HIGHER EDUCATION *hefce*
FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND

Teamwork

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Partnership in the delivery of a live brief: reflections on impact

Warts and all…

bucks
new university
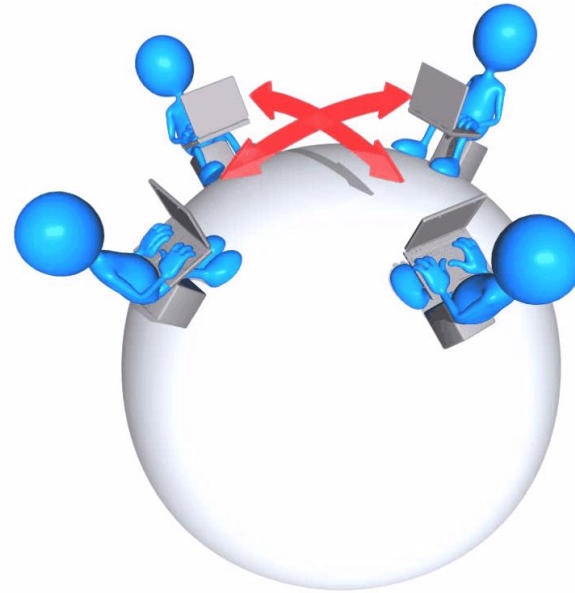
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Bucks New University
HEFCE Catalyst Call A

Partnership

'…is fundamentally about a relationship in which ***all involved*** – students, academics, professional services staff, senior managers, students' unions and so on – are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together. ***Partnership is essentially a process of engagement, not a product.*** It is a way of doing things, rather than an outcome in itself.

A LIVE BRIEF – the *Vehicle* for Partnership

- **REAL (*not simulated*):** Wycombe District Council required a location-sensitive 'Heritage Trail App' to interpret WW1 sites near the city centre

- **PARTNERSHIP LEVELS:**
    - co-work between students and staff, co-research and co-publication;
    - with Wycombe District Council and other stakeholders (historical societies and schools);
    - across subject areas
    - wider notion of partnership to enhance University relationships with the stakeholders, society, locality, sectors and key professions

- **'LIGHT TOUCH':**
    - Can we more efficiently exploit limited resources, use existing modules/teaching vehicles?
    - If so, might this avoid over 'engineering' a partnership experience

- **CROSS DISCIPLINARY:** two subject areas –
    - technical/mobile development (L6 computing students) and content creation (L4 creative advertising students).
    - Intention is to refine curricula to enhance vocationally relevant collaborative skills.

- **TEAM-BASED:** to enhance problem solving, critical thinking, management, decision-making and negotiation skills

A LIVE BRIEF – the *Process* for Partnership

- **REFLECTIVE:**
  - Debriefs and video diaries at individual, team and process levels.
  - A vehicle to involve students in the development of future cross-disciplinary modules.
- **ETHICAL:**
  - beyond consent … participation in research and directing the development of the learning experience.
- **STUDENT AS PARTNERS:**
  - Students planned, managed and executed projects.
- **RESEARCH BASED:**
  - Students involved in evaluation and disseminating live-brief experiences
  - Potential for authorship and ownership – e.g. by reporting involvement and findings as LinkedIn projects
- **LEARNING GAIN:**
  - we know this has taken place … but what are the dimensions and measures for LG surrounding the live-brief – we're still uncertain!?
- **REWARDS:**
  - Opportunity for cohort to 'publish'
  - 'winning' team paid to develop to deployable standard under the supervision of two project management professionals – one technical and one content specialist
- **Above all … TIME CONSTRAINED!:**
  - Deadlines throughout – app to go live by 31 July

Time stays long enough for anyone who will use it

Heritage Walk App - The Brief

- **Location Based Notifications** – Notifications when the user is within range of a predefined location.

- **Walking Trail** – The application should guide users around a route.

- **Multi Platform** – The app should be accessible on any device.

Working in partnership with:

- **Student**
- Communication within computing class for project updates and help with the technical side.
- Communication/ organisation with the Creative advertising students.

- **Staff**
- Discussion on how to deal with the project in an achievable way and what technology to use.
- Limiting the scope of the project to make the project more realistic to complete.
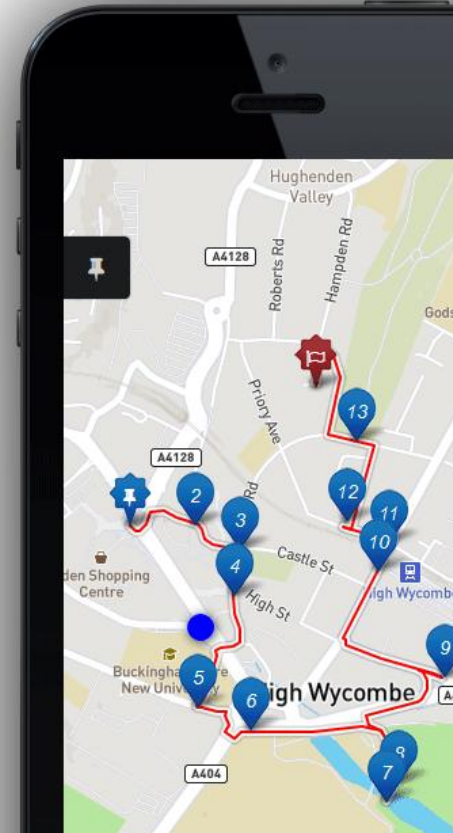
Being in communication throughout the project so we can make sure the App and the content still fit together nicely.

- WhatsApp
- Facebook Messenger
- Asana
- Yammer
- Meetings

Potential Issues

Communication tends to fade off as the project progresses as each team is working on their own stuff and it's hard to reconnect.

Communication lost or seen slowly if there are too many avenues.

Finding a balance between managing expectations to reduce excessive workload as well as making the work challenging and aspiring.

Potential Solution

Move all important communication to a single service where it is easy to see when and what people from both teams have said, all in one place. This would make communication between both students and staff more straightforward.

Findings … so far …

- Varying levels of **engagement/motivation** against required participation

- Appreciated the **'natural' approach of working** with live briefs

- Partnerships - inter and intra:
  some good partnerships between students and academics
  focus group sessions seem to suggest the **requirement to engender improved collaboration within groups**
  analysis ongoing to assess feedback on client partnership

- Safety and security in managing communication and delivery:
  working against university policy (e.g. Assignments must be in Blackboard)

- *"Great to build something … the best module so far …"* **vs** *"Not*

Learning Gain

HEFCE: 'an *attempt* to measure the improvement in knowledge, skills, work-readiness and personal development made by students during their time spent in higher education'

Partnership in the Delivery of a Live Brief