



JISC RSC Scotland South & West Case Study @ The Glasgow School of Art

Comic Life Case @ Study Glasgow School of Art

Transcript for podcast

Hello and welcome to another podcast brought to you by the RSC Scotland South and West.

I am Margaret McKay the eAdvisor for Inclusion and today I am here with Jude Boyd who is an IT librarian at the Glasgow School of Art.

The Library and Learning Resources team have created a more visual approach to library orientation and induction.

Margaret: Can you tell us a little bit about your original library orientation style?

Jude: Although we previously had good mixture of visual and text based information for our online library guide, the information we gave students at induction was very text based. We started to think that that students were not really looking at the material and therefore we wanted to rethink this and come up with something a wee bit more different. It was at this point that we came up with comic style idea,

Margaret: So something that offered a more visual approach?

Jude: Yes definitely. Because we have art and design students, they tend to be much more visual learners and we wanted to think about graphical ways of conveying our information.

Margaret: What was your alternative approach?

Jude: We took really basic ideas – what is available on the first and ground floor on the library. We wanted to portray this as comic book and used a piece of software that would present this style with an image, a caption and a cell which creates the story of what's around in the library.

We used a multi platform software called 'Comic Life' which is very easy to use and can be downloaded as a 30 day trial if you want to try it out.

Once installed the software will offer default layouts and you simply drop your images and captions into each cell and it creates the comic.

Margaret: Can you describe the process? How did you go about deciding what to do and how you were going to do it?

Our team took advantage of a staff development day and the whole learning resources team was involved. We split into 2 groups and decided to write a storyboard of what the comic would convey. We

drew out our ideas on a flip chart. Each group had a camera and took digital photos of what would be in each cell. After that we installed the software and put photos into each of the cells.

We noticed that it was not as accessible as it could be so looked at the JISC TechDis guidelines and tweaked – changed font style to comic style, font size and changed background colour, default text to LC. We asked for feedback from dyslexic members of staff. Made into a PDF and then uploaded onto website. Comic sans.

Margaret: So it was very much a collaborative process - having a number of staff involved, getting feedback at different stages from different members of staff?

Jude: Yes feedback from staff was crucial and also learning support tutors who were involved in supporting a range of learners including those with English as a Second language as well as dyslexic learners.

End product - on website at: http://www2.gsa.ac.uk/library/online_resources.html.

Margaret: Have you used the model of information in visual images in other ways?

Yes we have used this process to create a basic guide about logging onto the Glasgow School of Art web mail, which is just one sheet. Good for simple software instructions we have also used it to create a poster for our student library forum. The resource and the process is very transferrable and can be used in many different areas.

Margaret: Your example has been library but I guess you could see this model being used in many different areas?

Yes this model could be used in any area in a college or university to provide an alternative to text-based methods of conveying information.

Margaret: knowing what you know now, if any other people were interested in using this kind of software to provide information to students do you have any advice?

We put a lot of time into the storyboard so if you spend time at this stage it will save you time at the end. Download free trial – try it out and see what is involved. Have a go!

Margaret: Getting feedback from others is a great idea.

Jude: Yes this was definitely useful to keep on tweaking it to get most readable and accessible result.

Margaret: The output is terrific, it is easy on the eye and attractive to read and because you have used your own team in the images it provides a great introduction to the IT support staff and the academic liaison staff.

Yes the feedback about putting a face to staff has been good, to help students identify who to look out for and who can help.