

Progress Report for CETLD Projects (Interim Report)

Re-inscriptions: Text to Object

An investigation of the use of ICT in the reproduction of historical texts, including archival materials, in museum contexts.

I. Overview of Project

Work towards the completion of Re-inscriptions has been progressing steadily and in line with the agreed terms of the award. Prototypes as defined in the outcomes have been created (see below), they require editing and hosting on relevant web pages but exist as files that have been sent to individual student/tutor evaluators. Thus evaluation is on-going and semi-structured questionnaires on reading/looking/listening practices is due to be completed in the week beginning 27th May 2009.

2. Aims and Objectives

There has been no change to the aims and objectives.

3. Targets

- i. Selection of objects (5 to 8) from collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (September-October 2008)
- ii. Selection of texts (10-15) relevant to those objects (September-October 2008)
- iii. Experimentation with reproduction and re-presentation of material identified in (ii) as audio files for mp3 players/ipods, on PDAs and in various analogue or 'hard copy' forms (November 2008-February 2009)
- iv. Development of successful experiments identified at iii as prototypes (February-April 2009)

The above targets have been met:

The following selections have been made:

Objects:

Ardabil Carpet
RCP2 Chair, Jane Attfield, 1992
Stereoscopic views, Delamotte, 1954
Homemaker Tableware, 1957-1968
Never Mind the Bollocks, Jamie Reid, 1977

Texts

K. Marx, *Capital*, 1867
N. Klein, *No Logo*, 2000
H. Gavron, *The Captive Housewife*, 1968
A. Oakley, *The Housewife*, 1974
V. Papanek, *Design for the Real World*, 1972
W. Whewell, 'The General Bearing of the Great Exhibition on the Progress of Art and Science' *Lectures on the Results of the Great Exhibition of 1851*, 1852
Gracchus. 'Last Words on the Exhibition' 12 October 1851, *Reynolds Newspaper*
Select Committee on Arts and Manufactures, 1836
G. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 1967
M. Bookman, *Towards and Ecological Society*, 1975

Five podcasts have been made, all of which require fine editing for sound quality. I anticipate a further 10 podcasts will be made in period April 2009 to June 2009.

4. Project Outputs

The key project outcome, the transformation of archive or primary text into spoken word, is underway. Photography towards the site specific installation, which may take the form of a series of small books, is complete.

5. Project Outcomes

The work towards the creation of prototypes is well underway as is the compilation of research findings that will contribute towards a scholarly article. Evaluation process needs to be completed.

6. Stakeholders

V&A: the collaboration with Rebecca Reynolds, HE Officer, has proved to be stimulating academically and very useful in terms of informing the technical aspects of the project.

University of Brighton: informal student feedback so far has reflected upon the pleasure in being asked for commentary but feelings of lack of expertise in judging the different learning platforms. Staff have made suggestions about selections of objects and considered ways of using podcasting in their teaching.

7. Risk Analysis

Nothing to report.

8. Intellectual Property Rights

I have followed advice from VRU at the University of Brighton on digital rights and have selected out of copyright material or passages of the permitted length.

9. Project Management

Nicola Keith, technician with sound technology expertise, has been unable to work on the project due to illness. Her role was to support the creation of podcasts. Louise Purbrick, with help from Media Services at Grand Parade in Brighton has undertaken the recording and will seek further advice from Rebecca Reynolds regarding editing. I have followed Rebecca's work and considered issues of listening time that she raises in the selection of texts.

10. Budget

Expenditure so far as supported teaching replacement and travel to London. The project is within its budget.

12. Evaluation

Year 1 students following a unit entitled Defining Practices in the Art and Design History programme have undertaken an initial evaluation of which the crucial issue of the importance of 'context' in the presentation of historical texts emerged. Further evaluations are planned for May (semi-structured questionnaires) and June (listening in museum settings).

13. Dissemination Plan

The main dissemination milestone was the 4th March 2008 CETLD seminar. The project has also been introduced and discussed with Year 1 BA (Hons) students at Brighton following degree studies in History of Design, History of Decorative Arts, Museum and Heritage Studies, Fashion and Dress History. These students have listening to one podcast in a lecture setting.

14. Unexpected findings

As the Re-inscriptions project begun the process of experimenting with the creation of podcasts a series of important issues about the practice of reading has emerged. I have been considering the ways in which information and communication technologies may or, indeed, may not encourage the kinds of sustained reading as intellectual or imaginative pursuit rather than simply for information. It is the former that plays a key role in developing critical practice of students, university level or otherwise. The question of reading is often at the forefront of teaching practice, however, creating podcasts also raised unexpected and interesting questions regarding the dramatization of the text and the authenticity of the reader.

Many of these points were discussed on 4 Mach 2008 following my presentation to CETLD's seminar and I am grateful for all the contributions of those who attended.

15. And finally . .