

The Arts and Science communication module: 50538

Submission: 5 minute arts video and critical reflection.

Deadline: 21st May 2020

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Critical reflection on creation of five minute video: *Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*

Video to be accessed here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lgttd9_DGpk

The creation of the video "*Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*" during the lockdown due to Coronavirus presented one of the most challenging working environments to date to complete a piece of science communication. With daily life changing significantly, planned approaches to this arts video had to adapt to the situation and original plans had to change significantly.

The biggest challenges created by the impact of Covid19 has been access to external contributors to inform and provide scope for content and messaging. This significantly changed my initial plans; rather than having content driven by a contributor in a traditional web 2.0 approach (Procter, R et al,2010) I suddenly had to choose content which I could curate myself from scratch.

The main driver for content was something which interested me and I could do from the confines of social distancing. Due to the mental health impacts upon myself from the covid19 situation, this enabled me to stay motivated and continue work on the project. Therefore it was the topic and confines which dictated the focus on mindfulness and neurology.

The development of this video on a subject matter really unknown for me, not having a neuro-science background presented its own challenges. Not only did I have to research, and understand neuroscience, but then had to be transformed into something understandable for a non-academic audience. This took a considerable amount of time during the development phase of the project and limited the time availability to work on the artistic output.

Creation of this video challenged my artistic creation skills as to what could be achieved on a laptop and GoPro style camera, from the confines of my flat and once-a-day exercise. With "*Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*" there are three key areas to evaluate; the face to camera approach, animation segments, and soundscapes.

Face to camera approach.

Due to the constrictions on creativity as mentioned above, the most adopted approach within the video "*Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*" is direct presenting to the camera, in what I class as mimicking a Youtuber style. This approach includes directly speaking to the camera as if talking directly to that audience member, clean lighting and some home-esque elements in the background.

I chose this approach not only for ease but also as a way of targeting the young audience who typically watch Youtube videos. Research has found in the UK 80% of 18 year olds upwards use the social media platform, and the biggest age demographic is 18-24 year olds. (Cast from Clay, 2018). This is perfect for my messaging within the video as the types of mindfulness activities mentioned traditionally would lean towards the interests of young females.

When looking into the interests of my audience, Youtube demographics and audience segmentation became an interesting tool and allowed me to further understand my audience. For looking to see who else this video may reach offers a strong evidence base that could be consulted for future developments. (Youtube, 2020). This alongside the fact as a mid-20's female presenter also appeals to this audience. Within this video creation I aimed to draw upon learnings from my science communication as a life performance piece (Lacey, H, 2019a).

When considering this audience I did consider other social media platforms such as TikTok, whose 41% of users are aged 16 to 24, with 44% of users being female. (Omnicores Agency, 2020). Although a slight bias towards male users, this platform would have offered equal opportunity for my audience, the choice to not use this platform was due to my time constraints and inexperience in the application. There was also a bias that shorter TikToks were more popular and the narrative of my piece did not easily lend itself to shorter artistic forms.

Animation segments.

The creation of the simplistic animations within the video "*Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*" offers some light relief from presenting to the camera, and this was the main rationale behind the use of this tool. To help keep audiences engaged, best practice for video outputs is to have multiple camera shots and footage related to what is being discussed. (Hamline University, 2020). Again, due to coronavirus lockdown effects, gathering this alternative footage was a challenge and animation was a way to overcome this and challenge myself to learn a new skill.

Upon hindsight I would have created, given more time, specific data visualisation regarding the mindfulness research and neuroscience. This would have been more factually accurate and given more gravitas to the artistic output. However, the fact my messaging was more generic and gives an overview about mindfulness research, this would have been a challenge. This is something I would consider if I was to create an artistic output in relation to a specific research paper or output.

Soundscape creation.

Drawing upon my journalistic routes, I wanted a method to bring in other voices to the research and add a variety of personal elements to the story. Bringing in other voices through the use of voxpops enabled me to bring in diversity to the piece (Peter, C. 2019). From my experience within journalism and media, encouraging contributors is normally a challenge. However in this instance, with my approach of recruitment through social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, this was a relatively easy task which adhered to the government guidelines of social distancing.

One of the learning curves with this particular approach was in regards to ethics. This was brought to my attention via fellow science communication professionals on Twitter. This, first of all, was a significant realisation that actually others within the community were watching the work I was producing. Looking into this brought me back to my learnings on ethics in science communication, and that actually there is no one school of thought. (Lacey, H, 2019b).

After reviewing the University of Salford's ethical guidelines (2020), and guidance from my tutor experienced within science communication practices, I concluded that due to the anonymisation of data, and that contributors opted in to send their voxpop recordings, this was deemed enough consent for the content to be used without needing to go to an ethics panel. In hindsight, going forward I would need to think of ethics implications at the start of projects rather than during to ensure that no ethical codes were broken during my creations or science communication practice.

To conclude, the creation of "*Mindfulness during coronavirus; how does it work?*" video, under the constraints of coronavirus, have exceeded my expectations in what can artistically be achieved under such conditions. Of course, under normal circumstances, I feel that so much more could be achieved through the merging of science and arts in this manner. However, this experience has provided some excellent learning on how science communication can be produced in challenging times, the ethical balance regarding contributor content, and how in my personal circumstances working with a scientific contributor is of significance. For me, although I am proud of learning a new science topic and applying this to a video, this significantly impacted the quality of the potential of science related content, and that simply learning the basics of a subject does not lead to the most informative content. However in this situation and for this

target audience this has been acceptable, but is not something I would usually accept and settle for within my work.

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