

# 11.11 remembered

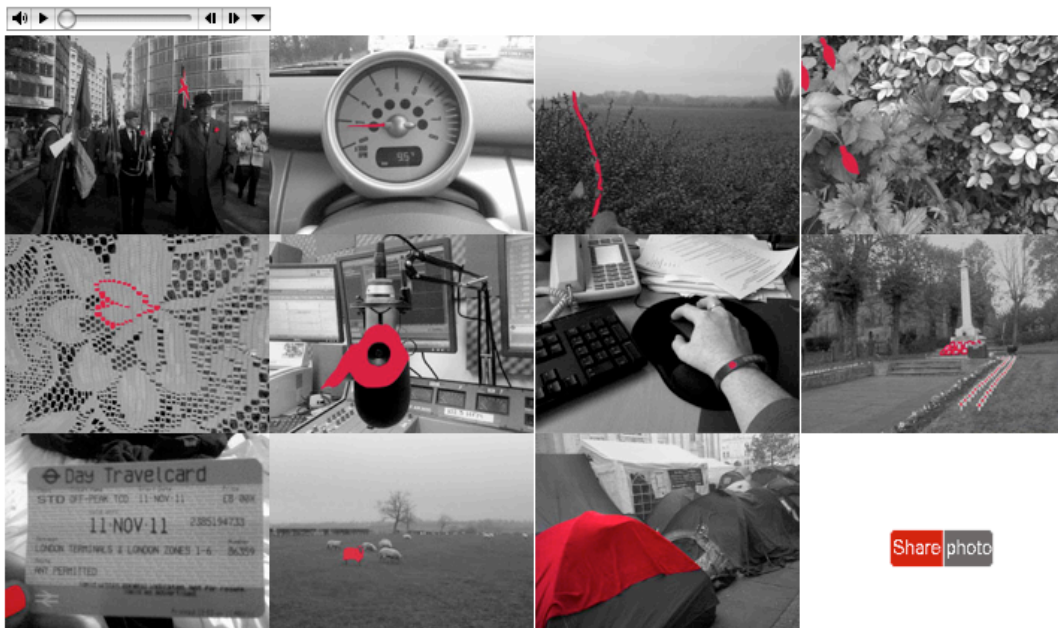
Supporting Research Material extracts  
created during the project's process

<http://www.photomedia.lincoln.ac.uk/rwright>  
Digital Media Moblogging Experimentation

## 11 11 remembered

Share your photos taken on Remembrance Day the 11th November in any year to be part of our themed Poppy Day gallery. To join in click 'Share photo' or zoom in to find out about each image.

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## 11.11 remembered

### Summary and concept

I wanted to look at the next step from “*experience captured*” (Sontag, 1977) to the online art forms about ‘experience shared’ and therefore networked in our participatory culture, which conceptually inspired project two. My work will be experimental so that I can explore sharing (and communicating with) images and possibly audio on a particular subject or theme.

My assertion is that we are innate communicators with a natural desire to connect with others. It has been customary for us to communicate and connect since ancient times – from drawings carved out in caves to tales told around communal fires and from Plato’s shadow-playing to religious preaching. We have always communicated/connected throughout history by reading books, listening to the radio and watching the television. Now we are embedded in the World Wide Web ‘public sphere’ where images have become a part of our sharing culture. Thus photo essays and photo sharing are other mediums to communicate and connect. Civic engagement to connect has shifted into a shared online socio, economic, cultural and political space. Historically we have developed from a local geographical community into the ‘digital commons’ - a global landscape of web 2.0 digital media (Merrin, 2008).

My project plan is to research and evidence to inform my mobile phone capture idea. I wanted to understand mo-blogging and the method of producing a photo essay. According to an online photography and social media organisation creating a photo essay is an art form as well as journalistically communicating a message.

As with a written essay, the elements of a photo essay should be structured in a way that easily conveys a story to the viewer. Each individual photo contributes to the overall story, theme, and emotions of the essay. The photos

you choose must not only be compositionally and artistically strong, but also informative and educational. Collective Lens, 2007/10

I would echo that a photo essay is an art form of images but I want to challenge the way it is traditionally presented – linear production with a beginning, middle and end. I would assert that inviting users to participate and interact, as in my project idea, is a new and innovative dimension to this digital media form. Encouraging interaction on which images users would like to browse through (order is the user's choice) and can submit an image if they wish (one they have captured) will be at the heart of my piece. It is a more open process for the user to engage with, and a design I am keen to try out. This is why my creation will be a development of the traditional photo essay so that it is interactive, participative and furthermore collaborative.

I was inspired by the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the year 2011. The time and date was a perfect same numbered palindrome, i.e. it read the same forwards and backwards, 11.11.11 on 11.11.11. This can only happen on one day every hundred years. The last time was on 11 Nov 1911. This date inspired my mo-blogging project. I decided to call it 11.11 so it would have a shelf life other than Armistice or Remembrance Day 2011. Thus users would be able to share images taken on 11.11 from years before 2011 and in future years on Remembrance Day.

It is important for me to look at the background of this event to gain a deeper understanding of the context of the 11<sup>th</sup> of November. I found out that the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month marked the signing of the Armistice on 11<sup>th</sup> Nov 1918 to signal the end of World War One. Remembrance Day is held annually on 11<sup>th</sup> November to remember all men and women who were killed in the two World Wars and other conflicts. Armistice Day was renamed Remembrance Day after World War Two. Although Armistice Day is still widely used, and understood in a global context. Remembrance Sunday is held on the second Sunday in November,

usually nearest to the 11<sup>th</sup> November. The Last Post is traditionally played to cue the 2-minute silence on Remembrance Day. In military circles the Last Post marks the end of the day and the last farewell. The 2-minute silence is also recognised on Remembrance Sunday at 11am. The poppy is traditionally worn to remember those who died because the poppy thrived in the bloody battlefields of Flanders in Belgium where the area was left devastated by the first war. The first Poppy day in Britain was 11 November 1921. Money from selling poppies in the UK and abroad is used for veterans and their dependants and collected for The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal Benevolent Fund (The Royal British Legion, 2012).

My idea will be to create a thematic online photo essay that is a non-linear piece to encourage user interaction whereby participants can choose images to view and to share (upload) their images captured on mobile phones. Armistice or Remembrance Day is the central theme – public capture from 11.11. Traditionally photo essays are images placed in a specific order to tell the progression of the event or theme –although they now can have audio and graphics as illustrated at Magnum Photos<sup>1</sup> - and they are linear with no real interaction from the end-user. My project will address the latter so either the user can choose which photo/image to zoom in on or where in the day (possibly from a timeline or caption) and data mine to find more details. I will try out adding audio with the two minutes' silence captured by a local commercial radio station, HFM, to add ambience to the main grid of images. However, if it is looped or on auto-start by clicking on each image I am taking control away from the user, so adding sound is an issue I must explore further when my image content and the format (web design) has been worked upon. Although I am keen to add sound to the images, it has to be appropriate and work for all of them because although at this stage I would be able to capture a relevant sound for each image I would not be able to sustain that for the life of the project which would be ongoing.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://inmotion.magnumphotos.com/essay/dgi-29>

Each individual image taken by the public on 11.11.11 adds to the overall theme, albeit the image may not be related to Poppy Day the effect on each image – desaturated in Photoshop (PS) black and white with poppy red as an accent colour - will convey the overall theme of my project ‘11.11 remembered’. See below.

Original Photo



Themed for 11.11 project



Captured by participant's mobile  
(Blackberry)

Black & white with red feature  
(Photoshop Adobe CS5)

The opportunity is for the public to add to the 11.11 collection or archive with any images that they actually took on Armistice Day, the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, in any year – for their experiences to be captured, shared and networked.

My concept to document experience (captured and shared) throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the 11<sup>th</sup> month of the year 2011 was off the ground. Armistice Day is part of history and a yearly event so this is an opportunity for me to look at experimental forms of citizens' capture to enhance the public archive. Inspired by our sharing culture I invited people, peers and friends, to capture 11.11.11 on a mobile phone [mo-blogging]. The method of publishing to an online site from any mobile handheld device, mobile blogging, is a user-friendly practice and certainly in the spirit of the age or zeitgeist. In terms of contemporary practices in digital media examples include Britain in a Day

(BBC/Scott, 2011)<sup>2</sup> about public contributions from 12 Nov 2011; there is an ongoing interactive project offering opportunities for public participation in documentary production within different locations called 24-hours in<sup>3</sup> (n.d.); and a YouTube and National Geographic documentary from other people's footage on the 24 July 2010 called Life in a Day<sup>4</sup> (YouTube/NatGeo, 2010). Britain in a Day was summed up to be a resource for the future and that 'it will create an extraordinary archive and record of what it means to be alive in Britain' (BBC, 2012). Participatory culture is embedded in our digital commons and as highlighted by Jenkins (2010) 'interactivity is a property of the technology, while participation is a property of culture.'

Participatory culture is emerging as the culture absorbs and responds to the explosion of new media technologies that make it possible for average consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content in powerful new ways. A focus on expanding access to new technologies carries us only so far if we do not also foster the skills and cultural knowledge necessary to deploy those tools toward our own ends. Confessions of an aca-fan: the official weblog of Henry Jenkins, 2010

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-15199776>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.24hours-in.lincoln.ac.uk>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/user/lifeinaday>

## USER EXPERIENCE

### Test group and online audience

Usability is also high on my list and will set the boundaries for starting my project design. As outlined by Miller (2011, p. 27) 'web design requires the designer to understand the end user's habits, the context in which the work is received and the necessary function of the end result.' For example in the West our culture is that we read from left to right and look from top to bottom. So I will ensure to put my key text in the top left. The top half will have the succinct information, i.e. areas above the fold are 'seen by the user when the page loads...content below the fold requires that users scroll down' (Miller, 2011 p. 28).

I wish to encourage users to join in and my authorship of which part/s of the image to turn into the red feature will be my editorial judgment on the photo they have shared, along with many design decisions on where to put the captions, buttons and so forth. Users filling in details about the image, time and location, will enable me to find a suitable link for more information to complement the image. The link may be any online data from text to video, for example the HFM Radio image will have a hyperlink (link outbound to a destination anchor URL, Uniform Resource Locator) to a movie about the radio station on YouTube. Data mining was an area I would have liked to include in my last project, as it adds another layer of context and user experience, and would enhance this piece so I wish to see how to achieve it and implement it in project two. As with any piece being produced I have to continually test or experiment to make authorship decisions because it is all part of the production process.

Usability is the direct experience the user has with my site. Even within a target audience the demographic data (age, gender, culture, etc) vary

considerably according to research. In addition there is 'an added level of demographic information' that includes:

Information about technology, like operating system, processor speed, screen resolution, memory and connection speed. All of this demographic information can play an influential role when it comes to usability design.

Miller, 2012, p. 173

Although there is no correct way to design usability features of a site, the level of user experience (UX) broadly what is the site's purpose, the needs and level of experience of my user and the available technology. Usability is about the ease to which my user can engage from my site's interface (and its software). Usability diagrams in the production process have helped me to plan my site and the usability effectiveness has been addressed by factors from the technology I have used to my overall design. Usability made me explore and experiment in interface elements like the navigation, submit form, text links and so forth.

As outlined above 'web design requires the designer to understand the end user's habits, the context in which the work is received and the necessary function of the end result.' To reiterate, in western culture we read from left to right and top to bottom. Thus the top half, areas above the fold, will have the key information (Miller, 2011 p. 27-28).

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**11 11**  
**remembered**

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The range of the age group in my test group from 21 to 83 was important because they would have different levels of using web pages and my focus



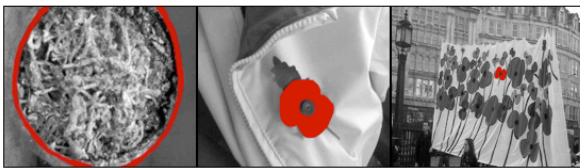
was on my users' experience. Reflecting and reviewing the users' experience helped me think deeply about my decision-making. This process enabled me to refine areas like the buttons (majority of my test group felt the text was too small), include a sub-heading on pages when navigating, re-design layout of the form, develop and set up an archive page. It was to house all the images used on the site's home page so when a new one is uploaded (only eleven at any one time on the mainframe) then one will drop into the archive page.

## Archive

11 11  
remembered

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Home About Terms Archive



Bearing in mind the research around usability, outlined above, I felt confident to clearly author my project as I had envisaged and with the hindsight of my users' experience, as well as some relevant reading around usability.

When we're creating sites, we act as though people are going to pore over each page, reading our finely crafted text, figuring out how we've organized things, and weighing their options before deciding which link to click.

What they actually do most of the time (if we're lucky) is *glance* at each new page, scan *some* of the text, and click on the first link that catches their interest or vaguely resembles the thing they're looking for. There are usually large parts of the page that they don't even look at. Krug, 2006, p. 21

An online audience is an international one and, as identified with users, it varies widely. Demographics apart from gender and age include a huge

range from education to language. So I would argue that usability has to be simple (not simplistic) and logical with an engaging interface to hook an audience and users. Active participation of the audience can be an artwork and seen as a temporal process rather than as a fixed object, an artwork as an open system.<sup>5</sup> Krug (2006, p. 22-27) argues that 'If you want to design effective Web pages, though, you have to learn to live with three facts about real-world Web use':

We don't read pages. We scan them.

We don't make optimal choices. We 'satisfice' (satisfying & sufficing).

We don't figure out how things work. We muddle through.

There were ten people in my test group aged from 21 to 83 and each category of 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, 70s and 80s. They included those who had captured images on their mobile phones from my original invitation on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011 and my final project clients.

Members of my focus group were sent a draft of my project even though I was still working on it, so they could feedback on the user experience, design communication and test the upload and database systems. I will need to test again after making any amendments and refining the site. Here are some users' feedback to my project:

*... I like the simple and uncluttered look of the main page of the website. The title, words and font of the text has a clarity to it which I find attractive in that it does not draw attention to itself but simply states the bare essentials. The form is clear enough although I wasn't sure which date to enter (the date I was submitting it or the date it was taken).*

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<sup>5</sup> See for instance Dinkla, S. (1996) From Participation to Interaction: Towards the Origins of Interactive Art, in Clicking In: Hots Links to a Digital Culture Seattle: Bay Press

*... The buttons look too small (top right) as it's difficult to read the text. The bottom right one is nice.*

*... (on the submit form share photo) I think you could be more explicit about what time and date you are talking about, I know you mean in relation to the photo you have updated but as we discussed some could think the time and date when they completed that page.*

*... I think the "About" and "Terms and Conditions" buttons could be bigger and bolder to draw the eye to these, as they are they are almost insignificant. Perhaps a different colour too?*

*... Your first paragraph with the photos below is fine, however I think a separate paragraph below something like: To view click on your chosen photograph to.....*

*... I think you have done a good job, but for those of us who need a bit more help, I wonder if you would consider the following. T&C maybe explicitly say it is terms and conditions or just terms? Make text on buttons larger! The terms seem overlong and although I understand the reasons for them, could these be reduced without diminishing their importance, of course. Maybe a bit from you, in your words, at the start?*

*... Reviewed the site - looks really good, few minor comments. I would add a home button to the top nav. Suggest at the top of each page you state the title*

*of the page with remembered - so if you click about – title should be remembered – about. I like the way the photos load in terms of speed. On the home page I would state click “share photo” to upload an image – obvious for me but maybe not for some people.*

*... Suggest placing a link to the T&C near the tick box. Seems laid out to widely apart for the data being inputted.*

*... Thought the main page was striking, attractive and elegant. The wording was simple but sufficient and did not distract from the images. Liked the grid. Black & white photos captured the theme of the day while the elements of red enlivened the images and suggested bloodshed but also a freshness appropriate to a Remembrance.*

*... I very much like the concept of your site and the way the photos come out of the page when you click on them - and the links for more information. You have obviously spent countless hours on this!*

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