

The Podmag – Week 11

K: Hi and welcome to this week's issue of the Podmag, I'm Karen Foley.....

D: And I'm Dave Middleton

K: Well Dave, I must say I'm very impressed with our nice new office

D: Isn't it fantastic!

K: It's very lovely. I love the glass frontage and the lovely clean floors and not a photocopier in sight, it's fantastic

D: The income was quite nice, how much did we make in the end?

K: I think it was 58 pence

D: 58 pence, well that's pretty good

K: All that work

D: Yeah, Well, I don't know, that's double my wage!!!

K: This is fantastic, what a location to present an entertaining news programme in. So what have we got this week?

D: Well, we have got a lot of news coming up and we are going to move onto that in a moment, but we have also had a pretty full inbox, so let's go to our in box

(In box jingle)

D: Who's been emailing you then Karen?

K: Well, I've had some emails from **Susan Corbett** who says, hi Dave and Karen. I think she means Karen and Dave there! I love the Podcast, sorry for not been in touch before and Susan is studying DD131 alongside TD233 and she has just found the Podmag and she is realising what she has been missing. So welcome Susan we hope you are listening this week.

D: I have had an interesting email from somebody called **Adrian Horn** and **Adrian** wanted to know whether the conference would be open to European students and that has got a very simple answer actually Adrian, yes, it's open to European students and what we would like at the Student Connections Conference is to bring people together wherever they are, that's whether they are in Europe, whether they are in Australia or New Zealand or anywhere else in the world. They can come to the conference because it's all online and it will mean that some people will probably be logging on in the early hours of the morning their time and the evening our time. So Adrian, yes, European students are more than welcome, everybody is welcome.

K: That's the benefit of an online conference isn't it, anyone can come and it will be at a range of times of the day, so even if you do have a different time factor to us here in the UK, then you can log on at a time that suits you and there will be recordings as well.

K: Right, I've had an email from **Kerry Sharp** as well, now Kerry has been emailing us a couple of times and she has now said that she is very excited about the conference, she has registered and she is going to be coming to the Activate workshops as well, and she is also very interested in our digital storytelling course, so she has put her name down for that and we have had lots of people interested in this which is great to see and we will talk about that a bit later in the show.

D: Actually we are going to talk about it any moment now

(News Jingle)

K: Right, first on the news we have our conference registrations, now this only opened a couple of weeks ago, but so far almost 200 people have registered at the time of recording this and they have been going up daily, so thank you for registering. Dave, tell our listeners what getting registered will mean?

D: OK, the first thing that happens when you get registered is you give us your email address and then we send you an email. Basically, registering at this stage doesn't commit you to anything at all, what it will do, will allow you to be kept in touch with what is going on.

(Jingle)

K: Right, the next item on the news is our conference blog, now Dave, you started this, what's been going happening on the blog?

D: Well, we thought we should have a blog to explain some of the issues that people aren't too clear about, and one of the questions if you remember somebody asked on a forum, and I believe it might have been one of your forums Karen, which is the sort of discussions Karen has on the forums on the modules that Karen teaches, if you are unfortunately enough to have her as your tutor, is what exactly is an online conference? And I thought that was a really good question actually, so I started to think about it and then I started to find my fingers typing and I decided that this would be a good subject for a blog. So if you go to our blog which is on the conference website and you can get to the conference website from any module now, just click the link that says Student Connections and go to the conference website and click on the conference blog, and you will find there is a couple of blog pieces there now. The first one, which I did, which is about what is an online conference and then Karen is on there as well, and she is writing about what is going to happen at the workshops which moves us to our next piece of news.

K: Absolutely!

(Jingle)

K: So the workshops. Now you can read about these on the blog as Dave says but a lot of people have been asking what happens at a workshop. These workshops are basically a chance to meet online and before the conference, we will be training people who want to learn certain new skills about using our OU live system and these workshops will happen online as well, so what it will be, it

will be Dave and I and probably about 10 - 20 students all hooking up and talking about social sciences. So if you are interested in exploring those ideas or just hooking up with Dave and I online and finding out a bit more about the conference, then let us know you are interested and we will register you on the workshops.

D: And remember, the workshops are only one hour, so we are not asking you to give up a large proportion of your lives, you don't have to do any preparation in advance, so there is no text books to read, just turn up and we will have a chat, find out what your ideas are and we will find a way of realising those ideas for the conference, and also we have a couple of top bloggers who are going to help us with those workshops when we get onto the specifics of how to do a blog, we have got two real expert bloggers who have agreed to come along and help us out and do you know who they are? They are Meg Barker, everyone likes Meg and also **Martin Weller**, who is a fantastic blogger, I read his blog a lot and he knows a lot about this kind of thing, so he has agreed to come along and help you, so that will be great as well, do get signed up.

K: Excellent, I'm going to sign up for that one too myself then maybe we will get some good blogs out of me yet.

(Jingle)

K: OK, next on the news, digital storytelling.

D: Yes, the digital storytelling, well, literally, I am overwhelmed with the response to this, lots of you it seems, are very interested in digital storytelling, we are going to make some fantastic videos and they will be showcased during the conference.

K: So if you have written to us we will get back to you to let you know whether we can include you in that project or not, once we have sat down and looked through all the applications over the next few days.

(Jingle)

D: All the news that you need about the conference, the updating, all the latest news is going to be found right here on the Podmag so do keep listening every week to the Podmag, I know it all sounds pretty rubbishy most of the time, but occasionally within all that, we are going to put some nuggets of information that you will actually want to know.

K: Dave, what's this red line around our studio?

D: Well I'm not entirely sure, but I was talking to one of the chaps and he told me it was to keep out the elephants

K: Oh, but there are no elephants here

D: You see, its working

K: mmmmmmmmmmm

K: So Dave, for this week's interview, who did you manage to talk to?

D: I found out the person in the faculty who is in charge of research is our Associate Dean for Research – Gillian Rose and I went along to see Gillian a couple of days ago and this is what she told me.

Interview with Gillian Rose

D: Thanks for seeing us today Gillian.

GR: My pleasure.

D: You are the Associate Dean for Research in the Faculty of Social Sciences. Is there any research that the Social Sciences Faculty have produced that has had an impact?

GR: The one I might pull out is a big European project that's actually about to finish in a couple of months, it is being led by **Professor Engin Eisen**. What **Engin** has done is to develop an amazing network across Europe of citizenship activists groups of different kinds. So these are organisations that are trying to enable all sorts of people to claim their citizenship, but particularly working with groups of people who find that difficult, often perhaps because they are refugees or illegal immigrants. So I think that project is fantastic.

D: There must be a relationship between the research that people do and the kind of modules that we produce for the various qualifications?

GR: A lot of research across the university is in how to teach effectively, what are the most effective ways of teaching and learning? The second relationship that is quite direct between teaching and research, is that students were learning materials that we create, obviously want to get the best most cutting edge kind of content in terms of their courses and that means that as academics writing those modules, we have to be informed about what is happening in our fields and so that the students get the best quality kind of content for their modules. The third area of research, which is that part of our institutional and social role I guess, is to encourage people to think critically and carefully about how society is organised, the effects, equalities, that's my view anyway. There is a strong social role, how perhaps we can intervene in it most effectively to enhance quality of life for people.

D: Let me ask you about your research then. You have won awards.

GR: I have, I've won one.

D: Ok, you've won AN award. Broadly speaking what is your research area?

GR: What I am interested in is what photographs and other images that look like photographs do in the social world if you like, so I've got a couple of particular sorts of photos I am interested in, one of which is family photographs. Family photos for a long while were really dismissed by the few academics/researchers that bothered to look at them, as being these very selective visions of family life. You know everybody is always happy and smiling and they get taken at birthday parties and Christmas and you know you never see your teenager stomping off in a tantrum in a family photo or your baby screaming. People take hundreds probably thousands of family photos, particularly now cameras are on phones. That suggests to me that they are doing something for people in terms of their sense of identity and of who they are, so I went off to interview lots of mums with young

children about why they took photos and what they then did with them and what they wanted to see in them and what they felt about them, and it turned out that they were really really important. They were massively important for being able to mark family relations. Really important way of maintaining a sense of family identity and very important for mums I think to be able to see photos of their children and being able to take photos and then look back on them at moments of kind of calm and quiet, when your kids are not with you. It is very important for mothers to sort of reflect on who they are as a mother, and their relationship to their child through the photo or though taking photos is often what dads do. Making albums and getting prints sorted and sending photos off to other family members that seems to be most exclusively done by mums.

D: Brilliant, Gillian Rose – thank you very much.

K: Ahh, that's fantastic, makes me think back on all the photographs I have taken over the years and maybe there is a use for them after all!!

D: What are they waving at us?

K: Oh, they are like little tiny tennis rackets

D: Like a little tiny ball that they are bouncing up and down on it. I have to be careful saying that.

K: Well it takes all sorts doesn't it round here. Anyway, erm, so

D: Sorry, I had better go and see what they want, I'll be back.

K: Oh, OK

(squish squash)

D: Apparently this is a squash court and they have got it booked!!

K: Oh well, we had better go they are looking pretty angry, see you next time.