



Subject Centre for  
History, Classics  
and Archaeology

JISC DISTRIBUTED E-LEARNING  
PROGRAMME PHASE II  
NEWSFILM ONLINE PROJECT SUBJECT  
TUTORIAL GRANT

## FINAL REPORT

<b>Project title:</b>	The Representative Process: Elections and Voting in Britain
<b>Project leader</b>	Dr. Cathy Gormley-Heenan
<b>Lead Institution</b>	University of Ulster
<b>Date of completion</b>	January 2009
<b>Synopsis of Project</b>	<i>This tutorial is located within the subject area of politics, and forms part of the content delivered within our existing Introduction to Government module. The more particular area that this online tutorial addresses is in relation to the topic of elections in the UK. By choosing a broad topic such as this, there is scope for focus on electoral systems, actual general election results within the UK over a number of decades, and the calls for electoral reform within the UK.</i>
<b>Aims/Objectives</b>	<i>To appreciate the function of elections;</i>  <i>To understand the different types of electoral system;</i>  <i>To evaluate the case for reform of the British electoral system.</i>
<b>Main Outputs and Outcomes</b>	<i>The project has resulted in the development of a 30 minute digital tutorial on 'An Introduction to Electoral Systems and Electoral Reform in the UK'. This tutorial was created using Camtasia software and allowed me to integrate both the Newsfilm Online video clips with existing PowerPoint materials and with an audio voiceover from me. In a sense, it was developed with a 'user-generated' content idea in mind – this meant that I did not focus on 'professionalising' the look and feel of the video but rather focused on how to make sure that the video to be something that the students could relate to in terms of what they normally do and how they normally review materials. Given that they are quite comfortable with the YouTube type videos also created by non-professionals, I was comfortable with this idea.</i>



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**Student Feedback**

*Because of the unfortunate and unforeseen delays in the actual development of the digital tutorial (see section below which details problems with mastering the GLO tool for example), student feedback on the content of the tutorial will only become available in the second semester of 2008-09 academic year. This will be forwarded in due course. Informally, small groups of students who have had the opportunity to see the video while it was being created were very supportive of both the idea of creating such videos, very engaged by the material available through Newsfilm Online and argued that this would be a good supplement to lecture materials (in written format) that are normally posted on our module areas in the University's VLE.*

**Observations for  
future projects**

*My observations relate primarily to the 'technology side of things'. The main problem that I have experienced has been in relation to the proscribed use of the GLO tool to create the digital tutorial. I have had significant problems using the tool. Transferring the Newsfilm Online files into FLASH files for use with the GLO took some time. However, once this (small) hurdle was overcome, others followed. The GLO itself presents me with various 'glitches' and 'bugs' that only became apparent when working to finally create the tutorial after gathering all of the material together. Neither of the two pattern templates offered by the GLO Maker were appropriate for my project. The freestyle pattern tool creator in the 'Create Storyline' section of the GLO was much better and I was happy to develop the tutorial using this. However, the problem with this was that the 'freestyle' option also had limitations and constraints. For example, the amount of text that could be written in the text boxes once the 'Create Screens' was used, was minimal and didn't allow me to give sufficient background information that I felt was both necessary and appropriate for the tutorial. On numerous occasions, text was 'cut' and missing because there was a limit on how long the sections could be and this was NOT made clear in the 'Create Screens' tab.*

*Because of such problems, I decided that the only way to proceed was to create the tutorial as a PowerPoint and integrate the Newsfilm Online clips into the PowerPoint as media clips. Consequently, the FLASH versions of the files were no longer useful and I had to change everything into wmv files. I was disappointed at having to take this decision because I felt that the PowerPoint was not as aesthetically pleasing in terms of format and layout as the GLO tool might have been*



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*had it worked properly.*

*On a very positive note, I would say that the wealth of material that is available from Newsfilm Online is phenomenal. It will make the lectures and seminars much more interesting and engaging for the students once we get over the small hurdle of actual presentation. I would intend to further develop a series of other 30 minute digital tutorials using the content available on Newsfilm Online.*

*In addition to this, the support and guidance from Darren Marsh at the HEA C-SAP subject centre has been of huge benefit to me. For future projects, I would perhaps suggest that the support and assistance for funded projects is more technical in orientation. I would have really appreciated a technical expert assigned to me from the outset of the project to help me through the minefield of learning to creating flash files and develop digital work that is aesthetically pleasing.*

*Overall, it was been a very rewarding experience for me. I can see how the creation of such tutorials will have real pedagogic benefits for my class and plan to develop this further.*