 1.

1 - Overview	5 - Video
2 - Preparation	6 - Web Sites
3 - LinkedIn	7 - Promotion
4 - Facebook	8 - Advanced

Table 1 – Proposed Topics To Be Covered In The Podcasts

The intention of using podcasts is to make the material available for provision to universities where staff themselves are not savvy about website production and social media use. This will also be more suitable for students to prefer the audio style of learning. It is also hoped that the podcasts will promote the available of the wider training resources, which are available for free use at all Higher Education Institutions, and these will be further promoted when disseminating the findings from the production of the podcasts.

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Alignment with the workshop

The proposed project aligns clearly with the topic of social media from the workshop.

The teaching and learning resources being developed use the podcast form of social media, which was promoted heavily during the workshop. The overarching topic on which the resources are being produced is also social media, since using sites such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn successfully is one of the main parts of establishing a Professional Presence.

Additionally, one of the aims of the workshop was to encourage delegates to explore the use of new social media technologies that they had not explored before. I have no previous experience of delivering podcasts, so this funding will allow me to research and develop that field, and to provide details of my own amended practice.

How will your project help embed learning technologies?

The area of creating an online Professional Presence is not one that is yet widely taught within UK higher education, but it is one which can lead to immediate interest and change to practices. Since many students already use social media extensively, this is an area which they find engaging.

The project is learning technology based, since it is set of learning resources that are being produced using a new type of technology. Podcasts are accessible to students, many of whom are continually listening to information, whether during travel, at home, or just between classes. The use of this technology is intended to help students to take in this valuable information.

Within my own practice, I have no previous experience of developing podcasts. This requires my own research of the most suitable tools to use and the best methods to present the. It also requires the development of "hands on" experience so that I can help other academics who are thinking of using podcasts. Thinking towards the longer-term, it is hoped that, if a method of producing podcasts quickly whilst also maintaining quality can be developed, it may be possible for me to provide additional podcast teaching for other subjects.

How could your project help promote skills and practices among colleagues and students? [200 words]

The training, in the form of podcasts, will be made available directly for students. This will enable them to develop their own Professional Presences. It is hoped that colleagues will also note the availability of these resources directly to their students.

The availability of the resources will also be widely advertised using my own social media channels and blog, and it is anticipated that the HEA will also be able to promote these. I intend to note the availability of both these resources, as well as the initial set of teaching materials during presentations and I will be able to present about the experiences of producing the podcasts at other HEA events.

My experience of teaching this material to my own students is that it is timely, and that they find the use of social media within teaching engaging. By considering and improving their own Professional Presence, students can be expected to be more able to demonstrate their own readiness for employability, which will ultimately help to get more students into more appropriate career positions.

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Funding requested: £500

Justification for the funding

The payment for this is intended as a contribution towards the time release needed to develop podcasting experience and to produce and promote the podcasts.

Some of the funding will also be set aside to allow for attendance at the cluster event. It is anticipated that this will most likely take the form of a presentation at the 2014 HEA STEM Conference, although this will depend on the preferred dissemination methods once these are made available.

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