

Self-recorded video diaries in online synchronous learning environments

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What is an OSLE?

For education, an online synchronous learning environment (OSLE) is a web program which enables learners and tutors to meet and discuss virtually. These environments support voice and text communication as well as video. Unlike video-conferencing, learners can access the OSLE from within or outwith the institution – at home, on placement, or at work – as long as they have access to a computer with broadband Internet access.

For research, the OSLE is a safe environment for participants to create video diaries which can be archived and transferred to a protected area on the network. Participants can be provided with a MP4 version of the video diary.

What is a video diary?

“A video diary is a digitized diary used for research with purposes similar to those of studies using written diaries; that is, the collection of data on informants’ lives over an extended period.” [1]

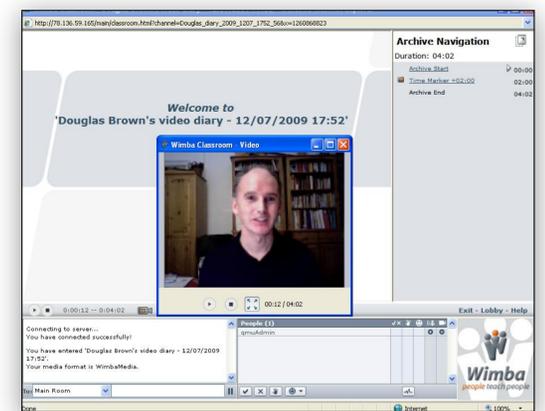
- Frequently used in popular culture and reality TV such as Big Brother;
- Found on social networking sites such as YouTube;
- Commonly used in medical research [2].

Emergent research suggests:

- Improved quality of data:
 - ✓ Closer to subject;
 - ✓ Includes non-verbal and verbal communication;
 - ✓ More and more detailed, open and expressive information [2].
- Practical way of gathering historical data over extend time-scale;
- More user-friendly, more familiar and more confidence-inspiring to participants;
- Encourages reflection in participants;
- Positive impact on power relationship between researcher & participants [1];
- Easier and less time-consuming than writing [3].

What are the challenges of video diaries? [4]

- Ethics;
- Recruitment;
- Not appropriate for all participants;
- Avoidance of recording until after reflection [1];
- Analysis;
- Dissemination of video clips.



Why video diaries?

“Diaries can provide rich data about the day-to-day events and contain a realistic account of the activities undertaken by the learners.” [3]



Case study

An exploration of learner and tutor experience in using online synchronous learning environments across disciplines within the School of Drama and Creative Industries:

- 4 tutors – monthly video diaries;
- approx. 6 students – 2-4 video diaries;
- Focus on experiences of using an OSLE (Wimba) for learning and teaching;
- Timeframe – 9 months.

[1] Buchwald, D., Schantz-Laursen, B., Delmar, C. (2009). Video Diary Data Collection in Research with Children: An Alternative Method. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 8(1). Retrieved December 13, 2009, from <http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/IJQM/article/viewFile/5126/5194>

[2] Jefferies, A.L., Hyde, R.S., & Bullen, P.R. (2008). How it was for me...: First steps on our learners' journeys through HE. Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Networked Learning, Halkidiki, Greece, 5th -6th May 2008. Retrieved December 13, 2007, from <https://uhra.herts.ac.uk/dspace/bitstream/2299/3625/1/903461.pdf>

[3] Conole, G., de Laat, M., Dillon, T., & Darby, J. (2006). LXP: Student Experiences of Technologies – Final Report *JISC e.learning pedagogy programme*. Retrieved December 23, 2009, from http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/elearning_pedagogy/elp_learnerxp.aspx

[4] Hardy, J., Haywood, D., Haywood, J., Bates, S., Paterson, J., Rhind, S., Macleod, H. (2009). *Techniques for Gathering Student Views of their Experiences at University*. Retrieved December 13, 2009, from http://www2.epcc.ed.ac.uk/~lead/documents/Methodology_LEaD_Report_final.pdf