Project title: Footsteps of the Impressionists: an online study tour

Project leader: Mr. Alex Syndikas

Reference Group:
Dr. Fiona Peterson, Director, Learning & Teaching – School of Media and Communication
Ms. Filiz Ergec, Learning and Teaching Advisor DSC
Jodie Fenn, Education Media Group – RMIT
Darren Smith, Education Media Group – RMIT
Ms. Grazyna Rosinska - School Liaison Librarian
Anne Lennox – Coordinator RMIT Copyright, Education Media Group

Funds approved:
$19,844

Funds acquitted: (see Appendix 3 financial statement)

Summary of the project, outcomes, impacts and dissemination:
‘Footsteps of the Impressionists: an online study tour’ was aimed at creating an alternative mode of delivery to the existing Art/Photography – RMIT wide Student Elective ‘off-shore’ study tour in Paris, France.

http://www.rmit.edu.au/mediacommunication/studytours/impressionist

While ‘being there’ has always been the cornerstone of this course, this alternative web-based ‘online’ mode would assist those students who can not afford the time away from RMIT University or costs associated with overseas travel.

In designing this mode of delivery, the emphasis centered on the use of global websites, QuickTime documentary sequences, Virtual Reality (QTVR) environments and ‘Digital Video’ footage and ‘Still’ images taken from my previous study tours in Paris.
We also looked at how we could integrate the RMIT University Library's online resources into the course site. In particular, the ‘off-air’ art documentary recordings held in the Media/AV section; as the library hold an extensive collection on the Impressionist movement and its painters. We found that the most accessible means of integrating video clips of these documentaries would be via the library's Video Streaming system. Video Streaming would make it more feasible as it would eliminate the process of downloading large files in order for the documentaries to be viewed. This feature would provide an invaluable means of interactive research material for this online environment.

We looked at the physical layout of the course together with the Education Media Group (EMG), who then designed a suitable Wire-Frame template for delivery. The EMG reduced the number of chapters we had created in order to make the learning experience less complex than we had initially designed and produced a template that is 'user friendly', incorporating appropriate information about the locations of walks, (the video recordings of actual walks), documented ‘still’ images, useful links to articles on the web, and video streaming documentaries relating to the location or artists. The front page introduces the various individual ‘Walks’ or ‘Museum Visits’ together with its various points of interest via a site map and incorporates interactive thumbnails to indicate the ‘Research Activity’ for this walk, together with the various links to Location Sites and other resources.

The virtual study tour project – ‘Footsteps of the Impressionists: online study tour’ addresses issues involved in offering a fully developed web-based course incorporating current innovative technology to enhance learning. It adds to the contribution towards the delivery of the ‘Global Passport’ and hopes to increase student engagement in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary flexible learning experiences.

It is anticipated that this online study tour will be implemented in 2011 as an RMIT University wide – Student Elective for local and offshore campuses, as well as an Open University Australia (OUA) single unit.
Introduction:
The project was aimed to create an alternative mode of delivery to my annual overseas Impressionist Art Study Tour in Paris titled ‘Footsteps of the Impressionists’. While ‘being there’ has always been the cornerstone of this course, where one walks through the Impressionist landscape or stands in front of those majestic paintings, an alternative web-based ‘online’ mode would assist those students who can not afford the high cost of travelling to France. Designing an online ‘virtual tour’ with multiple IT resources would be a way to simulate the face-to-face experience.

Project Description:
In designing this course mode, emphasis would be totally directed towards IT web-based online delivery, using global websites, QuickTime documentary sequences, Virtual Reality (QTVR) environment, Digital Video footage taken from previous study tours in Paris, as well as still images of the locations.

Initially we looked at how we could integrate the RMIT University Library’s online resources into the course site. In particularly, the ‘off-air’ art documentary recordings held in the Media/AV site. There is an extensive collection on the movement and its painters. We found that the most accessible means of integrating video clips of these documentaries would be via their video streaming system. This would provide an invaluable means of interactive research material for this online environment. Our first contact was Mr. Russell Taylor – Library Officer (Media Technology/AV. He showed us examples of Video streaming available and the process for adding our selection onto Library’s video streaming Database. Video streaming would make it more feasible as it would eliminate having the enormous large file size uploads of the documentaries prior to viewing them. Also depending on the broadband width availability in possible remote areas this could prolong the allotted time a student could devote to a research passage or viewing task.

Ms. Grazyna Rosinska – School Liaison Librarian introduced us to the Library’s electronic resources databases such as – eBook, Net Library for Art, ArtLex, Oxford Art Online and Camio. Unfortunately, due to copyright issues many of the images of paintings that we would like to discuss in this virtual study tour course were not in these collections. We then approached the RMIT University Copyright officer – Ms. Anne Lennox – Education Media Group who deals with copyright issues regarding
online visual material and she advised us to use the Wikimedia Commons free media repository online. In the category of Impressionist paintings we found 773 files. This was an invaluable resource for the visual content students’ could refer to for their projects/tasks.

The next phase, was in the course designing stage. How do we simulate the Face-to-Face international learning experience of being in Paris to that of an online environment? What learning advantages could we incorporate to the online user that perhaps a person on location may not experience? We began by analysing the ‘Off-shore’ daily itinerary, mapping out locations and situations of significant importance. Storyboards were designed in terms of ‘Walks’ and ‘Museum Visits’ so that we could approach EMG (Education Media Group) in designing a suitable Wire-Frame template. This template would have to be ‘user friendly’, incorporating appropriate research information about the locations in terms of video recording of actual walks, documented ‘Still’ images, useful links to articles on the web, and video streaming documentaries relating to the location or artists.

We met with the EMG team Ms. Jody Fenn – Production Coordinator/Senior Graphic Designer and Mr. Darren Smith – Web Developer. We expressed the general feel that we would want to include in the site and the importance of clearly defined navigation chapters.
Figure 1 shows the general layout of the information we required to be included in the wire-frame. We identified 13 possible chapters – ‘Home Page’ introducing the course followed by student Log in access. We suggested that the next segment should be independent from each other so that a student need not go through the introduction page every time the student logged in to go to the Virtual Tours or Resources sections. The last 9 chapters would be interconnected with the previous 3 sub groups giving the online student invaluable visual research possibilities for an online environment.

Further discussions with EMG led to merging some of these chapters to simplify the workflow. Revisiting the storyboards and the interactive resource material we came up with a final template version (Figure 2). The front page introduces the individual ‘Walk’ or ‘Museum Visit’ together with its various points of interests via a site map and incorporates interactive thumbnails to indicate the ‘Research Activity’ for this walk together with the various links to Location Sites and other resources.
Once we enter the ‘Walk’ see figure 3, the template becomes totally interactive with multiple ‘Location Images’, streaming ‘Documentaries’, ‘Movie clips’ and External web links and at the extreme lower right of the page a location pointer, which indicates where in the walk has reached. Each ‘Walk’ will have its specially designed site map (see Appendix 1) with a smaller version of the map as a navigation pointer. The navigation pointer is a valuable tool for the virtual environment, giving the student a sense of immediate location in respect to the overall ‘Walk’ experience.
Evaluation of project outcomes:
The project team has identified that the Footsteps of the Impressionist virtual study tour would be more effective with a reduced number of walks as compared to the ‘Off-shore’ tour. The web-based course should not be compared to it, but rather it should be treated as an independent mode that would incorporate current innovative technology to enhance learning and to make better use of the global IT online environment. It was finally agreed that the virtual tour should be reduced to include – 6 ‘Walks’ around Paris and the countryside of the Seine Valley, with only – 2 ‘Museum Visits’ focusing on the Impressionist Collections housed in the Orsay and the L’Orangerie Museums.
The team then reviewed these Walk/Visits and developed a series of learning tasks and assessment activities that would be generated from these Walks/Visits and include:

- Writing activities demonstrating knowledge of key Impressionists works, urban locations and artists from the late 19th century in Paris,

- Production activities including development of Photo essays, Drawings and or Digital Photo stores reflecting the observations from those individual ‘Walk’s and museum ‘Visits’,

- Online activities including class discussions about each Walk/Visit. It is also anticipated to use a universal Blog to extend class group interactivity.

- Reflection Project based on the French culture and culinary arts.

A total of 9 assessment activities have been newly designed (see appendix 2) for this web-based course incorporating current innovative technology to enhance learning outcomes.

The project has attempted to increase student engagement in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary flexible learning experiences by incorporated in its 8 ‘Location Destinations’ (Walk/Visit). A total of 65 QuickTime video-streaming art documentaries segments and 180 ‘Location Still’ images with supporting text about the images. There are also extensive biographical details on all the major artists discussed in this web-based course as well as 47 external web links for additional student art database and resource information.

All of the collating of research data, visual material, QuickTime art documentary segments, has been completed. Unfortunately, due to unforeseen circumstances with the finalisation of the web-base wire-frame from EMG, it has caused a temporary holt to the ‘Go live’ pilot program. This would have been extremely important to evaluating the project via a focus group.
The EMG has assured us that the wire-frame should be completed soon and that the remainder of the functionality and other stages should be completed by July. This will enable us to fully evaluate the project. It is anticipated that a focus group made up from several members of past ‘off-shore’ study tours students will participate in this testing phase. There will also be some current RMIT students and peer tutors involved in the pilot program. Feedback questionaries will be crucial to the refinement of the course objectives and learning outcomes.
Appendix 1 SITE MAP.
Appendix 2

Assessment Activities

1. Montmartre Walk.

This area was synonymous with the artistic culture of the late 1800’s. Painters such as Renoir, Degas, van Gogh, Cassatt and Toulouse-Lautrec devoted their painting themes into capturing the everyday life-style of the locals who were going to cabarets, dance halls and theatres.

For this activity select one painting of the above artists and in 300 words, describe your views in how he/she was able to capture the ambience of Montmartre. Upload your (Word or pdf) document embedding the jpeg of the painting onto the Discussion Board in the folder titled Montmartre Activity (Mark 10%)

2. Louveciennes Walk

With the expansion of the inner Paris railway system it led to many Parisians taking advantage of more leisurely explorations of the outer Arrondissement (quarters) of the countryside. This was especially attractive to the Impressionists painters such as Monet, Pissaro, Sisley and Renoir who’s thrived on painting outdoors. Perhaps the most popular towns visited by artists were Louveciennes and Marly-Le-Roi.

For this activity select one of the above artists and create a photographic scene that reflects the essence of what they were painting.

Submit a document that includes your final photo file together with the referenced painting and a 300 words description that refers to what inspired you to create your image. Your document should not be more than a 2Mb file.

Upload this file onto the Discussion Board in the folder Louveciennes Activity (Mark 10%)
3. Auvers-sur-Oise Walk

Vincent van Gogh spent the last two months of his life in Auvers-sur-Oise. During this time he was so prolific with his paintings that it said that his best works were painted during this short time. His paintings captured the poetry of the landscape and also reflected how his devastating depression led to his ultimate sacrifice.

For this activity select a painter, photographer or musician in the 20th Century or more recently in this century that reflect the same emotions feelings as depicted in the work of van Gogh.

Select a series of images that illustrate your choice and create a (multimedia) digital photo story presentation using either ‘Keynote’ (Mac) or Microsoft PhotoStory (PC). Running time of digital photo story – approx 2 min.

Upload this file onto the Discussion Board in the folder **Auvers-sur-Oise Activity** *(Mark 10%)*

4. L’Europe District Walk

The Gare St Lazare became the hub of this district. It marked the beginning of Modernity and the Machine Age. It was also the popular meeting place for the impressionists where many of them in their earlier years lived in the district. Two of the most respected and influential painters were Edouard Manet and Gustave Calibotte. In particularly, Edouard Manet where in 1863 painted the most controversial painting – Le Dejeuner sur l’hebre.

For this activity revisit the documentary ‘Luncheon on the Grass’ which refers to this painting by Manet and create your own version – either as a drawing/illustration or a photo-shoot. If done photographically the model does not necessary have to be naked, think laterally and see how you could re-create this scene.

Upload your document (no more than 2 Mb) onto the Discussion Board together with a short description (150 words) relating to how you approached your image into the folder **L’Europe District Activity** *(Mark 10%)*
5. Monet’s Giverny Walk

The town of Giverny, which is about an hour journey by train from Paris, was known as the ultimate paradise for any artist. Claude Monet’s garden in Giverny became an endless motif for his paintings. He captured (en plain air) outdoors, the light and colour of a scene. This was his legacy to painting throughout his life.

For this activity you are to seek out a scene that has a variety of visual elements. This could be a landscape, seascape or an urban environment. Photograph the scene at different ‘time-of-the-day’ in order to best capture the changing colour and contrast of light.

From your shoot, select the best 5 images that summaries these variations together with a short description (150 words). Upload this activity as either a pdf file or Word document (no more than 2 Mb) onto the ‘Discussion Board’ in the folder Monet’s Giverny Activity (Mark 10%)

6. Pere Lachaise Walk

The Pere Lachaise cemetery is one of the most famous European cemeteries in the world. Many of the great actors, writers, musicians, composers and painters are buried in this cemetery.

For this activity you are to create an interactive file of a person listed in the cemetery’s directory that you have admired and illustrate his/her contribution to society by articulating one of the works. You may wish to include a song, music, paintings or poetry/writings. (Interactive piece approx 2 min.)

(Mark 10%)

7. Orsay Museum Visit

The Orsay museum has the most extensive Impressionist collection of paintings, drawings, photography and decorative arts in the world. The Orsay was committed to include the Academic or Pompier art of the 19th century as part of the fabric of the museum.
For this activity, select one artwork that you have seen in the Collection. Upload your selection onto the ‘Discussion Board’, and discuss your selection as a threaded discussion with your virtual classmates. You are also required to respond to at least one other classmate in the virtual classroom.

Your discussion contribution should be equivalent to approx. 350 words. (Mark 10%)

8. L’Orangerie Museum Visit

The most unique series of works by Claude Monet are the famous Water Lilies murals painted in Giverny. Monet started this project around 1893 and completed his eight panoramic paintings just prior to his death in 1926. The murals were installed in the L’Orangerie museum in 1927 and have been permanently on display in the two oval rooms situated in the lower ground level of the museum. More recently, the L’Orangerie museum went through a complete six-year building restoration. In the process the Water Lilies were relocated to what is now the oval rooms on the main level of the building.

For this activity refer to Monet’s – Water Lilies panoramic series. Seek out a landscape, seascape or urban cityscape that you can replicate photographically as an extended panoramic image – approx 180 degrees of vision.

You will either need to use a digital stitching program to perform this activity or use the ‘Panoramic’ mode in your digital camera.

Create 3 Panoramic images. (Mark 10%)

9. REFLECTION PROJECT – French Cooking

Your final activity for this course is to research the Culture and culinary delights of French Cooking. For this activity you are to research French food and phrases as well as prepare a meal. With the use of a digital storytelling program document the steps in preparing the meal. You may wish to do this as a video segment or a series of still images with voice over. The final stage for this activity is to upload the segment onto the YouTube site. Your segment should run for about 3 to 4 minutes.

(Mark 20%)
## Appendix 3.

### Financial Management Report:

**IO360213**

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### Income YTD Actuals

**Total Income**

- **Operating Expenses**
  - E1100: SAL-FIT & CONS-ACAD 3,847
  - E11500: SALARIES-CASUAL ACADEMIC 200
  - Salaries 4,056
  - Salaries 4,056
  - E11500: ANNUAL LEAVE EXPENSE - ACADEMIC 76
  - Employee Entitlements 746
  - E21000: SUPERANNUATION- OTHERS ACADEMIC 19
  - Superannuation & Pension Schemes 19
  - E22500: PAYROLL TAX - ACADEMIC 203
  - Payroll Tax 202
  - E24100: WORK COVER PREMIUM- ACADEMIC 49
  - Workers Compensation 49
  - Ousts 1,014

- **Total Salaries & Ousts** 5,078

- **E25000: CONSUMABLE MATERIALS** 147
- **E51002: CONS. MAT.-COST TAX** 532
- **Consumable Materials** 682
- **E59600: NETWORK, PRINTING & PRODUCING EXP** 630
- **Marketing, Advertising & Public Relations** 180
- **E54499: TRAVEL-O/SEAS(EXP)** 901
- **Travel & Motor Vehicle Expenses** 801
- **E66600: CONTRACTORS** 4,200
- **Staff Administrative Costs** 4,200
- **E66600: INTERNAL EXPENSES CONTRA** 1,000
- **Finance, Legal & Other** 9,000
- **E61100: SCHOLARSHIP ALLOWANCES** 9,000
- **E61950: STAFF DEV.-NOT FBT**
- **Staff & Student Related Expenses**

**Total Other Operating Expenses** 14,893

**Total Expenditure** 15,933

**Operating Result** 10,933