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Conference or Workshop Item

Title: Blogging and self-identity: assessing the impact of a 'digital you' within higher education

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Version: Accepted version

http://nectar.northampton.ac.uk/8599/
Blogging and Self-Identity: Analysing the Impact of a ‘digital you’ within Higher Education

(A work-in-progress project)

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Aims

- To identify whether the act of blogging has an impact on students’ self-identities at university.
- To examine whether blogging should be incorporated into teaching in order to increase student engagement.
- To assess perceptions of the importance of fashion blogging in today’s society.

Methodology

First year Fashion Marketing students were introduced to blogging as part of a session on developing a professional identity online. To encourage them to experience blogging, students were shown how to set up a blog, with individual support. Students were then set a compulsory assignment to produce a blog post reflecting on their experience at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery. Follow-up research on the students’ blogging experiences was carried out through a qualitative study in the Spring Term.

Initial Findings

- “I want brands to notice me”
- “I enjoyed blogging once I gained confidence”
- “I found it hard to keep the posts continuous”
- “I thought no one would be interested”

Future considerations

- In-depth interviews are to be conducted to analyse how motivations and barriers to blogging link to students’ perceptions of the value of a digital presence in relation to a perceived audience.
- Individual blog posts will be analysed using NVivo software to identify any relationship between student perceptions and typology.
- The overall results from this longitudinal study will enable the researchers to make recommendations for the use of blogs within HE by focusing on the student experience of constructing a digital self-identity.