

# EVALUATING COLLABORATIVE VIDEO PROJECTS

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## ABSTRACT

This workshop explored the use of media wikis, blogging and podcasting as a tool for collaborative creativity in the classroom. During this workshop participants were encouraged to contribute to a collaborative environment by wiki entries, making blog entries. Participants also created podcasts and post them to the collaborative environment.

## WIKIS

A wiki is a collection of web pages designed to enable anyone who accesses it to contribute or modify content. (Definition from Wikipedia 2008)



The wiki environment used at CP3 can be found at: [www.digitalcreator.org/groups/cp3](http://www.digitalcreator.org/groups/cp3)

The word wiki is derived from the Hawaiian word wiki wiki that means quickly, meaning that web pages can be created quickly as a collaborative enterprise. Perhaps the most famous wiki is, of course, Wikipedia the collaborative encyclopaedia. Not all wikis have to be on the same scale as wikipedia and they are put to many uses in many organisations as a collaborative means of working.

In an educational context the power of a wiki is that it can be used by students to collaborate on a range of projects that include:

- joint planning of a project by a group of students that enables a tutor to see who has contributed what to the project
- collaborative publishing of a project to include a variety of media and engenders a sense of joint ownership
- a wiki also enables students to have a platform for the evaluation of their work by peers

One of the strengths of a wiki is that all contributions made to the wiki are logged and it is relatively easy to see which student has contributed what and when.

However consideration must be given to the way a wiki is developed in an educational context to protect the privacy and safety of students. There are a number of safe environments for wikis and most reputable learning platforms offer an education institution options for the implementation of wikis.



**Wikis are an excellent tool for students to collaboratively plan, publish and evaluate digital projects**

### BLOGS

A blog (an abridgement of the term web log) is a website, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

(Definition from Wikipedia 2008)



Most people are aware of blogs as a way of recording and publishing digitally an individual's thoughts and actions over a period of time, however given some thought, blogs can be applied to digital projects that students undertake collaboratively. One of the major difficulties a tutor has is assessing individual contributions to group projects and having insight into the processes undertaken by students whilst working together on a project.

A collaborative blog that uses a variety of media can be a great way for students to tell the story of their progress through to the final production of their finished product.

Consideration should be given to the way blogs are set up in educational institutions as some of the publicly available blogging services might not be suitably secure for students to blog safely. There are a number of safe environments for blogging and most reputable learning platforms offer an education institution options for the implementation of blogging for students.

### PODCASTING

A podcast is a series of digital-media files which are distributed over the internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and computers.

(Definition from Wikipedia 2008)



Podcasting – which is in effect audio blogging is a technology that allows organisations and individuals to deliver multimedia content to an audience on a regular basis with little or no effort on the part of a user. The user simply subscribes to a podcast feed and the content is downloaded to the user's computer when a new podcast episode/programme is available. This podcast can then be played in a computer media player of the user's choice, such as iTunes, or synchronised with the users portable music player, such as an iPod. This means that the user does not have to go and look for information and is not tied into accessing media at specified times.

The term podcasting arose from the amalgamation of two words, iPod and broadcasting because it was believed by the early pioneers of this technology that the ubiquitous iPod was an ideal device to listen to podcasts on. It should be pointed out that it is not necessary to listen to a standard podcast on an iPod as other MP3 players can do this too.

A simple analogy for the difference between podcasting and traditional web-based media delivery would be the way different people purchase magazines that interest them. Say I am interested in gardening I could go to my local newsagent or bookshop and look through the shelves and then find a magazine I like the look of. When I have found the gardening magazine I want I can purchase it and take it home to read. Of course I could subscribe to the gardening magazine and get it sent to my home each month for me to read whenever I want. Sometimes I receive my subscription copy of the magazine before it hits the shelves in the shops. This way there is no effort on my behalf and the magazine company is happy because they are making a regular sale.

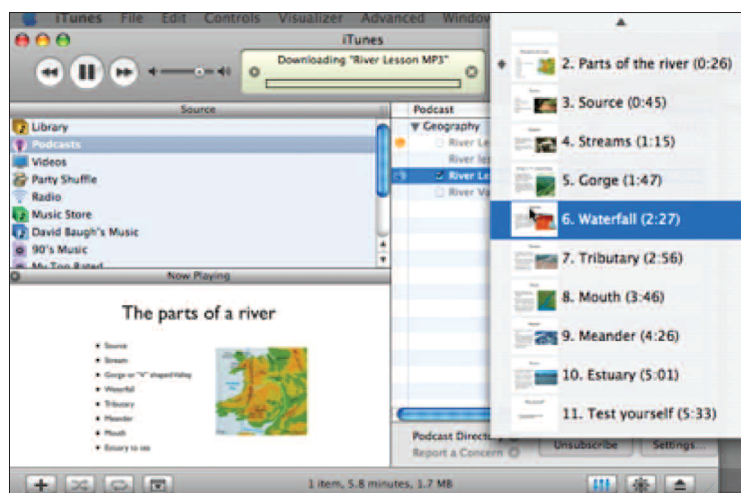
From a podcasting perspective the equivalent of the shopper buying a magazine from a newsagent is a user going onto the internet to find an audio article that interests them and either listening to it in situ via a media player or downloading it. A podcast subscriber uses a programme like iTunes to find a podcast that interests them and then they subscribe to it (usually free of charge). This podcast will then continue to flow to the subscriber's computer and music player each time there is a new episode of the podcast for the subscriber to enjoy wherever and whenever they choose.

Unlike magazine subscriptions the vast majority of podcasts are free but there are some that are via a paid for service. The quality of some podcasts is questionable but others are very professional – especially those provided by public service radio channels such as the BBC. To find a podcast you can use the iTunes podcasting directory that lists thousands of different podcasts. Subscribers rate these so you can get an idea about the quality of different podcasts. There are over 1000 (and increasing daily) educational podcasts available at the time of writing and some of these are interesting to listen to but as yet do not have the educational content that would be really useful in schools.

Although podcasting is usually associated with audio files it is possible to podcast PDFs or movies so that they can be viewed via iTunes and in the case of movies on an iPod.

There are two levels of audio podcast:

- a simple audio feed similar to a radio programme such as is available from the BBC now. This could be played back in any suitable media player, or an MP3 player like an iPod. This could be recorded using Audacity or GarageBand.
- an enhanced podcast that allows a user to see synchronised still images whilst hearing the audio, viewing video clips or following URL hyperlinks related to the audio. This type of podcast would use iTunes or an iPod to take advantage of these advanced features and be produced using GarageBand.



*A Podcast in iTunes showing chapters*

### SO WHAT IS THE EDUCATION POTENTIAL?

So how can this be used in education? Just think how useful it would be to get audio files directly to students' iPods or computers without having to rely on them to go and get the information.

These audio files could take different forms:

- texts that would have been read in the past
- a teacher's commentary on a text that the pupils are studying
- foreign language dialogues and vocabulary
- recorded lectures
- music to be studied
- interviews with experts
- podcasts from other schools
- public service broadcasts delivered through the podcast medium

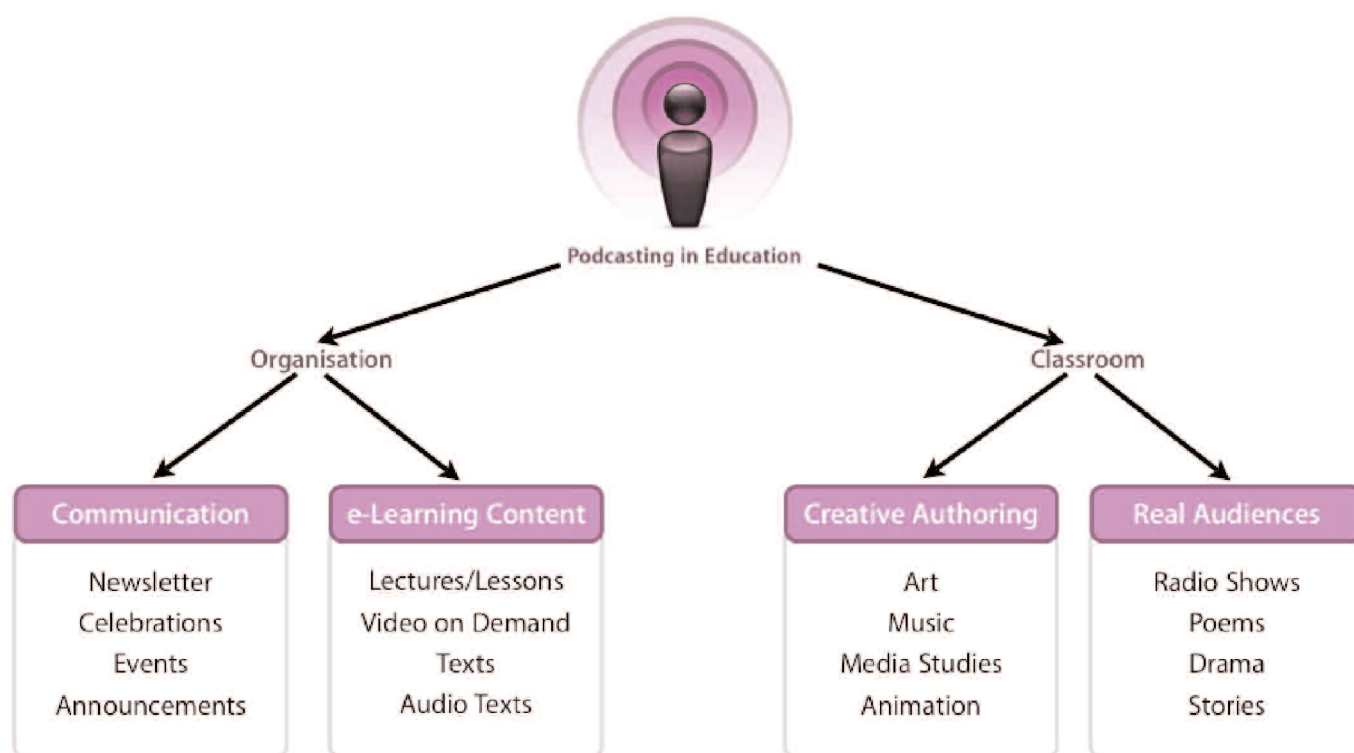
In addition to audio files other material can be delivered in the same way such as video and PDF files. With this in mind it would be possible to deliver a large amount of course material through the medium of podcasting.

From the creative point of view there then becomes a real point in students recording their own podcasts as they know that they will have a real web audience. Pupils could podcast:

- their own radio programmes
- guides to local areas (podguides)
- digital stories
- documentaries including interviews

These pupils created podcasts are really effective if the podcast file is enhanced with the use of imagery, supporting text and hyperlinks to web material.

One of the perennial issues with podcasting is that delivery methods are simple for users to publish with and institutions to manage but any good learning environment should enable podcasting with ease.



David Baugh is a primary trained teacher with classroom experience teaching students aged 5–18. Until 2001 he was a Teacher and ICT Coordinator at Ysgol Frongoch School in Denbigh. He is now the Advisor for ICT in Denbighshire LA with responsibility for all aspects of ICT and eLearning in sixty-five schools. David Baugh has been an Apple Distinguished Educator for eight years and was the winner of the Teaching Awards Creative use of ICT in 2000 and BECTA's ICT in Practice awards in 2001. David has an interest in the development of creativity in education especially with reference to its relevance to ICT. This interest has led to long-term investigations into the use and best practice of Digital Video and multimedia in education and its role in the creative learning process.

David Baugh set up the DV in Education ([www.dvined.org.uk](http://www.dvined.org.uk)) and the iPod in Education ([www.ipodined.org](http://www.ipodined.org)) websites visited by over 50,000 people a week. He has developed many online courses used by over 700 teachers. Most recently David has authored and developed the Digital Cre8or Award which is a Level 2 qualification equivalent to the ECDL that allows students and teachers to get accreditation for the creative use of digital media ([www.bcs.org/cre8or](http://www.bcs.org/cre8or)).