

Institution: Middlesex University

Title of case study: Bridging the Digital Divide: Creativity research resulting in digital upskilling

Period when the underpinning re	esearch was undertaken:	1 st Sept 2012 15 th April 2020
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		

Name(s):
Dr. Josie Barnard SFHEARole(s) (e.g. job title):
Senior Lecturer in Creative
Writing with JournalismPeriod(s)
submitting
HEI: 1st
2012 to 15th April 2020

Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1st Aug 2013 to 31st Dec 2020 Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact

Despite increasing emphasis on online access in the public and private sphere, the digital divide is widening, with 52% of the workforce (17.2 million) lacking essential digital skills for work (Lloyds Digital Index, 2020). uses creativity to provide an adaptable model for effective and future-proofing digital upskilling which has:

Influenced development of qualifications by OCN London (particularly their Essential Digital Skills Qualifications) and the Royal College of Nursing Learning and Development Pathway for RCN Representatives;

Changed perceptions of digital exclusion and influenced practice in charities/NGOs; Influenced policy thinking within the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) via membership of its Digital Skills and Inclusion Working Group (DSIWG); Enabled professional writers to advance their digital practice:

2. Underpinning research

, located within writing practice,

and provides solutions to digital skills acquisition with an emphasis on creativity and humanisation. Change in the digital sphere is rapid; equipment and discrete digital skills can quickly become obsolete. However, digital upskilling largely centres on provision of online access, equipment and/or technical training. Barnard identified that this approach alongside entrenched assumptions were inhibiting progress in enabling digital skills acquisition.

Select Committee report on Supporting the Creative Economy (Dec 2012), Barnard identified - ng. Leveraging her

experience outside academia, including as an award-winning writer, radio producer/presenter



assignments, which focused on using including repurposing of

inner resources to tackle digital challenges She



awareness in relation to digital exclusion. Cliff Manning, Research and Development Director of Parent Zone, He notes resulted in a widening of his understanding which experience of people with dyslexia, for example, and the intersectional nature of digital Manning also commented on the role the documentary played in highlighting the [5.4a]. Julie Sarson, Job Club Manager at Christians Against Poverty (CAP) changed her view of digital exclusion after participating in and listening to the documentary, seeing that having the necessary digital skills. Consequently, [5.4b].

Participation in the documentary and

exclusion on fundamentals such as securing housing had a major influence on Leeds based Refugee Education Training Advice Service (RETAS). Charlotte Hagerty, the RETAS Volunteer Co-ordinator, was particularly affected by two things:

support can be critically enabling when working to support digitally excluded citizens; and

even turn on a device (6 million) or open an app (7.1 million). Subsequently, Hagerty changed how she and her team worked with clients, devising an apparently simple method whereby volunteers sit with homeless clients to physically help them download apps to help them search for a home and then ensuring they had the digital skills to use them, thus improving their chances of finding accommodation [5.4c]

approach during the onset of the CV-19 lockdown (spring 2020) which forced services online, including the teaching of English. Influenced by the documentary, RETAS recognised it llenge, especially for lower-level learners to access online and introduced a blended approach that incorporated - support -toand study packs, alongside on-line elements [5.4c].

Influencing policy thinking within the DCMS. In 2018 Barnard was appointed to the DCMS Digital Skills and Inclusion Working Group (DSIWG) and via membership contributed to the development of Enhancing Lives Through Digital Engagement: T Toolkit, released to selected NGOs and charities working with digitally excluded citizens late 2020 (due for publication by the Government 2021). Professor Leela Damodaran (Professor Emerita of Digital Inclusion and Participation, Loughborough University; founder and Director of Digital Technologies and Social Inclusion (DTSI) Community Interest Company (CIC); and member of the DCMS Digital Skills and Inclusion Working Group) was commissioned by DCMS in 2019 to develop the Enhancing Lives Through Digital Engagement toolkit to address the needs and guide the digital engagement activities of digitally-disadvantaged people. Professor Damodaran notes direct contribution to the work of the DSIWG and and r14(d)] TJ3@04800038@0460044\$3BT/F2 11.04 TBT/F2 11.04 Tf1 0 0 1 62.424 356.93 T



Impact on professional writers.

platforms and genres and increased productivity for the professional writing community. Former Chair of the National Association for Writing in Education (NAWE) and Princip