

**2011 UNIVERSITY ANNUAL LEARNING & TEACHING CONFERENCE**  
*Changing Times: Refreshing the Learning & Teaching Strategy*

Theme: A university for the region

14:10 - 14:40

**Interactive installations: exploring collaborative working practice through blended learning and public engagement**

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***‘We think the Learning & Teaching Strategy should bear in mind professional practice and create greater links with employers.’***

**Abstract:**

This paper explores the enhancement of the student learning experience through a three-way collaboration between the university, a local museum, and an industry professional. Collaborative working practice is explored in several modules within the School of Arts and New Media, but usually within the confines of the teaching environment. The third year module ‘Interactive Technology 2’ requires students to work in small groups to create interactive installations. The aim of this project was to extend this work with a ‘real-world’ focus, working alongside a professional interactive systems designer to give students experience of producing work to a specific brief in a public art gallery or museum. The students had to pitch their project ideas as a team to the museum trust and work in negotiation (via an online website) with the client as the project developed. This project has developed over a three year-period, to the point where the museum trust are keen to include student work in a 6 month professional exhibition with the potential to employ recent graduates.

The students were split (according to expertise) into teams of three and worked with the supervision of a tutor alongside the client. They also had advice from an external consultant. They developed to a specific brief a number of interactive projects over a period of seven weeks for a two-week joint installation in the museum, open to the public. The learners developed their project ideas collaboratively online via the use of web logs. These blogs included the sharing of different aspects of the project (such as audio and interface design). The data collected for the study included video diaries from the students, asynchronous discourse, and feedback from: 1) The client (the museum trust); 2) The general public; and 3) The students involved within the project.