

# How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?

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## What are effective ways to share travel narratives online and is there a better way?

Submitted by: Thomas Norton

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### Abstract

This project examines how blogs currently present their travel narratives through challenging the predominant form of blogs being presented in reverse chronological order. Building on the approach to narrative put forward by Nack (2011). Empirical research on blogging was used to develop alternative ways to present travel narratives. Different aspects of the narrative explore how the blogger comments on an event, the medium and presentation of the blog and the motivation and psychological attributed of the blogger. Analysis of contemporary blogs and a dedicated blogger forum contribute to requirements to develop an alternative presentation for narrative based travel blogs. This design, created through user centred development, was tested against a standard presentation for two exemplar travel blogs. The alternative presentation was found to provide the blogs audience with more understanding of the time purpose and event parts of the narrative. However the current presentation was found to provide a better understanding of the author aspect of narrative.

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## **Chapter 1 - Project outline**

This project starts by defining the first principles that the project is based on theoretical research carried out. These are what a blog is, who writes them and what this project understands narrative to be. After these first principle definitions have been found the project will explore the different aspects of the narrative, as the project defines it, in turn based on theoretical research. These different parts of narrative stem from both the literature definition of narrative and the further discussion given in the literature. This exploration centres on the event the narrative is commenting on, how the narrative is presented, the motivation of the author, the role of the audience and the intercommunication that can occur between the blogger and their audience. Each of these topics allows the project to focus on a smaller part of the narrative in turn while linking the implications between literature sources.

The event that the blogger is commenting on will discuss the how the blogger selects events to blog about and how they chose the overall topic for their blog. In these sections the project highlights theoretical research into different blogs that have been created based on different events created for different purposes. Some of the blogs explored include personal blogs, community blogging and blogging during conflicts. The project aims to highlight the variety that exists in blogosphere and the implications the choice of event has to the rest of blog. In addition the project aims to highlight how important the idea chosen of event to comment upon is to the success of the blog in terms of getting the message that you wish to tell out there.

The project then looks at the presentation and the medium of the blog. In this the project looks at two groups of presentation principles, surface structures and deep structures. Surface structures focus on how the layout of the blog in this the choice of medium and the implication of this choice are explored touching back to the earlier section on what a blog is. The deep structures, on the other hand, focus on how the elements used on the blog convey the narrative to the audience. This is explored by looking at the implications of the quality of the writing in the blogs along with the implications of the use of other mediums such as videos and pictures have to meaning.

The project then goes on to look at the literature which explores the motivation and psychological factors of the blogger. In this the project explores who the blogger is and why they choose to blog. The project does this by looking at the personality profiles of successful bloggers who use different blogging tools. Following this the project looks at the reasons that blogger blog for. The project aims to show that the bloggers are generally fit into one personality architecture with clear reasons for blogging.

The project then goes on to explore the literature surrounding the reader's motivations to view and interact with blogs. In this section the goals for the audience are established and the impact of these goals for the blogger. The impact of these goals affects both the preceding sections, at that point, based on the choice of event, the motivation of the blogger and the presentation of the blog.

The literature aspect of the project concludes by looking at the intercommunication that can occur in blogging. The project aims to highlight the two styles of intercommunication that can occur namely merging and two way dialogs and the affect these have to narrative. It also explores the wiliness of both the blogger and the audience to participate in the communication and the benefits that communication has to expanding the narrative presented by the blogger to their audience. The project focuses on the idea of character based storytelling being used in order to expand the narrative being presented above and beyond what the blog currently includes.

Once the literature has been explored, for the different aspects of the narrative that can be found in various literature sources, the project will then identify issues to be looked into for the second half of the project. These issues will be set in the travel blogging domain in order to understand this narrative better. The project will look at these issues in a similar way to the way that the literature was explored. This was to look at

each sub element of narrative in turn. This was done by undertaking studies to identify primary research to base claims upon. The project started by looking at the surface structures, deep structures and the intercommunication used in travel blogs. This was done by looking at the top ten travel blogs for their content. The surface structures looked at in this section included the medium that the blogs used and the style of blogging that took place. The deep structures explored will be the ordering and linking present in the blogs and their articles. The intercommunication is also explored by looking at the tools the blogger provides to their audience in order for conversations to take place both on the blog and using external communication methods such as social networks.

Following on from this study the project goes on to explore other mediums used in travel blogs. These include video blogs and podcasts. The study again focuses on the intercommunication, surface structures and deep structures of the blogs. The project undertakes this study by looking at the top ten podcasts and the top ten video blogs. The project aims to highlight the differences that occur in the narrative being told when the blogger uses different mediums.

The project then goes on to explore the motivation and psychology of bloggers though a separate study looking at the opinions of the bloggers. This was done by collecting primary research from a forum which blogger use to communicate about blogging on. In this they highlight how they write their articles, the external issues that they encounter with their blogs and their wiliness to communicate with their audience.

The project then focuses on the intercommunication aspect of blogging. In this section a study is carried out in order to identify the use of different communication methods and what these methods mean for both the blogger and their audience. This was done by focusing on some of the blogs looked at in the previous studies again focusing this time on the communication that occurs both on the blog and on external communication platforms. The project aims to highlight both the methods used and why they are successful for the blogger and their audience.

The project will then go on to create a new design for blogs which unites the content of blogs in a different way to the preconceived notion of requiring blogs to be ordered chronologically. This is done by using the literature and primary research to identify the users, the blogger and their audience, expectations. These expectations where used to inform user scenarios, use cases and user requirements. From this point an initial range of designs where shown to potential end users to get their feedback. Based on this feedback the project selected a design to undergo a second iteration of user centred development. This further provided feedback on the design and the improvements that can occur. This feedback was used to come up with a final design which was then in turn used to encode existing blogs in order to conduct a final study.

In this final study the new design based on the user feedback was used to compare with the excising designs of blogs which rely on the preconceived notion that blogs should be ordered reverse chronologically. This was done by showing potential end uses the same blogs encoded in different ways. The participants where then asked about different part of the narrative to gage their understanding using each design. The project aims to highlight the differences to narrative understanding that can occur when the presentation aspect of narrative is changed. In particular how the notion that blogs must be ordered reverse chronologically is not necessarily the best way to present the narrative to the audience.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature review**

The preceding section highlighted that the project will start by undertaking theoretical research which later empirical research will be based upon. In this chapter the project aims to look at the different parts of narrative in turn in order to explore the use of narratives in blogs and the implications of this.

### **2.1 - Introduction**

The first section of the literature review will look at the domain area of blogging. This aims to explore the basic ideas and concepts around the project along with creating an initial frame for more in depth later discussions to be built on top of. It starts with the most general ideas of what blogs and travel blogs are, why they are important and different classifications of the different styles that the blogs can take. This is to build a base level of knowledge of the technical terms and ideas currently established in the field. This will also show the definitions that the remainder of the project will use.

The project makes the choice to explore the widest range of different blogging platforms based on the initial definition found in the “What is a blog?” subsection. As a result the project looks at traditional text based blogs as much as blogs using different mediums such as blogs exclusively using videos or sound. In addition to this the project also looks in depth at less traditional blogs which exist in social networks as they both satisfy the definition of blogging and are being more frequently by bloggers either exclusively or to enrich their traditional blogs.

It then goes on to consider the role of the blogger also known as the author of a blog. This section will focus in turn at different aspects of the blogger starting with who they are. This centres around the classifications of the types of bloggers that exist based on the style of content that they produce.

The final part of the initial section looking at the background knowledge explores the way that the blogger creates their narrative and the different styles this narration can take. This looks at how the stories are perceived by the reader along with different ways of categorising these stories. In particular this section looks at how the narrative can be kept coherent without loss of meaning across posts and how narratives can be told in nonlinear ways such as using interactions. The project looks at different classifications for different narratives along with the classifications of what makes up a narrative. It also explores how tagging content can be used to help in the discovery of content along with the problems in creating successful and useful tags.

The project finds a definition of narrative based on Nack (2011) and uses this to focus each of the remaining sections of the project to different aspects of the narrative. The first of these sections focuses on the blogger commenting on an event part of the definition. In this section the project explores the bloggers choice of what events they wish to surround their narrative around and why they comment on one event and not another. The bloggers choose lots of events to base their narrative around. The project aims to highlight this verity by exploring a few of them. These include blogging during conflict, disasters and for personal reasons. The project also looks at the why the literature surrounding why a blogger comments on one event over another.

The project goes on to look at the medium and presentation of the narrative in blogging. This part of the project builds upon the ideas of the in the basic ideas of the layout of blogs. This is the surface structures of the blog. The presentation can also take into account deep structures. The project looks at this aspect of presentation too by looking at the quality of writing in the blogs and how different mediums such as pictures and videos are used to present the narrative.

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The project then explores the motivation and psychological attributes of the blogger part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. In this section the project looks at the personality of the blogger and what it means for the narrative that is presented to the user. In addition to this the project explores the motivations that the bloggers have to create their blogs and the narratives that are included inside them. The project also explores in this section the privacy concerns raised at different parts of the project.

The previous sections looked at the different parts of the definition of narrative put forward by Nack (2011). The subsequent sections look at the additional ideas that Nack (2011) puts forward. This starts by looking at the role of the reader in narrative. This section will look at the reader's role in a blogs which use different ways of delivering their content. This looks at the why they read blogs both in general and why they choose specific blogs to spend their time on. This section also looks at the impact of mobile technology currently has on reading blogs including limitations based on external environment.

The final section focuses on the last idea that is presented by Nack (2011) which is the affect that intercommunication has on the narrative being told. This section will explore the communication which exists between the blogger and their audience. This intercommunication has several different ways of existing which fall into three main groups messages in the body of a blog post, discussions on the blog post next to the content and discussions on external platforms away from the blog. This exploration looks particularly on the idea of relationships being created and maintained along with the idea of creating a community through the discussions between the two groups. This section also looks at the differing forms that intercommunication can take both in terms of the style of the communication and who the discussions are involving. The project also classifies these different communication methods using classifications found during theoretical research.

## **2.2 - What a blog is**

Blood (2002) defines a blog as a “frequently updated Web page with dated entries in reverse chronological order, usually containing links with commentary”. This definition tells us nothing about the required regularity of posts or the style that posts can take. The only guidance that Blood (2002) provides is that the blogs must be updated frequently but some blogs depending on their style could reasonably be updated weekly, monthly or even yearly. Some bloggers on the other hand do not set out set specific regularity to update their blog instead they make changes whenever they feel like it or whenever they have the time.

Baumer et al (2008) asked a sample of blog readers what they believed the definition of blogs was during semi structured interviews as part of their experiment. Different participants responded differently for example Judith considered notes on Facebook (now called status updates) and the blog option on MySpace as blogs. Both of these are often displayed in reverse chronological order. The rest of the participants focused on features of a blog such as RSS feeds, commenting and personal content. Other participants considered blogs as stressed by a conversational nature very important to a blog and this idea will be discussed in more detail in the later intercommunication section of this literature review. None of the group specifically mentioned any part of the academic definition such as dated entries or reverse chronological order.

The style of the posts, which is the name given to the individual articles on a blog, can be in various forms. These include and are not limited to text, pictures or videos. Blogs themselves can, according to Gao, et al. (2010), be further subdivided into smaller groups based on these differing styles that posts can take. Gao, et al. (2010) puts forward the groups of art blogs, photo blogs, sketch blogs, mob logs, audio blogs and video logs. The project will look in detail at these groups along with others groups found from different sources.

These smaller groups that sub divide blogging culture are based on different aspect that make up a blog. These aspects include the presentation that blogs take such as its medium. Examples of different mediums can be found in the following paragraphs and include art blogs, photo blogs, sketch blogs, audio blogs, video blogs and micro blogs.

Art blogs are web pages in which the blogger posts their art and designs. They do not generally tell a story however some art collections may appear as one. They are predominately done in order to make a name for their art and to network. The blogs often include ways to contact the artist or ways to buy the art. Examples of these kinds of blogs can be seen in the work of Wooster collective (2012), ffffound (2012) or boooooooooom (2012). In addition to the above some artist are choosing to explain or provide context about their art through including text next to their posts. The blog of James Wagner (2012) shows his art along with his textual descriptions providing additional context. Other artists provide their art and descriptions in a more informal way such as the street artist Tom Bingle (2012) also known as inkie who provides his art and comments on his Facebook profile and communications with his fans.

Photo blogs are web pages similar to that of art blogs however they, as the name suggests, include photos rather than art as the subject of their posts. Examples of these blogs include image diary (2012) and photography prison (2012). There are also sites such as the blogs at flicker (2012) and the wall street journal (2012) which try to tell stories through their use of pictures rather than text. In the world of travel blogging, which this project is centred around, there are bloggers such as Lee Brown (2012) who share their travel stories through their photographs.

Sketch blogs are web pages which include a collection of pictures but the pictures depict the author's sketches. These sketches have been scanned in or photographs taken of them in order to get them online. They too have two different styles the first is where the author just posts their sketches in reverse chronological order and the other being when the author adds texts about their sketches. Examples of ordered pictures blogs are the work of Karen Blados (2012), Laure volume (2012) and of Maxwell Paternoser (2012). Examples of sketch blogs with textual descriptions include Andrea Joseph (2012) and Chris E.O'Neill (2012).

Audio blogs or podcasts can be considered as blogs produced by the recording of a spoken voice. Podcasts, as the project will refer to them, go against Blood (2002) definition of blogs as the Podcasts are not generally posted to a webpage instead they are posted to a platform where end users can easily access them. These blogs increased in popularity since their introduction to iTunes in June 2005, due to being more easily available. (Todd Cochrane, 2005) iTunes also shows the wide range of topics that are available including comedy, news, education, sport and health. Examples of popular audio blogs include the Guardian's Football Weekly (2012), the rooster teeth podcast (2012) and science talk (2012). There are also travel bloggers using this style such as Excess baggage (2012).

Video Blogs are web pages in which the author tells the story they wish to tell using videos. The videos can be in lots of different styles. Self-shot are videos where the author points the camera on themselves and talks through the lens, such as that of Philip Defranco (2012) or Toby turner (2012). Video blogs may also be thoughts of the author placed over the top of an unrelated video such as Total Biscuit (2012) or the syndicate project (2012). In addition to the above there are travel bloggers using video blogs including Linzloves (2012) and Michelle Phan's series Wonderlust (2012).

Micro blogs are text based web pages where the length of each post is restricted. (Technology review, 2012) The most common service for this type of blogging is twitter although other services exist such as hello and even Facebook though the use of status updates. In twitter the author is restricted to just 147 characters per post. This shortening of posts also allows the personalising of posts to a given reader with the use of @replies. The individual posts on twitter are called tweets. Examples of micro blogs are the twitter pages of iJustine (2012) Hillary Duff (2012) and Rio Ferdinand (2012).



In addition to blogs being categorised and grouped based on their medium they can also be grouped by their subject. Blogs that are part of this style can be found in the following paragraphs on individual blogs, personal blogs and travel blogs.

Individual blogs generally do not fit into just one of Gao, et al. (2010) categories as the author can change how they present their blog using different mediums based on the meaning the blogger wishes to portray or their external environment when writing their blog. For instance a blogger who normally makes video blogs may make some posts on the go, by phone, and so the blog could now also be considered a moblog also. Later the same author may take a picture of a sunset to add to their blog so it can be considered as a photo blog as well.

Personal blogs is the term given to web pages which are like diary entries. (Stephen, 2008) They are generally text based but may include pictures or videos as the author decides. They are usually produced using tools similar to WordPress or Blogger. They are usually highly personal in nature such as including stories about the bloggers life and experiences but sometimes contain notes in the text referring directly to the reader such as Lara in Nardi et al (2004) paper referencing directly to her old classmates.

Travel blogs are described by Pan et al. (2007) as blogs which “express the experiences of the visitor at a specific destination”. This definition makes no indication over what these experiences are or their presentation as a result the distinction of this kind of blogging is based on presenting the experiences tied to the location that they occur in. Schmallegger and Carson (2008) shows that the experiences that the bloggers blog about fall into three categories. The first of these is general topics which include climate, cuisine, transport and culture. The second category of bloggers experiences that they blog about is general descriptions. These general descriptions include comments on the destination, attractions and activities that the blogger experiences. The final category is specific items which include the bloggers experiences of accommodation, restaurants, services and quality.

These blogs were traditionally text based but due to the reduced cost of bandwidth now include pictures and videos in addition to the text. (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008) In addition to the changes in style that have occurred the blogs themselves have been used for different purposes.

The first of style that the blogs take is consumer to consumer blogs. In this the blogger is providing their information and experiences to their audience in order to inform them. The audience are reading the blogs in order to gain information about trips that they wish to partake in in the future. In addition to this the audience may instead be interested in the goings on in the bloggers life and is reading the travel blog in a similar way to a personal blog. This is to understand what is going on in the bloggers life. This consumer to consumer style of travel blogging will be the focus for the later studies surrounding how the narrative is presented and understood.

Travel blogging can also be produced as a business to business style. In this the bloggers audience is other members of the travel industry in order to facilitate discussions with them. In addition to this the travel blogs can be produced as a business to consumer style. In this the blogger will be part of or writing for a member of the travel industry to try to persuade the audience into purchasing holidays.

Travel blogging stated in the late 1990's but has now grown into a huge industry in itself. (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008) In fact these blogs were involved in the planning of up to 20% of trips in a \$10 billion industry. This shows the huge impact that these blogs have to both individuals and business that partake in them alike.

Kaushik (2012) puts across an alternative way of categorizing blogs. These categorizations are based on how the author writes. They include the author writing about what they think, what they know, what they do, what they feel or any combination of the above. She does not make any classification over blogs that use different mediums and so her definitions can be used to describe blogs that could have multiple classifications according to Gao, et al. (2010).

In addition to grouping blogs based on the medium used and their subject, blogs can be grouped based on their use of mobile technology. This is the case on Moblogs. Moblogs are web pages built by the blogger which they can update using a mobile phone. Most of the commonly used blogging platforms such as WordPress and blogger provide the tools to create this style of blogs using smart phone apps. It does not make any reference to the medium used by the author to create their blog. The most common moblogs are twitter, Facebook along with the well-known blogging platforms described earlier. This provides the blogger with a way to share what is currently going on at the current moment. The rise of smart phones has made this style of blogging easier and this in turn has led to an increase in the adoption of this blogging style. Examples of the posts that can be made as moblogs are shown on webstagram (2012).

The project will define blogging as “frequently updated Web page with dated entries, usually containing links with commentary”. This is a modified version of the definition put forward in Blood (2002) by removing the requirement for posts to be ordered reverse chronologically. This part of the definition has been omitted due to the project aiming to look at other ways to link and order the different parts of the narrative. This definition also allows the project to look at the widest range of different blogging tools and platforms such as traditional tools and social networks. This is due to the articles on all of these sites including all the constituent elements of the blogging definition. The project looking at less traditional blogs is also backed up by the reader’s definition of blogging. This constant changing of what blogging is has changed over time and the past background can be found in Table 0-1.

In addition to the definition of blogging the project will sub categorise blogs based on their medium put forward by Gao, et al. (2010). However it will also include micro blogs and personal blogs as classifications of blogging in order to get as wide a view of different systems, used to share travel stories, as possible. In particular the project will focus on consumer to consumer style of travel blogging.

### **2.3 - The author of the blog**

The author of all such posts, in all of the above, is known as a blogger. Bloggers can fit into two different categories “content creators” and “content aggregators”. “Content creators” are the bloggers who publish content in any form that is about their own experiences. They have a definitive style or voice that the reader can identify with. They are normally an expert or have prior knowledge in the category that they write about.

“Content aggregators” bloggers, with sites similar in design to Angel et al (2006), take and relay the stories or post of “content creators”. These blogs can still take any form and is considered common courtesy to quote where the article has come from. (Slayter, 2012) Angel et al (2006) created a system called grapevine which collects information from various blogs in real time to discover interesting and surprising stories. It works out on the fly top stories based on what others have said. In this way it is a good example of content aggregation. Some micro blogging platform such as Twitter and Tumblr encourage this behaviour by providing “re-tweeting” and “re blog this” buttons respectively.

Naaman et al (2010) puts forward different classification for bloggers. They instead classify bloggers as either “meformers” or “informers”. “Meformers” are the bloggers whose posts are predominately about them and their thoughts whereas “informers” post messages that are designed to inform their audience. Naaman et al (2010) also goes on to propose the characteristics that the end users are likely to have.

Bloggers can also be classified based on who they write for. The blogger can write for themselves on their own blog which is what would be expected. However the blogger can also write for other websites in this case are guest bloggers. Guest blogging is defined by Salcido (2013) as “process in which a blog or website will accept and publish content written by another”. This is done in order to create a win: win situation for both

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the site owner and the blogger providing the content. The site owner will benefit through adding diversity to their blog and the additional posts that are created above what the blogger could ordinarily create. The blogger providing the content will gain due to getting their blog linked to on the post. This allows the blogger to gain publicity for their blog.

This project will be focused on bloggers who are “content creators” rather than “content aggregators”. This is due to the “content creators” being the bloggers who actually create the travel stories. They are there in the moment and have had the first hand experiences when trying to tell their own story rather than retell someone else’s story. This project will also make no prejudice between “meformers” and “informers”. This is because both are involved in the telling of travel stories in blogging.

The blogger no matter how they are classified falls into a standard demographic profile which was found by a 2008 survey on who bloggers are. This survey was not done under controlled circumstances but was done by a blogger. (Garrett, 2008) so these figures need to be taken with a pinch of salt as they are likely to be reflected by the readers of his blog. He found that a third of the nine hundred and eleven people who responded were female and sixty two per cent were male. They also are very likely to have further education (87%) and are from a wide range of ages with the only significant drop off being those under twenty (5%) or over sixty (4%). This shows that there is in fact no one reason for blogging or one type of blogger but instead a wide range of people from a wide range of backgrounds will blog.

The project will use content creators/ content aggregators and meformers/ informers classifications of different bloggers going forward based on the best way to talk about the bloggers at the time.

## **2.4 – Narratives and Story telling**

Nack (2011) defines a narrative as “making a comment about a certain event, following an idea about the medium and form of presentation, which is ground in one’s own motivational and psychological attributes”. The first part of this definition talks about an “event” this can be anything that the author decides. In this way the event can be anything that Kausik (2012) classifies as a blog. This is anything that a blogger can write about the things that they feel, do or think. In blogging the events that the bloggers choose to write about are wide ranging including conflicts (See Section 2.5.2.2), aiding in disaster recovery (See Section 2.5.2.2) or their personal life (See Section 2.5.2.1) amongst others. In these events the blogger wishes to talk about themselves and their feelings about the events. These people can be categorised as “meformers” (See Section 2.3). These fit into the things the blogger does classification of Kausik (2012) group. Bloggers can also get there events as news in a topic that they find interesting. In this case the event might be a new product or idea that the blogger wishes to share with their audience. These bloggers can be categorised as “informers” (See Section 2.3). These fit into Kausik (2012) thinking group although not exclusively.

The definition goes on to talk about the presentation that the narrative can take. In this case the narrative can be presented in any form so long as the blogger can use it to articulate the event chosen for their article. The presentation can include pictures, videos and text such as the mediums put forward by Gao, et al (See Section 2.2). However the presentation may also be providing the narrative through communication with their audience or on external social networks (See Section 2.9). The presentation of the narrative may also be across different articles or even between where the blog is situated and the other tools the blogger uses to communicate with their audience. The narrative must be presented in a coherent, clear and easy to understand for their audience. As a result the quality of the bloggers writing will also affect the presentation and in turn the narrative (See Section 2.6.1).

Nack (2011) also shows how the narrative can be presented through inter-relationships between the reader and the writer. This relies on the blogger making a choice on the presentation of the narrative to include this communication and the reader

contributing to the discussions. He also highlights how the social environment that surrounds the narrative affects it. This social environment can be both online such as the integration with social media websites or real world connections that link the blogger and the reader. The blogger can also use these tools to ensure meaning is preserved and to give further information to the reader. This will allow the blogger to provide further, deeper and more tailored narrative to the reader. In addition to this Nack (2011) puts forward that “Narration is a structure-oriented activity that begins in the mind of the narrator but is completed in the mind of the receiver”. In this Nack (2011) puts forward that the narrative being told is not exclusively told by the blogger but the meaning is derived by what the audience take from the blog. However this means that the audience can get the wrong or unintended meaning of the narrative that the blogger is trying to tell.

The final part of the definition talks about the motivations and psychological parts of the blogger. The motivation and end goal for the blogger will depend on the event that they choose to talk about. In addition the personality (See Section 2.7.1) and mood of the blogger will affect the way that the narrative is told (See Section 2.7.3).

In travel blogging the event part of the narrative is the holiday or trip that the blogger has been on. This will incorporate the things that they do on their trip and how they feel about them. In this case the likelihood is that the bloggers will be talking about their experiences of their holiday and so are “meformers”. However the project will also look at the bloggers who show the event to inform others about the places that they visit. The presentation of the narrative in travel blogs is of the bloggers own choice and so can be in any of the styles presented by Gao et al (See Section 2.2). The motivation and psychological factors which affect the narrative are also based on the blogger. In this way the personality of the individual blogger will drive this part of the narrative rather than any specific style being necessary to travel blogging.

Nack (2011) goes on to distil narrative into two groups “the story being told” and “the form that the story is being presented in”. The story being told or fabula is the “entire structure of causal-chronological joint events within a given time and space”. The chronological nature of this part of the narrative relates back to Blood (2002) definition of a blog being a “frequently updated Web page with dated entries in reverse chronological order, usually containing links with commentary”. However this chronological ordering is not the part of the definition blogging that this project is focusing on. Instead the project is interested in new ways that links can be created in the narrative. So in this case the most important parts of the definitions are “the link between time and space” along with “links with commentary”. The time part of the fabula mimics Blood (2002) requirement for the dated entries. This provides the reader with some external situation and ordering to the narrative that is being told. The space element of the fabula is the position of the blogger while they are writing their blog. In travel blogging this will change as the blogger visits different locations. This is backed up by Nack (2011) proposing that narration is a “structure-oriented activity”. This is such that the plot of the narrative is linked in a natural way which tends to be done by time order. However this is not exclusively the case as a result other ways of linking are sufficient so long as the content is linked so that relationships and meaning from the events is established.

The other part of the narrative is the “form the story is being presented in” or plot. This is described as the “themes, goals, events or actions”. The theme is the separate elements that make up the story and how they link together. Nack (2011) argues that at least one theme must be present to make the story coherent. The themes of the blog can be anything that the blogger chooses however in travel blogging the theme is likely to be the holiday or trip that the blogger takes and what they did during it. Nack (2011) also shows that the theme is used to capture the interests of the audience. This capturing of the audience’s attention is important for lots of different reasons including to gain a following for the blog and to get the audience to participate and interact with the blog (See Section 2.9.1).

The goals part of the narrative is what the blogger intends for their audience to take away from the article. The blogger either wishes to tell the stories of their life or to

inform their audience about a topic. In travel blogging the blogger will have the goal to either inform their audience about their experiences while at a location or to inform them about what they can see and do at the locations they visit. This again reflects the personal choices of the blogger and is ground in the “motivational and psychological attributes” of Nack (2011) definition of narrative.

The event part of the narrative has already been discussed as the topic or domain that the blogger wishes to describe to their audience. The final part of “the form the story is presented in” is the actions of the blogger. This will incorporate the way that they tell their story this can be both on their main blog and also incorporates the blogger’s actions on other sites such as their communication on external social networks. As a result bloggers tend to have several different blogs that they interact with. These can all impact the narrative that the blogger wishes to tell.

Nack (2011) also goes on to show that the plot of the narrative is the meeting of “surface structures” or expression and “deep structures” or context. The expression or “surface structures” is the same as Nack’s (2011) presentation of context part of his definition of narrative. The context or “deep structures” are the words or other medium that the blogger chooses to use to present the narrative that they wish to tell. This “deep structure” is the part that the project is most interested in, in particular how this presentation of the plot of the narrative can flow from the blogger to their audience. In addition to this, the project focuses on when the reader gets a different meaning from the plot than that of which the blogger intended.

Nack’s (2011) definition of narrative, particularly the sub categories, uses the term story as a constituent element. This indicates that narrative may be a higher level term. Qamra, et al. (2006) gives a definition of story in blogging culture being “a set of blog entries that are about a specific issue and that reflect a discussion in blogspace between members of an online community”. The specific issue part of the definition is same as events in Nack (2011) description of narrative. This is the content that the blogger wishes to talk about. This in travel blogging is the holiday or trip that the blogger wishes to discuss. The discussion part of the definition again highlights how the communication between the blogger and their audience can affect and add to the story that is being told (See Section 2.9). This is further highlighted later in this section which shows how narrative or story can be discovered with a character based story telling. In this the story or narrative is discovered by the communication from the blogger and their audience talking about the event or topic.

Qamra, et al. (2006) goes on to identify its stories using a Content-Community-Time model. This model has several similarities with Nack’s (2011) evaluation of narrative. The first part of this model is Content this is what the story is about. This is similar to the Nack (2011) use of the event to describe the topic that the blogger is discussing in their articles. The blogger can decide what the content of their blog is but in travel blogging this again will be the holiday or trip that the blogger takes. The community part of the model is the intercommunication between the reader and the blogger (See Section 2.9) and the way that the character based storytelling can aid the narrative. This idea that the community adds to the story shows that the blogs relies on their audience as much as the audience relies on the blogger to create the narrative. In this way the story that is being told is not just created by the blogger which was echoed by Nack (2011). Finally the time part of the model is the delay between the blogger creating the post and the reader discovering, reading and possibly responding to it. This is due to different bloggers working in different ways. Some bloggers especially those using social networks as their main blog will write their articles in the moment rather than writing them up at a later date. In travel blogging this has more implications due to it often not being possible to post the articles in the moment that they are created. This is due to some locations not having access to mobile data or the access to the internet being too expensive. Whether the price of the data is too expensive will be dependent again on the psychological attributes of the blogger and their opinions.

Qamra, et al. (2006) further explores the time element of the story identification model and identifies hot stories. These are stories where the time stamp on posts is most recent. Hot stories also tend to be the posts that will be at the top of a page. This is due to the reverse-chronological ordering of posts on blogs currently. Due to the posts being at the top these are the stories that the reader is most likely to see and thus will be the posts that new users will decide whether the reader wishes to continue reading. These posts are not necessarily the most relevant to the readers. This may result the audience may not be as engaged with the content and so may not return or interact with the blog. This unwillingness to interact with the blog will make narratives through communication and character based storytelling more difficult. This idea of content being almost exclusively linked and viewed using chronological order is something this project wants to move away from. Instead it is looking at different ways to link the content to bring the most relevant stories for the bloggers audience to the same level of prominence on the blog as hot stories currently do. In travel blogging time may not be as relevant as the location to the audience. This is based on what the audience's goals are when they are viewing the blog.

Qamra, et al. (2006) goes on to explore how stories can be in a single post or continued across posts. A story being a single post goes slightly against the given definition of story being "a set of blog entries". A story using a single post is likely to be describing one of Nack's (2011) events. More interestingly a story that evolves across posts will have a level of evolution and continuation between the posts. They are likely to be tightly linked and may include one or more event elements. In the chosen domain of travel blogs the multiple posts may be when not all the information about a point of interest can be placed in a single post or used to describe different elements that make up a holiday.

There are two main ways currently used to move between posts in a blog however this project hopes to explore other potential ways in later sections. The first of the current ways is using the time stamp between the posts to indicate the order of the posts and thus the order they should be read so that the story unfolds in the correct order. This relies heavily on the time part of the content-community-time model. In addition to this it will benefit hot stories and justify these stories taking prominence on the blog.

The second of these ordering is the use of tags. Tags, according to Sen, et al. (2006), are "short free form labels used to describe items in a domain. They help people remember and organize information such as email (GMail), web sites (del.icio.us), photos (Flickr), blogs (Technorati), and research papers (CiteU-Like)". This allows the blogger to assign words to their posts to describe their posts in order to group like content together. A travel blogger may tag all the churches that they visit with a church tag in order to group them together. The reader can select this tag along with any other that they wish to explore from a list in order to see all of the posts which have that tag.

Gupta et al. (2010) has done some interesting work into this area. Firstly they highlighted the motivations the author of the tags, namely the blogger, for adding the tags to their posts which is the motivation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. The motivations include improving the ease of future retrieval, attract attention, improve presentation, opinion expression and social signalling. Future retrieval is important as it allows the user to find older content that is relevant to their interests as they had selected a given tag. This aims to get around hot stories getting the most prominent positions on the blog. Attracting attention is helpful for the reader to notice the content that they are looking for more quickly and easily. The other motivations serve the idea of giving the reader an idea of what they are about to read and start them off with an initial idea of where the story is going and what they should be feeling.

Gupta et al. (2010) also identifies the common types of tags that authors add to their work. The categories that were highlighted include but not limited to content based tags, context based tags, ownership tags, subjective tags and personal tags. Content based tags are the tags which show what the post is about. This gives the reader short or one word idea about the meaning of the story or narrative based on the content of the given

post. This is the context part of Qamra, et al. (2006) way of identifying stories based using a Content-Community-Time model.

Context based tags provide information about time and location that surrounds the post. In travel blogging this is likely to be used very commonly due to it being an important element in the stories that are being told. In fact the whole blog is based around locations and the events and experiences the blogger has at these locations. This will give the time element of Qamra, et al. (2006) way of identifying stories based using a Content-Community-Time model.

Ownership tags provide information to the reader either about the owner of the content tags such as Microsoft owning windows OS or the owner of a post such as the specific author of the post in a blog which has multiple contributors. Ownership tags will not have as much effect over this project as it will be limiting the blogs that I will be looking at and the future designs to blogs that have one author.

Subjective tags highlight emotions in the post (See Section 2.7.3). This can provide additional information about the story with regard to the bloggers feelings about the post. Personal tags are used to get the post to the target audience that the blogger wishes to reach. This can allow the readers to get the content that is directed to them such as Lara in Nardi et al (2004) having a tag for classmates. This will hope to address the Community element of Qamra, et al. (2006)'s Content-Community-Time model. This is done in two ways, firstly due to emotion and emotional responses increasing engagement with content and thus an increase commenting due to Shmueli, et al. (2012) argument that commenting requires large engagement from the reader. Secondly to get the correct audience to the post in order to get the groups needed to create a discussion.

The micro blogging website makes the greatest use of these tags using a feature called hash tags. Huang et al. (2010) defines a hash tag as "the specific name for a tag in twitter. Hash tags derive their name from the fact that they are preceded by the symbol '#', also known as a hash mark". Twitter puts a lot of importance on these posts by allowing searching based on them and prominence on their site by tracking and displaying the most commonly used tags (Huang et al, 2010). These tags are generally genderless but some may be more common in one gender as highlighted by Cunha et al. (2012). This further shows that there are differences between bloggers and the styles that they write in. The use of tagging in this way can provide the reader with additional context information while minimising the characters used in the post. It also serves to focus the writing of the blogger into shorter parts using the tags to provide this extra contextual information while still telling the whole story that they wish to tell.

Tomás et al. (2009) found that these forms of tagging have two key problems. Firstly any given tag can experience low tag reuse. This is where the tags that the blogger has already established are not continually used and so they become less effective for the reader to use. This can be due to the blogger using names that are similar to describe the same would be tag rather than the same word such as instead of continually using the tag of houses they may come up with additional tags such as manor, manor house and property instead of re-using the initial tag. Secondly retrieval problems which are where the reader looking at the tag gets little or no understanding of what the blogger actually expects to tell the reader. To get around these problems Tomás et al. (2009) and Tomás et al. (2010) highlighted that the tags should be developed using stories and narrative instead. This is where the blogger will tell a story with the tags rather than work out what tags they wish to use in an unstructured approach.

Tomás et al. (2010) identified, through interviews, different elements that are important to creating a story or narrative. This can create more useful tags to the user if the user requires a tag more closely linked to the content of a story. However the paper does not make any argument to what the user is looking for. The assumption that the project takes is that readers are looking for these stories and narratives in the blogs due to their wish to keep in touch and to virtually people watch (Joinson, 2008). These categories are Time, Location, Author, Purpose, Photo type, Event, Device, Description, People and Quality. Photo type, Device and Quality all relate to the medium that Tomás

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et al. (2010) chose to explore namely pictures and so will relevant to blogs using that medium such as photo blogs. Time and Location fit into Nack (2011) sub category of narrative namely the form that the story is being presented in. People, event and Purpose relate back to creating the emotional connections that are needed to get reader engagement and response.

Some of these categories, Tomás et al. (2010) argues, lead to easy transition between one another. This is interesting as Qamra, et al. (2006) points out that the stories can be formed across blog posts. These links may be able to provide the reasons how and why stories can flow between posts. The most common transitional links are from device, time and location leading to quality, location and event respectively.

This different style of tagging allows the bloggers to create more useful tags which are more easily reusable as they fit into a definitive structure. This use of story to create tags helps the blogger to provide more information (5.9 times more information according to Tomás et al. (2010)) and improve tag reuse (94% reuse in Tomás et al. (2010)).

These tags are very good at describing simple content, single narrative and single medium content but this is not always the case. There are times when the style of the blog includes different mediums in order to create more complex split narratives and to create more immersive content. Adabala et al. (2010) looked at how a story surrounding a sight of historical interest can be shown to those who have never visited the site. This used several different mediums in order to create an experience for the user and create an emotional response to the story that is being told. This looks at the medium and presentation of Nack's (2011) definition of narrative. Adabala et al. (2010) produced two systems exploring two narratives and two experiences for the users of the system. Both systems included multiple media streams, animated slideshows, Photosynth, audio, Video, pictures and clickable annotations. Looking at Adabala et al. (2010) shows how blogs can blogs which regularly use different mediums can use this to create a more immersive and interactive experiences.

Adabala et al. (2010) designs got high praise from the people that they interviewed. One of those that was interviewed highlights this by saying "Oh, it is like a movie!" this shows how immersive an experience these multimedia narratives can provide. The likening to a movie is also interesting as movies can be considered art as they evoke an emotional response in their audience. So if these systems can get this far can others. With this level of engagement commenting and communication will become more common and stories with more depth. This is due to a later idea that engagement will get the bloggers audience to interact and comment with the blog (See Section 2.9).

Adabala et al. (2010) highlights that the systems were also very easy to use and as such do not interfere with the user's enjoyment and immersion. In this way the blogs designs need to be simplistic and easy to use in order for the narrative to be easily followed and the system used effectively. The ease of use also hopes to ensure that the reader does not get incorrect information due to confusion about the system itself.

This idea of immersion being important to engaging the audience in the plot of the narrative is continued in Camanho et al. (2008) where they looked at narratives in interactive storytelling. This form of storytelling is slightly different to a blog as it allows the user to shape the content that they are receiving as they receive it. Blogs on the other hand tend to just present the information, narrative and story in the way the blogger wishes it to be seen. Instead the interaction is established through the use of the communication tools described earlier. Commenting seems to be the most interactive part of this process due to the continuing back and forth between the reader and blogger in order to explore more of the story as the discussion unfolds.

Camanho et al. (2008) highlights additional story telling mechanisms of character-based and plot-based mechanisms. Character based stories are ones in which the narrative is given through the interaction between people which Nack (2011) shows that narrative in blogging can flow in this way. This serves to get the users to perform more actions to get the story from the characters. In blogging situations this is like the



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blogger making their post then the reader commenting on it which then starts the exploration of the story that the blogger wishes to tell. In this case the story or narrative exploration is more like a conversation or chat rather than the blogger just telling the story. This is focusing the whole story telling experience around Baumer et al (2008) idea of blogging being the intercommunication between the reader and the blogger. This type of storytelling will only work if the two groups are present. The communication requires both the blogger and reader input, if the readers do not post then the blogger is unable to add more content and if the blogger is not present then the readers are left waiting. This highlights the importance of time to the relationship between the blogger and reader particularly if this style of storytelling is used. Due to the increased communication the blogger may over share information that they did not initially intend to.

Plot based approach on the other hand give the reader set information that the blogger wants to provide to the reader. In this way it is the more traditional version of providing the reader with a story or narrative in blogging. It allows the blogger to create fixed timeline for the story including a defined start, middle and end. This style Camanho et al. (2008) argues provides less interaction from the user but provide the blogger with easier to guarantee coherence and an increase in dramatic power. With less interaction with the audience this allows the full narrative to be given without requiring audience participation. This can get around problems with limited end user engagement or in situations where the blogger cannot respond immediately. In travel blogging these delays are more likely due to the blogger constantly changing time zones and being in a different time zone to their audience. So the audience will not get responses to their messages as quickly. However this assumes that the blogger writes and publishes their articles on location but this is not always the case as some blogs are created after the event such as the content aggregation style of blogging.

These two styles give the blogger yet another conscious choice over how they want their blog to be read. This will relate back to different parts of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. This includes the event the blogger is interested in, the medium they use and their motivation for doing so.

This project will be using narrative rather than story as it is more general and will continue to allow the most general and wide ranging styles for future designs. In addition to this the definition of narrative fits in more with the rest of the background work done in this literature review. Using the definition of narrative also does not include a necessity to have posts ordered chronologically which the definition of stories has. This, similar to the change in definition of blogging, allows different styles of ordering blogs to be explored. This definition of narrative focuses on the blogger commenting on an event, the medium and presentation that the blogger uses and the motivation and psychology of the blogger.

This project will also focus on plot based approach to storytelling however for stories that transcend different posts will use models better suited to this style. However the project will look at the best ways to engage the blogger and reader in order to better facilitate the intercommunication and community formation necessary for a successful blog.

The project will also describe the narrative that is gained through discussions between the reader and the blogger as communication rather than character based story telling. This is due to the communication being the only way that blogs currently deliver this form of storytelling. This will include both the commenting on the articles along with the communication on external tools to deliver additional narrative. This area is very important to the project and more exploration can be found in a later section (See Section 2.9).

## **2.5 - Commenting on an event**

The first part of Nack's (2011) definition of narrative in blogging is "making a comment about a certain event". In this case the events are the story that the blogger wishes to tell to their audience. This is backed up by the definition of events given by

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Business Dictionary (2013) of an “Occurrence happening at a determinable time and place, with or without the participation of human agents. It may be a part of a chain of occurrences as an effect of a preceding occurrence and as the cause of a succeeding occurrence.” The project will look at the ways in which the bloggers select these events that they wish to write about. The project will then look at some of the events that bloggers choose to create their narratives around and the commentary that they provide around these events. These events include those where meformer is talking about their own lives such as personal blogs and in some cases during conflicts or disaster recovery. The conflicts and disaster recovery can also be seen to try and inform others about what is going on. As a result these along with community blogging and narratives in TV shows will be explored as the events that informers centre their narratives around.

The commenting part of the definition is defined by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2011) as “something that you say or write which gives an opinion on or explains somebody/something”. In this way commenting is any post created by a content creator no matter the content of the article or the style that the post takes.

### **2.5.1 - Blogger's likelihood to share an event**

Kiciman (2012) puts forward a group of criteria which influence bloggers likelihood to share a given event by creating a narrative. Kiciman (2012) did this by studying the micro blogging habits on twitter comparing what people say about the weather to what actually happened. It is important at this point to note that the study it is looking at a specific subsection of blogging namely micro blogs using a specific service namely Twitter. This means that it may or may not provide any insight into other areas of blogging or even other micro blogging platforms.

In Kiciman (2012) work he ensured reliability through ensuring that the weather that was compared in his project was geographically similar to the location of the blogger. This was done using the locations provided in the bloggers account however this does not take into account people being away on holiday or other events where the user is away from where they set up their account. The location information has the additional problem that the locations that the user has stated may be of any “granularity”. Kiciman (2012) removes those which are considered “too broad an area” however it is not specified how broad is too broad. In light of these shortcomings Kiciman (2012) puts forward the following criteria which contribute to the likelihood of whether an event is suitable to share; expectation, extremeness, change, sentiment, privacy concerns, population segments, mobile devices and time effects. Expectation is used to describe how normal the weather is relative to the time of year. Weather conditions that are considered to be more likely to be blogged if they are different from what normally happens at that time of year hence less expected.

Extremeness is how close a given day is to the one, three, six and twelve month high or low temperatures. Weather conditions are more likely to be blogged about if they are closer to these high or low temperatures as they are less frequent.

Change is how different the conditions are from the previous day. This is due to their contrast from the previous day. Weather conditions are considered to be more likely to be blogged about if they are substantially different to the previous day.

The following factors were not included in the research but were factors that Emre expected to effect on blogging rates. The first of these is sentiment which is that people are more likely to blog about a given weather condition if it is extremely positive rather than mildly so.

Privacy, which can be found in more detail in a later subsection of the literature review, indicated that events that are more personal are less likely to be blogged about. As an aside Kiciman (2012) states was not included in the work as there are “little if any privacy concerns” in the domain. However this depends on the style of the blog that the blogger chooses to use and the subject matter that they chose. For example bloggers in Egypt during conflict where bloggers were being killed for blogging, discussed in more

detail in a later section, privacy will be a major concern. The style of blogging that Kiciman (2012) looked at was a micro blogging platform which is designed to have all the messages publically viewable as a result the privacy concerns of members will be less.

Population segments are the dividing of the bloggers into different groups as you know more about their tendencies. This will allow social information about users to be used to indicate how likely a user will blog about a given topic.

Mobile devices are the assumption that if a user has a mobile device which can access their blog on the go they are more likely to blog about situations as they happen. This is due to the blogger being more easily able to blog about the event in the moment rather than needing to remember an event and try to recall it later where they are more likely to forget it. This is more likely to have a beneficial effect to micro blogging or photo blogging rather than blogs that require longer entries.

Finally a time effect is the assumption that a blogger is more likely to blog about an event that happens at a convenient time such as during a break or in the evening. This is likely to have had an effect on the validity of the data especially when you consider that users are more likely to post blogs in their free time such as the weekend, which the survey makes no account of. This can be further backed up using more data from Chris Garrett's survey on blogging where it is indicated that the largest group of people blog for pleasure (49%) rather than a job (4%) (Garrett, 2008).

## **2.5.2 – Blogger's selection of event**

The blogger can use the criteria set out by Kiciman (2012) in order to select the events that they wish to create narratives about. However this is for a specific post rather than a blog itself. The blog itself must be on a topic that the blogger wants to blog about and that their audience wishes to view. In addition it would be helpful for the blogger if the topic that they wish to discuss have events that bloggers wish to write about based on Kiciman (2012). In addition to this the blogger needs to have experience or expertise in the topic so that they can actively report the events that they wish to blog about. The project will now explore some of the subject matters that the bloggers decide to blog about and the commentary that bloggers choose to make about them. The project will start at looking at how bloggers centre their events on conflict and the commentary they choose to provide around this.

### **2.5.2.1 - Personal exploration**

Bloggers also often take inspiration from their own lives. This can be likened to sharing a public diary with the world or a select number of individuals. This style of blogging is most akin to personal blogs categorised by Stephen (2008). In this the blogger share their experiences of events in their life for various reasons, discussed later in this section. This also highlights how the bloggers selection of what to write about is affected by Kiciman (2012) classification of privacy. Those bloggers who elect to be more private and not wish to share as much online about their life may select stories that are not part of personal exploration. In addition the privacy concerns of bloggers are looked in more detail in a later section (See Section 2.7.7).

Nardi et al. (2004) and Schano et al. (2004) look at how individuals use blogging platforms. They found a different purpose for blogging namely to share their own lives with no-one, a select group of people or the world. The different studies get slightly different classification of the activities involved in this style of blogging. Nardi et al. (2004) categorises these activities as; updating others on activities and whereabouts, expressing opinions to influence others, seeking others opinions, thinking by writing and releasing emotional tension. Schano et al. (2004), on the other hand, has the such categories as; diary or personal record keeping, chronicle or newsletter, photo albums or

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scrapbooks, travelogues as well as status updates or progress reports, news digests and newspaper page.

For this project Nardi et al. (2004)'s updating others on activity and whereabouts and Schano et al. (2004)'s travelogues as well as status updates or progress reports groups are of particular importance.

Updating others on activity and whereabouts is interesting as it groups together events in an order. Travel stories are generally going to be a list of activities and events that the user wants to share so the two styles share a lot in their order even if their content is different. In Nardi et al. (2004)'s study they talked to a few bloggers and readers about their opinion on the topic. Lots of the users that they looked at commented on the importance to see what was going on when they could not be there as being very important to them. This too can be related back to the travel blogging aspect of the project as the end readers are unlikely to be present on the holiday itself.

Schano et al. (2004) gives little details on the travelogues category. They do however say that the itinerary of the trip may be posted before the trip takes place. This is interesting as it could create a different order to a blog. Instead of the posts being ordered based on time they could be seen as branches off of the itinerary post. In addition to this Schano et al. (2004) highlights the use of blogging as a pull technique it feels less intrusive to make posts as it becomes the user's choice to view and consume the information.

### **2.5.2.2 - Blogging during conflicts**

A lot of research has also been done into the use of blogging in conflicts, emergencies and disasters. Firstly Al-Ani et al. (2010) looks at the use of blogging in Iraqi. This was done through the evaluation of a hundred and twenty five blogs written by Iraqi citizens. Al-Ani et al. (2010) looks at these blogs for content to support given ideas that he puts forward. This seems a very subjective way to evaluate the blogs and there seems to be little in the way to compare or rank different styles. These blogs do however give insight to the types of stories and experiences that people have gone through without the distortion of main stream media. In the research the blogs give different insights these include, impacts of disruption in the conflict zone, forming communities of support, providing emotional support, and to engage in dialog about the conflict.

In the impacts of disruption section Al-Ani et al. (2010) bloggers talk about the effects the conflict has on their lives from hiding from gunmen to the effect on their education. They all centred on the feeling of being trapped in their own homes and their blogs were their way of connecting to the outside world. Al-Ani et al. (2010) provided the following remark on the entrapment "this dangerous environment led to physical confinement and subsequent isolation". This remark gives more balance to the understanding of the experiences of the bloggers.

Forming communities of support is the ability for the bloggers to report what they want to without the fear of violence or retribution. Al-Ani et al. (2010) called this community the "let me be your eyes" as they try to report the events that the media does not. One blogger commented "I won't say that the media are lying but they are telling only one side of the truth." And another "200-300 journalists have been killed because they attempt to tell the news that one or another group doesn't agree with". Blogging for these bloggers is a way to explain the situations that they are experiencing without the fear of repercussion. It helps to create a different version of history for future generations which is held remotely and anonymously online.

Providing emotional support is the ability for blogs to help people come to terms with the difficult circumstances that they are trapped in. This emotional support is mostly attributed to the freedom that anonymity has allowed the bloggers to talk more frankly. The communication that allows the users to post on blogs anonymously in order to share opinions and seek refuge in others even if you do not know who they are. This support was not just from others in the situation it expanded into other countries. This support

from others had caused one blogger to their give thanks commenting that “caring and support to me you bring me to life again”.

Engaging dialog about the conflict is where the blogger provided narration of what day to day life is like. This exploration, using blogs, to exchanging of views and ideas about the future which can be used to inform others and shape opinions. These exchanges of ideas could normally happen in meetings however due to the conflict stop this from going on. So in order to get around that problem people have taken their discussions online and sometimes these are done in the form of blogs.

During Al-Ani et al. (2010)’s study all the blogs that were looked at where personal blogs created by content creators. This means that all the blogs are text based first-hand accounts. It does not unfortunately tell us anything about the style of other blogs and even if these blogs did include pictures. Also this survey was done on Iraqi blogs which were posted in English, these bloggers involved in the survey may have had different experiences to those who only communicate in Arabic.

Al-Ani et al. (2010) with the same team produced another paper a few months later about the same conflict. Al-Ani et al. (2010) then looked at a random 35 Iraqi blogs and analysed the comments on the blogs and the content of the first five posts. The comments fell into ten different categories; admiration, advice, author response, criticism, encouragement, link, information, query, sympathy and support. The comments appeared in different frequencies based on the initial content of the post. The blogs themselves where separated into different categories in Al-Ani et al. (2010) were only some of these categories appeared in Al-Ani et al. (2010). The categories are providing support, finding commonality, building a knowledge base and restoration. This change of categories in such a short space of time shows how bloggers are constantly evolving their content based on what is necessary at the current time even with the most similar domain. This also shows how bloggers in similar circumstances will blog differently and for different purposes. This further highlights the variety in blogs and bloggers.

Al-Ani et al. (2012) later looked at a different revolution namely Egypt in early 2011. In this the team explored how I.T can in part cause a shift in power. This can be done though several ways including broadcasting slander from off-camera politicians, stopping controlled communication channels, reduce barriers to information. The study concludes that the attempted control of communication failed to stop the spread of the narrative of the bloggers. They put forth their opposite point of view for both the international community and for the local communities. They posted first hand videos of what was going on in the streets which was free from authority’s editing which caused several key bloggers to be arrested and a virtual curfew enforced. The study further showed how there was an increase in blogs that focused on the revolution as the conflict continued. However the study does not say why this increase occurred. It could have been due to a perceived increase in security for bloggers as the rebels gained support and power or more people finding a cause worth fighting for as they read what was going on.

Instead of conflict Qu et al. (2011) looked into a disaster namely the 2010 Yushu earthquake in china. In their study they looked at the use of a Chinese micro blogging site called Sina-Weibo. Using micro-blogging platforms during disasters is not a new idea as Twitter has been used during the 2007 California Wild Fires, 2009 Red River Floods and the 2009 Oklahoma Grassfires. Qu et al. (2011) shows how during the disasters micro blogging has shown its usefulness for emergency response as they provide easy accessibility to share information quickly with a large audience. During the study Qu et al. (2011) states that social media responded to the disaster by “seeking and sharing information, expressing their feelings and opinions, and organising donation and relief activities”. This fits into some of the categories in Al-Ani et al. (2010). The seeking and sharing activity and sharing information and organising donation and relief activities fits into communities of support group. The expressing their feeling, on the other hand, fits into providing emotional support group. In addition to the general responses Qu et al. (2011) also looked at a number of questions that they wanted to find answers about. They did this though evaluating over 90,000 posts. The project is only going to include one of

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these questions; what kinds of messages do people post after a major disaster. This question has been chosen as it is the only one that Qu et al. (2011) put forward which directly relates to the blogger.

Qu et al. (2011) puts forward that the messages that bloggers fall into a number of categories. These categories are; opinion-related, situation update, general, emotion related, action related, off topic and other. This shows the types of messages that bloggers put forward after a disaster. The most interesting of these categories is the action related group. This group, of 4% of total messages analysed, included sub categories which show the positive impact that blogging can provide. These sub-categories are; seeking or offering help, looking for missing people, proposing relief action and relief co-ordination. All of these have helped to save lives during the disaster and to reunite those who are lost with their loved ones. Qu et al. (2011) also shows how active blogging was at different points following the conflict. Interestingly the most posts were created one week after the event occurred, however this can be explained as this was also the day of national mourning for the disaster.

### **2.5.2.3 - Community blogging**

Other bloggers will take their inspiration from a business or organisation that they either care deeply about or are employed by. This is a process called community blogging. Recently there has been a rise of community blogging. This is where a large organisation or business will have an individual or team in charge of dealing with building a community around the business such as Major Nelson (2012) or Microsoft support twitter page (2012). This has benefits such as to engage users in order to keep their custom and inform them about new products. In addition to this they also try to get ideas from the community and implement them in order to improve the service or products that the business provides (Drell, 2012).

Social Web thing (2012) describes the characteristics that are expected of a good community blogger. It highlights, amongst others, that relationship development, emotional intelligence, thick skin and respect are all important. This will lead to developing long term relationships with their end users in order to keep their custom.

Edvardsen (2012) puts forward an argument that brands should outsource their community blogging. This article was posted on a blog so there is an obvious bias. She highlights that outsourcing can offer experts in social media and a fresh perspective to the process. If the end goal is to establish long term relationships then the business need to work out whether an expert of social media or an expert of the business will provide the greatest impact to the end user. In my opinion the best community managers live and breathe their community and they will only get the sufficient knowledge from seeing both sides of the business that they are involved in.

This style of blogging is similar to business to consumer travel blogging (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). This is due to the blogger promoting the travel to their audience rather than a product. In addition this process is done for the similar reasons of promotion and getting feedback from the blogs audience. The use of an independent expert blogger writing on behalf of the blogger is also explored by Schmallegger and Carson (2008). Who puts forward that the organisation must be clear about the blogs purpose so not to be performing “stealth marketing. This is a further problem as bloggers may instead be posting favourable reviews on their blogs rather than on the businesses blog or website. This has certain ethical issues for the blogger (See Section 2.7.7) and the organisation or business partaking in the activity. These hidden reasons for bloggers may be picked up by the audience and as a result may damage their willingness to view the blog in the future. This is due to the perceived intent of the blogger being less favourable (See Section 2.8.2).

#### **2.5.2.4 – Blogging as narrative in TV shows**

Blogging has also been used as a central theme of some TV shows. These shows include *Gossip Girl* which was initially a book and *Awkward* (IMDb, 2007) (IMDb, 2011). In *Gossip Girl* a fictional blogger provides narration and directs the story similar to the idea of the *Guest of a Guest* blog (2012). This character is used to introduce twists and cause conflict between the main characters. The blogger though remains unseen however is included as a voice over when relevant. This is interesting as it can show the effects a blog can have on social relationships as information that people intend to keep private is made public. This on a grander scale is similar to Al-Ani et al. (2012) as the authorities wanted to control information flow but the whole dynamic of the country changes once the information from anonymous bloggers got out.

*Awkward* on the other hand uses a blog for the main character to share her thoughts and feelings. This is similar to Nardi et al. (2004) thinking by writing and releasing emotional tension categories of personal blogging. In this show it is interesting to see how the decisions that the main character makes can be directly related to the posts in the blog.

Overall it is interesting to see an online communication tool be introduced into main stream media in highly successful shows. This will increase the exposure the wider public has to blogging and to increase the understanding of the process. This is further spreading into the youth market with Disney revealing a new show called *A Dog with a Blog* aimed at the tween market (IMDb, 2012).

### **2.6 - Medium and Presentation**

The medium part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative was discussed in Section 2.2. This project puts forward the different ways that bloggers choose to present their blogs. These mediums include pictures such as art blogs, photo blogs and sketch blogs (Gao et al, 2010). Bloggers can also use sound in the case of podcast blogs or videos in the case of video blogs. In addition to these the most common presentation of narrative is text based. This is present in most forms of blogging either as the only medium used or in addition to other mediums. So in blogging the blogger can use one of these styles to present the narrative or any combination of mediums.

The presentation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative will be affected by how easy the audience can view and interpret the blog. The quality of the use of the mediums will affect how easy it is for the reader to get the meaning from the narrative. This is important as Nack (2011) argues that narrative “begins in the mind of the narrator but is completed in the mind of the receiver”. This shows that how well the blogger uses the medium will make the reader more or less easily be able to understand the different categories of the narrative including Location, Purpose or Description (Tomàs et al, 2010). The project will now look at how well bloggers currently use text based blogs to communicate the narrative that they wish to tell.

#### **2.6.1 - Quality of writing in blogs and how it affects the presentation of narrative**

Rello and Baeza-Yates (2012) looked at how good the quality of writing is on various websites and how the quality has changed over a year. In this they developed a quality measure called *lq* which is a mathematical change to misspellings over correct spellings. So a higher *lq* score indicates that the website has more misspelling. In 2011 the most errors were found on blogger, YouTube and Facebook in that order. However the *lq* scores are the largest on Y! Answers, Live journal and Fotolog. The *lq* scores are different as they are based on the percentage of errors on the site rather than the total number of errors found. Larger websites are likely to have more total errors however as they may have more correct spellings so their *lq* scores may be lower than smaller sites.

In 2012 the most errors were found on Blogger, MySpace and Flickr in that order. However the lq scores were highest on Live Journal, Facebook and Yelp in that order. This is interesting as Facebook has both high amount of total errors but also a high percentage of errors from the lq scores. This may be due to the nature of the website being designed to get information out as quickly as possible or due to the wide range of skills that the users of the site have. In addition to these stats Rello and Baeza-Yates (2012) found very high average lq scores across .com and .net web addresses. It is impossible to identify what websites have the high lq scores as the numbers are averages. On the flip side .edu have very small lq scores.

Overall between 2011 and 2012 the lq scores for websites shows that quality is decreasing and the lq score for social media shows that quality is increasing but still remains of a lower quality than websites.

As a result this shows that the bloggers are not presenting their narratives in the best way to their audience and in fact the presentation is actually getting worse for traditional blogs. This will lead to the audience being less able to understand the narrative being told due to confusion caused by mistakes in the bloggers writing. However the quality of social media is increasing as a result the audience will get a better understanding when narrative is presented in this form. This is predominantly used when the blogger decides to deliver their content using this style (See Section 2.9).

## **2.6.2 – How pictures are used to present narratives in blogs**

Schneider (1996) looked at how pictures can be used in order to retell a narrative. This found that picture only story telling is more likely to be found as incomplete. In this way it should be used in addition to other forms of presenting the narrative. In situations where only pictures were used the narrative focused more on original units rather than grammar. This means that the readers were making up their own way of how the narrative is presented as they have no grammar to go on. This relies on the creativity of the reader in addition to the blogger providing a stimulus for the audience to work on. However Schneider (1996) also shows that the story does not change each time the audience try to recall the narrative presented in the pictures.

These changes and adjustments to the narrative has been explored by Snelson and Sheffield (2009) who showed that the story changes will be based on the personality and motivation of the audience. They put forward that the factors that affect the meaning that the audience get are context, purpose and philosophical stance. The context of the pictures can be improved by having the text being used in addition to the pictures. This will allow the audience to have more direction showing the bloggers narrative that is intended to be presented. The purpose of the content will be the choice of the event that is being described. In this way the audience picks up some of the clues about the narrative based on what has perceived it which affects the narrative being told. The philosophical stance of the audience which shows that part of the audience's personality is taken into the narrative when the audience is given no other information.

The use of pictures also has an effect on both the narrative being told and on the reader's perception of the blogger. This was highlighted in Beyoncé: Life is But a Dream (2013). In this Beyoncé said that her audience "click on a computer and you see all the pictures, all you think of is the picture and image you see all day every day. You do not see the human form any more". In this Beyoncé shows that the pictures are in some way dehumanising the blogger and builds an expectation that the audience have the right to the blogger. She goes on to explain that the pictures also affect the meaning that her audience take from other songs. In this way the inclusion and sharing of pictures can also affect the narratives of other blog articles.



### **2.6.3 – How videos are used to present narratives in blogs**

Dreon et al. (2011) puts forward seven elements which make up a video narrative. These are the point of view, a dramatic question, emotional content, the voice, the soundtrack, economy and pacing. The point of view sets out the narrative that the video is trying to tell and the perspective that the narrative is taking. The event part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative which incorporates some of the bloggers psychology factors surrounding the narrative that the video is trying to tell. The dramatic question also shows the event being described by setting out the issues that are going to be discussed and solved in the video.

The emotional content is the deep structures part of Nack (2011). This shows how the event is actually being presented to the audience. In this case the blogger is using this to immerse their audience with the story and possibly even trying to get an emotional response from them. The way that the blogger chooses to present the video will be based on their personality (See Section 2.7.2).

The voice, soundtrack and economy also relate to how the narratives deep structures are presented to the audience. The pacing is how quickly these deep structures are shown to the audience.

In addition to Dreon et al. (2011) thoughts on videos to present narrative Roberts et al. (2009) adds that the blogger has an influence over their audience through the videos. The argument is that the video itself can change the audience's thoughts about a topic. The topic in this case will be the event that the blogger is basing the narrative around. In travel blogging this shows that the audience perspectives about the trip will be changed based on the bloggers opinions. This makes the blogger intent more important as a result the audience may take this as more of a reason to read a specific blog (See Section 2.8.3).

## **2.7 - Motivation and psychological factors**

Nack (2011) definition of narrative also states that narratives “are ground in one's own motivational and psychological attributes”. Motivation is difficult to define and lots of contrasting definitions have been created over time (Kleinginna Jr and Kleinginna, 1981). In fact Kleinginna Jr and Kleinginna (1981) has undertaken work looking at the various implications of each of these definitions. As a result this project will define motivation as “an idea or concept we introduce when we undertake to explain behaviour” (Bolles, 1975).

The psychological attributes on the other side will predominantly look at the aspects of the big five indicator (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010). The first of these indicators is openness. This is whether a blogger is open to new ideas or are narrow minded. In this way the rigidity of beliefs and range of interests are assessed. The second of these is Conscientiousness. This is whether an individual is organised or not. In this way this assesses the desire of the blogger to impose order in their posts. The third of these is extraversion. This is whether an individual is sociable and outgoing or introverted. In this way this assesses the bloggers level of comfort with relationships. This idea is important for establishing the desire of the blogger to participate with the intercommunication that the project will highlight the importance of later in this chapter (See Section 2.9). The fourth part of the big five indicator is agreeableness. This is whether an individual is sympathetic to others or uncooperative. In this way this assesses the bloggers ability to get on with others. This is also important attribute for bloggers trying to build relationships with their audience through intercommunication. The final indicator is neuroticism. This is whether a blogger can maintain a balanced emotional state in their posts. In addition to the big five indicators age will be explored as a psychological attribute to look at the ways this also affects the narrative being told.

The project will look at this through exploring the bloggers personality along with their mood while blogging. This will give some of the psychological attributes that successful bloggers possess. The project will then look at the motivations of bloggers in

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particular why they choose to blog and why they chose the style of blogging they use. The project will also look at the idea of oversharing. This is where the reader is picking up on more of the personality than the blogger wishes to share. The project will then look at mechanisms that are put in place in order to address the oversharing for both the blogger and the reader.

### **2.7.1 - Personality Bloggers who use facebook**

Quercia et al. (2012) looked at 170,000 Facebook users who have taken a Big 5 personality test and linked it to their Facebook account. They have compared the results of the test with the number of Facebook friends that they have. In blogging terms a Facebook friend are individuals who read the blog as the subsections of the blog are placed onto their newsfeed. It found that users with a high number of Facebook friends mimic that of those who are successful in real life at networking and maintaining long term relationships. In terms of the big five personality types Quercia et al. (2012) argues that the main effects of whether a user will have lots of “friends” are extraversion, neuroticism and age. If a user is has a higher than normal extraversion or a lower than normal neuroticism then they are likely to have more “friends” on Facebook. In addition if the user is younger then they tend to have more friends than older people with the same personality profile. Of the above only age and extraversion are statistically significant. The number of friends is important as these are the individuals who will receive parts of the blog as items in their “news feed” and so make up the readership of this style of blogging. Personality and mood share a lot in common in blogging this connection is also present.

### **2.7.2 – Personality of bloggers who use other blogging platforms**

Gill et al. (2009) looked at the different bloggers scores on the big five personality scale. They found that the bloggers are likely to be the subsection of people with high extraversion, high neuroticism and high openness. This is different to Quercia et al. (2012) argument that Facebook bloggers have low neuroticism. As a result we can see a difference personality type for different types of bloggers. This may be due to the external environment surrounding the sites as in Facebook you can control who reads your personal blog whereas in other types of blogging the blog is completely public.

Gill et al. (2009) went on to look at how different personality types affect the way that the blogger writes. Firstly bloggers with high neuroticism, which is common for bloggers, tends to use more self-reference, negative emotion, less reference of others and tendency to focus on their cheerer or jobs. With this personality the blogger will tend to talk in a negative way about themselves. The blogger also tend to choose to protect others by not including them in their blog posts.

If the blogger has high extraversion then the blogger is likely to use more verbs, more time references and tend to be less negative. In this the blogger is more likely to give more vivid narratives about positive experiences that they have partaken in. The blogger will also find it more natural to include the time aspect of Tomàs et al. (2009) definition of what to include in a narrative.

If the blogger high openness then the blogger is more likely to include more of their interests and hobbies along with more about their senses and write in the present tense. This style will aid the immersion of the narrative as the reader can feel that they are actually at the blog event and location in the moment that the event is taken place. This also helps the reader feel more included with the narrative which is one of the criteria for why the reader chooses to read a blog over another blog (See Section 2.8.3).

In addition if the blogger has high conscientiousness then they are more likely to blog about their occupation, use more positive emotions and include more about the time aspect of narrative. In addition to this the blogger is likely to use a mix of different tenses for their narratives rather than just using one style.

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Finally the agreeableness part of the bloggers personality trait does not affect the style that the blogger uses. Instead this part of the personality will affect the bloggers choice of event that they wish to base their narrative upon.

Each of the different personality indications shown above do not exist independently of one another and each are on a sliding scale. As a result the blogger can be high scores in several areas of personality. However the arguments put forward by Gill et al. (2009) cause contradictions when different personality types intertwine. The best example of this is that the blogger could have high neuroticism and high extraversion both qualities that Gill et al. (2009) highlights are common in bloggers. This leads to the blogger being expected to use more negative (high neuroticism) and less negative emotion (high extraversion) based on the arguments provided. This tendency to use more positive or negative emotions will both effect how they report the narrative that they wish to tell and the context or event that the blogger wishes to comment upon (Nack, 2011).

In addition they may have different severity of each of the different personality types. In this way there is some ambiguity over how high the personality scores need to be in order to be reflected in the bloggers blog.

The project will accept these assumptions over the style of blogs reflecting the personality of their blogger even with the reservations highlighted in the preceding paragraphs.

### **2.7.3 – What moods are bloggers in when they create their posts**

As shown in the previous section neuroticism part of the big five indicator highlights the ability of the blogger tendency to maintain a balanced emotional state. The previous section has shown that bloggers tend to have high neuroticism. In this way they tend to blog about a wide variety of moods in their posts.

Choudhury et al. (2012) has identified more than 200 moods on the micro blogging site twitter. This show how wide ranging the thoughts of the bloggers can be during blogging. This shows again that the online blogosphere (the collection of all blogs) mimics the real world. The differing moods where shown on several graphs of activation against valence. This showed how different extremes of moods are reflected in each of the different experiments Choudhury et al. (2012) did. In particular, Choudhury et al. (2012) looked at the hash tags placed at the end of tweets. A hash tag is a way of tagging a message on twitter to show its content for searching. In one experiment they found that reports of extreme emotions are more commonly reported as hash tags on tweets. However this is only the case when the extreme is either high valence and high activation such as happy or low valence and low activation such as sad. The other extremes of high activation and low valence such as “shocked” and high valence and low activation such as “carefree” are less used. This data is all about the bloggers self-reporting moods while they are micro blogging. This is interesting as it shows the more likely moods that the blogger is experiencing as they write.

Another experiment looked at the effect of followers to following ratio has on the bloggers reporting of their mood. A follower is term used for the individual blogger’s audience and following is a term for the people that the blogger reads. This experiment again used the hash tags at the end of tweets to determine the moods of the blogger along with using the bloggers personal profile to find the number of followers and number of people following. Bloggers who are following less other users than have followers are likely to self-identify moods such as unhappy, seductive and sunny. These moods tend to have higher valence scores. Bloggers who are following more users than have followers are more likely to self-identify moods such as violent, timid and worthless. These moods tend to have low valence scores. This may show that the audience or followers are picking up on the mood of the blogger and are only reading the blogs which have a positive feel to the posts.

The final experiment looked at how much activity occurs based on different moods. The most talked about moods are welcoming, friendly and trauma. The more

talked about moods tend to be those which have higher activation. On the other hand the least talked about moods include unhappy, lazy and suicide. These moods tend to be more negative and have low valence scores. These negative moods tend to be personal which may be the reason that they have lower amounts of activity.

The personality and mood tells us lots about the blogger themselves. It is also an unintended side effect of sharing their writing online. This is not the only unintended information that the blogger is presenting about himself or herself. They are also showing the world some information that most people bloggers wish to keep private as they are personal in nature and can cause conflict.

### **2.7.4 – Bloggers motivations to blog**

Kjellberg (2010) looked at the different reasons that bloggers have for creating their own blogs. To do this she interviewed a range of researchers who blog in order to get their own reports of why they do so. She found that the bloggers have three main categories of why they choose to blog. These are sharing, room for creativity and feeling connected. The sharing part of this definition is the blogger trying to express their opinions about a given topic. In this way they are aiming to share their “commentary about a given event” part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. The bloggers also comment that they provide this commentary in order to create an audience (Kjellberg, 2010). This awareness that the audience are motivated to read a blog based on the content the blogger wishes to share and their perceived intentions to do so can be found in a later section (See Section 2.8.2). In this style of blogging the bloggers are “informers” (See Section 2.3). In this they are expressing the ideas in order for others to better understand the academia that the blogger is researching.

The second of Kjellberg (2010) categories is having a room for creativity. This is where the blogger is blogging in order to organise their ideas and to aid or practice their writing for their future academic reports. In this the blogger is using the blog to develop their own skills and is not particularly interested in their audience as they are blogging for purely their own benefit.

The final of Kjellberg (2010) categories is feeling connected. This is where the blogger is actively seeking to interact and maintain relationships with their audience such as colleagues or friends. They are trying to share their lives and interests with others. This would be expected if the bloggers were blogging using personal blogs but this context is theoretical research so is slightly unexpected. However this shows that the relationships for bloggers to their audience is important to bloggers and is one of the reasons that they blog. This shows that when discussions such as the communication discussed in later section (See Section 2.9) can be used to motivate the blogger to blog more frequently due to this connection that they feel. This further highlights that the reader has an influence over the blog and the content that is being created.

The blogger does not purely state that they are motivated by one of the categories. Instead they can be motivated by any subsection of these categories. They are motivated through a variety of these categories either in turn, by a post by post basis or for the blog as a whole.

Kjellberg (2010) did this by interviewing a group of researchers. In this way the information is purely for bloggers who blog in this way. As the project has already highlighted there are lots of different types of bloggers (See Section 2.3). As a result the project will now look at a different context of bloggers namely for politics which was done using surveys instead of interviews. The use of surveys will also remove any bias based on the presence of non-verbal communication which may not have been captured in K study. However it introduces fixed questioning so the study may have gaps which arise during the study which cannot be easily changed during the study.

Ekdale et al. (2010) highlighted a larger number of reasons that bloggers gave as their motivation for blogging. These include helping society, to influence opinion, to let

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off steam and to formulate the new ideas. These reasons can still fit into the definitions that Kjellberg (2010) puts forward.

To begin with the sharing category, put forward by Kjellberg (2010), is similar to the extrinsic category of Ekdale et al. (2010). This includes to help society, influence opinion and to critique opponents or the media for the bloggers own political benefit. They are in this way aiming to highlight and share their viewpoint in order to inform others about their stance on different issues in the same way that the academic bloggers are aiming to highlight their research. In this way the “event” that they are blogging about and the narrative associated to it is attributed to these ideas that the political bloggers are trying to put forward.

The second of Kjellberg (2010) categories is the room for creativity. This is similar to Ekdale et al. (2010) idea of the blogger trying to articulating ideas. In this group the blogger states that their motivation is to formulate new idea and to keep track of these ideas. This allows the blogger to work on their own ideas in this case their political stances in a public or semi-public setting similar to the academics trying to organise their ideas about the topic they are researching.

The final of Kjellberg (2010) categories is to build connections to their audience. In Ekdale et al. (2010) there was no record of bloggers being motivated to build these relationships the closest to this idea is the blogger trying to influence public opinion. In this the blogger is trying to control the thoughts of their audience rather than to build open discussion. In this way the blogger is trying to build a relationship with their readers but one in which the blogger is meant to be seen as superior or an expert based on the arguments that they put forward in their blog posts.

The two different papers seem to have a lot of overlap in the motivations that bloggers in different contexts where the information was gathered in different ways. The bloggers themselves may be different in both of these contexts but they have similar motivations for blogging even with different end goals. The project hence forth shall use Kjellberg (2010) subcategories for bloggers motivations for blogging of sharing, room for creativity and to build connections.

## **2.7.5 – Bloggers motivations to travel blog**

As discussed in Section 2.2 travel blogging can be used in several different ways (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). The first of these consumer to consumer travel blogging the blogger in this form creates their posts to share their travel stories to their audience, keep in touch with their friends and relations and need for self-expression. These fit into Kjellberg (2010) subcategories of motivations for bloggers quite neatly. The bloggers have Kjellberg (2010) sharing category as they wish to share their experiences of travel. The bloggers also have a motivation for creativity as they wish to self-express their travel experiences. Finally this style of blogging also has the creating and maintaining relationships with their audience. In this case the travel bloggers are trying to connect to both the people that they know and people with like-minded interests.

In business to business travel blogging the blogger is motivated predominantly for Kjellberg (2010) category of building connections. This style of blogging is used to create discussions in order to share and discuss opinions and ideas about the travel industry. The audience that the bloggers are trying to interact with are other such experts in the industry so this is used as a way to transfer knowledge from the blogger to the audience and vice versa.

The final sub classification of travel blogging is business to consumer blogging. In this case the blogger, according to Schmallegger and Carson (2008), in order to get feedback from tourists, share latest news and information about the business and to facilitate discussions with their clients. In this way business to consumer blogging fits into the wanting to share experiences and facilitate discussions with audience parts of Kjellberg (2010) categories of blogger’s motivations to blog. In addition to this the blogger may not be part of the organisation. Instead businesses can hire guest bloggers.

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When this is the case the bloggers are motivated also by the payment that they receive for their work. The organisations on the other hand are motivated to do this method of hiring guest bloggers as a form of advertising. These posts are either put on the bloggers own blog or the businesses blog. However when the posts are put on the bloggers blog then the business must be careful that they are not partaking in stealth marketing.

### **2.7.6 – Example of bloggers unintended oversharing**

Boutet et al. (2012) looks at deciphering who bloggers voted for in the 2010 UK general election based on their interactions on the micro blogging site twitter. This was done by manually analysing 220,000 users, 1,150,000 tweets and 79,000,000 following/follower relationships to create a ground truth data set. From this set the team developed a system to find other users political allegiances. The allegiances that they found have high accuracy however they only found a small number of users just 5,900 labour supporters in a data set of 220,000 users. Who you support in politics is a sensitive matter for some and etiquette states that it is one of the things that you should not discuss at a dinner table so it is interesting that Boutet et al. (2012) manages to find this information out only using public information. This could be an example of the users oversharing but the users do not actually say who they support it is unintentional at most. This shows that the audience may get a different response to that which the blogger intended based on their interpretation. This different response that users get may not necessarily be accurate to what the blogger actually believes or thinks.

Due to this unintended oversharing the blogger needs to be wary of their own and other people's privacy. In addition to overall best practice ideas there are legal guidelines that bloggers must follow.

### **2.7.7 - Privacy concerns and regulations surrounding blogging**

Tufekci (2012) looked at different people's opinions of sharing information online. She did this by surveying a group of Facebook users in order to gauge their opinions and their responses in certain situations. She went on to find out whether online activities of either yourself or another had directly caused real world problems.

Tufekci (2012) found that a large number of those surveyed had in fact made alterations based on their own unintended oversharing or another individual's sharing of their information. 82% of the surveyed users showed that they have tried to reverse their own oversharing of information through changing their profile. 73% of those surveyed had tried to remove others oversharing through untagging themselves from a picture. A much smaller but still significant group (19.6%) had left Facebook all together due to privacy concerns. This survey included a wide range of ethnicities so to show that this ideology of changing what they share based on personal opinions is a global phenomenon. This relates back to Baumer et al (2008) idea of the reader, in this case the Facebook user who is making changes, placing the perceived intent of the blogger, in this case the external person who is oversharing, of a high importance. The User in this case will take it upon themselves to rectify the situation and for 68% of people to distance themselves from the bloggers who are oversharing and unfriend them. Facebook has one key difference to blogging in that all the stories or posts are directly about people although this brings more similarities to personal blogging. As a result the Facebook user may feel more betrayed by the oversharing and thus may show in the survey more dramatic actions to correct the situation than they would do on another platform. The other reason that the user will show more extreme behaviour is due to the artificial links that get added to his or her profile which give the artificial impression that the user approves the post.

The subsection of users that had made a change due to oversharing was then asked if they had ever made a change to their privacy settings and most of them (80%) have. 90% of those that made a change, made that change to be less visible and thus more

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private. This shows how oversharing either unintentionally by the user or by a different user can lead to changes to how open the user will be in the future.

After this Tufekci (2012) looked at the real world consequences of sharing information on line via Facebook. A very small and not statistically significant percentage (0.6%) had very extreme consequences such as losing a job or had legal issues. When you look at whether those surveyed knew someone who had the same consequences the percentage jumps up significantly to 19.7% and 21.9% respectively. This is probably due to the larger number of people involved and the seven degrees of separation idea. Having these extreme real world consequences can also help explain why so many people try to protect their privacy so much. The consequences act as a deterrent to incentivise individuals to under rather than over share.

Relationships due to the multiple ways that people interact may also be negatively affected due to sharing of information. In fact 27.7% of those surveyed had a fight with a girlfriend or boyfriend due to Facebook and 25.7% have had a fight with a friend. The percentages jump up to 70.9% and 66.2% respectively for knowing someone who has encountered the negative externalities. This re-enforces Nardi et al's (2004) example of Lara having a personal connection to her readers. It also shows how the connections can be bent or broken when the trust is lost or abused online.

Governments also need to protect the individuals concerns. They have done this in lots of different ways depending on the country that you are in however the worldwide nature of the internet has caused problems in getting worldwide co-operation and coherent cross border agreements put into force. Hansen, et al. (2011) highlights a few of these policies. They include social access and inclusion protection such as the American with disabilities act, Executive Order 13166 (improving access to services for people with limited English proficiency) and Individual with Disabilities education act. These serve to ensure that the widest audience can access the sites as possible. Hansen, et al. (2011) also highlights different acts to protect both the reader particularly if they provide information and the blogger such as Federal Information Security Management Act, Information Quality Act and Copyright law.

Other laws that bloggers need to be aware of are Liable, Fraud, Data Protection and Malicious falsehood as highlighted by Neeson (2012). Liable is the responsibility of the blogger not to make false account or information that may cause damage to others reputation or a products reputation. They are also required to moderate the comments on their posts in order to remove liable content. So the blogger is responsible for the comments of their readers. Fraud is using a false identity online such as that of a famous or factitious person. Data protection is the disclosing of personal information without others consent. This is again highlighted by Lara in Nardi et al (2004) paper referencing directly her old classmates. She is disclosing information about what her friends are studying without getting their consent. In all likelihood Lara is not going to get in trouble with her friends because of this but she could encounter problems if the content was more embarrassing or personal. Finally a malicious falsehood is providing incorrect information or unfounded negative comments with the sole intent to damage another's commercial ventures.

In addition to these the idea of anonymity online leads to an increase in the feeling of protection for the blogger as highlighted by Al-Ani et al. (2010). In this the bloggers could freely talk about their experiences without fear of retribution from the government. This shows that protection can come from the systems themselves than due to the government protecting their people. In fact the government actively tried to censure the actions of the bloggers and the anonymity trumped the laws and regulations that they put in place.

## **2.8 - The role of the bloggers audience in blogging**

The previous sections looked at the different parts of the definition of narrative put forward by Nack (2011). The project will now look at different ideas surrounding

narrative also put forward by Nack (2011). This starts with exploring the role of the audience in blogging. This is done as Nack (2011) puts forward that “Narration is a structure-oriented activity that begins in the mind of the narrator but is completed in the mind of the receiver”. In this way the narrative that the audience receive, is not necessarily the narrative that the blogger wishes to tell as it will be affected by the audience’s interpretation.

The project will explore the audience by looking at how they interact with blogs using different platforms. The project will also look at why the audience choose to view blogs and why they interact with them. In addition the project will look at why the audience choose to read one blog over another. This section concludes by looking at the impact that mobile technology and external factors have on audiences interacting with blogs.

### **2.8.1 - The role of the bloggers audience in Facebook**

Joinson (2008) looked at the different reasons the people read and interact with Facebook bloggers. Joinson (2008) identified the main uses of Facebook as social searching and social browsing. Social searching is a term given to where a user is seeking to find out information about their off line contacts. Social browsing is a term given to trying to make connections online to potentially meet them offline. Joinson (2008) also highlighted that users were trying to “keep in touch with an old friend or someone I knew from school”. These ideas can be seen in other forms of blogging for example a reader may perform social searching by viewing a friend’s personal blog. Social searching can also be performed by a reader finding a micro blog which they do not know the blogger prior. Social searching may lead into the intercommunication with others which is discussed later.

Joinson (2008) went on to get Facebook user’s to undertake surveys in order to better highlight their uses for Facebook. The biggest reason that was highlighted was “keeping in touch”. This shows how the connection between the reader and blogger can keep engagement. This also highlights that the user is more likely to read posts from bloggers that they already feel like they know. This feeling knowing may be because the reader and the blogger know each other in real life but may also be due to the reader feeling a connection to the blogger based on the bloggers writing or other interaction between them. Joinson (2008) also finds that users also “virtually people watch”, “reconnect with old contacts”, “communication”, “photographs” and “making new contacts”.

### **2.8.2 – Reasons audience view blogs**

Baumer et al (2008) undertook research in order to better understand the reader. This was done using three techniques. Firstly a survey was given to the participants to find out demographic information. Secondly logging software was used to track what the user was reading. Thirdly semi-structured interviews were used to gather more data and to gauge the feelings of the participants. The size of the participant pool was not very large, only fifteen people, so no statistics were given and no promises that the findings of the study mimic that of the whole readership of online blogs.

This research showed that a large subsection of the readers identified reading blogs as a leisure activity as they said that reading blogs was “chilling out” or “wasting time”. This hints at the end user not seeing blogging as particularly productive process. Other users see reading blogs as a habit as they responded with “it’s something that happens through the course of the day that I feel like I might need to do. It’s just become a habit, I guess” or “checking blogs is like checking one’s email”. This other view of why the reader reads a blog is not because of enjoyment or desire to do so it is instead to ensure that they are not missing out on something. This also hints on it possibly being an addiction to some especially as one participant called Charles likening his reading of



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blogs to smoking a cigarette. In addition two of the participants highlighted the idea of being overwhelmed by the amount of information available to them also known as “information overload”. This however does not stop them from reading the blogs but may affect the platforms that they feel most comfortable using. These blog readers will be more comfortable reading micro blogs as they are less likely to be overwhelmed by information due to the shorter nature of the posts. This will affect the later designs that I will come up with later in the project, namely to ensure that the reader is not overwhelmed by information be it relevant or not. The design for reducing information overload was put forward by El-Arini et al. (2009) through personalising a learning engine to filter out content that the reader is less interested in.

### **2.8.3 – Reasons the audience will read one blog over another**

The research also highlighted a number of self-identified reasons for reading a given blog rather than another (Baumer et al, 2008). These included “the content of the blog”, “the intent of the reader”, “the perceived intent of the blogger” and “the relationship between the blogger and the reader”. The content of the blog is the subject matter of the blog such as art blogs discussed earlier. This is because the blog must be related to the readers interests so they are more likely to read an art blog if they enjoy art. This is the “comment about a certain event” part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. The reader has highlighted that they are also interested in the event that the narrative is one of the contributing factors for them to read blogs.

The intent of the reader relates back to the idea that most of the readers are looking to relax and “chill out” so the readers are less likely to want to read a blog based on something they perceive to be work such as class subjects that they do not enjoy. In travel blogging, according to Schmallegger and Carson (2008), the readers intent is to find out about places that they are going to visit. In addition to this the readers perceive the information from the blogs to be more credible due to blogger sharing their experiences rather than trying to sell them the holiday. In this way the reader believes the blogger is acting in the readers best interests. This links into the “perceived intent of the blogger” part of Baumer et al (2008) categories. This shows that the reader is more likely to read a blog that they believe is positive. This means that parts of the site like adverts or the blogger trying to sell you something puts the reader off. The reader wants the blogger to be on their side especially if they are offering help, providing reviews or shaping opinions. These incorporate the “motivation and psychological attributes” parts of Nack (2011) definition of narrative.

The final reason Baumer et al (2008) puts forward that the audience reads a given blog is “the relationship between the blogger and the reader”. This reinforces Joinson (2008) idea of “communication” being important and Nack (2011) idea that narrative can be presented through intercommunication and relationships between the reader and the blogger. This intercommunication is discussed in a later section (See Section 2.9).

### **2.8.4 - Impact for the reader of the introduction of mobile technology**

The audience has also highlighted some problems that they have with interacting with the blog. The problems that this project has identified are not the fault of the blogger but instead the platforms that the blogger chooses to use. The blogger themselves will be unable to make changes to address the problems for the reader and instead the reader is left to live with the problems.

Ganoe et al. (2010) designed a mobile system for participation in community activities. During the design of this system and the following evaluation of the system revealed some impact that mobile communication has for blog readers. They found that weather can have a substantial impact on the use of a system. In the evaluation the participants used the developed system at a fireworks display at night. This external

environment of being cold led to the participants to use the system more often indoors rather than outdoors. As the mobile platforms have moved towards being smart and touch screen based has made it less practical to read the blogs in the cold when you are wearing gloves. This is outside the bloggers control but if they can engage the reader then they may choose to consume the content when they are inside or on other devices instead.

Ganoe et al. (2010) also identified that mobile connectivity can also impact the reader. From the evaluation of server logs Ganoe et al. (2010) found that in certain locations across the event had blind spots where the system would act unexpectedly. The system would stop the user from getting directions when they were required and less clear instructions being displayed. This too the blogger has no control over as the effects are based on mobile networks.

This is important for this project as to look at the widest range of platforms for sharing stories and its impact on the designs of blogs.

## **2.9 - Intercommunication**

The project has now looked at each part of Nack (2011) definition in turn. However he also puts forward in the literature that Narrative can be presented through the communication between the blogger and the reader. This idea has also been highlighted by the audience saying that one of the criteria that are important to them when selecting a blog to read over another is the communication with the blogger. In addition some of the audience also highlight the process of viewing a blog is to keep in touch with the blogger in this way (Baumer et al, 2008). The project will look at how communication can take place in blogs and the forms that this intercommunication can take. In addition the project will look at how this intercommunication can add to the narrative that the blogger wishes to tell.

The intercommunication in blogging can fit into two main categories, the communication between the blogger and the reader and the communication between two readers. There is also communication between bloggers on external sites or communities such as on forums but this is considered outside the scope of this project but this communication this intercommunication will instead be used later in the project in order to further explore the opinions of the blogger.

In Nardi et al's (2004) paper a participant called Lara refers directly to a subsection of her reader base namely her old classmates directly in her blog posts. This is an example of the blogger communicating directly to the reader in the text of the posts. Nardi states "the post shifted, in a single sentence, to a salutation to Lara's friends in the midst of finals." She notices that bloggers styles can shift during post changing tones so Lara can engage and relate to parts of her audience. This shows how the blogger relates their posts to their readers based on offline or real world communications or relationships. This goes back to Joinson (2008) idea of reader's desire to "keeping in touch" and Baumer et al (2008) idea of "perceived intent of the blogger". The readers get the information that has been tailored to their interests and so can pick up on nuances that the rest of the readership may miss. This also leads to the readers getting a positive intent of the blogger and re-enforces the idea that the blogger actually cares about the readers.

Lara's comments were also highlighted in Baumer et al (2008). In this they looked at identity as a reader's relationship with the blogger. They found that offline and online identities are not distinct hence how Lara knew her readers or classmates and could direct the post towards them relates back to Joinson (2008) idea of Facebook's readers looking to "keeping in touch" and "reconnecting with old contacts". Baumer et al (2008) also goes on to show that being a part of a community is also important to the readers. This is established online but can also be established offline in the case of a friend's personal blog.

Community formation is established by the reader's comments and replies to one another. These discussions may also include the blogger themselves providing clarification or offering their perspective on the issues that the readers bring up. This

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community spirit was brought up in several parts of the literature review most notably in Baumer et al (2008) where several participants mentioned that they consider blogging as these conversations between readers and bloggers (Ganoe et al, 2010). In the micro blogging platform twitter Macskassy (2012) shows two different styles of conversations which create the interactions between blogger and the readers. This is done through “two-way dialogs” and “merging dialogs”. Two way dialogs are conversations between two members going back and forth about a topic. This back and forth is often in the public domain and such the conversation is given the same level of stature on twitter. This shows how some businesses are tailoring the tools they provide to this social interaction that Baumer et al (2008) highlights is important. Merging dialogs are more interesting these are where different members talk to the same other member. In this case there can also be communication between the members who wish to speak to the main blogger. This generally starts with the first blogger making a post that a large number of people find interesting which creates a pool of people to take part in the discussion. This again highlights the importance of establishing community through reader to reader and reader to blogger communication.

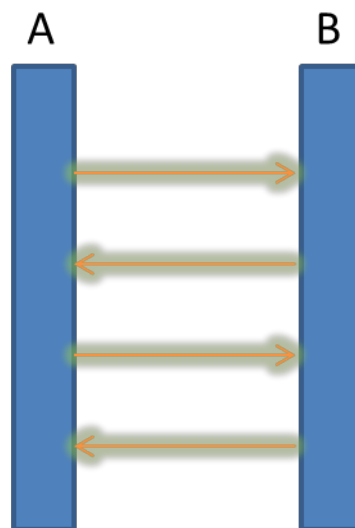


Figure 2-1 - Pictorial representation of two way dialogs adapted from Macskassy (2012)

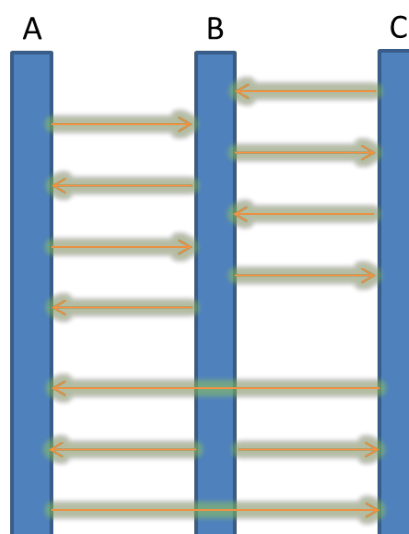


Figure 2-2 - Pictorial representation of merging dialogs adapted from Macskassy (2012)

Twitter also has other tools designed to promote communication and integration between users. This tool is re-tweeting which is where a reader of a blog post can re-post

the same message. This was touched upon earlier. This tool allows a reader to establish a permanent link to bloggers posts that they most relate to. Lumezanu, et al. (2012) shows how people choose to re-tweet based on the content that engages them the most. One such event which is designed to engage the widest number of people is political elections and the Nevada Senate race was used by Lumezanu, et al. (2012) to compare to the Debt ceiling race which had is less engaging to the general public. Lumezanu, et al. (2012) found that the senate race had 55% re-tweet rates whereas the debt ceiling debate had only 7% re-tweet rates. This further shows how tools have been created to both show where connections between reader and blogger are and to highlight them in the community.

Twitter has also had an effect on informal communication in the workplace. Zhao and Rosson (2012) highlighted two groups of benefits that intercommunication in the workplace brings. The first group is “relational benefits” this sub divides into three main areas “personal perception”, “common ground” and “connection”. “Personal perception” is the group that describes the benefit of individuals learning more about their colleagues so they can find the best people to work with and to find those they would like to work with. This has helped work place efficiency as teams work more co-operatory and improve employee satisfaction. “Common ground” is the sub-group which ensures that similar thinking about facts occurs in the organisation. This increases the skill of the workforce due to employees learning of one another. “Connection” is the sub-group attributed to improving collectiveness in the organisation. This is good for the workplace as it will increase employee retention and as a result keep skills that the business requires inside the business rather than the employees leaving to join competitors taking these skills with them.

The second group of benefits to intercommunication in the workplace is “personal benefits”. This allows the employees to gain extra skills and information independently of regular training. This is due to information flowing more freely in social networks through weak ties but trust is still important. In addition to trust, credibility of the source is also important to get the skill transfer.

The organisation can get these benefits with less cost due to Baumer et al (2008) that reading blogs is a leisure activity. This will both allow changes to be made with less conflict and employees may take part outside of work time. On the other side of the communication is the bloggers these in this case will need to be specialised to the organisation in which it is implemented. This may also create added workload for some employees in the business. The success of the change may also be affected by the privacy concerns of the blogger which is discussed in a later section of the literature review.

Other platforms have other tools to allow this communication to take place. One of the most common in all types of blogging platform is using a comments box after a post. This is the case on personal blogs sites such as WordPress and on more social network style blogging platforms such as Facebook. Shmueli, et al. (2012) found out a lot of necessary information about this area. Firstly there are lots of different readers and thus their propensity to interact with a given story changes with both the story and the individual. So the readers fall into two groups those with rich comment history and the larger group whose comment history is poor and rarely comment on stories. So the blogger to reader relationship and communication will be very different for each of the types of reader. The blogger themselves will prefer to have the engagement of readers with rich comment history for intellectual curiosity, increased activity and exposure and easier to gauge community interests to direct the future of the blog.

The literature however does not look at why the low comment history member’s reluctance to post however it may be assumed that it relates to the readers requiring high engagement to content in order to comment on a post (Shmueli et al, 2012). This shows that the readers are not engaged by either the blog itself of the medium that the discussions take on. As a result the low comment history readers may be more engaged with conversations that take place in other ways such as on social media.

Shmueli, et al. (2012) also looked into the number of comments on a given blog entry. They found that stories are more likely to have just a few numbers of comments where the most frequent number of comments are one and between two and three. This will make the bloggers job of encouraging communication harder due to the large number of users with poor comment history. In addition to this Shmueli, et al. (2012) found that fewer comments are made on a site that has a social network attached to them than those which are just blogging platforms. This shows that the platform that the blogger chooses to use will create a substantial change in the way that the blogger can communicate with their audience. When the blogging platform has a social network attached or other communication methods are in place less of the discussions take place on the post itself and may be on other methods instead.

Shmueli, et al. (2012) also highlighted three other indicators about the commenting procedure. Firstly that by commenting on a post shows a high level of engagement from the reader. This gives the blogger the responsibility to provide the readers of his or her blog with interesting content in order to encourage commenting. Secondly that affinity is greater than friendship when it comes to commenting. This means that a reader will be more likely to leave a comment if they relate to the content of the post above if they know the person. This will also lend itself to more positive comments being left as the readers are more likely to give comments when they agree with the content. This could serve as motivation for the blogger to provide more content if they believe that others are enjoying his or her work. However this is not just a positive thing as it may lead to group think as it is more likely the same positive comments are written creating a community of only likeminded individuals. It also makes creative criticism harder as would be negative commenter may fear a backlash from the other members who enjoy the content. Finally Shmueli, et al. (2012) highlights that member's care about their friends commenting about a story even if they do not care about the content itself. This increases the size of the community and with this it increases the possible exposure that the blog has with limited extra workload for the blogger. The work had already been done by the developers of the blogging platform through providing these features for both bloggers and readers benefit. This is also another differentiator between blogging platforms and so bloggers may choose platforms based on this.

### **2.9.1 – Lacking participation in intercommunication**

The communication discussed relies on both the author and the blogger both wishing to participate in the discussions in their various forms. However this is not always the case as some of the audience will chose not to partake in the intercommunication. This lack of participation in the intercommunication is called Lurking.

Lurking makes up a large section of a blog's readership as blogs are likely to have more readers than the number of comments. During Ganoe et al. (2010) evaluation of their system revealed that only a few comments were placed on the stimulation posts. They did not see this as a purely negative thing as they stated "important part of building critical mass in such a system". They also highlighted that a relatively large amount of pictures were posted to the system instead. This shows that the evolution of the interaction between readers or between the reader and the blogger.

### **2.10 – Conclusion**

This literature review has explored the work of experts in their relative fields in order to better understand the world of blogging and the sub-cultures surrounding it. The project started by looking at various definitions of what a blog is and ultimately decided that a blog is defined as "frequently updated webpage with dated entries in order, usually containing links with commentary". This was a definition adjusted from Blood (2002) for the scope of this project.

Following this the project looked at different classifications of blogs and some examples of bloggers using these differing styles. The classifications centred around two contrasting styles, the content of the blog post and the style that a blog is presented in. It was decided, in this first section, that the project will use the classification of differing blogs based on their content rather than the content of posts. This built the basis of surface structures for the later section exploring presentation of the narrative.

The background knowledge section concluded with the project focusing on the blogger. This section started by looking at differing classifications of bloggers which fell again into two main groups. The first group whether their accounts were first hand or not and the second group being what topics the blogger chooses to blog about. In this project hence forth will look at only the bloggers who produce first-hand accounts called “content creators”. Once the type of blogger was established the project looked at the demographic profile of a standard blogger. This is that the blogger was most likely to be male with further education and little bias to any age group. This shows that there is a very wide range of different bloggers profiles (Garrett, 2008).

The project then went on to look at what narrative is and why it is important for blogging culture. The project defines narrative as “making a comment about a certain event, following an idea about the medium and form of presentation, which is ground in one’s own motivational and psychological attributes”. This is used for two key reasons, to explore the blogging without restriction on posts needing to be ordered chronologically and the focus on intercommunication. This section goes on to look at different ways that these narratives can be captured and looked at such as the Content-Community-Time model. The project also looked at how tags can be used to highlight like content and addresses problems that come in tag formation by suggesting categories to consider in the creation of tags for content. The section concluded by looking at interactive storytelling. This is twofold one in blogs which use multiple differing presentation of content in order to engage the reader further through more immersive experiences. The second being telling stories using a Character based storytelling (Camanho et al, 2008). This is where the narrative is told through the interactions between members rather than purely broadcasted to the reader.

The definition of narrative found in the literature was used as the starting point for the rest of the project. In this way the project went on to look at the different aspects of Nack (2011) definition and ideas about narrative. The project started by looking at the “comment on an event” part of the definition of narrative put forward by Nack (2011). The project did this by exploring what characteristics determine the likelihood for a blogger to create posts on one event rather than another. In this the project found that the reasons for blogging are very diverse based on the individual bloggers purpose of blogging and personality. The project found that bloggers tend to select their articles based on the criteria put forward by Kiciman (2012). In this the blogger is more likely to report or articles that more different to their expectations, more extreme events and when more change has occurred with the previous day or week. In addition to these criteria they also found that the bloggers sentiment, privacy concerns and their external environment such as the availability of mobile technology and bloggers time. In addition to the criteria of why the blogger chooses certain topics the project also looked at different topics that they choose to explore and the implications of doing so. The project found that bloggers blog about conflicts such as in Egypt and Iraqi. In these the bloggers used their blogs for a wide range of purposes including forming communities of support, engaging in dialog about the conflict and inciting change. In addition to conflict the project looked at how blogging was used in disasters such as sharing information and organising relief activities. In addition to these the project also looked at how businesses and bloggers are using blogs as a tool to build relationships to brands both to maintain and increase sells but also to get ideas and feedback from the end user using community blogging. Another topic that bloggers often engage in, and that the project looked at, is the use of a personal blog. In this the blogger can share their stories with groups of people to update others on their activities and whereabouts.

The project went on to look at the medium and presentation of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. This was done by looking at the quality of writing in blogs and found that different blogging platforms have different standards to the presentation of content and these standards change over time. The standards are shaped by the community that use the website to blog from. In this section the project found that blogging quality overall is decreasing however social media quality is increasing but still remains of a lower standard than other websites. In addition to this the project looked at how pictures are used to present the narrative. The project found that pictures do not tell the whole narrative and so they are best used alongside another medium such as text (Schneider, 1996). In addition the project found that the understanding that the audience get from the pictures is affected by context, purpose and philosophical stance (Snelson and Sheffield, 2009). This section concluded by looking at the understanding that the audience get when the narrative is presented using videos. The project found that videos contain certain elements which help display the narrative to the audience (Dreon et al, 2011). These elements include dramatic question, the pacing of the video and the point of view that the blogger takes. The project also found that the videos narrative if presented correctly can change the audience opinion of an event or the narrative.

The project went on to explore the literature surrounding the motivation and psychological attributes of the blogger. The project started by looking at the personality of bloggers and found that successful bloggers will have higher than normal extraversion or lower than normal neuroticism. In addition the project identified that the age of a blogger has on their popularity and how readily they will share narratives. This personality has some effect over the bloggers article choice.

The project went on to look at bloggers personality when they use different platforms to blog. The project found that bloggers are more extraverted, have higher neuroticism and are more open (Cill et al, 2009). In addition the project found that the personality of the blogger affects the way that the narrative is told. For example high extraversion is likely to include more verbs, more time references and less negativity in their narrative.

The project went on to explore the mood of the blogger and how it is varied depending of the blogger reader balance. The blogger reader balance is the how many other blogs a blogger will interact and read relative to the number of people who read and interact with their blog. The project found that bloggers who have more readers than those they read tend to have moods linked to their articles that are higher valence scores such as unhappy, seductive and sunny. The bloggers with fewer readers than they read have moods with low valence scores such as violent, timid and worthless. In addition the project found that the most talked about moods were high activation such as welcoming, friendly and trauma.

The project also went on to look at the motivations that bloggers have to participate in creating and maintaining blogs. The project found that bloggers highlighted that they blog in order to share their stories, have a creative outlet and to connect to their audience (Kjellberg, 2010).

The project went on to look at the idea that the blogger is disclosing some information that they did not intend to such as their political allegiances. This idea of the blogger unintended oversharing of personal information is important and then project went on to highlight that the oversharing can lead to real world consequences most prominently damage to relationships. As a result of this lots of people are monitoring and changing their privacy settings on their blogs and the majority are doing so in order to increase their privacy. Some users are taking this to the extremes and are deleting their accounts all together. As a result of this being highlighted as an issue certain measures are being designed and used in order to ensure the privacy of the end users and stakeholders. These measures included government legislation and the rise of the use of anonymity online. The project looked at these measures and the difficulty both in their introduction and the effect on the blogging culture.

The project after exploring the different parts of Nack (2011) definition of narrative went on to explore some of the other ideas that he has about narrative. The project started by looking at the reader due to Nack (2011) stating that “Narration is a structure-oriented activity that begins in the mind of the narrator but is completed in the mind of the receiver”. This section started by looking at the different reasons for the reader to both read blogs in general or a specific blog. The project found that readers choose to read blogs in general in order to waste time, as an addiction to not miss anything or out of habit. The reasons that a reader reads a specific blog are due to the content of the blog, the intent of stakeholders and the relationship between the stakeholders. In this case the stakeholders are both the blogger and the reader.

Following the exploration of why people read blogs the project looked at the impact that mobile technology has on reading of blogs. The project found that environmental circumstances can make the reading of blogs more difficult such as being cold leading the reader to wear gloves which makes operating their mobile phones more difficult.

The project finished by looking at another of Nack (2011) ideas about narrative namely intercommunication. The project looked at how the blog uses intercommunication in order to expand the narrative being told by the blogger and how this communication is being used to create and maintain relationships. The project found that communication can take place in several different ways such as the blogger referring to parts of her audience directly in the posts, on the blog, or using comments to allow messages to be posted. The project classified the conversations as “two-way dialogs” or “merging dialogs” based on who takes part in the conversation and how they do so. The project also looked at the personal and business benefits of these styles of communication on blogs. This section concludes by looking at the reluctance of some users to comment on blog posts in a process called lurking.



### **Chapter 3 - Project future aims and future exploration**

The preceding chapter the project undertook theoretical research into how narrative is used in blogs and the implications of it. The project looked at the blogger and the reader and how they share and pass a narrative between one another. In order to do this the project took Nack's (2011) definition of narrative and explored each of the constituent elements to find its impact to both the blogger and the reader to see how the narrative is currently shared. The project will now undertake empirical research in order to explore Nack's (2011) sub categories of narrative but specifically in the context of travel blogs. Later chapters will report a series of studies to understanding the ways that the blogger and readers provide and interact with the narrative.

The context of travel blogging was established in Section 2.2 as "express the experiences of the visitor at a specific destination"(Pan et al., 2007). Due to this definition the "event" part of Nack (2011) explanation of narrative is fixed as the experiences that the blogger has at different places. In addition the project hence forth will look exclusively at the consumer to consumer style of these travel blogs (See Section 2.7.5). This is in order to remove some of the conflicting goals for bloggers in different styles of travel blogging. In particular this removes the external pressures by businesses to get favourable reviews which may impact the bloggers freedom to create their own narrative.

The comments that the bloggers make inside this narrative were explored by Schmallegger and Carson (2008). These are general topics, general descriptions and specific items (See Section 2.2). The project will use these classifications as some of the comments that bloggers comment upon but will also highlight others as they arise.

With this context established, and the affects and restrictions of travel blogging to Nack's (2011) exploration of narrative understood, the project will explore the bloggers in more detail in this domain with respect to learning more about the narrative they create and how they fit into the remaining parts of Nack (2011) exploration of narrative. These are the remaining parts of Nack's (2011) definition of narrative namely "medium and form of presentation" and "ones own motivational and psychological attributes". The project will also address the intercommunication part of Nack (2011) exploration of narrative.

The project aims to explore each of these areas in a series of studies exploring and trying to learn more about how the narrative is presented in travel blogs. First successful travel blogs are examined which use a variety of different mediums (See Chapter 4 and 5). This will predominately explore the "medium and form of presentation" part of Nack (2011) definition. After this the project will look at the "motivational and psychological attributes" part of Nack (2011) definition by looking at what bloggers are saying about blogging (See Chapter 6). This will be done by getting the bloggers thoughts and feelings about blogging from a forum. The final part of Nack (2011) exploration of narrative is the intercommunication (See Chapter 7).

This empirical research will be used to build upon the theoretical research found in Chapter 2 in order to build a body of knowledge about how bloggers create the narrative in travel blogging. This knowledge will be used, will be used to create a new set of potential designs for how blogs are presented to the audience (See Chapter 8 and 9). These designs will be refined with potential end users with limited knowledge of travel blogs and blogging in general. This will ultimately create an end design of how travel narratives in blogging can be presented. This design will be used in an experiment to compare this solution with current solutions to compare the understanding the bloggers get from excising travel blogs arranges reverse chronologically with the new design (Blood, 2002).

## **Chapter 4 - Exploratory empirical research into travel blogs**

The previous chapter the future aims for this project were established. The first of these was a desire to further explore the medium and presentation of travel blogs through empirical research (Nack, 2011). In particular the following study will aim to identify the typical style that bloggers use to write their blogs in and the implications of this. The style that the blogger is using is either to be a content creator or content aggregator (Angel et al, 2006),. In addition this subsection of the study will also look at whether the bloggers work as a team or as individuals and how this affects the narrative.

The study will follow on to look at the “surface structures” of the presentation of narrative (Nack, 2011). This is how the narrative is displayed and the choice of medium that the blogger uses. The study will also look at how the readers and bloggers can interact this is to establish some knowledge about a different part of Nack (2011) exploration of narrative namely intercommunication (See Chapter 7).

The project will finish by looking at how the narrative is ordered and linked. This will establish how the bloggers present narratives across different posts. In addition the project wants to see if there are other ways that content can be linked and ordered other than chronological order. This is to see if there is an alternative way to present blogs without the constant preconception that blogs must be ordered and linked in this way. The definitions found during theoretical research focus on needing the posts to be linked by time however the projects definition of blogging this is omitted for this purpose (Blood, 2002).

### **4.1 – Methodology**

#### ***Blog selection***

In order to gain this understanding the study will look at the top twenty travel blogs as ranked by Blog rank (n.d.). This selection of travel blogs were chosen as they can be seen as successful blogs in the context we are looking at. These travel blogs will also have the largest readership due to the criteria used to rank the blogs. As a result using these blogs should have the largest reader interaction however as learnt in the literature study that the readers still have to be engaged with the content in order to interact with the blogs (See Section 2.9). However the ranking do not take any account of how engaged the bloggers are making their readership as this is not part of the criteria for ranking blogs.

#### ***Procedure***

Now that the choice of blogs to be used in the study has been established the project must work out how they will be assessed. In this study the project started by setting out following key questions for analysis in particular while looking at the blogs.

- Are the bloggers content creators or content aggregators? (Angel et al, 2006)
- What mediums do they predominantly use in their posts? (Gao, et al, 2010)
- Do they have a way for the reader to interact with the narrative? If so how many readers take up this opportunity?
- How are posts currently ordered?
- How are posts linked, if at all?

In addition to the questions that were posed when looking at the blogs any additional interesting features were noted down.

When looking at the blogs in order to answer the questions the project would note down what was found in a chart (See Figure 0-3, Figure 0-4 and Figure 0-5). The notes were established through reading all the articles or posts on the first two pages linked from the front page of the blogs. This allowed both the articles themselves and the way that they are linked to and from the front page of the blog to be explored. This means that the different blogs that were looked at would have different numbers of articles considered for the study. This reflects another design choice by the blogger of how they chose to

display their articles. This method of looking at two pages of articles was done in order to spot trends and commonality across several posts rather than just what the blogger has recently posted. In addition to this it allows the project to find article styles and features which are less often used. These features or styles may only feature in one or two of the posts on the pages looked at. When the project was concerned about response rates on the blog such as the number of comments on an article the project would look at the second most recent blog. This was due to that particular article being the most recent data which the reader has had the opportunity to place their responses on. However this will not necessarily be the post that the reader has the most affinity with so this may not be the post with the most number of comments (Shmueli, et al, 2012). As a result these numbers will be used to give an indicator of the ball park responses given.

## **4.2 – Travel bloggers posting style**

### ***Observations***

All of the bloggers are content creators and hence create the posts themselves rather than copy or aggregate content from others. Ten of the twenty blogs looked at are created solely by individuals. The other blogs either have a team of bloggers (4 blogs) or allow guest bloggers (5 blogs) to create posts in order to provide more content to their readers (Salcido, 2013). Guest bloggers was further discussed in Section 2.3. In addition where guest bloggers are used they link to the guest bloggers blog along with other posts they have written. This is due to the profiles of the guest blogger being placed on the posts. The final blog leaves the author unspecified so there is no way of telling if it is the same individual writing all the articles.

### ***Interpretation***

The blogger's, by using content creator style of blogging, will have their unique narrative exclusively on their blog. This allows the blog to have its own style and flow and improves coherence across the blog. This is due to all the posts being of a similar style (Gao, et al, 2010). This style becomes almost a brand for the blog. This brand or these unique posts will also help influence the reader's affinity to the blog (See Section 2.8.3). This is through Baumer et al (2008) arguments that the "content of the blog" will affect the reader's willingness to read a blog. The content will be the unique style of the narrative that the blogger which attracts the audience to the blog. The uniqueness of the narrative relates to blogger making unique comments in their own style based on their personality and motivation to do so (See Section 2.7). In these ways the uniqueness in narrative can be related back to these parts of Nack (2011) definition of narratives.

The posts when made by the blogger add to this uniqueness of the blog and its narrative. This will change the narrative due to it further and more deeply be ground in the "motivation and psychological attributes" of the blogger part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. This way the personality of the blogger will be reflected in the posts of the blog as they are being created by them (See Section 2.7.2) (Gill et al., 2009). This also will aim to make the audience have a more positive perception of the intent of the blogger is helpful and that they will act in the best way for their audience. This is another of Baumer et al (2008) attributes that affect whether the audience will read a given blog.

When the posts are made others they try to keep a similar style to the main bloggers. This is normally free however some bloggers try to charge the guests to be allowed to post or provide payments to the bloggers for their time. The guest bloggers use of biography in order to give the reader more information about the guest blogger and provide links the guest bloggers blog or other work they have done (Salcido, 2013).

My Blog Guest (n.d.) highlights some of the benefits to the blogger (owner of the blog) and the guest blogger. They highlight that the guest blogger benefits due to increased exposure through reaching new audiences, Building their brand and building links to their site. The blog owner benefits through getting exclusive content and a fresh

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perspective from the guest bloggers. This understanding is trying to create a win-win situation in order for collaboration to occur and for the blogs to grow. This process in some ways mimics content aggregation as the blog owner is getting content from other sources than his or her own experiences but in this way the guest blogger is aware that the “aggregation” is going on and is receiving credit for their work.

### **4.3 – Mediums travel bloggers use in their blogs**

#### ***Observations***

All twenty of the top blogs looked at use both text and pictures in their posts (Gao, et al, 2010). What is interesting in how the balance of text to other mediums shifts between posts for instance “GoBackpacking” uses very little text and instead focuses the posts on pictures where as “The Cranky Flier” uses almost exclusively text only with a select few pictures such as graphs. In addition to this the blogs on websites make limited use of other mediums such as videos and sounds. Videos were found in 4 of the blogs and sounds or podcasts were found in only one of the blogs.

#### ***Interpretation***

This shows how different bloggers have different approaches to blogging even when they are in the same domain. The different ways that pictures are used shows that different bloggers will present their narrative in different ways even if they use the same medium hence changing the deep structures (See Section 2.6).

The limited use of other mediums such as videos could be due to problems with the tools that the blogging platforms currently provide or again down to the choice of the blogger. Either way more information needs to be found about how these forms of communicating the travel narratives are used and their impact in communication between the blogger and the reader (See Chapter 5).

### **4.4 – Bloggers wiliness to interact with their audience.**

#### ***Observations***

All twenty of the blogs looked at allowed the bloggers audience to add their comments about the article however four of the blogs allow the audiences comments to be hidden from public view and are instead just sent to the blogger. However in two of the blogs the readership choose not to take up the opportunity to comment (See Section 2.9.1). In addition only three of the blogs the blogger actually responds to the comments of the reader in the comments.

On seven blogs the audience are interacting by using social media more than commenting. Two of the blogs allow the reader to share the content of a post to others using email rather than social networks however it is not indicated on the websites how often this is used. Two other sites allow the readers to subscribe to the blog via a newsletter and a number of blogs highlighted the ability to subscribe via a RSS feed.

#### ***Interpretation***

Shmueli, et al. (2012) showed that commenting on article requires the reader to have a high level of engagement in an article. Therefore due to the blogs having limited amount of comments the most popular blogs are not engaging the end user very well. However the readership may be purely being engaged to a different way through liking or sharing the content instead. This may be the new way that engagement in these blogs is being shown. This liking and sharing helps the blogger by creating more perspective readers through viral growth but they are not getting the opportunity to directly communicate with them (See Section 2.9). This shows that the user is prepared to interact with the post but in a different way. In this way with the importance that the reader is unconsciously placing on external social networks the bloggers need to place at least

some of their effort into creating an identity on these sites and interacting in this way with their users (See Chapter 7).

The lacking in commenting from both sides highlights that both the blogger and audience do not engage in Camanho, et al. Idea of character based storytelling (Camanho et al, 2008). This means that the blogger needs to find different ways of delivering their narrative. This is done through providing more of the details of the narrative in the blog post itself. In this the blogger must ensure that they provide more of the comments of the event in the article (Nack, 2011). The blogger should also ensure that they provide the reader with more information surrounding Tomàs et al. (2010) criteria for what should be included in the narrative such as Time, Locations and Description (See Section 2.4).

The reader also provides the comments not in a public setting on some blogs. In this way the comments are not creating a discussion but are instead used more like feedback to the blogger about the posts. It is impossible to see what the content of these messages are and so it will be difficult to do any further evaluation. This can make it easier for the audience to provide creative criticism as it can be done in private. In this way the blogger can get the feedback from their audience and make changes based on it.

The blogs that allow their audience to subscribe to the blog via email allows the blogger a direct way to contact the readers about new content. This again is a one way or broadcast only form of communication which is just used to get the readers to return to the sites. The readers on the other hand may enjoy the updates however some may find them intrusive. This means that the blogger must be careful of how frequently the updates occur.

The final observation highlighted was the use of RSS feeds in blogs. Godin (2005) explains that this is a feature which alerts the readers when a change to the blog has occurred such as a new post. This allows the readers to find content quickly after the post is made with limited effort. This makes it more likely that the reader will revisit the site when new content is posted rather than having to continually check a website. This is commonly available on blogs and on other websites online however Godin (2005) also highlights that a low percentage of the readership of his blog uses such a tool. RSS has been designed to be easy to install to a blog, as this project will show later most platforms do this automatically, and for the reader to use. RSS feeds were also highlighted by the audience of blogs as one feature they expect to see on a blog (Baumer et al, 2008).

## **4.5 - How posts are currently ordered**

### ***Observations***

All but three of the blogs looked at in the study exclusively order their posts reverse chronologically and a further blog uses this order with additional ordering styles. Two of the blogs are now using a different style of ordering posts in order to try to bring more relevant articles to the top and hence given a highlighted state. They are doing this through ordering posts using a featured article style and by topics. A hybrid system is in use at “The Longest Way Home” where a single blogger selected featured most prominently at the top of the blog followed by the rest of the posts in reverse chronological order. “foXnoMad” has a slightly different style for ordering their posts they divide the posts into three distinct piles namely Advice, Picture & Video and Tech. This splits the narrative into almost three mini blogs based on these different topics. Each of the mini blogs has its own separate narrative and chronological ordering.

### ***Interpretation***

The current use of chronological order allows the most recent post to be placed at the top of the blog so that it can be viewed first. This gives the most recent post a highlighted position on the page and is most likely to be read. This is similar to Qamra et al. (2006) identification of hot stories (See Section 2.4).

The other sites which the bloggers have developed different ways to alter the surface structures of the blog and the ways the posts link to one another (Nack, 2011).

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This will make it harder for the most recent posts to be found by the readers as they are not on the top but instead other content based that the blogger chooses will gain this prominence and increased visibility on the blog. Due to the majority of blogs being in this reverse chronological style the change may also surprise the readers who may just believe that the blog is not being frequently updated (Blood, 2002).

Bloggers have tried to use hybrid systems to mix the benefits of chronological order and bloggers own styles of picking other content to highlight. This will get around the readers confusion as the newest posts are still easily found but the blogger can still show the user something that he or she wishes the readers to view.

In other blogs the blogger has elected to sub divide the blog into three mini blogs. This creates three narratives and three groups of posts from the same author. These mini-blogs are then ordered reverse chronologically. In this way the user can have more choice in the area that they wish to read about. They can then see the most recent post for that area without having to first see posts from a different topic that they may not be interested in. This style can also allow the blogger to create different styles and narratives for each of these mini-blogs.

## **4.6 - How posts are linked in travel blogs**

### ***Observation***

In the blogs looked at the strongest theme running between posts was the location that the blogger was blogging from. However there were differences in the way that the bloggers audience could move from one article to the next. These are to use tags and categories (See Section 2.4) or to use a popular posts or “you may also like” method. Tagging and categories that top bloggers have used include; Activities, Topics, Features, Food, Life, Photography, Advice, Family travel, Work/life Balance, Contests. These are not always successful as the “Art of Backpacking” has the problem of the tags not being easily seen and hence less widely used. The other issue is that the blogs have too many different tags on them.

### ***Interpretation***

Location was expected to be the key link to content due to the nature of travel blogging being catered around experiences at these locations. The locations used where the locations the bloggers spent a large amount of time in one location and hence devoting a number of posts to the one location rather than one much longer one. Some bloggers still choose to have the whole of one location being one post no matter the length.

The first of these tools that the bloggers used to link content was by using tags (Sen, et al, 2006). This wide range of groupings shows that the blogger tries to tailor the tags to both the content that they provide, the style that they write in and to what they think their audience want to read and cares about. Gupta et al. (2010) provided some examples of tags that can be used, of these most of them are context based tags. This aims to address the content of the blog and the perceived intent of the blogger and their audience parts of Baumer et al. (2008) reasons that the audience view blogs.

The processing of tagging and categorising posts is predominantly done in order for the readers to find posts however it can also be used by the blogger to focus their thoughts prior to writing. A key importance must be placed on the accessibility and ease of use of the tags as tags which are hidden are of no benefit to the reader.

The other of that blogger have used is to have a “you may also like” on a post. This provides a list of other posts that have been determined to be similar to the one that the reader is currently reading. This does not necessary ensure that the reader gets the correct order though a given narrative that the blogger wishes to tell. It does however give the reader a good indication of other content that they may wish to read. The biggest issue foreseen is there are a finite number of recommendations, normally four, so if the reader has already read all of them then the reader will be stuck as to what to do next. Popular

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posts will experience this issue of recommendation exhaustion more quickly as what is popular will take longer to change. The other problem with this is that there is no way of knowing how these recommended posts are determined. This could require the blogger to select the articles themselves but this will make a larger workload when the blogger creates posts. On the other hand the blog itself could create recommendations automatically. One way that this could be done is using Facebook open graph API which can be used to provide recommendations based on your personality, your friends activity and your interests.

## **4.7 - Additional information**

### ***Observations***

Fourteen of the blogs have a summary of the article or the first paragraph on the front page which then links to the full article if the reader selects it. A few of the sites also have advertising on their sites. In particular the adverts on “Nomadic Matts Travel Site” are distracting the audience’s attention from the content.

In addition four of the blogs end every post with a question and a further blog ends all their posts with a poll.

Finally two of the blogs have maps which chart their travels. “The Longest Way Home” has a map which purely shows where the blogger has been however “Uncornered Market” uses their map to indicate the location each of their posts. However these do not link to the posts themselves and purely provide an illustration of where the articles are from.

### ***Interpretation***

The brief summary of articles on the first page allows bloggers to have more articles on the list of posts page while not limiting the availability to the content. The introduction gives the reader a feel of whether that particular post is for them and if it is not then they can more easily find other content. This provides the reader with part of the narrative up front. The audience should be able to get the event part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative from just this short introduction of the content.

Advertising is not an issue some of the time as the bloggers are trying to monetize their blogs. However there is a fine line from being acceptable to being annoying and obtrusive for the reader which some of the blogs have crossed. It is a constant balancing act between the blogger trying to earn a living from their blog and providing the best experience for their audience. This is due to the adverts breaking the emersion from the narrative. It is not just the locations of the adverts but the content of the adverts too. For instance readers are going to be more annoyed more quickly if the adverts are noisy. In this way the adverts are damaging the presentation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative.

Some of the bloggers are trying to get more discussions on their blogs by asking questions or starting polls. This is the blogger trying to encourage these discussions comments or to gage the opinion of the readers about a given issue. This is a very good idea in practice however due to the readers not contributing to the discussions particularly the highlighted lack of commenting this is likely to be unsuccessful in practice (See Section 2.9.1).

The use of maps to show the positions of articles allows the reader to quickly locate posts set in a given location in a more interesting way. From an ascetic point of view this looks better on the page than a long list of countries or regions. However to locate a particular post is difficult especially when the site has a large number of articles from one location and thus a large number of pins on the map. This also reinforces the idea that locations are the main way that articles are linked.

## **4.8 – Conclusion**

In this study the presentation and the mediums part of Nack (2011) definition of blogging has been explored. This study has also touched on the way that the blogger is using communication in order to expand this narrative. In travel blogs the bloggers are content creators who predominantly use photos and text in order to present the narrative that the bloggers wish to tell. In addition the study has highlighted that although the blogs are currently linked and ordered using chronological order there is an underlying link of locations linking content across the blogs. This link of location has been further shown by a few of the blogs including maps to highlight the locations more prominently to their audience.

The communication exploration has highlighted that commenting on posts is available across all the blogs. However the take up of this way of communicating with the blogger changes a lot from blog to blog. The study also highlights how the bloggers and their audience are using social media in order to interact with the blogs narrative. The study has also highlighted the bloggers trying to encourage the communication through using questions and polls to create discussion topics.



## **Chapter 5 - Exploratory research into other surface structures**

### **used in travel blogging**

The previous chapter undertook a study looking at the use of presentation and medium aspects of narrative. However due to the choice of blogs to be explored in that study limited use of videos and podcast styles of blogging. In order to explore how bloggers use these mediums to present the narratives the project will undertake an additional study to look in more detail at how narratives are affected by this. In addition this study will also look at in some of the ways that bloggers who use these mediums differ in the way that they communicate with their audience. This study also aims to show the limitations on how the narrative can be presented and the differences in blogs, bloggers and their audience due to this medium (See Section 2.6.2 and 2.6.3).

### **5.1 – Methodology**

#### ***Blog selection***

In order to explore the travel blog narratives using videos and podcasts the project will look at the top ten most subscribed travel and events channels according to vidStatsX (n.d.) on YouTube and the 10 best travel Podcasts as listed as the top Audio podcasts on iTunes in the Places & Travel category. When looking at these blogs the project watched or listened to the ten posts in the order they appear on the blog front page. For the YouTube channel the front page was the profile of the blogger where all their videos were linked from. For the podcasts each blog is given a page in the iTunes store this was used as the front page for this study. These 10 video blogs or podcasts were used in order to determine trends and any rarer one off style that the bloggers choose to use.

#### ***Procedure***

We looked at these blogs in a similar way to the first study with a list of initial questions relating to the style, medium and presentation of the narrative. These questions were the same for both the video blogs and the podcasts and are as follows.

- What methods are provided for the audience to interact with the blogger? (Nack, 2011)
- How can video blogs or podcasts be shared?
- How the video blogs or podcasts are ordered?
- How the video blogs or podcasts link between one another?

In addition to looking at the blogs in order to answer the above questions they were also looked at to find any additional information they can find. The additional information can be found in the additional notes sections (See Section 5.2.5).

While looking to answer the questions the project will note down its findings in the charts found in the appendix (See Figure 0-6, Figure 0-7, Figure 0-8, Figure 0-9 and Figure 0-10). These notes will be used as the basis for the observations in the preceding sections of the study.

### **5.2 - Video blogs**

#### **5.2.1 - Methods provided for the audience in order to interact with the blogger**

##### ***Observations***

As all ten of the video blogs were found on YouTube they all have the interaction tools that YouTube provides. These are the ability to comment on a video, add

your own caption to a video and to give a video a “like”. YouTube allows these comments to be voted using “thumbs up” and “thumbs down”. This will make comments that have more “thumbs up” to appear more prominently in the comments section. In addition the comments that the blogger responds to are also displayed more prominently. By prominently we mean that they appear in a box directly under the video which is above the regular comments section. The comments can also include a time stamp from the video. If the comments do this then they can appear as annotations during the videos. YouTube also allows the users to give a video a like rather than commenting.

All ten of the video Bloggers have profiles on external websites such as social networks. The most popular of these are Twitter and Facebook which appear on all ten of the video blogs looked at in the study (See Chapter 7). In addition to social networks two of the popular YouTube video travel bloggers run their own external websites. These are “DamonFizzy” who runs a community site and “nayders07” who runs a more traditional blog with additional information using pictures and text along with her videos. A small minority of the channel provide more traditional methods for communication such as “Olga Kay” providing a PO Box for communications by post and “nick” provides phone numbers on his website.

### ***Interpretation***

Commenting on a video is the main way that the audience can put across their opinions about the video. The discussions are generally between different viewers however the blogger can choose to reply to a comment and in this case YouTube groups the views comment and the bloggers comments together so that the connection between the comments can be easily read together. However Anthony (2011) highlights that through the introduction of thumbs up along with the comments the audience are instead just looking to get “thumbs up” in any way that they can. This does not get the intercommunication that benefits the blogger or the rest of the viewers as it fail to add to the narrative or discussions. Anthony (2011) also argues that the “thumbs up” culture also discourages some viewers from adding their comments as they think they will get a lot of “thumbs down” especially if the comment is likely to oppose the perceived community opinions.

This way the viewers can link their comments to a specific part of the content can be used to aid discussions as they can create links directly to parts of the video. This might help to make the user feel more a part of the blogging process and so may encourage them to provide more of their own content to the blog. In this way this style of blogging gains much more interaction between members of the audience and between the blogger and the audience.

The introduction of “liking” a video also allows the user to show that they enjoyed the video without a large number of the same generic “thanks for a video I enjoyed” messages and thus the comments are actual discussions. Giving a video alike also makes the video appear more prominently in searches and in a “most liked” category. In this way the audience saying that they enjoyed the video is helping the bloggers video to reach a larger audience and so is creating a tangible impact rather than just a sense of accomplishment.

The bloggers that have created their own external websites have done so to aid the two way communication and merging dialogs (Macskassy, 2012). The first of these external websites is “DamonFizzy”. This was created so that his audience to communicate with each other and with him in a verity of ways including a forum and a chat room. This allows merging dialogs to more easily take place. The chat room allows direct communication in real time whereas the forum allows asynchronous communication platform. This allows communication with people in the same time zone and with people the other side of the world to take place. However this does not directly link to the video or any way to expand the narrative. It seems that it is used more as to keep the audience engaged with the channel and to increase social pressure to encourage them to watch more. As the audience feel more connected they are more likely to

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comment and interact. This is due to Shmueli et al. (2012) argument that audience are interested in their friends commenting on the article even if they are not interested in that particular article (See Section 2.9). In this case the friends are the other members of the community that they know from the forum. This is an effective way for the bloggers to encourage commenting and in turn aid character based story telling (Camanho et al, 2008). In addition to this it may also make the audience feel like the intent of the reader is to build these relationships with their audience and as a result may be more likely to read this blog over another blog (Baumer et al, 2008).

The other blogger with an external website is “nayders07”. She uses her blog links content better than YouTube allows and allows more social network presence to be shown. In fact “nayders07” has the largest number of ways that her audience can directly communicate and interact with her. This allows the most ways for her audience to partake in discussions with her using two way dialogs (Macskassy, 2012). In this way she allows the audience to get far more tailored narrative through the most like character based storytelling of any blogger found in the project.

### **5.2.2 – Methods provided to the audience in order for them to share posts**

#### ***Observations***

All of the channels allow their content to be shared through the tools that YouTube provides. These tools are; embed a video to your website, post to Facebook, post to twitter, post to Google + and to add to a hangout. However “nayders07” uses her website to provide additional ways to share the videos using her website. She is the only blogger to do this. The additional ways that she provides to share content using StumbleUpon and Tumblr.

#### ***Interpretation***

The tools YouTube provide allows the viewer to share the content with some of their social networks and control how the content is posted however what if they only use other social networks and wish to share the content there. With the tools that YouTube provides and the inability for the blogger to add more the viewer can not share the content in the way that they would like and so limits the growth and exposure that the blogger can get. However the bloggers using their own websites can get around these issues and adapt or react more quickly to new ways that their audience require. This can also be used to further tailor this to their audience and show more of their personality in the ways they share the blogs content.

### **5.2.3 - How the posts in videos blogs are ordered**

#### ***Observations***

YouTube restrict the way that videos are ordered on their site. As a result all ten of the video blogs were ordered in reverse chronological order based on the upload date of the video. All of the blogs videos are sent to their audience using a subscription system used by YouTube. This system will present the audience with all the videos from all the blogs they are subscribed to in reverse chronological order.

Seven of the YouTube bloggers are providing additional ordering styles through the use of playlists. These playlists allow the blogger to link like videos together based on different criteria. The criteria that the bloggers surveyed have decided to use include; locations, events, style and time.

#### ***Interpretation***

The compulsorily reverse chronological style of these video blogs has restricted the freedom of the blogger to present the narrative in the way that they wish. In this way the tools that the blogger is being provided with are hampering the narrative being told.

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This could also be seen to force the narrative to include more of the time part of plot. This time part of the narrative is highlighted by Tomàs et al. (2010)

This ordering style also allows the most recent videos to be displayed most prominently on the YouTube profile and in the subscription box. This makes the most recent video the one that the audience is most likely to view. The issue with this is the content and narrative of this video may not be what the bloggers audience is looking for. This is due to the audience highlighting that the content being one of the main criteria to view a blog (Baumer et al, 2008). If this content is not included in the video then the video does not engage the viewer. This lack of engagement will lead to less comments which restrict character based storytelling and lower likelihood for the audience to return.

In addition the ordering of blogs in the subscription box will lead to the most recent post on a given blog only gaining prominence if it is more recent than all the posts from other blogs that the audience subscribes to. This leads to the blogger being uncertain as to how much of their audience the post has reached as a result they have to come up with other ways to ensure that the content reaches their audience.

The bloggers are trying to order their posts in other ways than reverse chronological. This is difficult due to the fixed nature of the YouTube as an environment for the blog to exist in. The bloggers are trying to reorder these based on other criteria that they believe are more interesting and relevant to their audience. Locations make the most sense as a grouping as the blogger is constantly moving around and this will allow the viewers to see videos on a given location rather than the most recent. This highlights more prominently the location part of Tomàs et al. (2010) and matches the content part that indicates that reader will view a particular blog (Baumer et al, 2008).

#### **5.2.4 - How posts in video blogs link between one another**

##### ***Observations***

YouTube allow two ways to link the videos between each other is through annotations inside the video and through linking the videos are “video responses” of one another. Annotations has been found on five of the video blogs looked at and video responses used in three of the video blogs. All three of the bloggers who use video responses do this in addition to using annotations.

##### ***Interpretation***

Annotations allow the blogger to add a small amount of clickable text or picture which will allow the viewer watch a different video. The problem with this is the original video will stop playing and be replaced with the new video which makes it more difficult for the viewer to return to the first video. As a result annotations are most often found at the end of the videos.

Video responses are videos which the blogger has decided relate to the first video and are displayed prominently on the right of the page where YouTube decided related videos can be found. This is not very obvious to the user that the videos themes continue from the current video to the next.

Overall there is very little benefit to linking videos as the tools that YouTube have designed do not highlight the links very well. As a result the bloggers are not easily able to create narratives that overlap posts and highlight these links to their audience.

#### **5.2.5 - Additional information**

##### ***Observations***

One of the most interesting things found while looking at the bloggers profiles is a feed. Nine of the blogs in the study have one so this is likely to be a feature that is in the process of being rolled out. In this feed it shows all the bloggers activities on YouTube such as liking videos, uploading new videos and commenting on videos. The blogger have been seen to use the feeds to highlight their old content to their audience by liking or

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commenting on old videos. The blogger have also used these feeds to highlight other bloggers videos by commenting on them or liking them. Finally the blogger can use the feed to highlight where the conversations are currently happening by responding to comments on a given video. These responses also appear on the feed.

In addition three of the blogs have merchandise or t-shirts shops in order to monetize their blogs.

### ***Interpretation***

The feed shows the viewer's real time updates of what a blogger has most recently done no matter what the task that they performed was. This provides the blogger with several ways to highlight different content to a viewer who is looking at the feed. In addition to this the feed is published to all the viewers who are subscribed to the channel via their personalised YouTube front page.

The feed will provide the relevant description of the action along with a link to the video at the top of the feed or personalised front page until the blogger performs another action. The personalised front page contains all the bloggers that the viewer is described to and so the like or comment will only appear at the top of the page until either the blogger or another blogger who the viewer is subscribed to performs an action.

The feed being used to highlight other blogs can be used to suggest to their audience other bloggers that they may enjoy. This can be done for one of two reasons the blogger may enjoy the second blogger and hence wants to spread the word. On the other hand the blogger may be doing it in return for something from the second blogger. For example a common practice on YouTube for one blogger to like a video of another in order to get them to like a video back in return. This process is taken one step further as when a viewer subscribes to a blogger YouTube will recommend other bloggers you may also wish to subscribe to. The recommendations are specified by the blogger and are normally the bloggers other channels but they often include other bloggers in order to appear on their recommended subscriber's section.

The feed also been seen to be used to highlight discussions in the blog. In this way the blogger can encourage others to join in a discussion through both highlighting and facilitating the discussion. It also shows the viewer that the blogger is trying to respond and thus makes it less of a fruitless effort. In terms of the number of comments YouTube videos have a lot more videos than that of traditional web page based blogs. However a subsection of those who are commenting are not aiding the conversations but are instead advertising themselves of products, looking for admiration such as making comments for likes or just trying to put other commenter down.

The stores can be seen to monetizing their blogs in order to continue to provide content. This can also show a higher level of viewer participation and engagement from the blogs. This shows that the viewers are actively seeking and are prepared to pay their hard earned money on merchandise baring a logo or catchphrase from their favourite bloggers.

## **5.3 - Podcasts**

### **5.3.1 - Methods provided for the audience in order to interact with the blogger**

#### ***Observations***

The podcasts looked at were all from iTunes this is a closed and carefully controlled environment in which the blogger can only use the tools that apple have provided for them. In this case the audience are restricted to only being able to post customer reviews were they receive the content. In addition to this iTunes provides no way, other than to address issues in the next issue of the podcast, in order for the blogger to interact with their audience. In this way little to no discussions can take place.

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Some of the bloggers have got around this problem like YouTube bloggers by having external tools away from where some of their content is delivered. These podcast bloggers have the only link, that iTunes allows, to their website. This website allows the blogger to have full control over what can and cannot be posted. The bloggers websites that looked at allow more communication between the blogger and listeners. They do this by utilising social media again particularly Facebook and twitter along with more traditional methods such as forums. Different bloggers make more or less use of their websites but the stand out from the group being “Traveller Language Guides” which contains the widest range of social networking options including YouTube and a social network for travellers with a fully featured blog.

### ***Interpretation***

This lack of communication methods is probably done as iTunes sees their platform as purely a disruption network rather than have the goal of facilitating discussions. As you have seen in the previous sections YouTube also control what the bloggers can do but are much freer in the choices that they provide to bloggers. In this way a lot more of the YouTube bloggers than podcast bloggers only use the tools provided. YouTube also allows the blogger to place more emphasis or prominence on their external profiles such as other social networks or websites.

## **5.3.2 – Methods provided to the audience in order for them to share posts**

### ***Observations***

Again iTunes restricts the tools that they provide to users. However in this case the tools do allow some ways to share the content however they are not as substantial as YouTube. iTunes allows the listeners, and the bloggers if they so wish, to share the content to their Facebook and Twitter accounts. More interestingly the most prominent of the features that they provide is a “tells a friend” feature. This requires the user to sign into an iTunes account and then they can send a link to the blog along with a message to a given e-mail address. All of the features that iTunes provides are fairly hidden behind a small arrow next to a large subscribe button (See Figure 0-11). In this way as much as iTunes provides these features they do not show them prominently and thus shows how little importance the platform places on the tools.

## **5.3.3 - How the posts in podcasts are ordered**

### ***Observation***

iTunes only allows the podcasts to be ordered in reverse chronological order.

### ***Interpretation***

This ordering style is not very helpful for travel podcasts as commonly to they are more relevant based on content rather than time. This is because the audience are likely only to be interested in a subsection of the content rather than the whole most likely content about locations that they are going to or have visited or about activities that they are interested in such as skiing.

## **5.3.4 - How posts in podcasts link between one another**

### ***Observations***

All of the bloggers on iTunes do not have links between their posts. The closest to an exception that any of the blogs has is the “London walks podcast” has one episode which is has two parts. The most often style to the blogs is to have a single episode on each location no matter how long the particular episode will be. They then move on to the

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next location in the next episode. The locations that get different episodes are different depending to the scale of the blogger.

## **5.4 – Conclusion**

In both video blogging and podcasts the blogger's narrative presentation is restricted by the tools that they choose to use. The tools only allow the bloggers to link and order the narrative through limited ways predominantly through time linkages. The bloggers have tried to use these tools along with creating other platforms to provide more tools in order to link content in different ways. The most prominent way of doing this is by linking the content about the location so they can be accessed together.

The communication aspect of this study showed that YouTube was the only tool which provides the blogger and their audience with a way to communicate. However both sets of bloggers have looked to find different ways to communicate with their audience through predominantly using social networks. This allows the bloggers to provide further narrative above and beyond the videos or podcasts themselves.

## **Chapter 6 - Empirical research into bloggers opinions on blogging**

The preceding two chapters explored the presentation and medium parts of the narrative. In addition to this they touched on the intercommunication aspects of narrative also. This chapter will instead look at a different aspect and no less important part of the Nack (2011) narrative exploration namely the bloggers “own psychological and motivational attributes”. This builds upon and reinforces some of the knowledge that was found in the literature review particularly focusing on the external environment that the bloggers chose to blog in and why they do this (See Section 2.7). This additional information will be found out by getting bloggers to self-report their thoughts and feelings about several issues which were not in the literature currently in the following secondary research study.

In addition to the “psychological and motivational attributes” being looked at the study will also touch on the communication of bloggers through looking at their wiliness to interact with their audience.

### **6.1 – Methodology**

In this study the project will look at unprompted issues raised by bloggers on a forum. The forum selected is the “bloggeries” forum (bloggeries.com, n.d.). After establishing where the information could be found we looked at and read the threads that bloggers were posted on the site. This was done in order to find the topics that appeared most frequently. From these topics the ones which had already been found out in the literature review and those with little relevance to travel blogging removed. The project was left with a few topics to discuss which are found in the preceding sections. For these topics the threads that addressed them were reviewed and the bloggers opinions captured. These opinions can be found as bloggers quotes in the observation section of each of the topics discussed. This also allowed the opinions to be captured without being affected by the way that they were collected such as by using interviews. This leaves them free from bias based on how the questions were asked or presented to the bloggers. In addition a poll or an interview captures the opinions of the participants at the time that the study takes place. The use of the forum allows the past opinions of the bloggers to be seen on an equal footing to the opinions of bloggers placed on the day of the study. This allows the project to explore the widest range of opinions along with how the opinions have shifted over time. On the other hand this way of capturing the opinions is less tailored to the questions that the project wants to ask and so do not fit perfectly into the parts of narrative that the project is exploring. The topics that will be discussed are how the bloggers write their articles, the bloggers time pressures and the bloggers willingness to interact with their audience.

#### ***Participants***

The forum that was used requires members to be active bloggers before being able to read or post to the blog. As a result the participants of this study are bloggers who have blogs that are at least two months old and have been posted on at least twice a week. Other than this the bloggers must also be content creators but it does not matter what style of blogging they chose to use (Gao, et al, 2010). In addition the bloggers looked at in this study range in the amount of time they have for blogging, their age, their gender and the income that they get from blogging. As a result the opinions are from a wide section of the blogging community. However this study can only capture the opinions of bloggers who use the forum.



## **6.2 - How bloggers create their posts**

In this section the project will focus on one aspect of the part of the big five indicators highlighting the psychological attributes of the blogger. This is the conscientiousness of the blogger which shows the bloggers desire to impose order in the way they create their posts (Gill et al., 2009). The literature found no tendency for bloggers to be either high or low in this part of personality. As a result the project will expect the bloggers to demonstrate a wide range of different approaches and levels of organisation in the creation of their posts. In addition this project also highlights that ideas can come from others who they have relationships with. In this way this section also highlights some aspects that some bloggers are found to have high openness part of the big five indicator.

### ***Observations***

The bloggers on the forum highlight that they plan their articles in different ways. The user “ajwalsh” keeps a notepad of ideas as they come to them whereas “HarryIsLewis” uses the paper to jot down ideas from memory or experiences prior to them starting writing the article (ajwalsh, 2010) (HarryIsLewis, 2010). In addition users including “Irish Jo” and “ajwalsh” get their ideas when talking to their friends however give no further evaluation of what ideas come of this (ajwalsh, 2010) (Irish Jo, 2010). Other bloggers choose not to plan their articles instead they elect to just start writing. Users who blog in this way include “TKUEXCLUSIVE” and “Bagleworm”. (TKUEXCLUSIVE, 2012) (Bagleworm, 2012). Some bloggers try to help others by linking to more information rather than provide their own opinion. This was done by the user “Web Design” linked the bloggers to the work of Housley (n.d.) which details a wider variety of possible sources of ideas. The some of the ideas presented include have conversations with others, view media such as TV or to view websites and other blogs.

Once the idea is established the blogger has to write the article itself. Bloggers have highlighted different ways in which they write their articles. To start with the blogger “jameswatts1990” highlights that he can only blog in a designated work space such as a coffee shop (jameswatts1990, 2012). He says “I don’t have a separate office space, as such I can get sometimes get distracted. I’ve found that when I head out to places such as a coffee shop or somewhere similar – I’m actually quite productive”. Other bloggers highlighted their problems with trying to use mobile technology. Firstly the blogger “cupcakeandnerfguns” has problems with the autocorrect features leading to increasing the time taken for blog post to be created (cupcakeandnerfguns, 2013). This is due to the auto correct changing the article meaning due to changing some of the words which the blogger must notice and re-correct. The second problem with the technology is the aps that have been developed are not well designed. The user “ChickenFreak” states “The Blogger interface doesn’t play so nice with the iPad, so if I want to blog on an iPad, I’ll usually write the post in Stickies (I have a keyboard case), then paste it into Blogger, then wait until I get back to my laptop to add a picture and post” (ChickenFreak, 2013). In this the blogger highlights a problem with the interface and the design of the system along with the problem with limitations in features.

Finally once the blogger has completed their blog post the blogger has to tell their audience that they have made a new post. This is done in the most part by using social networks to create the attention for example the user “csuds” posts updates to his Facebook fan page and “ajwalsh” posts updates to twitter (ajwalsh, 2011) (csuds, 2011).

However this is not the only way that the bloggers can provide can tell their audience. Other bloggers highlight that the best way to tell their audience is specific to who the audience are. In this way the process of telling should be tailored to the bloggers audience. This tailoring to the audience was highlighted by “ajwalsh” as they posted “I think the best thing you can do is to work hard to identify what the best community would be for your blog and then start promoting there.”

### ***Interpretation***

The bloggers get their ideas from several different sources. The method that bloggers say that they record their ideas is using a notepad or piece of paper. Some of the bloggers create these lists as they come up in life others do so just before blogging. Both of these systems create more ideas than are required by the blogger and so some of the ideas will be eliminated based on the bloggers preferences. From the long list of ideas the blogger will select the most relevant or those that the blogger believes will create the most interesting articles.

The bloggers also get their ideas from talking with others. These other people may or may not view the blog but will affect the blog in either case. This is a method that bloggers use in order to find and explore their ideas. From this they can write their articles with both the theme and direction already talked through. This also allows some readers to directly influence the content of the blog and so the posts are more likely to be relevant to the audience (Nardi, 2004). The bloggers also get their ideas from the media such as TV shows or music (See Section 2.5.2.4). These are topics of interest to the user's audience and capture what is going on around the blogger. This allows the blogger to provide their commentary about these topics and the readers read based on their enjoyment of the topic and the personality of the blogger. The theoretical research, found in the literature review section of the project, highlighted that the topic and intent of the blogger play a key role in the reader choice of one blog over another (Kiciman, 2012). The blogger may also get their ideas from websites and provide additional commentary tailored to their audience. This is done in a similar way to discussions surrounding TV shows or music. The blogger may also get their ideas from other bloggers in a similar way to content aggregators. However in this case the blogger uses this to find ideas rather than taking the article from the other blogs and reposting it. This will allow the blogger both to get the idea of what to write about but also some indication of how to report the narrative.

Finally some bloggers have highlighted that they prefer not to plan their articles at all and so demonstrate low conscientiousness. In this the blogger can just write what they feel like with limited to no plans. This gives the user more freedom over what to blog about and how to relay their narrative to their audience. This requires the blogger to know their audience more carefully to ensure that they continue to create content that their audience wants to read. Some bloggers such as "Bel-et-Bien" use different styles depending on the narrative they wish to create (Bel-et-Bien, 2012). This is due to some narratives that the user wishes to create requiring research and sourcing pictures or information. Other narratives such as personal blogs which rely on the bloggers feelings require a more spontaneous approach to writing.

Once the blog ideas been determined the process of writing can begin and the bloggers have highlighted that they write in different ways. The majority of bloggers wish to continue blogging from their home office as this is where they feel that they get the most done. This is due to the elimination of distractions which is why most people choose a home office as it is a separate space free of distractions which the blogger can work from. However the bloggers are not against trying new ways to blog such as using mobile platforms to write their content. However the technology may not be beneficial to the blogger in a similar way to the readers experiencing problems accessing a blog due to the cold shown in the literature review. The bloggers highlight a numbers of problems with the current technology available to them. The finally issue that bloggers have with the technology is the inability of a keyboard. The blogger highlighted their need for a physical keyboard over and above the touch screen solution offered. They found the process of typing fiddly and using an external keyboards are not a solution as its not full size.

Once the article has been completed however the blogger chooses to write it the blogger must tell their audience about the new post. In our previous study have highlighted that bloggers use lots of different ways to share their content to their audience

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(See Section 5.2.2 and 5.3.2). These include using e-mail, social media and RSS feeds. In this study has found that the choice of how to share the content relies most importantly on using the way that the audience are most likely to see it and to tailor it to them. In this way the audience are both engaged with the blog and the new content but also feel like the blogger cares about them and the community. This again reinforces the bloggers good intentions criteria for why the audience read a blog (See Section 2.8.3).

### **6.3 - Bloggers time pressures**

This section looks again in some small part about the conscientiousness of the blogger as it looks at the ways that the blogger has to plan to get around time constraints that they may have. In this way the bloggers may be demonstrating high conscientiousness (Gill et al., 2009). In addition to this this section focuses on the motivations of the blogger to create these posts as they try to overcome the time pressures of blogging.

#### ***Observations***

Most of the bloggers in the forum have a regular day job and their blog is purely a hobby on the side. So many people have their own day job that the forum has a topic dedicated to discussing their own jobs (Melvin et al. 2010). With this restriction on bloggers time they have less time to spend on their blogs. Blogging tends to get done on the weekends with the user “Melody” starting “I work close to 50 hours a week at my job. I tend to write almost all my content over the weekends - Sometimes it eats up my whole Saturdays, and schedule it to post during the week.” (Melody, 2013). This time restriction is further highlighted by the blogger “DuncanM” stating “I am lucky if I make two posts a year. Blogging is just a hobby; between a full-time job, family, etc. it is hard to find time to write quality posts.” (DuncanM, 2012). Time is also a big problem in travel blogging which was highlighted by “Graefyl” stating that “I try to do one travel post per month and maybe a few others. Sometimes I can get ahead and have a number of journeys there waiting in advance” (Graefyl, 2012).

#### ***Interpretation***

The idea of getting around the bloggers time constraints through scheduling the week ahead post is a good idea but with a few problems. The first being that it does not fit into all topics that the blogger wishes to write about it is particularly not response to current events (See Section 2.5.1 and Section 2.5.2). For example the idea of scheduling the posts will not be able to cover TV shows as they will not be able to see the program, write about it and post it while the article is still relevant. The other issue with scheduling is that some bloggers have even less time and so scheduling will not help. In addition to this travel blogging by its nature requires further demands on the bloggers’ time as they must travel to another country along with finding the narrative they wish to tell and writing the post.

### **6.4 - Bloggers willingness to interact with their audience**

In this section the project will explore the bloggers wiliness to participate in intercommunication in order to assess the viability of character based storytelling (Camanho et al, 2008). This looks at the extraversion and agreeableness parts of the big five indicator highlighting the psychological attributed of the blogger (Gill et al., 2009).

#### ***Observations***

The most common response by bloggers is to comment either if they have something to add or if they can benefit from referral traffic (Sam Matla, 2012). However other bloggers are actively trying to get their audience to partake in discussions and are even changing the style and presentation of their blogs with the aim of improving the

wiliness to communicate. The first idea presented by bloggers is to invite their readers to leave feedback at the end of each post. This could be actually asking for feedback or leaving the audience with a question in order to start a discussion. Another suggestion that was presented by bloggers is to reply to the readers who comment. The final idea that the user “freedombreather” suggests is to improve the visibility of the blog posts using social media such as twitter (freedombreather, 2010).

Bloggers are also looking at the form of communication in order to promote their blog. The user “Trulyana” highlights that bloggers can do this promotion using external tools such as Google feed burner (Trulyana, 2010). This use of external tools can be used to reduce the workload for the blogger of promoting the blog.

Other bloggers have taken this idea of trying to build relationships through discussions to a higher level by creating a post dedicated to improving the relationship with readers (hadi20, 2013).

Finally some bloggers take this even further by trying to bribe readers into commenting using a giveaway. However some bloggers still show their reservations to this system with the blogger “stewie” saying “I don't think you can do much to encourage readers to leave comments. Ultimately they will leave comments if they feel moved to do so.” (stewie, 2013). This reflexes the literature view that the audience are most likely to comment if they have affinity to the content (See Section 2.9).

### ***Interpretation***

Bloggers have different willingness to communicate with their audience. Some of the bloggers are readily seeking to communicate with their audience but others are not prepared to be a part of the discussions. Bloggers that are purely motivated by growing their blog and so designs that will highlight the benefits of discussions leading to more engagement and thus grater retention of readers (See Section 2.8.3).

The bloggers that actively seek to get and maintain conversations also talk about this desire on the forums. These discussions centre on how to get more comments. In these discussions several ideas of changes to style that can be used in order to generate discussions. However when the blogs do manage to get this communication started or use a medium such as YouTube (See Section 5.2.1) which tend to have more comments makes replying to each comment almost impossible. This is further exacerbated due to the bloggers limited time constraints discussed earlier. However even with this being against trying to get more comments it does strike back to the literature review as Shmueli, et al (2012) stated that affinity to the content is more powerful than friendship with regard to commenting. This showed that the content is still more important than any relationship that can be created by the bloggers personal responses.

## **6.5 – Conclusion**

In this study the project explored more of the psychosocial and motivational attributes of the bloggers. The most prominent result of this is that the bloggers are very different. They get their ideas from different sources including their own life, the things they enjoy or their interactions with their friends. The bloggers either record these interactions as they occur or try to recall it from memory. The bloggers also write in different ways and in different places. In addition to these the bloggers also have different willingness to interact with their audience and different motivations to do so. The only similarity that this study has found is that most of the bloggers time is stretched and as a result do not get to blog as much as they would like to. Some bloggers have tried to get around these problems through scheduling their posts to spread them out more.

## **Chapter 7 - Empirical study focusing on intercommunication**

The preceding chapters have shown empirical research exploring parts of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. They first explored the presentation and medium parts of this definition in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5. The project then went to explore the psychology and motivation attributes of the blogger part of Nack (2011) definition (See Chapter 6).

This chapter does not explore any part of the definition instead it explores a different idea presented in Nack (2011). This idea is that the narrative can also be told through communication between the blogger and their audience. This is also looking at the way that character based story telling can aid in the narrative (Camanho et al, 2008).

The intercommunication explored in this study falls into two main categories. These are the intercommunication on the blog itself and the intercommunication away from the blog articles on external websites.

### **7.1 – Methodology**

#### ***Blog choice and terminology used for the study***

In order to explore the intercommunication the project looked at all the blogs in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 again in order to identify the blogs which used communication most frequently or in a different way to other blogs. At this identification stage the project wanted to have a good mix of different mediums used in the blogs. This was because blogs style may affect the way that the bloggers communicate (Gao, et al, 2010). This allows the project to see what is unique to one medium and what common practice is across different styles of blogging to expand on the ideas discovered in Section 2.6. This use of different styles also brings ambiguity to what constitutes communication on the blog and what is on external sites. On the webpage blogs communication is determined as the comments on the blog posts even if they require the audience to have external accounts or are embedding an external website inside the post. On the video blogs the communication is determined as the comments on the video on the YouTube page. On the podcast blogs the communication is determined as the comments on the iTunes page of the blog as limited as it is. The external communication is anything other than that previously described and includes, but not limited to, use of forums and social media. Some of the blogs that are looked at transcend the boundaries such as “nayders07” blog being a video blog and a video blog. The on the site communication is for this project determined by their predominant medium in Table 7-1. The choice of blogs to look at in this study can also be found below in the same table.

**Table 7-1 - List of blogs used in intercommunication research**

Website	Predominant medium
Longest way home (2013)	Webpage Blogger
Normadic Matts Travel site (2013)	Webpage Blogger
Uncornered market (2013)	Webpage Blogger
Nayders07 (2013)	Video Blogger
Other iJustine (2013)	Video Blogger
DamonFizzy (2013)	Video Blogger
The DIS Unplugged (2013)	Podcast Blogger
Traveller language guide (2013)	Podcast Blogger
Rick Steves (2013)	Podcast Blogger
Indie travel podcast (2013)	Podcast Blogger

#### ***Procedure***

Once the choice of blogs is established the method for on the blog communication was determined. This was to look at the second most recent article on the

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blog no matter the medium. By choosing the second most recent rather than the most recent article this stops an article which has only just been posted from being used in the study. The problem with too recent posts is that the audience are unlikely to be able to of posted on the article so little to no communication can be seen on those posts. The on the blogger intercommunication observed in the following sections uses quotes as qualitative data in order to support the claims that they make in the discussions. In addition they present some of the information through figures that can be found in the appendix.

The off the blog intercommunication will look at any and all forms that can be found which the blogger uses to communicate with their audience. When looking at this communication the project will look at the recent communication in each of the different tools the blogger uses. The project determines recent as the last two weeks. However if such a case occurs that there is limited or no communication within the last two weeks then the project will look at least the last twenty messages that have occurred. In addition in the case that the blogger or their audience has posted too many messages in the two week period then the project will look at the most relevant and interesting ones. In addition if the blog comments are not organised by time order then the project will look at least the top twenty messages no matter the form reading from the top of the page.

The write up of the most interesting and relevant ways that the narrative is presented can be found in the subsequent discussions divided up by the blog used at each stage of the study.

Note: Facebook (which is a readily looked at social network looked at in this study) has recently undergone a change to how it displaces comments. Prior to the change Facebook comments would be listed exclusively in chronological order. Now Facebook allows the bloggers audience to reply to one another's comments. These responses will be placed with the initial comment no matter the time this comment was made. This study was done before the change took place and so reflects the communication in the first case described (Chaney, 2013).

## **7.2 - Webpage blogs**

### **7.2.1 - Longest way home**

Communication on the blog is done using a comments section after each post. In this particular blog almost all of the comments from readers get a response from the blogger. Some of the comments that readers add to posts are looking for additional information such as Keith asking "I wonder why she split the books in two?" or Kristina (2012) asking "I love books like this and think it sounds great. Looks like the second book is out already. Are you going to read it too?". In these cases the blogger tries to answer the question as best that he can. In addition to this most of the bloggers posts do not extend the narrative and purely provide just enough information to the reader. The post looked at none of the initial posters responded to the blogger so no long lasting conversations took place.

Some of the comments that readers put on the blog does not particularly need a response but the blogger feels necessary to provide one any way. An example of this is Emma (2012) saying "Not heard of this book before. Sounds like an interesting read and story." And getting the response from the blogger of "It is Emma, well worth it.". In this case the comment did not expect a response as it was purely expressing her opinion. Overall the comments on the blog fall into two categories asking for information from the blogger and readers express their opinions.

The article looked at had the majority of the comments being created on the same day as the post was made. The responses by the blogger however appeared in a group three days later. In this way the blogger is taking time out a few days later to respond to all the comments in one go. However this may be the readers have already lost their attention from that particular article.

As for external communication “the longest way home” has a Facebook page along with a twitter page. Their Facebook page (2012) as of 30 December had 3224 “likes” this allows the new posts that the blog makes to reach a fairly large number of potential members. However these posts that the blogger makes on their Facebook page purely provide a link to content on the blog. This does not seem to create any conversation from the readers. In fact the most recent three posts that could potentially be seen by over 3000 people received no comments and the post received a grand total of 4 “likes”. The communication between the blogger and the reader and in some cases conversations between readers more likely occurs when the reader posts to Facebook pages “wall”. The posts that readers place on the blog that the blogger responds to fall into the same two categories that appear on comments on the blog. These are the reader asking for more information or expressing an opinion. The examples of the two groups respectively are Barbra Adam asking “Did I just see your book trailer ... Andrew???” and Kashif Ali showing his opinion stating “Just saw your blog - so awesome!”. What is interesting is that the time between the reader posting and the blogger responding are a lot shorter in the two examples given above were responded to in 58 minutes and almost a day.

Between members some discussion surrounding particular posts brake out. These do not occur on the bloggers posting of the story but instead seem to break out when a reader posts the story again along with some of their own comments. An example of this is a conversation surrounding the blog post “What is the definition of home?” in this Raising Miro (another blogs Facebook page) and Sal Lavallo had a discussion about the content, providing their own further content and opinions. In this way further content is provided through the conversation between two readers rather than needing the blogger to extend the content. This is another style of conversation that has been found other than the two styles of communication put forward by Macskassy (2012).

On twitter most of the content that “The longest way home” posts are generic messages and pictures to all their followers on the site. In the few messages that are posted on their twitter are purely thanking other popular travel bloggers for re blogging links to new blog posts on their sites. There are readers trying to read the contact the blogger through tweeting messages at them such as Andrew asking “All ok with you? Hope no new problems with health! Bought a Himalaya book for my dad and remembered some places from your blog!” (Andrew, 2012). However these comments and questions did not get any public response from the blogger.

### **7.2.2 - Nomadic matts travel site**

Again as this is a web based blog comments are used as the conversation medium. However unlike “the longest way home” the blogger does not respond to the readers’ comments at all but this does not stop people from posting. The comments from readers are disjointed as they do not relate in any way to each other. They do however allow the readers to post their responses which other can read even if they choose not to respond. Even with the lack of interactions between bloggers and readers the blog still receives more comments than “the longest way home”. However this may be due to the size of each of the blogs readerships.

What is particularly impressive is the number of readers of the blog who have used the inbuilt tools to share the blog post. At the time of writing this it is at 441 people. When you take into account the average Facebook user has 130 friends this realistically shows that in excess of 57,000 people who know nothing about the blog will see that one of their friends recommends the article. This gives the blog an amazing potential new reader base off the back of a simple tool that provides such enormous word of mouth marketing opportunities (Muano, 2011).

In terms of the external communication that “Nomadic matt travel site” has a presence on several social network sites including Facebook and twitter. In this way it

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uses similar platforms to the “the longest way home”. Unlike “the longest way home”, “Nomadic matt travel site” also has a presence on YouTube.

On Facebook the blogger provides updates that are more than just please go to my blog. The updates are generally a short description of what the blogger is doing along with a related picture. In a select few updates the blogger does include a link back to the blog but this is provided with a short description of the content and a picture. In this way it seems that “nomadic matt travel site” takes more care over what he posts and as a result it gets more from their readers. The blogger also treats the Facebook page as a micro blog rather than a communication platform. The readers show a larger response to this style of providing content to the reader. The readers are more likely to “like” (266 “likes” on the most recent update) and comment (11 comments on the most recent update) on the bloggers updates. The comments that are provided to the initial mostly are the readers expressing their opinions and as a result the blogger does not respond to the reader. Such as Radha Parikh commenting “What a fabulous view!!!” (Facebook, 2012). However the blogger does try to add to the conversation when he thinks that he can provide benefit to his readership or can provide additional information. An example of this is the blogger responding to a reader called Robert Roach with a comment saying “Robert Roach I hate them but I flew them because I wanted to get Star Alliance status for Lufthansa and SAS for when I was in Europe. I've already gone back to American Airlines!”. In this example the blogger provides his readership with additional information about his travel arrangements when asked by one of his readers. In this way the blogger will aid the discussions when necessary but will allow the conversations to freely flow.

Also on the Facebook page readers are able to add their own comments. Once you filter out the readers who are posting to the blog as a way of advertising you are left with the actual reader’s comments. These are mostly readers asking the blogger where he currently is or whether he has been. The blogger responds to the comments quite regularly and provides the information that the reader is asking for. In some cases he also asks about the reader life. For example the following conversation between Kirstyn Dryer and the blogger which shows how strong connection between the reader and the blogger is and how on both sides are willing to share their stories.



Figure 7-1 - example conversation between the blogger and a reader on Facebook

The blogger uses twitter in two main ways. Firstly to post updates either as links to the blog or as a single line. In addition he sometimes includes links to other websites or pictures along with the updates to provide further information and narrative to the reader. In this way the blogger is splitting the story that he wishes to tell across three, four when you include the YouTube videos, different platforms. His readers however do not necessarily follow the narrative across all the different platforms as they may only be a user of a subsection of the sites.

The other use that the blogger has for twitter is to respond to messages from his readers. These include making plans with other bloggers and interacting with his audience. The interactions tend to centre on opinions rather than asking for more information.

On YouTube the blogger tends to provide two types of videos. The first are short update clips of various locations across the globe. The other is the blogger answering a



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set question directly to the camera. The blogger has not uploaded any new videos for five months and there are large gaps between videos. Finally there are not many comments on the videos. This shows that the blogger and his audience tend to use the other platforms more than YouTube.

### **7.2.3 - Uncornered market**

On the site the bloggers respond to the readers' comments however it is not very prominent that the responder is the blogger themselves. In the comments section names are given along with a time stamp. The names will probably mean a lot more to those that often read the blog however to first time user the fact that the name that the blogger uses is their real identity rather than the blog title is misleading particularly as this blog in particular has two different bloggers. The use of real identities is a conscious choose by the bloggers as they have a notice by the location where readers can leave comments (See Figure 0-12).

Most of the few comments are about the opinions of the reader than asking for any further information. But like "the longest way home" the blogger reply to every message that they see no matter what the context of it. Also like "the longest way home" there are no long lasting conversations.

The bloggers also make use of the common social networks of Facebook and twitter. On Facebook their posts are most similar to "Nomadic matts travel site" as they are like a blog where the bloggers provide descriptions and pictures of the places that they visit. They also provide the occasional links back to their blog. However the number of comments and "likes" are greater than that found on "the longest way home" Facebook page but less than that found on "Nomadic matts travel site" Facebook page. What is interesting is that the blogger also uses "#tags" that are more commonly found on twitter rather than Facebook. On twitter this is a method of tagging like content from different people as seen in the literature review but on Facebook it does not serve any purpose. As a result the use of "#tags" on Facebook is used for journalistic purposes rather than any practical reasons.

When readers post to the Facebook page they are likely to get a response from the bloggers and the comments are similar style to "nomadic matts travel site". Namely that they fit into predominately readers expressing their opinions and asking for information about different locations.

On twitter the bloggers primarily use the social network as a way of providing content to the readers in bite size chunks. In this way they use the social network as a blog. In the process of writing their messages they include tailoring the content by directing the content to individuals using "@replies". "@replies" is where the blogger selects one or more of the people he is following to be the subject(s) of a given message. In addition to this the bloggers also make large of "#tags" as a form of tagging like content. They are the only one of the web page bloggers to use this form of classifying their content. They also perform some conversations with their members but these messages are in the minority. These comments are mostly discussing opinions rather than providing more additional content.

"Uncornered Market" also makes use of a YouTube account. This account is also not updated very regularly and is watched less than "Normadic Matts travel site" YouTube account. The number of comments is also less however they respond to all the comments that viewers leave for them. The majority of the comments are messages of thanks but the blogger finds something to say to each of them.

Finally the blogger uses a flicker account which the bloggers post the pictures that they use on other sites. In this case this is an example of the content being duplicated so that it can be seen on different sites by different sub groups of their audience. This shows that the bloggers recognise that all of their audience do not use all of the different communication platforms that the bloggers use. The pictures placed on flicker are done so with a single line of description along with "#tags". Again the "#tags" do not serve any

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real purpose other than journalistic purposes. The pictures are divided into sup groups based on the locations that they were taken from.

All the blogs do not inbuilt the content from the external sites they instead provide links to more content as a result some readers will not see the additional content that the bloggers provides. This will be the bases of one the designs proposals found later in the project. A way of allowing all the separate narrative threads that the blogger provides on different sites to be shown in a more convenient and coherent way to the readers.

### **7.3 - Video blogs**

All of the video bloggers looked at have their video blogs on YouTube. YouTube provides the bloggers with a set group of tools that they can use in order to communicate with their audience. On the comments section, where most of the communication on YouTube takes place, on their YouTube channels can have up to three distinct sections. The first section is called “up loaders’ comments” (See Figure 0-13). This is where the comments that readers have posted that have been responded to appear. This highlights them above all the others just because the blogger has commented upon it. The second section is “top comments” (see Figure 0-14) this is where the comments which the viewers have made and have been “thumbs up” by other users are displayed more prominently. This allows the blogger to judge which comments are most popular and hence most important to address or respond to. The final subsection is “all comments” (See Figure 0-15). This is the remaining comments that the audience have written about a given video are displayed. In this section conversations between distinct members of the community can take place. In addition to the tools that YouTube provide each of the bloggers looked at have a different way to further communicate with their audience outside of where their content is predominantly found.

#### **7.3.1 - Nayders07**

Nayders07 makes use of the up loaders’ comments on almost every video after some time has elapsed from the initial posting of the video. In this almost all of the videos have two or three responses from the blogger to topics that the audience has brought up. In this nayders07 manages to extend the narrative to these viewers and so they can further explore the story that the blogger wishes to share. Most of the comments centre on the experiences that the travel story has shown to take place. This is also reflected by the top comments that viewers have chosen to thumbs up. In addition to this another popular topic that is addressed in the comments section is to get further information about how to travel. This is because the blogger is seen by the viewers as an expert which is available to answer the questions that the audience asks. All of the communication is done in an informal style which shows that both the blogger and the audience both feel comfortable with each other and at a similar social level. There seems to be no pandering from either side no matter what the subject of the comments. In addition to this the viewer’s comments are almost exclusively positive. This is unusual online as people see the anonymity as a way to express more controversial points of view. This is best example of how the community has been created sharing a passion and aiming to help each other.

In addition to the tools that are provided on YouTube Nayders07 has other ways in which to communicate with her audience. There are two main groups of other tools that Nayders07 uses to communicate with her audience. The first of these is using social networks and the other is using her external blog.

The social networks fit into two groups themselves. Firstly there are social networks that are used to purely to provide additional content to her audience such as flicker, Tumblr and stumble upon. What the project is particularly interested in at this time is the second group of social networks which are used to communicate with the audience. This is mainly done on twitter and to a lesser extent Facebook. On twitter

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Nayders07, who goes by “heynadine” on the site, actively responds to messages from her audience. The conversations that Nayders07 have are a lot longer than any of the conversations that have been found to this point. In this way a lot more of tailored information can be provided to the audience. In addition to this Nayders07 also actively start conversations with the audience to try to find more information about them (See Figure 0-16). The final use that nayders07 has for twitter is to provide real updates about her travels to include the audience, first hand, as the events are going on. Facebook on the other hand allows her audience to post any messages to blogger without necessarily needing to relate to a specific travel blog entry or story. In this way it allows the audience to freely ask questions or provide comments about any topic that interests them. This is done without initial stimulus from the blogger and instead relies on the audience to direct and take the initiative. The result of this is a lot of comments expressing opinions or purely saying “hi”. This does not extend the story that the blogger wishes to tell. However in amongst all the “hi” messages there are occasional messages which are asking about trips that nayders07 may be making in the future. These messages get a response from the blogger but do not have the long conversations that are found on twitter.

The other communication channels that nayder07 uses is her blog. This works similar to the blogs discussed previously however the blog seems to only get a small number of comments on the articles. This is likely due to most of the comments being placed either where the story is initially shown such as the videos or in the methods that the user perceives get a better or quicker response such as on twitter.

### **7.3.2 - Other ijustine**

On YouTube ijustine manages to get a lot more comments than Nayders07. However the majority of the comments are not constructive and are instead vulgar or negative comments. This is the audience using anonymity to put forward negative views briefly mentioned earlier. This does not serve to get any further information about the story that the blogger is trying to tell. In addition to the comments not relating to the story or trying to get any further information the blogger does not respond to any of the comments. This is likely due to none of the comments needing a response or the blogger not having the time or not wanting to respond to the comments.

Outside of YouTube ijustine has several social media platforms to provide extra narration. On twitter ijustine provides further messages about her current goings on. She does not respond to her audience so she uses twitter as broadcast channel rather than as a communication platform. On Facebook there is a similar reluctance for it to be used as a communication channel. It two allows the blogger to broadcast messages to her audience and for the audience to post messages to the blogger. This different approach to using external communication to tell travel stories further shows how all different bloggers blog in different ways and as a result there is likely not a one solution fits all approach. Even when bloggers have similar tools they use the tools differently with different levels of interactivity and integration or perspective into their offline lives.

### **7.3.3 - Damon fizzy**

On YouTube again there is limited use by the blogger of the tools to provide responses to the large number of comments that are placed on the videos. Instead of this the blogger has made a choice to use an external platform to provide the communication between both the blogger and the audience along with the communication amongst the audience members. The first thing that you notice with the external communication platform is its name “Fizzy family” (See Figure 0-17). This was the choice of the blogger to try to make the group feel more connected both to each other and to create strong identifiable links between the blogger and the viewers. This site has two main ways that communication can take place. Firstly using a “shout box” in this member can create conversations in real time like conversations in the real world. These conversations are

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unstructured and without a specific topic to discuss. In addition the style of messages is quite informal. This tool allows members with similar interests to have conversations and create links between members of the community. These links between members can also be stored in “friend lists”.

The second communication tool is a more substantial forum. In this the conversations take place asynchronously. This style allows messages to be shared and conversations to take place without both members being online at the same time. This will allow communication across time zones. In addition to this the conversations are semi-structured as the forums are divided into different topic areas and each conversation has a specific title which frames the conversation. The forum is well used with in excess of 5000 messages in some of the topic areas. Most of these conversations are between members who enjoy the bloggers work. Some of the topics being discussed are related directly back to the bloggers videos but most are about the interests of the viewers.

The blogger is fairly visible on the site in fact there is a specific area to post topics which you like to discuss issues with the blogger. However the blogger has not posted any new messages since December last year even though he has been online since then. As a result this may not be as much interactive conversation as other forms looked at but does provide a much better way for members to communicate. Both the communication between the blogger and the audience and amongst the audience do not extend the narrative as they in the most part do not relate back to the narrative that the blogger is trying to tell in his blogs.

## **7.4 - Podcast Blogs**

As discussed earlier (See Section 5.3.1) the iTunes platform does not provide many tools for communication along with the content and as a result the different bloggers have had to find their own ways to interact with their audience. They have done so in different ways.

The DIS Unplugged have implemented a forum on their site to provide a method of communication between bloggers and the audience and in amongst the audience. This is similar to Damon fizzy’s forum in which it predominantly allows the communication between members along a wide range of topics. However the topics are not divided into separate areas on the DIS Unplugged. This creates discussions more like Facebook conversations where the audience can choose more freely what the topic will be for a conversation. However it still has the problem of not creating the discussions between the audience and the blogger which improve, enrich and extend the narrative.

In a similar vein to forums is Rick Stevens using a “graffiti wall” which allows members to post messages on a wall for others to read and respond to. The walls are divided based on locations to provide the overall topic for each wall but other than that the users are free to discuss any topics they so choose. This has the same problems as forums being that the conversations are between members and not directed to the blogger. In this way the users of the tool may be learning about the locations but they are not getting more information about the story that the blogger was trying to tell.

The final tool that the podcasts bloggers looked at is the bloggers use of social media. In particular the bloggers use Facebook and twitter. In the most case these tools have been used to provide additional narration though a broadcast method with limited discussions between the blogger and the audience. The interesting deviation from the trend is Rick Stevens Facebook discussions after he posts a new story. These discussions run into hundreds of posts but critically allow both the communication with the blogger and amongst the audience. This is probably due to the blogger being available at the time that the article is posted and hence near real time communication can take place. This is based on the idea in the literature review that both the blogger and audience need to be engaged in order to get the communication started and to best explore the bloggers narrative.

## **7.5 - Conclusion of exploratory research into intercommunication in blogging**

The communication that blogger and their respective audiences have is predominantly limited by how much the blogger is engaged with the idea of communicating with their audience. The best example of this is that most of the bloggers use twitter but Nayders07 stands out due to the conversations that she provides to extend the narrative. Providing further information to her audience and responding to any queries that they have. This shows that it is possible for the bloggers to provide the service to their audience but is choosing, either conscious or unconscious, not to. In order to try to address this problem the initial designs will aim to make the methods of communication for bloggers to respond to their audience more easily so they are more likely to extend the narrative to their audience. In addition to this the designs should aim to highlight the benefits to the blogger of the communication. As a result the problem is not just a technological one but also a social one as the bloggers has to change their behaviours too.

In addition to this there is difficulty in getting to the communication platforms. In most of the sites looked at the communication methods are on completely different sites to the content. The only exclusion to this is the use of commenting next to the media. This method is not as easy for the blogger as they have to go through a large number of messages to find where they need to respond. In the other case the social tools are hidden on other sites which are linked using small boxes (See Figure 0-18). As a result the initial design will also aim to bring the content and the communication together.

## **Chapter 8 - Developing new ways to present travel narratives in blogs**

The preceding chapters, the project focused on learning more about how the narrative is created by the blogger and how the narrative is interpreted by their audience. The chapters have focused on different parts of the definition of narrative put forward by Nack (2011). The chapters have also undertaken this learning in two different ways by looking at theoretical and empirical research. This chapter goes on to propose an alternative design for blogs which aim to present the narrative that the blogger wishes to tell in different way. In order to do this the project will undertake a user centred iterative development in order to produce the new designs. Once the alternative design is created it will be used in a study to compare the narrative the audience get from current designs to this new design (See Chapter 9).

### **8.1 - The design process**

A user centred iterative design process was adopted and is reflected in the structure of this chapter. The users in this case are the bloggers potential audience. This design process will further describe the audience as people who have limited computer knowledge and limited exposure to blogging platforms both as a viewer and as a content creator. This is because this audience will have no preconceived notions of how a blog should look and as a result the narrative will be taken at the face value of its presentation.

The project will make use of user scenarios, use cases and user requirements based on the theoretical and empirical research to date. This research will be used to create a range of designs illustrated by differing fidelity prototypes which are shown to end users to get their feedback which informs future iterations. The project undertook two iterations using paper based solutions (See Section 8.5) in the first instance and then using interactive PowerPoint prototypes (See Section 8.7). From the evaluation of these prototypes a final design was created (See Section 8.9). This final design will be used in the subsequent chapter in order to undertake a study comparing this design to existing blogging designs to see which allows the reader to get the narrative the blogger wishes to tell more easily (See Chapter 9).

### **8.2 - User Scenarios**

In the literature review the project looked at two different users of blogs namely the blogger and their audience. The literature review found that each of these users interacts with blogs in different ways and the project will now look at the scenarios and situations that they use them in.

The blogger will be living their life and will find inspiration in the events that surround them (Kiciman, 2012). These events will touch the blogger to the extent they he or she wishes to write their experiences down so that others can see them later. In order to do this the blogger will record their ideas in a narrative which may include text, pictures and videos depending on how the blogger wishes to tell it (Gao, et al, 2010). Once the bloggers are happy with the narrative that they wish to tell they will publish the narrative to their blog which allows others to read it. The blogger may then also wish to publicise this new story to their friends, family or readership (See Chapter 7). They may do this in a number of ways possibly posting to the social networks on a fan page or by sending out a newsletter.

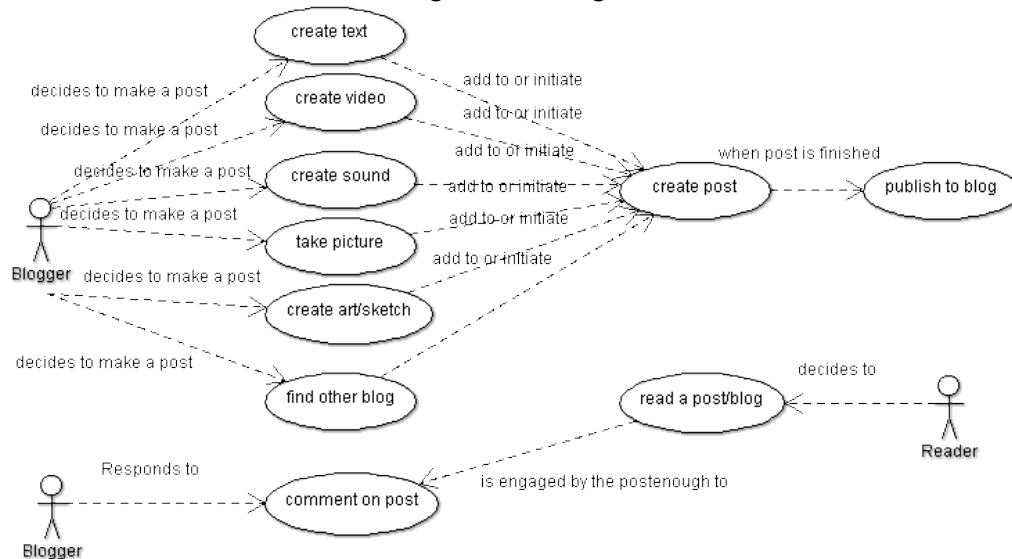
The reader upon hearing about the new article through the publicity channels or by visiting the blog the reader will read or view the contentment in order to explore the narrative. Upon reading the content the reader if they feel so inclined may feel such

affinity to the narrative that they wish to place a comment on the article in order to start a conversation about the topic (Shmueli, et al, 2012).

This conversation may include messages flowing from the reader to and from the blogger along with messages between different readers (Macskassy, 2012). In this all contributors can learn more about one another build relationships and further explore the narrative.

### **8.3 - Use cases**

The literature review has identified the different interactions that the bloggers and readers have with each other and the steps that they each take while using the blogs. This information is shown on the following use case diagram.



**Figure 8-1 - Use case of the relationships and interactions between bloggers and readers of blogs**

This diagram shows the steps that the blogger may choose to take in order to make the posts which make up the blog. These posts in their most basic form depend on the style of blog the blogger wishes to make based on Gao, et al. (2010) classifications. The blogger may choose one or more of these mediums to make up the posts depending on what their platform of choice allows. Content Creators will make more use of these tools as they are creating their own stories from scratch as shown by their own use case diagram Figure 0-2.

This stage the blogger can make use of external systems to host parts of the content. For example the blogger could embed a YouTube video that they created earlier into their posts in order to also provide that content to the reader. This also allows the blogger to create the content over a number of stages and provides more flexibility to the blogger. This flexibility is particularly useful as in travel blogging the blogger is likely to be in a distant and unknown place. They are unlikely to have easily accessible internet access and if they choose to blog using their phone they may find that their data charges are a lot larger than they expect. While they are away the blogger may choose to purely collect the pictures and video to post on their return. This may also be affected by whether the blogger is blogging as a leisure activity or as a job.

The Blogger can also get their content from other sources such as blogs or other forms of webpage. This subcategory of blogging is called Content Aggregators (See Section 2.3). The content is copied by these bloggers in order to spread its message and to make content easier for the readers to find. The more specific set of tools that Content Aggregators use can be found in Figure 0-1.

Once the blogger has all the content that they want, either by creating it themselves or by re-blogging from another source, for a post they can then arrange the content into a post. This post will depend on the individual choices that the blogger

decides and the restrictions that the platform the blogger is using has placed upon the blogger. These restrictions placed on the blogger by the platform they are using will be further discussed in a later section. Once the blogger has arranged their post how they wish it to be organised they can then post it to their blog for the Reader to Read it.

The other key connection that this Use case highlights is the intercommunication that the blogger and the reader have via commenting. This was highlighted in the literature review (See Section 2.9). This allows a medium for the blogger to provide content tailored to the subsection of the readers who have chosen to leave comments or ask questions (Shmueli, et al, 2012). The readers on the other hand use commenting to encourage the blogger to provide the additional content or to show their enjoyment in order to persuade the blogger to continue blogging.

## **8.4 - User requirements**

These requirements are given priorities, these priorities start at 1 being the least important moving to 5 being the most important. These priorities were created predominantly to ensure the key features that are required for the study to take place. These features which are needed for the study to take place are given the highest priority of 5. In addition, the requirements relating to the changes in the design that the study is exploring were given a priority of 5. The additional aims for the study were given a priority of 4. The remaining requirements were not seen as essential for the study and so they were given a lower priority as pointers for pointers for future direction in which research exploring narrative in travel blogging might take.

**Table 8-1 - User requirements for the creation of alternative designs**

Number	Requirement	Priority (5 to 1 where 5 is essential)	Functional/non functional
1	The design must allow blog posts to include text	5	F
2	The design must allow the blog posts to include pictures	4	F
3	The design must allow the blog posts to include video	4	F
4	The design must allow the blog posts to include sound	3	F
5	The front page of the blog must display all content based on a non-time based link that has been discovered	5	F
6	The front page must allow the blogger's audience to access the blog posts	5	F
7	Any indicated blog post must allow the blogger's audience to return to the front page	4	F
8	The design must allow the blogger's audience to place comments on the posts	4	F
9	The design should allow the blogger's audience to add comments to posts using their external social network account	2	F
10	The system should allow the blogger's audience to get to a given article from the front page within 3 clicks	3	NF
11	The system should allow the blogger's audience to return to the front page from the article within 3 clicks	3	NF



12	The system should not require the user to scroll on the front page in order to find articles	2	F
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These user requirements were created in order to motivate design work which would focus on the parts of the narrative that we wanted to explore. This was to explore different ways to present the narrative on a blog which does not centre on ordering the post reverse chronologically instead using the other links that exist between posts (Blood, 2002). In addition the requirements include looking at how intercommunication can both be encouraged and the benefits of using it (Shmueli, et al, 2012).

## 8.5 - Designs I

The previous sections (See Sections 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4) highlighted the different aspects that users expect to find in the blogging designs. These features along with the theoretical research carried out (See Chapter 1) will be used to explore different ways of presenting the bloggers narrative which relates to the presentation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative. These different presentations and the designs that are based on them will be explored in this section and leading to a study exploring the understanding of the narrative that the audience get when the presentation of the blog is changed (See Chapter 9).

The first stage of the design process was to design some low fidelity initial designs using paper based prototypes. This was done in order to explore the different ways that the users can move between specific views of all blog content to a specific article that the user wishes to view. In order to do this the following designs and further explanation were shown to possible end users to gauge their opinions of the designs with specific relation to how they can be improved.

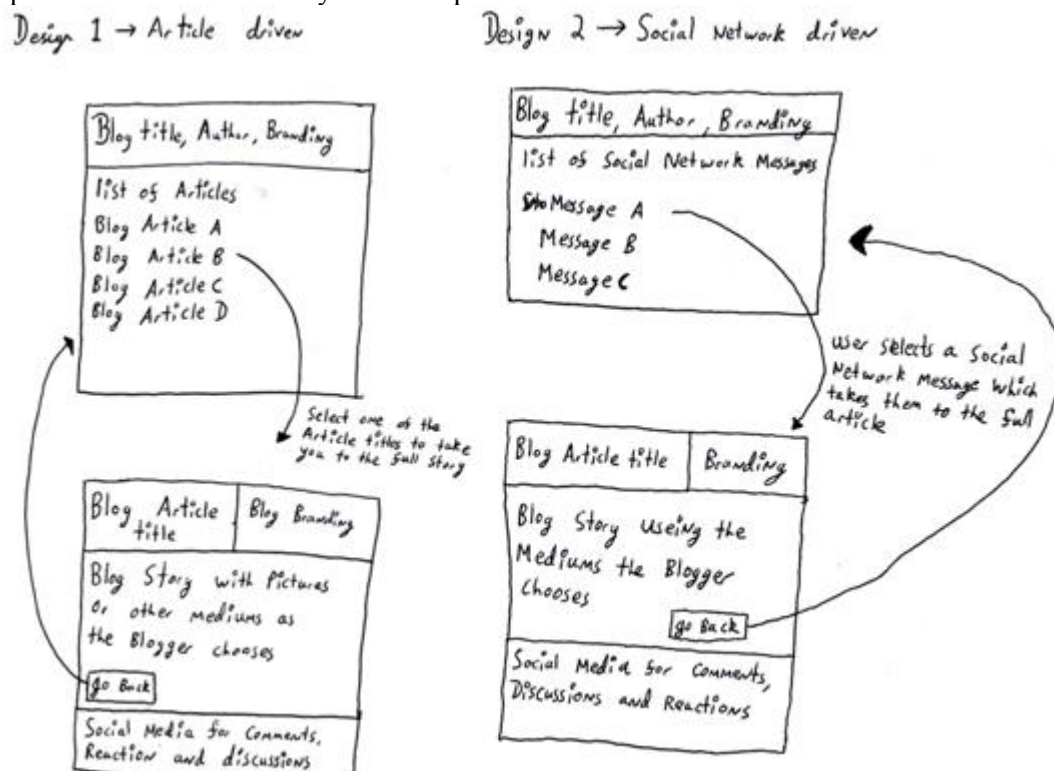


Figure 8-2 - Initial designs of “article driven” and “social network driven”

In the first of these designs, “Article driven”, the user can select a given article by choosing the articles title from a list of all the blog entries titles. The first concern with this design is as the blog has ever increasing numbers of articles, the degree of choice for

the end user could be overwhelming. This will make it more difficult to find the desired article particularly if the article is not at the top of the list. So the order that the blog titles appear will also need to be looked into at a later stage if this ordering of posts receives positive feedback from end users. The second reservation is that the blog titles may not provide enough information and requires the blogger to skilfully name the articles in order to direct the users to the relevant posts on the site. The main benefit to this design is that it is familiar to the way that the user expects to see the blogs ordered and has used this style on many sites before (See section 2.2).

The second of these designs, "Social network driven", is that the bloggers entries on social network sites are used to direct the user to the blog entries that are later produced around the initial stories. This has the benefit of centralising the content around the around the social media for several reasons. The first is that the stories that are produced using this design are in the moment providing the bloggers initial perspectives and responses to their travel as they are doing it. The second of this is it highlights this form of communication as a way to contact the blogger and will aim to make more discussions take place. The first reservation with this design are firstly that as the blog has ever increasing number of tweets or Facebook posts they are more difficult to find any specific article. This seems to be more of a problem with twitter as it is not uncommon for bloggers to have thousands of posts and hence the earlier stories will easily be lost. This problem is exacerbated due to the exclusive ordering of twitter posts by date so that the first blog entries will not be found without scrolling through all the prior messages. The second reservation with this is the difficulty technologically of creating the link between the messages on social network and the posts on a blog. This cannot be done automatically as some messages could link to more than one post and that the blogger may have different perspective to the links between the posts than that of any automated software solution. This is particularly problematic as described earlier that bloggers work in different ways, with different styles and different opinions of what blogging is. This results in there being no one-size fits all approach to the system and in fact will require the blogger in at least some part to be included in this decision making process. This has the obvious problem of increasing the workload for the bloggers some of whom already have the reluctance to spending time discussing topics with their audience.

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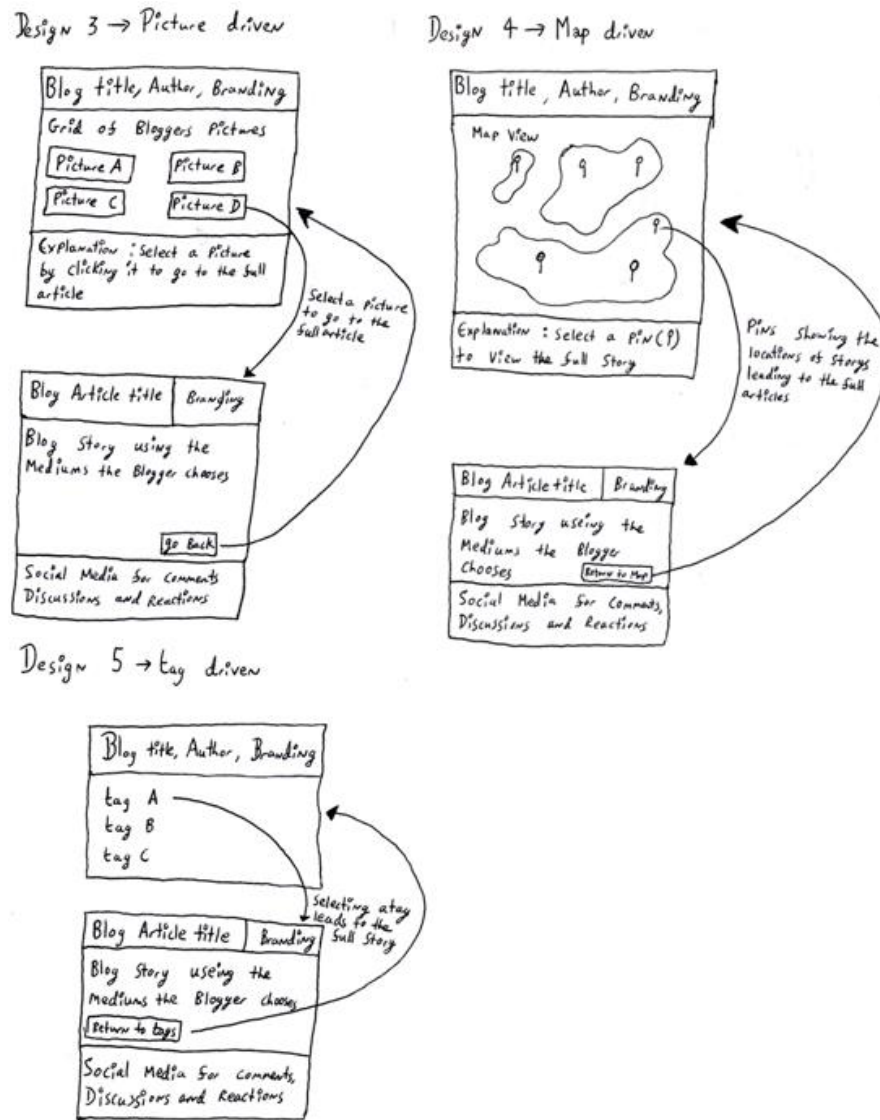


Figure 8-3 - Initial designs of “picture driven”, “map driven” and “tag driven”

The third design, “picture driven”, pictures are used to illustrate the articles. This requires the bloggers to use pictures as part of the design and so is not acceptable for certain blogger such as podcast bloggers who do not take pictures as part of their story telling process. In addition to this, a further reservation is that obscure pictures of less familiar locations will not be easily found or selected by the user (See Section 2.6.2). As a result the choice of pictures is important and increases the choices that the blogger needs to make and their workload is increased because of this. In addition to this a further reservation is that the end user may not expect to be able to select the pictures or that the pictures lead to full articles. As a result the designs include an explanation text at the bottom of the page in order to explain the process to the users. However this text may not be visible to the users if there are too many pictures on the page. The final reservation is that when several posts are based on the same location a picture may be relevant to more than one post. As a result it may be difficult for the users of the system to find the specific article that they are looking for rather than that of other similar articles.

The fourth design, “map driven”, uses a map to show the location off all the different blog articles. These locations are shown as pins on the map and once selected will allow the user to view the full article. This will centre the links between all articles and specific articles around the different locations that the stories surround. This is specifically relevant to travel blogging due the movement between locations of the blogger. The reservations about this design are again that it is a different way to move

from all articles to a specific from the way that the user expects. As a result the design again included a field of explanation. Unlike the explanation field in the pictures driven design it is not affected by having lots of potential article choices due to the map being a fixed size. Another reservation about this design is that it requires the users to have external knowledge. The external knowledge that they require is to know the locations of the article on a map. This may be common knowledge for some locations that the user is most familiar with but more obscure locations will be harder to find. As a result different articles will be easier to find than others and so will be seen more frequently. The balance of the user's attention is expected to change from that of viewing the articles on the top of a list to that of common locations that they can identify on a map. The result of this is that less discovery of new content and locations and that the end user will stick to viewing safe and more familiar locations. The final reservation with this design is that if lots of pins are at the same location such as a capital city then it may be difficult to distinguish one location from the next. This will need to be addressed if this style of design is to be taken forward. The two ways that this can be addressed is either by having differing levels of zoom or to have a pin link to several different articles that can then be selected by the user.

The final design, "tag driven", uses tags to identify the content of a post (Sen, et al, 2006) (Gupta et al, 2010). These tags will be created by automatically passing the article through software which will look at its content for two main characteristics in order to provide a brief overview of its content. The characteristics that the software will be looking for will be the importance of the words used and the frequency of different words used. This will lead to the spirit of an article being captured in a word or a few words which will aim to convey a brief summary of the article's narrative prior to the article being viewed by the user. The first reservation with this design is that there is likely not going to be a unique list of tags for different articles and as a result it will be difficult for users to find specific content. This is possibly due to tagging being used to group like content rather than to find unique and specific content such as lots of the tags including a specific location as part or whole of its identifier. This problem is also exacerbated by having more content on the blog as there is less chance of unique tags being created and there are more likely to be similar tags to similar articles.

## **8.6 - End User feedback on Designs I**

In the previous section the literature and research studies have been used in order to create designs for different ways that narratives can be presented. These designs will now be shown to the end users. These end users are as described in Section 8.1. This is done in order to work out the presentation styles are most understandable to the potential audience and which designs aid the understanding of the narrative.

### **8.6.1 – Methodology**

#### ***Participants***

This project chose to interview users with limited blogging background and limited computer use (see Figure 8-4). This was firstly to ensure that they had less pre conceived notions of what blogs are and so will not purely give feedback on what is most like the industry norm. In addition the lack of computer background is that they will find certain things harder to understand. This lack of understanding will be able to better differentiate the easier to use designs from the harder to use designs.

#### ***Procedure***

The evaluation of the designs was done through performing unstructured interviews with a number of possible end users. These end users were shown the designs one at a time in a random order as to try to counter balance for order. The order was determined by drawing the numbers from 1-5 from an online random number generator.

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When the end users where shown a design they were asked their opinion and critique of the designs with some direction. After all the designs where shown to the users they were asked which design they perceived would be the easiest to find a given article and which they thought was the best. The recordings of the experiment will be found on a cd at the back of the project.

### **8.6.2 – Results**

In the subsequent sections the project will present the findings of the study. This is done by looking at the qualitative data that is created during the interviews one design at a time.

Person	A	B	C	D	E	F
Age	37	48	51	51	54	56
Gender	F	F	F	M	M	F
order design viewed in	25341	14235	51243	21435	31425	54231
preferred "easiest to find a given article" design	social	map/picture	map/picture	map	map	picture
least preferred "easiest to find a given article" design	tag	tag	tag	picture	social	tag
preferred design	picture	map	map	map	map	picture
least preferred design	social	tag	tag	social	social	social

Figure 8-4 - demographic and overall findings from experiment

#### ***Observations***

In the study the participants highlighted some issues with some of the designs in addition to showing their preferences. To start with the second design, “social media driven”, to present the posts highlighted that the participants are unfamiliar with social networks and do not have accounts on the sites. This unfamiliarity led to this design being the least preferred design for four of the six participants.

The third design, “picture driven”, one of the participants highlighted that using pictures may cause confusion if you do not know what the picture is of. Overall this design was received by the participants positively with two of them indicating that this was their preferred design. On the flip side one of the participants highlighted that their perception is that this design was the hardest to find a given article.

The fourth design, “map driven”, was received most positively with four participants stating that this was their favourite design. All of those interviewed understood being able to click a pin would lead them to the article. This however could still be improved as one person indicated that the curser could change to highlight that pins could and should be clicked.

The fifth and final design, “tag driven”, the participants highlighted that they also did not understand the design. In addition to this the participants stated that this design is their second least preferred design with two participants stating this.

#### ***Interpretation***

The first design, “article driven”, being the most similar to the design in current use by the existing solutions in addition the participants had no strong views either way with the design. This highlights that the participants have a preference for other designs. As a result the current designs may not be the best way to present the narrative from the participant’s perspective.

The second design, “social network driven” most of those interviewed were not familiar with social networks and as a result indicated that it was the “worst” design. This will have implications with how the narrative can be presented to this demographic for character based story telling (Camanho et al, 2008). However this study is focusing on how the narrative is presented to the audience rather than how the narrative can be expanded through intercommunication. As a result getting around this problem is an issue for future work. The project will hence forth use commenting which does not require the

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users to have a social network account. In addition due to the lack of positive feedback about this design it will not be used going forward.

The third design, “picture driven”, the participants highlighted that this was one of their preferred designs. This was due to the indication that the pictures are more interesting than being presented with a page of text. However they highlighted a reservation with how well the pictures will demonstrate a given article. The picture may be able to provide some context but it will be difficult to determine the specifics of the article from just a picture. This idea was also highlighted in the literature (See Section 2.6.2).

The forth design, “map driven”, the participants highlighted that this was their preferred design. They also highlighted that one improvement to the design would be to make clicking locations more easy to see by making the curser change when hovering over an article. This change will be made for the iteration if this design is chosen.

The final design, “tag driven”, the participants also highlighted that they did not like this design. They did not understand the idea of tagging content and even when they did they highlighted that the tags had to be relevant to the content. There is no way of ensuring that the tags are relevant as they are most likely determined by the blogger. However if software was used to automatically generate the tags then the relevance of the tags could be prioritised.

### **8.6.3 – Conclusion**

Overall the users in the experiment did not like the designs using tags (design 5) and social (design 2). This was due to their perceived more difficulty to understand what was going on due to not having the required prior knowledge of the systems that the designs were built on. This perception that the designs are harder to use will limit their success and make users more reluctant to use the actual system due to the Technology Acceptance Model (Furneaux, 2006). So the progression of the project will use the design that the users responded most positively towards. The most positively responded to design was “map driven” (design 4). From this initial design the project will develop a range of designs which take this as the main focus of the user’s attention which will build up to the final design. However this was not exclusively the best design so alongside this style the next iteration of designs will also include elements from other designs. This is in order for the users who do not like this design to have an alternative way to access the posts.

## **8.7 - Designs II**

Following the feedback, in the previous section, from end users the project developed four slightly different refinements to the design. In these designs different subtle subjective differences were looked at. All of the designs did not exclusively use the “map driven” style due to it not being the unanimously selected as the best option. So in addition to the design utilising the map driven prototype it will also use the traditional style using blog article titles.

The designs were built as higher level fidelity prototypes than the paper prototypes. These designs were created using PowerPoint. In the designs the different screens would link to one another through the use of hidden buttons and hyperlinks. So that the end users would be able to see a working solution and better picture how the designs would actually function. In addition, these design were seen on a computer screen with the actual input device (mouse and keyboard) that would be used in the real solution. This will ensure that there are no side effects when the input style is taken into account.

The PowerPoint designs examples can be seen in the appendix (See Figure 0-19, Figure 0-20, Figure 0-21 and Figure 0-22) and the whole clickable designs can be found on the cd at the rear of the project.

The designs focused on different surface structures that could be used to present the maps along with looking at the way the comments should be displayed (Nack, 2011). The map was either seen as a traditional road map or as a satellite map. The comments on the other hand compared traditional comments boxes with a Disqus comments box. The Disqus comment box allows users to add comments to the article by either using the traditional method or by using social media. The project wishes to explore this to see if the audience will be able to see the benefit of a hybrid system which may allow some of the benefits of social network interaction to character based storytelling to be introduced without alienating those members of the audience which do not have social network accounts.

## **8.8 – End user feedback on Designs II**

### **8.8.1 – Methodology**

In order to work out which of subjective changes included in the designs the end user preferred the project created another study. In this study the PowerPoint designs would be shown to the end users and they indicated which design they preferred. This indication of which design each of the end users preferred was done by an anonymous survey. In this the end users would tick a box indicating their choice and putting it in a box.

### **8.8.2 – Results**

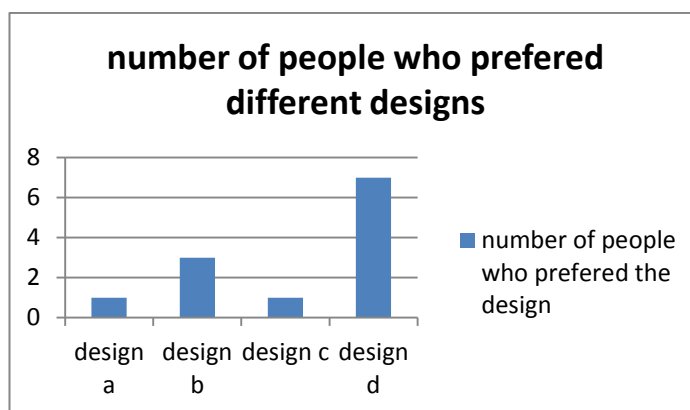


Figure 8-5 - users preferences for PowerPoint designs

#### ***Observations***

Overall seven end users (over 55%) showed that they preferred design D and this will be used to create the final design (See Figure 8-5 and Figure 0-22).

#### ***Interpretation***

Design D shows that the end users prefer a road style map rather than a satellite style map. This is due to it being easier to spot the pins and locations on the map. The side panel will contain the titles of the articles so to give the end users an alternative way of accessing blog entries. This alternative way to accessing the articles is in place in order to allow users who do not want to use or understand the map part of the design. In addition this design uses a traditional comments box.

After looking at lots of different styles of having discussions the targeted audience are less familiar with the different ways and so have rejected the use of new ways such as using Disqus or Twitter integration. As the audience have continually highlighted their preference to date the project will not look at integrating social media messages at this stage of the project (See Section 8.6.2).



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The design also incorporates a larger button which is used to return to the map. This button is used in order to return to the map and select a new article. This is easier to see and use especially if the article or comments are particularly long.

### **8.8.3 – Conclusion**

The Design D reflexes the participants subjective chooses almost unanimously. This design incorporates a road map surface structure and traditional commenting presentation. This design will be used going forward. This design will be used to encode websites in order to study how this style of presentation compares to current solutions. The building of this system can be found in the following section (See Section 8.9) and the study can be found in the following chapter (See Chapter 9).

## **8.9 - Final design for the presentation of narratives in travel blogging**

This design will be used to encode two websites for a study comparing this design to the current systems in use for those blogs. The first stage is to decide on the blogs that need to be encoded for this study. These blogs needed to be in the travel blog style but the project elected to investigate two contrasting blogging styles for the study. These blogs incorporated two different mediums as well as two different classifications for how the blogger presents their posts. As a result of this choice of final study two additional requirements are added as seen in the table below (See Section 8.4).

**Table 8-2 - Table showing additional requirements**

Number	Requirement	Priority (5 to 1 where 5 is essential)	Functional/ non functional
1	The design must allow the whole of a pre-existing blog to be encoded and accessed by the blogger and their audience	4	F
2	The design should remain consistent no matter which pre-existing blog is encoded using it	3	F

The first of the blogs chosen is a “meformer” blogger using a traditional word and picture mediums called “<http://www.notaballerina.com/>” (Gao, et al, 2010) (Naaman et al, 2010). The second blog style is an “informer” blogger using video medium called “<http://travelvideosblog.davidsbeenhere.com/>” (Gao, et al, 2010) (Naaman et al, 2010). These blog styles were picked, for this project, as the presentation and mediums parts of narrative showed lots of verity (Nack, 2011). In this way the project can find out whether the new design improves the understanding of the narrative across different styles of blogging. In addition these particular blogs were chosen as they were popular blogs that the project has not looked at up until this point. This was done to see whether the idea and evaluation of narrative picked up from the studies, undertaken up to this point, lead to designs that improve understanding taken from travel blogging at large rather than just those considered in the previous studies.

### **8.9.1 Implementation**

The designs were created using Html and java script. This style was chosen due to the bloggers in Section 6.2 highlighting that they preferred to access the blogs using traditional laptops. In addition this choice allowed the maps to be presented using the Google maps API. This allows the map part of the design to be more familiar to the end users. It also has the added benefits of not needing to create the maps again from scratch.



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(Google, 2013) This API allows the project to personalise the map so that it reflects the design for the blogs as created by end users.

An extract showing the code used to set up the map and add pins to it can be found in the appendix. The remainder of the code found on the cd at the back of the dissertation. In addition examples of what the designs look like can be found in the appendix (See Figure 0-23 to Figure 0-27). These designs look as similar as technically possible to the PowerPoint designs built with end users found in the previous section (See Section 8.8). The design also incorporates observations from the end user in other parts of the project. These include that the cursor should change when hovering over a pin from Section 8.6.2.1, there should be no distracting adverts from Section 4.7 and no inclusion of social networking features from Section 8.6.2 and Section 8.8.2.

The new design of “<http://www.notaballerina.com/>” allows the user to select the articles on the main page either by using the map or the article titles on the left hand side (See Figure 0-23). After an article is selected the audience can read the article and then comment upon it by using a traditional comments box (See Figure 0-24). The audience can also return to the front page by selecting the button on this page.

The new design of “<http://travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com/>” allows the blogger to select the articles on the main page either by selecting them on the map or by using the blog titles on the left hand side (See Figure 0-25). If the audience elect to select the article using the map then the blog post, in this case the video, will be shown on the map (See Figure 0-26). On the other hand if the audience select the article titles then the audience will be moved to another page (See Figure 0-27). On this page the blogger has both the video and the small comments they have created on it. This view also allows the audience to add comments and return to the main screen.

## **Chapter 9 - Study comparing different ways of presenting**

### **narrative in travel blogs**

The previous chapter, different ways of presenting narrative in blogs were explored. These different ways were used to create designs or layout of how the surface structure of blog posts are arranged in order to encode existing websites. These encodings will be used in this study to explore the different ways the narrative can be presented.

The redesigned blog is intended to control various aspects of the narrative (Nack, 2011). The comments and events aspect of Nack (2011) definition of narrative is attempted to be controlled by using the same articles about the same locations written in the same way.

The medium part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative, which looks at the style the narrative is presented in, will be attempted to be controlled by only comparing like for like styles of blogs as defined by Gao et al (2010). These two different mediums used in the study were traditional travel blog which use text with pictures and a video travel blog which use videos along some additional narrative presented by additional text in the posts (Snelson and Sheffield, 2009).

The motivational and psychological attributes of the blogger part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative will be attempted to be controlled inherently as they encode the same blog as the blogger really uses so the blogger remains consistent. Particularly the psychologically attributes of bloggers needs to be controlled as Gill et al. (2009) argues that different personality types write differently hence changing the deep structures and the narrative as a whole (See Section 2.7.2).

This chapter reports a study looking at the comparisons that can be drawn between the different ways of presenting the blogs either through the way that they are currently presented or using the designs created with the end users. This study is done in order to explore whether blogs can be presented in a different way than purely time based which is predominately used in the current presentation of blogs (Blood, 2002). The study tries to gage the understanding of the narrative that different participants get from the blogs. This was done by asking the participants about different criteria about the narrative (Tomás et al, 2009) (Nack, 2011).

In addition the study will look at whether the audience are prepared to comment on the different blogs to see if they wish to engage with character based story telling (Camanho et al, 2008). This is done even though the new designs were not created with encouraging commenting in mind and that the audience studies have already highlighted their reluctance to comment (See Chapter 8). As a result depending on the outcomes of the project this area may need to be addresses in future work.

### **9.1 - Study terminology**

In this study the project will use the term “current” to describe the way that the blogs are presented at the moment. This is the way that the blogger has chosen to present their blog to the world on their websites. These blogs focus on the chronological ordering of the posts (Blood, 2002). On the other hand the project will use the term “new” to describe the way that the blog is presented when they use the designs created with end users in Section 8.9. These designs focus on ordering posts based on a map rather than reverse chronological order.

The study will also use the term “design” to describe the way that the blog layout is presented in. In this way it describes the surface structures part of Nack (2011). The study will also use, to a lesser extent, the definitions presented in the glossary section of the appendix.

## 9.2 – Methodology

In order to do this study the project undertook a selection of structured interviews. The structured interviews created consistency of how the questions were asked to each participant. This allows the comparisons between the participants to be made more easily due to having the same question to compare. This also improves the validity of the data due to the project not comparing the responses by participants when they are asked similar questions rather than the questions being exactly the same. On the other hand this limits the questions being asked so that the project cannot pick up additional details by asking questions related to the responses of participants which would have been the case in semi-structures interviews. In addition the use of structured interviews requires the questions to be more carefully thought through as they cannot be changed or adapted mid participant or mid study. This was addressed by basing the questions on the theoretical research found out in Chapter 1 of the project while being selective based on the empirical research that has been done to this point.

The project elected to use the structured interviews due to the benefit of the fixed questions leading to the comparisons being more easily created outweighing the negatives of this style of interviewing.

In the structured interviews the participants will be shown two blogs. One of the blogs will be the excising encoding of the blog the other will be the new encoding of a blog. This study was double blind in the sense that the participants did not know whether the blog that they were viewing at any point during the study was the existing or new style. The participants will be shown one existing encoding and one new encoding in addition they will see both the “not a ballerina” and “davids been here”. For example, if they are shown the current design for “<http://www.notaballerina.com/>” then the participant will be shown the new design of “<http://myfiles.tn235/travelvideosblog.davidsbeenhere.com/>”. In addition different participants will be shown the current and new designs in different orders and see different blogs as seen in the chart below (See Figure 9-1) as to counterbalance for order (Shuttleworth, 09).

person	A	B	C	D	E	F
1st blog	notaballerina	notaballerina	davidsbeenhere	davidsbeenhere	davidsbeenhere	notaballerina
current or new design	Current	Current	New	Current	Current	New
2nd blog viewed	davidsbeenhere	davidsbeenhere	notaballerina	notaballerina	notaballerina	davidsbeenhere
current or new design	New	New	Current	New	New	Current
demographic						
age		54	45	51	51	48
gender	M	M	F	M	F	F

Figure 9-1 - participant demographic and order they viewed blogs in

### Participants

The participants (See Figure 9-1) in the study were chosen due to their unfamiliarity with travel blogs and blogs in general. This is due to them having less preconceived notions over the blogs should be presented epically as the project is looking at the way that understanding of the narrative changes when the blogs are presented not in the traditional reverse chronological order. As a result of this the participants are generally older. This also led to the participants having a lower technological knowledge. This was also beneficial as they were more likely to pick up problems with the new design and highlight where this design caused confusion.

The participants also had an equal mix of genders, this was done as an attempt at another control measure. The project has found no evidence in the literature that gender will make any difference to the understanding of the narrative or the wiliness to participate in communication but the project chose to control this too on the change that it would affect the findings. In an ideal world the study would have included more participants to cover all unique combinations of order and gender.

### ***Procedure***

This study started with participants being instructed to select an article. This instruction was left intentionally vague as to not to lead them in any way towards a particular selection. This also mimics the situation that the audience will find the site in if they used the blogs for real. The instruction would be the goal that they have and how the audience choose to accomplish that goal would be up to them. This is similar to Harris (2004) seven stages of action.

Once the participant had selected an article, they were asked to read or view the post. After they had indicated that they have done this, they were asked questions about the narrative. The questions were as follows:

- When do you think the post was created (Time)
- Where do you think the post was about (Location)
- Why do you think the post was created (Purpose)
- What event was the post about (Event)
- Do you know who the author of the post is (Author)
- What do you think about the presentation of the article (Presentation (Nack , 2011))
- What would you leave as a comment on the article (intercommunication (Nack, 2011))

These questions unless otherwise stated were based on Tomás et al. (2009) classifications of what can be incorporated in the plot of an article. The questions will be used to work out how much of the narrative the participants have understood via observations and interpretations, found later in this section, divided into sections focusing on each of the parts of the narrative the questions are looking at.

The participant would then be asked to find a second article and the questions were repeated. Once the initial questions were completed the participants were asked why they chose the articles that they did. The second design followed the identical style to the first.

Once the participants had looked and provided their feedback about the designs they were asked to compare the two encodes that they have seen based on a number of criteria. They were asked which design they:

- Found more interesting
- Found easier to understand how to use
- Had clearer presentation
- Learned more from.

The participant's responses were recorded as voice recording which can be found on the cd at the back of this project. In addition handwritten notes were taken which summarised the thoughts, comments and actions of the participants. These notes can be found in the appendix (See Figure 0-28 to Figure 0-38). In addition the summary of the observations and results can be found and their surrounding discussions in the following section (See 9.3 – Results).

## **9.3 – Results**

### **9.3.1 – Quantitative analysis of participants of understanding of narrative**

The following graphs show quantitative analysis of the participants understanding of the different designs explored in the study. In these results and those found in the appendix (See Figure 0-28 to Figure 0-52) the understanding was categorised into four groups. This was done as to easily compare the amount of understanding that the participants had for parts of the post independent of the post they select. In this way the different participants selecting different posts can be compared based on understanding that the participants get from the post rather than the context of the article. The categories

used in the study were; no understanding, incorrect understanding, vague understanding and full understanding. These grouping were also used in the following sections on the qualitative analysis found in the subsequent sections.

The no understanding group was used when the participants gave no response or answered that they did not know when they were asked a question. The incorrect understanding category was used when the participants gave a response to the question but their answer did not match the information that can be found in the article that they viewed. The vague understanding category was used when the participants gave a response which included the correct information but using less precision. An example of this is answers such as “in the last 5 years”. The final classification category is that the participants had a full understanding. This is when the participants gave a response which only and wholly included the correct narrative information.

These comparisons are further discussed in more detail using qualitative analysis to back them up in the subsequent sections of the project. This overall qualitative analysis is based on a small targeted sample size so the project should be repeated with other audiences in order to understand different demographics and how they understand the narrative when the presentation of the blogs is altered.

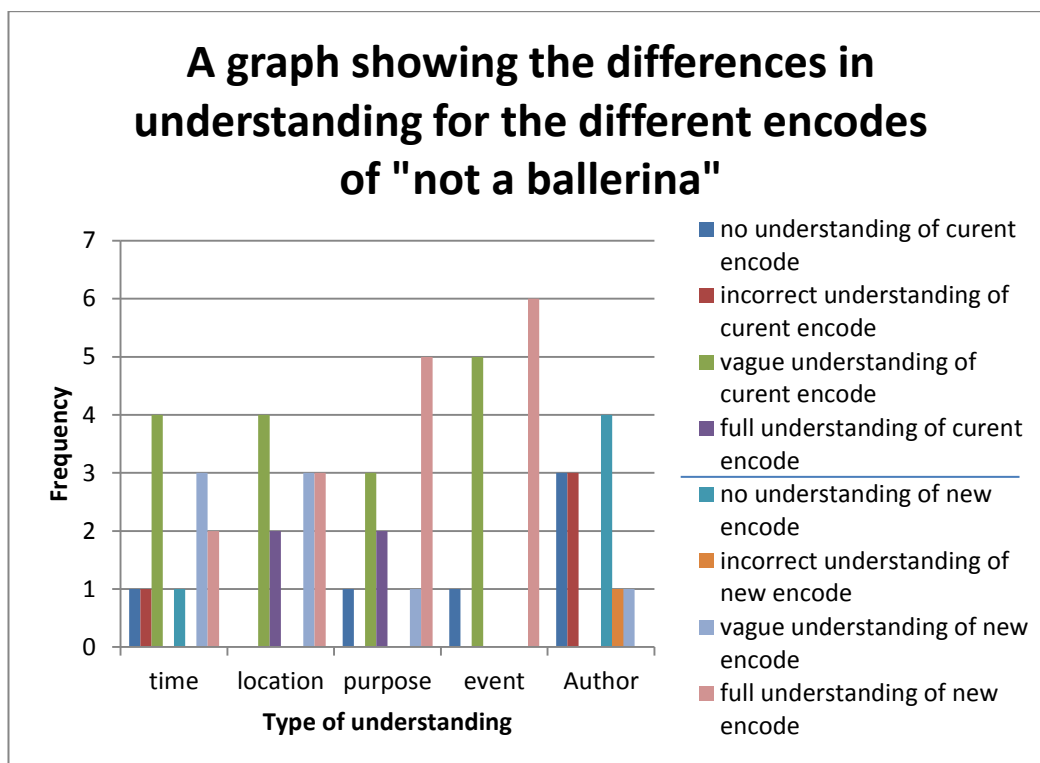


Figure 9-2 - A graph showing the differences in understanding for the different encodes of not a ballerina

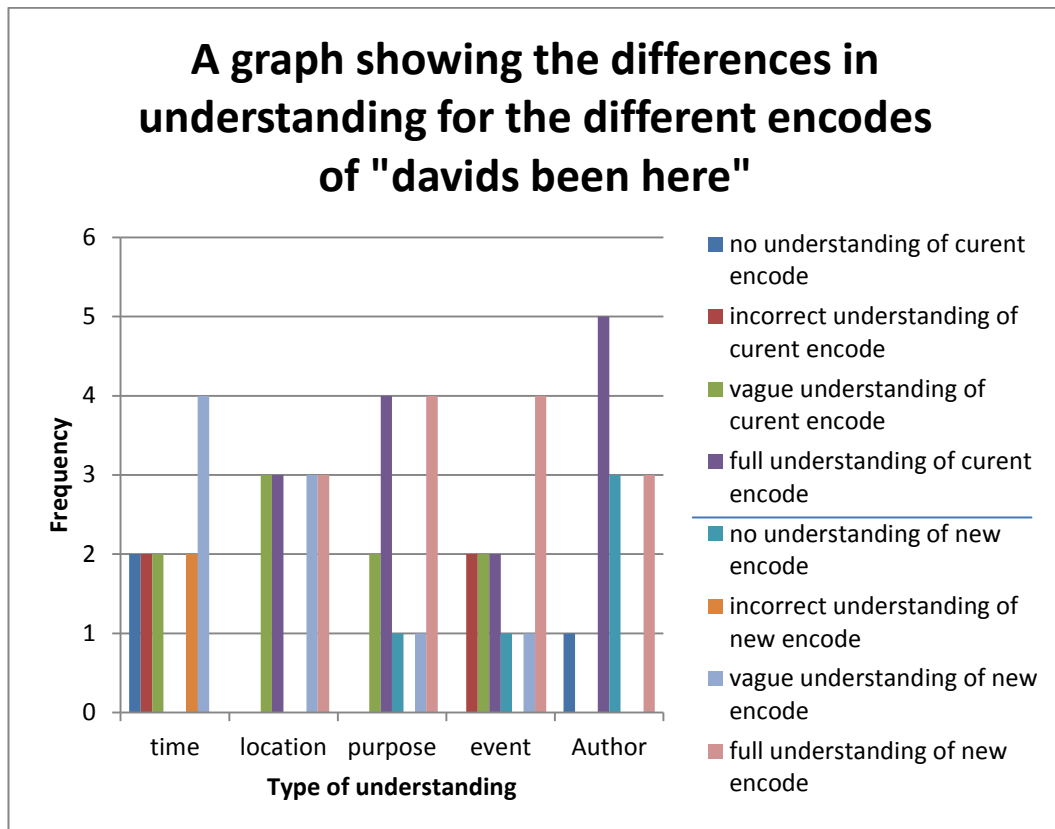


Figure 9-3 - A graph showing the differences in understanding for the different encodes of davids been here

## **9.3.2 – Qualitative analysis of understanding of narrative in travel blogging**

### **9.3.2.1 – Observations**

The participant's responses have highlighted a number of ways that the new and old encodings differ. This section will explore the different parts of narrative based on the questions posed to participants starting with Tomás et al. (2009) time part of narrative.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Time part of narrative***

The responses given by participants to the questions in Section 9.2.2 indicated that participant's gained more understanding of the time the articles were about in the new encodes of the blogs. In "not a ballerina" this is reflected by decreases in vague understanding of time, from 4 participants to 3 participants from the current to new encode, and decrease in incorrect understanding of time, from 1 participant to 0 participants from the current to the new encode. These decreases were matched by an increase in full understanding of time, from 0 to 2 participants from the current encode to the new. This increase of understanding of time also occurs in "davids been here". This is shown by a decrease participants with no understanding of time, from 2 to 0 participants from the current to the new encode being matched by an increase in vague understanding, from 2 to 4 participants from the current to the new encode.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Purpose part of narrative***

This increase in understanding also occurs in the purpose aspect of Tomás et al. (2009) part of narrative in the new encodes of the blogs. In this case the change of encode of "not a ballerina" is associated with a decrease in no understanding, from 1 to 0 participant from the current encode to the new encode, and a decrease in vague

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understanding, from 3 to 1 participants between current and new encode. This has been matched by an increase in full understanding from 2 to 5 participants from the current encode to the new encode. This was not reflected in “davids been here” as the only change in understanding is a single participant moving from vague understanding to no understanding from the current to the new encode.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Event part of narrative***

The study also highlighted an increase in understanding on event in the new encodes of the blogs. In this “not a ballerina” showed an increase in understanding of the event from no understanding (1 participant) and vague understanding (5 participants), in the current encode, to all participants getting a full understanding (6 participants), in the new encode. In “davids been here”, the understanding of event was also increased. This was shown by decreases in incorrect understanding, from 2 to 0 participants from the current to the new encode, and vague understanding also decreasing, from 2 to 1 participant from the current to new encode. This was matched by increases to no understanding from 0 to 1 participants from the current to the new encode, and an increase in full understanding from 2 to 4 participants from the current encode to the new encode.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Author part of narrative***

The change of presentation has led to less understanding of the author aspect of Tomás et al. (2009) part of narrative in the new encodes of the blogs. This is due to a decrease in full understanding of “davids been here”, from 5 to 3 participants from the current to the new encode, being matched with an increase in no understanding, from 1 to 3 participants from the current to the new encode. On the other blog, “not a ballerina”, there were no substantial increase in understanding instead there was instead slight changes between no understanding and incorrect understanding.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Location part of narrative***

The final aspect of Tomás et al. (2009) was the location. The study did not find any difference in understanding of this aspect of narrative. This is likely due to the current encoding already having a high level of understanding. The introduction of the map does not improve the precision of the answers given which would have been the only way to improve the overall understanding. This is most likely due to participants not zooming in on the locations of the map prior to selecting them. This feature was available to the participants but none of them used it as a result they continued to give vague location information. What is unclear is whether a different more technologically astute audience would use the zoom in feature in order to get more precise locations to highlight more understanding of location in the new design.

In addition to the aspects this study explored of Tomás et al. (2009) the study also looked at the participant’s opinions of different parts of Nack (2011). The parts of Nack (2011), the study looked at, where the presentation of the blog and the willingness to communicate in order to gain additional meaning.

#### ***Presentation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative***

The presentation of the current encode of “not a ballerina” was described by participants as “simple”, “good” and “nice pictures”. However the participant also highlights that they feel the blog could be broken up more. The new encode of “not a ballerina” the participants highlighted that they liked that the articles ended with a question, is “simple” and enjoyed the pictures. However the participants also highlighted that they felt the colour of the font and the background was not different enough and so made it difficult to read.

The current encoding of “davids been here” the participants stated that they found the presentation lacked detail, was too professional and trying to “selly”. By “selly” the participant meant they the fact the blogger was trying to sell the location to the audience

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and this was distracting from the blog. The new encoding of the blog on the other hand the participants highlighted that the presentation was “good” and “pretty good”. In particular the participants liked the inclusion of the locals in the blog. Even though the locals were included in both encodings the participants only picked up on it in the new encoding.

### ***Intercommunication part of Nack (2011) exploration of narrative***

The other aspect of Nack (2011) that this study looked at was the willingness of the participants to comment on the articles. The participants of the study are intentionally not those who will comment on the articles. As a result neither the new or current encoding of either blog made the participants want to add a comment. They during the study found it hard to come up with the comment that they wish to make and were vague with their answers. They did however highlight that they would only be prepared to comment if they were “moved” by the content and also highlighted that the addition of questions in the article also helped. They also highlighted that they were reluctant to place negative comments on the articles. So in this way the project cannot highlight whether either design was more effective in encouraging the bloggers audience to participate in the intercommunication. Instead however the project has learned more about the motivation and reasons that can be attributed to the willingness of participants to comment on a blog post.

### ***Participants self-identified article selection method***

The study also asked the participants why they selected the articles that they did. The majority, eight out of twelve participants, highlighted that they picked the articles based on location. Two of the other participants picked the articles because they are at the top. The remaining participants chose randomly (1 participant) or where drawn to the picture in the article (1 participant).

### ***Participants self-identified most interesting presentation***

The study finally asked the participants to self-identify which of the encodes was better for a number of criteria given. The first criteria that they were asked about was which design did they find more interesting. Of the six people, two said that they preferred the current encoding of “davids been here” another two said that they preferred the new encoding of “davids been here”. In addition one participant highlighted that they preferred the current encoding of “not a ballerina” and the final participant preferred the new encoding of “not a ballerina”. In this way the participants did not highlight one design that they considered better. This was due to them indicating that they felt that the learning was based on the subjective choice of which medium they learn best using rather than the presentation the blogs use.

### ***Participants self-identified better understood presentation***

The participants were also asked which design they had a greater understanding from. The participants took this question as which was the easier to use. Three of the participants preferred the new encoding of “davids been here”. A further two preferred the new encoding of “not a ballerina”. The final participant preferred the current encoding of “not a ballerina”. In this the participants have highlighted that they find the new encoding of the blogs easier to understand and use.

### ***Participants self-identified clearer presentation***

The participants were also asked which of the designs was clearer. This is also related to ease of use and as a result the results were similar to greater understanding. This was that three chose the new encoding of “davids been here”, two chose the new encoding of “not a ballerina” and the final participant chose the current encoding of “davids been here”. This also highlights the participant’s preferences for the new encodes.



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### ***Participants self-identified presentation that they learned more from***

The final criteria that the participants were asked about was which design they learned more from. Two of the participants preferred the new encode of “davids been here”, two chose the current encode of “davids been here” and one chose the current encoding of “not a ballerina”. The final participant stated that they would not choose as it was in their opinion a personal preference. In this part of the study the participants have highlighted that the current encoding of blogs is better in this aspect.

### **9.3.2.2 – Interpretation**

In the previous section (See Section 9.3.2.1) a number of observations were made about how the different designs produce different understanding of the narrative being told. In particular the understanding and observations of the different parts of narrative based on Nack (2011) and Tomás et al. (2009). In addition the project found in the previous section that the participants highlighted their own preferences for one encode over the other. The project will now look at the observations and what they mean for the project going forward.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Time part of narrative***

To begin with the study found that the new encodes gave the participants a greater understanding of the time that the article was about. In Tomás et al. (2009) time was the aspect of the narrative that the most of the participants in their study understood either spontaneously or when asked. This shows that the increase in understanding from the new encode is done to a part of the narrative that people already understand. The participants having a better understanding of the time part of narrative allows the users to understand the order of the posts more implicitly and that allows participants to work out whether the information about a location is up to date and so is still relevant thus improving the perceived intent of the blogger (Baumer et al, 2008).

The understanding of posts more implicitly allows the users of the blog to be able to pick up the order based off the articles themselves rather than the way that the posts are presented. In the new encodes the presentation of the articles gives no information about when the articles are created instead it relies on the user picking up the time of the post from the content of the article. What is interesting is that the participants got more understanding of the time based on the content rather than the ordering of the posts in the current encodes. In this way by removing the necessity of chronological ordering from the presentation of blogs allows a greater understanding of the time part of narrative.

In addition the improvement to the understanding allows the users to understand what articles provide them with up to date information. This is one of the reasons that participants in the study highlighted as the reason for reading a blog (See Section 2.8.2). This allows the users of the blog to know whether the information is still relevant to them and the likelihood that the places have changed.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Purpose part of narrative***

The study also highlighted that the new encode allows the users to get more understanding of the purpose of the article. This purpose is the understanding that the participants have for why the article was written. This increased understanding can harbour two main benefits firstly to uncover the intent of the blogger and secondly to improve the relationships between the blogger and their audience (Baumer et al, 2008) (See Section 2.8.3) (Zhao and Rosson, 2012). This intent can be more easily picked up, due to the increase in the understanding of purpose, and then the audience can be better informed whether they wish to view the blog.

In addition to getting a better understanding of the intent of the blogger the increase in the understanding of purpose allows the audience to learn more about the blogger rather than just the events that they talk about. In this way the blogger letting their audience into why they wrote the article is allowing them to include more of their

own life (Nardi, 2004) (See Section 2.5.2.1). This will strengthen the relationship between the blogger and their audience. This may also, based on the literature earlier in the project, that the improvement to the relationship may lead to an increase in the audience's wiliness to comment (See Section 2.9). This increase in commenting ultimately will lead to a better understanding overall of narrative due to further understanding being gained through character based storytelling (Camanho et al, 2008). However the limiting factor on the benefits is how open the blogger is (See Section 2.7.2) as this will affect how willing they are to participate in the intercommunication conversation (See Section 2.9).

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Event part of narrative***

Finally the study highlighted an increase in understanding of the event in the new encode. This event is the understanding of what the narrative was about (See Section 2.5). This allows the audience to better know the events and experiences that the blogger is blogging about. This makes the narrative being told more interesting as the clarity is improved due to the heightened understanding of the event. In addition the articles are more informative as the audience are understanding the actual opinion and comments of the blogger rather than what they thing the blogger is trying to tell them. In this way the audience get a greater precision of the narrative being told and get to view the narrative that the blogger is trying to tell.

#### ***Tomás et al. (2009) Author part of narrative***

On the other hand the new encoding has decreased the audiences understanding of the author part of Tomás et al. (2009). This understanding is the identification of who the blogger is. In this way it makes it harder for the audience to know the blogger and build the relationship between the blogger (See Section 2.9). This makes commenting much more difficult for a number of reasons. Firstly the wiliness to comment will decrease due to the lacking of feeling part of the community (Drell, 2012). This is because the literature highlights that audience members are more likely to leave comments if they have a relationship with the blogger (See Section 2.9).

Secondly the audience by not being able to identify who the author is will find it more difficult to know who the comments should be aimed at. This will make it more difficult for the audience to know what to write. With it being more difficult to write the comments it will make the audience less likely to leave those comments. In this way the audience may find it more difficult to differentiate between two way and merging dialogs (Macskassy, 2012). This is further exacerbated due to the audience not being able to identify whether the responses to their comments are from other members of the community or from the blogger who wrote the article. This may also affect the perception that the audience have towards the blogger as if the blogger is clearly responding then the perception will reflex this (Baumer et al, 2008).

The project after exploring the participants understanding of Tomás et al. (2009) parts of narrative, will now go on to explore the participants understanding of Nack (2011) parts of narrative.

#### ***Presentation part of Nack (2011) definition of narrative***

The study also highlighted problems with all encodes that were presented to them. The first issue that the participants highlighted was improvements to the content of the blogs. By content in this case we mean Nack (2011) deep structures (See Section 2.2). They highlighted that the blogs in part lacked details such as price information and were trying to see a location. This could not be changed by the design used to present the blogs instead this relies on the blogger to change the way that they blog. In this way the understanding is being hampered by the "motivational and psychological attributes" of the blogger due to the way that they are writing or recording their posts for the articles (See Section 2.7 and Chapter 6). The bloggers could address these issues by further tailoring the content of their blogs to their audience based on the feedback that they

receive (See Section 2.5.2.3). This is where the design of the blog can help due to improving the likelihood for the audience to leave comments that provide the feedback which allows the blogger to be informed as to what changes they should make.

The presentation part of the study also highlighted a problem with the surface structure of Nack (2011) (See Section 2.2). This was that one of the participants had problems reading the text of the blog due to their not being enough contrast between foreground and background text. This problem can be easily fixed by changing either the foreground or background colour. This will allow the blog posts to be read more easily.

The project after looking at participant's different understanding of the parts of the narrative will now explore the participant's self-identified comparisons of the two types of blog designs.

### ***Participants self-identified article selection method***

The majority of the participant's selected that they chose the articles based on location. This reinforces Baumer et al (2008) idea that "the content of the blog" was an important indicator of the audience's intent to view a blog other another (See section 2.8.3). This is important as in travel blogging the central theme is that of the locations being commented upon. The use of the map over the use of the titles in the new encodes also highlights the participant's importance of the locations in the blog. The map being used also has the same level of understanding as the current encodes of location.

### ***Additional participants self-identified preferences***

The participants highlighted that the new encode is easier to understand, easier to use and clearer. The participants also highlighted that they learned more from the current encodes. In addition the study found that participants highlighted no difference in which encode they found more interesting.

This was surprising that the new encoding was clearer and easier to understand and use. This is because it was testing a new design. This is probably due to the choice of the audience to use in the study not having any preconceived notions of how blogs should look or be ordered (Blood, 2002). As a result clicking on a map was not unexpected to them and also worked into their picking based on locations. In this way the map could show the locations more clearly to the audience and so they could find these locations more easily. In addition to this the design is less likely to get in the way of the audiences enjoyment and use of the blogs. So they are more likely to view more and are less likely to get frustrated navigation the blog.

The participants highlighted that they learned more from the current encoding. In this way the audience felt that they got more information about the location being shown from the current design. The participants did not give any reasoning for why they choose this style over the alternative. As a result further investigation will be required to see if the aspects that provide more learning to take place in the current design can be identified and then added to the new design. The only slight indication the participants identified was one participant refusing to answer and instead indicating that the learning was based on a subjective choice based on medium rather than style of the blog (See Section 2.6). However due to the overall opinion of the participants was to prefer the current encoding of both styles of blogs the project takes the opinion that it is more likely that an element of the current designs allows more learning about the locations to take place more easily.

## **9.4 – Conclusion**

In this chapter the project has undertaken a study looking at the comparisons in the understanding that users get from different styles of blogs. In this study comparison were made between current blogs and the same blogs encoded with the design created with potential end users in Chapter 8. This study aimed to compare the designs on different aspects of narratives put forward in Nack (2011) and Tomás et al. (2009).

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The study found that the new design, created with end users, allowed more understanding of Tomás et al. (2009) time, purpose and event parts of narrative. In addition the new encode also allowed greater understanding, easier use and greater clarity. The study also found that the current designs of blogs allowed a greater understanding of Tomás et al. (2009) author part of narrative. In addition the participants also indicated that they learned more from the current blogs. These comparisons were discussed with regard to how the blogs designs could be improved and what the implications are for the blog of each element.

The study also found that the participants had feedback about the presentation of the blog (Nack, 2011). They highlighted presentation issues with both surface structures and deep structures of the narrative (Nack, 2011). The project after identifying these problems highlighted different ways to improve the designs so that they were no longer an issue.

The study also highlighted, as expected, that the audience of the blog chose articles primarily based on the location that the post are about. The study discussed the implications of this and how the different designs are affected by this.

Overall the study shows that the pre conceived notion that a blog must be ordered chronologically in order for meaning to be preserved, found in the majority of the literature, is not exclusively the best way to link and order content. Instead other designs which link and order the posts, such as location, that are tailored to the style of the blog and what the audience expect are as good or better for some aspects of ensuring that narrative is preserved.

## **Chapter 10 - Conclusion**

This chapter will now reflect on the different parts of narrative that have been looked at and the implications to understanding of the bloggers' intended narrative. It begins by summarising the work that has been reported on in the literature review part of this dissertation and matching the theoretical research with the empirical research carried out in the later chapters of the dissertation. The chapter goes on to critically reflect on the key decisions made in this project. This chapter concludes by looking ahead at potential for future work to further explore narrative and its constituent elements. The project focuses on exploring the constituent elements of narrative as put forward by Nack (2011), alternatives to time based linking of posts on blogs and the implication of design changes has to the understanding of the narrative taken from the blog. This chapter also aims to highlight the originality of the project due to taking the uncommon view point that blogs do not need to be ordered reverse chronologically and using forums to gather the viewpoints of the bloggers.

### **10.1 – Summary of the project**

The project has explored the different parts of narrative through using the definition put forward by Nack (2011) and the further discussion that he provides. This definition is that narrative is “making a comment about a certain event, following an idea about the medium and form of presentation, which is ground in one's own motivational and psychological attributes”. The project has looked at each of these parts of the definition along with the idea of intercommunication, aiding narrative, through theoretical research which is then used to direct primary empirical research through various studies. We shall now look one last time at each of these parts to highlight the findings before widening consideration to the narrative as a whole.

The first part of Nack (2011) that the project explored was the “comments on an event” part of the definition. The literature has identified that bloggers comment on events for a number of reasons. These include expectation, extremeness, change, sentiment, privacy concerns, segments, mobile devices and time effects (Kiciman, 2011). In addition to this, the literature has identified that the bloggers choose a wide variety of topics to base their blogs around. The project has looked at a five examples of events blogs talk about: personal blogs, blogging during conflicts, blogging during disasters, community blogging and blogging in TV.

The studies reported in the project have used the description of “comments on an event” as being the narrative surrounding travel experiences. In this way the project has aimed to control these elements as they are defined in the specific type of blogging.

The second part of Nack (2011) that the project looked at was the “medium and form of presentation” by considering surface structures and deep structures in terms of media and content. The surface structures started by identifying lots of different styles of blog presentation including art, sketch and video blogs (Gao et al, 2010). The deep structures looked at how the surface structure was used to present the narrative. The project started by looking at the quality of writing in the blogs (Rello and Baeza-Yates, 2012). The project found that the quality of the presentation is decreasing and so it is becoming more difficult to get the understanding from the article. The literature also considered how the use of pictures and videos as deep structures affects understanding. The project found that these mediums require additional context in order to ensure meaning is maintained.

The surface structures of travel blogs was examined and was found to be just as varied. The blog posts include pictures, videos, text and sound. In this the bloggers are presenting their narratives in very different ways however they all still being ordered primarily in reverse chronological order. The project also identified a new way for the posts to be linked this was by using the locations that the blogs were based upon. This

change to the ordering structure allowed the project to explore this different way to present the blogs. This new style of blogs was explored in particular in the final study. In this the project found that this new way of linking content provided a greater understanding of several elements of narrative. These included the time purpose and events parts of narrative. However this new way of presenting narrative weakened the identification of the author.

The final part of the narrative definition that the project looked at was the “motivational and psychological attributes” of the blogger and their audience. The literature found that the bloggers tend to have high extraversion and high openness (Quercia et al, 2012) (Gill et al, 2009). However the literature disagreed about the neuroticism of the bloggers. In Quercia et al (2012) argued that the bloggers tend to have low neuroticism whereas Gill et al (2009) argued that high neuroticism is more common. The effect of these personality types to the deep structures was also highlighted by Gill et al (2009). They showed, amongst others that those bloggers with high extraversion are more likely to use more verbs and those with high openness are more likely to include details about their hobbies.

The bloggers motivations to blog were also found to be a desire to share stories, an outlet for creativity and to feel connected (Kjellberg, 2010). These in turn show the links to the event and the intercommunication parts of the narrative.

The literature shows the reader on the other hand is motivated to read blogs based on the content of the blog (the event), the intent of the blogger (psychological and motivational attributes of the blogger), the intent of the reader and their relationship with the blogger (intercommunication). This shows that the reader is picking up on a number of different keys from different parts of the narrative to determine whether they wish to further read the blog.

The studies carried out looked at the motivation and psychological attributes of the blogger looking at parts of the big five indicators in addition to what these attributes mean to blogs. The study looked at the conscientiousness of bloggers and found that this varies from blogger to blogger. This was shown though the differences in the way that the bloggers write their articles. Some bloggers are highly conscientious and as a result carefully plan their ideas prior to writing their articles and go through a set process to create, publish and publicise their articles. Other bloggers are not conscientious they instead do not plan at all and have a “just write” style to blogging. In addition to this the project looked at how bloggers deal with their time constraints. The project found that bloggers with this problem tend to hold back posts so to space them out. In this way the bloggers with limited time have had to be more conscientious. The study also looked at the extraversion and agreeableness of the bloggers. This was done by exploring the bloggers wiliness to participate in intercommunication. The project found that this too had a wide range of opinions. Some bloggers demonstrated their high extraversion and high agreeableness through being prepared to alter the way that they blog in order to make it easier for their audience to participate in the intercommunication. On the other hand other bloggers have low extraversion and agreeableness. This was demonstrated by bloggers either not wanting to participate in the intercommunication or by having no communication channels on their blog.

Between the literature and the study the project has looked at all parts of the big five indicators of bloggers. In this way all aspects of the psychological attributes of bloggers have been considered. Overall the bloggers are highly extravert, open and neuroticism. However the project has found that agreeableness and conscientiousness alter on a blogger by blogger basis.

The project final looked to explore the different ways that intercommunication can take place. The literature highlighted that the two main conversations that can take place are two way dialogs and merging dialogs (Macskassy, 2012). However the literature also highlighted that some bloggers with more relationship with their audience may talk directly to them in the blog itself (Nardi et al, 2004). The literature also highlighted that the intercommunication can provide additional narrative through

character based story telling (Camanho et al, 2008). This improvement to the narrative also highlighted different benefits for those communicating to gain. These include relational benefits and personal benefits. The improvement to the narrative fits into the later of the two. Finally the literature highlighted a number of criteria that affect the willingness for the audience to respond to a post. These include engaging the reader in the content and creating affinity to the content rather than a relying on the bloggers relationship with their audience.

The project also undertook a study to look at the different ways that the bloggers are using to communicate with their audience. The project found that the majority of the intercommunication and discussions are taking place away from the blogs. In particular the bloggers are using social networks more frequently to enhance both the narrative that they provide and to create relationships with their audience. In addition to this some bloggers are creating other ways to communicate with their audience the most common of these is the use of a forum on the bloggers website. In this way the audience can have asynchronous merging dialogs more easily. In addition the final study highlighted that readers are only prepared to comment on the article if they feel moved to do so. In this way the findings of the study are the same as parts of the literature. The final study also found that the bloggers audience is less likely to leave negative comments. This was not found in the literature and so additional studies should take place prior to this being assumed as fact. The participants also highlighted that the posts which ended with a question made them more likely to comment as it directed their thoughts to a topic. In this way the question was making it easier to comment.

The project has explored all the different elements of Nack (2011) definition of narrative and the intercommunication that he argues also aids narrative. The project has built up the understanding of the complex issue by exploring all the constituent elements of the narrative both through the use of theoretical and empirical research. The project has aimed both to both explain these constituent elements but also to show how they are important and relate to one another. The project has aimed to highlight that these elements do not act alone but act together to create different interpretations of the bloggers intended narrative.

## **10.2 – Reflection of the project**

The previous section outlined the main ideas that the project discovered both from the literature and from undertaking primary research. The majority explored the different parts of Nack (2011) description of narrative. However this is not the only way that the narrative can be thought of. The literature highlighted other models such as the Content-Community-Time model (Qamra, et al, 2006) or the story identification model (Qamra, et al, 2006). If these other models were used as the basis for the project then the project would have looked at different elements of that make up the narrative. Some of these models have clear overlap such as the content part of the Content-Community-Time model being similar to the event aspect of Nack (2011) description of narrative. The difference of the models may have led to different exploration taking place and possibly different findings. This ambiguity to what makes up narrative is likely due the inability to have good quantitative data and so some subjective opinions are included both in the identification of different literature of what the narrative is and in the evaluation of the constant elements that they propose. The project chose to use Nack (2011) due to their being no specific reference to chronological ordering which was the preconceived notion that lots of blogs are built around. In addition the definition also broke the narrative down into much smaller parts which allowed different parts of the narrative to be looked at in turn which the other models did not do. The problem with this is that the project relies on the ideas of Nack (2011) being realistic and not missing any other element of narrative that should of or could have been explored.

In addition the understanding of different parts of narrative depends greatly on the interpretation of Nack (2011). An example of this is surface structures which the

project defines, based on the interpretation of the literature, as the layout of the blogs. If this means something different to Nack (2011) then the interpretations based on this will be different. This is particularly difficult to ensure that the definition is interpreted correctly as it was not created with blogging in mind.

The project also looked at a number of studies the most challenging of these was how to capture the motivation and psychological attributes of the blogger. Initially the project was intending to send out a survey to bloggers however this received no responses and several bloggers asked to be paid prior to filling in the survey. As a result the project looked at different way to get the information that it required. This was done by using a forum that bloggers talk about blogging on (bloggeries.com, n.d.). This had the benefit of getting the experiences straight from the bloggers without them being aware that they comments were being looked at for a specific purpose. This allows the comments to be taken without being biased by the question being asked to minimise experimenter effect. On the other hand due to the forum being used the questions that could be answered where only those that conversations that were currently taking place. This too could be seen as a positive as the issues that the bloggers are talking about are likely to be the ones in which they feel are the most important. Especially when the literature in this project highlights that people are more likely to comment on an article, in this case a blogging topic on the forum, when they feel affinity to the content (Shmueli, et al, 2012).

The project also undertook a study looking at the communication of bloggers. In this the different communication tools that bloggers used were looking at. The issue that this project has to this study is that it assumes that there is no impact of when content is placed to the level of communication in all its different forms (Shmueli, et al, 2012) (Macskassy, 2012). This assumption occurs due to the project looking at all the blogs in one go even though some of the blogs may have had new posts created more recently than others and the effect of this to the level of communication is unclear. The project could have looked at the blogs after a given period from a new post being posted. However in practice this may be difficult firstly if the posts are created in other time zones they may require data to be collected at different times of the day. In addition the frequency of the blogs may delay the project as data needing to be collected after an article that is being waited for.

In addition to these the studies only looked at one part of the narrative at a time while trying to control the other parts of the narrative (Nack, 2011). As a result the validity of the results will be affected by how well these other parts of the narrative are controlled. In addition the project can make no statement about how several different parts of the narrative affect the overall narrative when changes to different parts occur at the same time.

The final study tried to avoid asking directly about the different parts of Nack (2011) instead the study asked about Tomás et al. (2009) parts of narrative when they overlapped. This was an attempt to remove any experimenter effect by seeding the parts of narrative that were actually being looked at.

The final study also only uses two blogs. This along with the fact that all blogs are different with different bloggers producing their narrative in different ways stops the findings from being reflexed to all types of blogging or even all styles of travel blogs (Gao, et al, 2010). However there are also other styles used in travel blogging such as podcasts which were not looked at in the study. In addition the studies also focused on one group of end users. These were the older people with less understanding of blogs and so less preconceived notions of what blogs should look like. As a result the findings can only be taken to this market section due to their being no argument found that states that audience view blogs in the same way with no regard to the demographic or past experiences. In fact the past experiences of other audience sectors are likely to have a large impact on the understanding that they take from the narrative presented in the blog particularly with regard to the level of familiarity with blogs and social networks which could be used to improve engagement in discussions.



The final study also only looked at a set number of blog posts as a result in blogs with more posts may lead to different understanding of the different parts of the narrative. As a result future work can look at this aspect of blogs with more posts to see if the proposed design continues to have the benefits of improved understanding of time, purpose and events.

In addition to the studies the project undertook some user centred development. In this the project looked at different designs with potential end users. The project used one group of end users namely older users with no preconceived notions of what blogs are. As a result the designs produced will be based of their understanding and expectations rather than other demographics. These designs may or may not be the best design to highlight the location aspects of the blogs for other demographics as they will have different preconceived notions of how the blogs should be displayed and how they expect to use the site. This audience group was chosen due to the fact that they should be the most sensitive to new designs and be less experienced in how they should be interacting with the blogs. In addition they had limited expectations that the new designs should look like current blogs.

The way that the designs were shown to the end users using different prototyping methods may also affect the responses that they give. This is due to the limitations in the amount of interaction that they can have with the designs to see how they work. In particular the use of paper based solution not being able to show all the aspects of the design and so the feedback was limited to the aspects of the design that the audience could understand.

Finally the final design created was encoded using web based package as this is what the bloggers indicated that they view and used blogs currently. However certain audience members of the audience will be viewing the blogs in different ways such as using tablets or smartphones (Ganoe et al, 2010). This project does not look into how the websites appears on these devices and whether this changes the bloggers understanding of the narrative. This aspect was controlled during the studies as all the studies took place on the same computer using the same web browser.

### **10.3 – Further work and exploration to be undertaken**

The project has also highlighted several areas which can be further explored in order to get a fuller picture of narrative. To begin with work can be undertaken to look at the affect that viewing blogs using mobile technology has to the understanding the audience gets of the narrative (Kiciman, 2012) (Ganoe et al, 2010). This can be studied by undertaking primary research with end users comparing the understanding that they get from viewing a blog on a mobile device with that of viewing the same blog on a computer. This should be done in a similar way to the final study where two different blogs were shown in different ways so the meaning of the second blog looked at is not affected by the participants recall of the first blog shown to them. In order to gauge the understanding of the narrative similar questions to the final study can be asked in order to see which parts of the narrative understanding each way of viewing the blog improves.

Further work can also be undertaken to explore the ways to improve the engagement of both the blogger and their audience into intercommunication, in particular whether the design of a blog can be used to encourage communication taking place rather than relying on the content of the article to drive commenting (Shmueli, et al, 2012). This is due to this being inconclusive in the final study in this project. This communication is best looked at by developing another design using user centred development which has the aim of improving communication. One way that the project has highlighted may be successful is to introduce more use of social networks into the blogs however this was unsuitable for the particular audience that this project looked at. So the choice of the audience when looking at this aspect of narrative is of great importance. When looking at the ways that intercommunication can be encouraged it will also be beneficial to explore the ways in which this intercommunication can lead to character based storytelling

(Camanho et al, 2008). This is due to some forms of communication being used for other purposes such as feedback or to say thanks as a result these do not improve the narrative that the audience can get from a blog (Macskassy, 2012). In addition the communication can be looked at to see if the audience gain further understanding of the narrative based on others comments (See Section 7.2.1). Finally additional work can be undertaken to look in more detail at the reasons that the audience are reluctant to leave negative comments in particular whether new designs can be used to make the audience more likely to provide this feedback.

Further work can also look at how different audiences and the number of posts on a blog affect the understanding in the travel blogging. In this way the narrative can be explored by changing the audience who view the blog or the number of posts in order to see the changes of understanding that occur. This can be done by developing a new design of travel blogs with the audience in order to compare this design with current and this projects design in a similar way to the final study. On the other hand the final study could be purely repeated with a different audience or number of posts in order to see what any changes to the understanding of the different elements of narrative occur. In a similar way different travel blogs can also be explored such as business to consumer travel blogs in order to explore the way that narrative is changed by the different goals based on the different style of blog (See Section 2.7.5).

In addition further work can be undertaken to see if the new way of encoding the blog articles is as effective for ensuring narrative is understood (Gao, et al, 2010). This can be done by looking at other styles of blogging such as podcasts or sketch blogs and encoding them in the same way as the final project was done. In this way it will be important to keep the demographic of the audience as similar as possible to the study as to control other factors that might affect the understanding of the narrative being taken by the viewer of the blog.

Further work can also look at the effects of a different definition of narrative being used to the understanding that the audience get from the posts presented to them. This additional project can use a different narrative model such as the Content-Community-Time model and look at undertaking studies to look at the constituent element to see if there are similar findings (Qamra, et al, 2006). This additional project should review the literature with this different perspective and choose studies based on what is most relevant to the new way of describing narrative. From this the two projects can be then looked at side by side to find similarities both in the designs produces and in the conclusions drawn from their studies.

Finally the future work can look at different style of blogging with the aim to highlight the different ways that content using these different styles can link content based on other criteria and not relying on chronological order. Once the ways of linking content are found then new designs can be created based on them. These designs can then be tested to see if these too improve the understanding of parts of narrative.

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## **Appendix A – Additional Information**

**Table 0-1 - showing the important dates in the history of blogging**

Date	Event
May 1990	The first web page - <a href="http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html">http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/TheProject.html</a>
January 1994	First recorded blog - Justin Hall's "links.net" ( <a href="http://links.net/">http://links.net/</a> )
April 1997	Jorn Barger's first use of the term weblog
April 1999	Peter Merholz shortens the term weblog to blog
July 1999	First free blogging tool - Pitas
August 1999	Blogger created by Pyra
9 <sup>th</sup> January 2001	Apple introduces iTunes
February 2002	First person fired for blogging at work
February 2003	Google buy blogger
May 27 2003	WordPress launched
4 <sup>th</sup> February 2004	Facebook launched
February 2004	Flickr launched
30 <sup>th</sup> December 2004	Facebook gains one million users
14 <sup>th</sup> February 2005	YouTube launched
23 <sup>rd</sup> April 2005	First video uploaded to YouTube
28 <sup>th</sup> June 2005	iTunes adds in podcasts
12 <sup>th</sup> October 2005	iTunes supports video podcasts (video blogs)
October 2005	Facebook allows users to add pictures (photo blogging)
9 <sup>th</sup> October 2006	Google buys YouTube for \$1.65bn in stock
27 <sup>th</sup> April 2007	Tumblr launched
9 <sup>th</sup> April 2008	Flickr allows users to upload videos as well as pictures (video blogs)
25 <sup>th</sup> February 2009	Tumblr buys tumlerette to provide a mobile app (mob blogging)
22 <sup>nd</sup> December 2011	Facebook changes to timeline
April 2012	Facebook buys instagram for \$1 billion in cash and shares
May 2012	Facebook IPO
October 2012	Facebook gains one billion users

(anon, 2012) (Barnes, 2011) (Beal, 2010) (Cheng, 2012) (Grove, 2009) (Halliday, 2012) (Path, 2012) (Phillips, 2007) (Technology review, 2012) (Telegraph, 2013)



**Figure 0-1 - Use Case for Content Aggregators**

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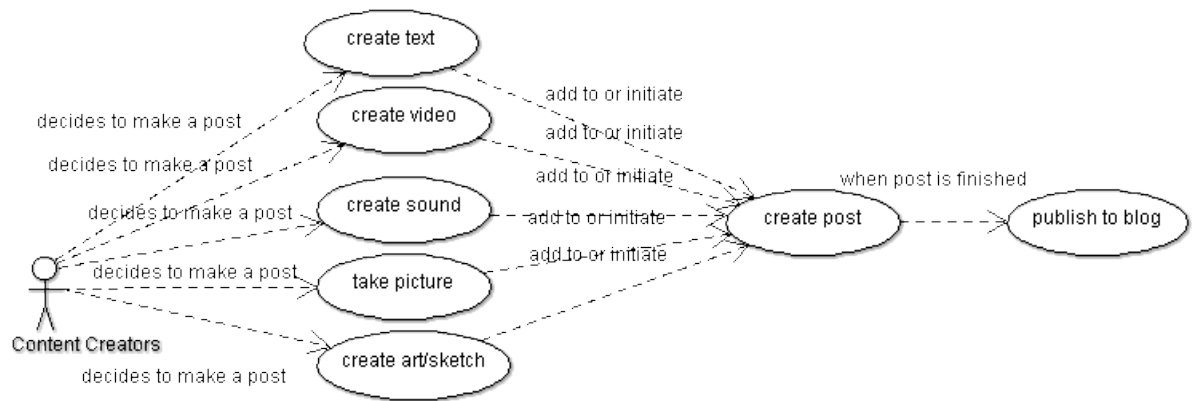


Figure 0-2 - Use Case for Content Creators

	style of blog		mediums used in most recent post				
Blog Title	creator	aggregator	text	videos	photos	sound	sketch
Gadling	multiple author creators		X		X		
Nomadic Matts Travel Site	X		X		X		
Uncornered Market	two creators		X		lots interrupting the text		
almostfearless.com	X		X		X		
elliott.org	X		X		X		
GoBackpacking	Dave with guest bloggers		little		predominantly		
Canada Adventure Couple	X		X		X		
Viator Travel Blog	collection of authors		X		single		
Tim Leffels Cheapest Destinations	unspecified		X		X		
Intelligent Travel Blog	multiple author creators		X	X	X		
Solo Traveler	single with guests		X		X		
Global Grasshopper   Travel Tips and Inspiration	two with guests		X		X		
Wild Junket	contributors and guests		X	X	X		
The Cranky Flier	X		mix of short and longer posts		Graphs		
Hole In The Donut	X		X		X		
The Longest Way Home	X		X		X		
Twenty-Something Travel	with guests		X		X		
Art of Backpacking	X		X		X		
foXnoMad	X		X	X	X		
Indie Travel Podcast	X		X	X	X	X	

Figure 0-3 - Top 20 Blogs Initial Research part one

Blog Title	gap between last two articles	reader interaction the second post	facebook	twitter	Google +	Email	competition
Gadling	1 day		0	0	0	X	X
Nomadic Matts Travel Site	2 days		29	362	37	3	
Uncornered Market	approx 6 days		24	53	56	8	
almostfearless.com	8 days		119	37	14	3	
elliott.org	1 day		7	X	X	X	
GoBackpacking	2days		1	8	9	4	
Canada Adventure Couple	1 day		6	34	29	13	
Viator Travel Blog	Same day	X		15	X	X	
Tim Leffels Cheapest Destinations	3 days		4				X
Intelligent Travel Blog	same day --> not updated since april 15 2011	X					
Solo Traveler	2 days		5	5	18	0	
Global Grasshopper   Travel Tips and Inspiration	same day			2	2	0	
Wild Junket	1 day		4	4	15	3	
The Cranky Flier	1 day		46	2	12	0	
Hole In The Donut	5 days		11	44	63	5	
The Longest Way Home	9 days	12 (6 by readers 6 responses by blogger)		2	8	0	Newsletter
Twenty-Something Travel	1 day		10	8	18	0	
Art of Backpacking	1 day	8 (4 by readers 4 by blogger)		21	32	1	
foXnoMad	1 day --> taking time off from nov 30 into 2013	3 (2 by reader 1 response by blogger)		11	24	4	
Indie Travel Podcast	3 days	X	X	X	X	Newsletter	

Figure 0-4 - Top 20 Blogs Initial Research part two

Blog Title	post ordered	post linking	
Gadling	reverse chronological	Continent/Regions, Countries, Activities (hiking, scuba), Topics (festivals, Food and drink), Features	overview -> click through to see more
Nomadic Matts Travel Site	reverse chronological	None	lots of adds all down one side, overview -> click through to see more
Uncornered Market	reverse chronological	Countries, Topic	allows sharing to lots of different social networks, allows donations, map of geolocations linked to articles
almostfearless.com	reverse chronological	Food, Life, Photography	
elliott.org	reverse chronological	None	overview -> click through to see more, ends with a poll
GoBackpacking	reverse chronological	Countries, you may also like	overview -> click through to see more
Canada Adventure Couple	reverse chronological	you may also like, photo stories, Advice	
Viator Travel Blog	reverse chronological	tags	overview -> click through to see more
Tim Leffels Cheapest Destinations	reverse chronological	tags, Categories (family travel, work/life balance, Contests)	
Intelligent Travel Blog	reverse chronological		
Solo Traveler	reverse chronological	popular posts	overview -> click through to see more
Global Grasshopper   Travel Tips and Inspiration	reverse chronological	you may also enjoy	overview -> click through to see more
Wild Junket	reverse chronological	you may also like	overview -> click through to see more
The Cranky Flier	reverse chronological	Hot topics	ends with direct question = high comments
Hole In The Donut	reverse chronological	popular	overview -> click through to see more
The Longest Way Home	single featured post followed by reverse chronological	you might also like	overland Travel map, overview -> click through to see more
Twenty-Something Travel	reverse chronological	you might also like	overview -> click through to see more, ends with a discussion question
Art of Backpacking	reverse chronological	popular, not prominent tags	overview -> click through to see more, ends with a question
foXnoMad	topic - Advice, Picture and video, Tech	related stories	overview -> click through to see more, ends with a question
Indie Travel Podcast	reverse chronological	tags, popular, latest comments, "read more its good for you"	overview -> click through to see more

Figure 0-5 - Top 20 Blogs Initial Research part three



## How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?

Thomas Norton

channel	interact with the blogger	share video
otherijustine	twitter, tumblr, facebook, google +, instagram, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
Cyr1216	twitter, tumblr, facebook, Younow, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
ijustinesiphone	twitter, tumblr, facebook, google +, instagram, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
Trippy	twitter, facebook, google+, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
DamonFizzy	Twitter Instagram, Facebook, Tumblr, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
nayders07	website with; chat, forum, member list,calendar showing birthdays Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Linked in, flickr, Youtube, Stumble upon, tumblr, foursquare,rss feed, direct email adress, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts via youtube.
lisa	website with blog, links to groups of videos and links to more social media. Twitter,Facebook,Dailybooth, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	Blog provides additional ways to share by twitter, StumbleUpon, Facebook, Google+ and Tumblr
ComedyShortsGamer	email,twitter,facebook, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
Olga Kay	email,twitter,facebook, flickr, imdb forum, KEEK, PO BOX, comments, captions added to timestamps in the video,like video	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts
nick	twitter,facebook,website with additional contact information	embed video to website, facebook, twitter, google+, hangouts provided by the YouTube platform

Figure 0-6 - Top 10 Travel Video blogs on YouTube part one

channel	ordering	links between posts
otherijustine	reverse chronological, playlists based on events/locations	video responses, anotations link to other videos
Cyr1216	reverse chronological, playlists based on style of videos	None
ijustinesiphone	reverse chronological, playlists based on time	anotations link to other videos
Trippy	reverse chronological, playlists based on time	video responses, anotations link to other videos
DamonFizzy	reverse chronological	anotations link to previous video
nayders07	reverse chronological, playlists based on location, style of video	none on YouTube, Related posts on the blog
	additional categories such as activities or attractions available on the blog	
lisa	reverse chronological	None
ComedyShortsGamer	reverse chronological	None
Olga Kay	reverse chronological, playlists based on time or style	None
nick	reverse chronological, playlists based on locations	video response and annotation to next video

Figure 0-7 - Top 10 Travel Video blogs on YouTube part two

channel	additional notes
otherijustine	feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
Cyr1216	small tshirt store, feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
ijustinesiphone	feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
Trippy	small tshirt store, feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
DamonFizzy	feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
nayders07	feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing, subscribe to the blog via email, blog uses tagging, click an article to see more
lisa	*not updated for 1 year due to new channel "lisanova", feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing
ComedyShortsGamer	*incorectly classified
Olga Kay	small store, feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and likeing, Allows video responses
nick	feed showing bloggers activities such as commenting, uploading and liking

Figure 0-8 - Top 10 Travel Video blogs on YouTube part three

podcast title	Author	audience to interact with the blogger
excess baggage	bbc radio 4	customer reviews,website without interaction
london walks podcast	Wizzard Media	customer reviews, listed unrealated website
inside the magic	Wizzard Media	customer reviews,website links to facebook twitter and youtube
italyguides.it	italyguides.it	customer reviews, website has a guest book
amateur Traveler podcast	Chris Christensen	customer reviews,website ebbdes the podcasts with some comentry, comments and a link to twitter
the Dis Unplugged	The DIS	customer reviews, website has a forum for "DIS" podcasts
Ther WDW Radio Show	Lou Mongello	customer reviews, Website with a forum
Travel with Rick Steves	<a href="http://www.ricksteves.com">www.ricksteves.com</a>	customer reviews,website has facebook, Youtube,twitter and hulu (us video on demand)
Indie Travel Podcast	Craig and Linda Martin	customer reviews,website with blog, comments, rss feed, twitter, facebook,youtube,google +
Travler Language Guides	<a href="http://podcasts@worldnomads.com">podcasts@worldnomads.com</a>	customer reviews, Website with blog, commenting,rss, facebook,twitter,flickr, youtube,Nomads (social network for travelers)

Figure 0-9 - Top 10 Travel Podcasts on iTunes part one

podcast title	share	order	link
excess baggage	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	none - seperate location on each episode
london walks podcast	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	one episode was a two parter
inside the magic	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
italyguides.it	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	none - seperate location on each episode
amateur Traveler podcast	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	website uses tags and You may also like section
the Dis Unplugged	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
Ther WDW Radio Show	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
Travel with Rick Steves	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
Indie Travel Podcast	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
Travler Language Guides	facebook, twitter,tell a friend	reverse chronological	None
		*iTunes has a inflexible layout to stop reodering	*iTunes has a inflexible layout which limits links

Figure 0-10 - Top 10 Travel Podcasts on iTunes part two



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton



Figure 0-11 - hidden way to share podcasts

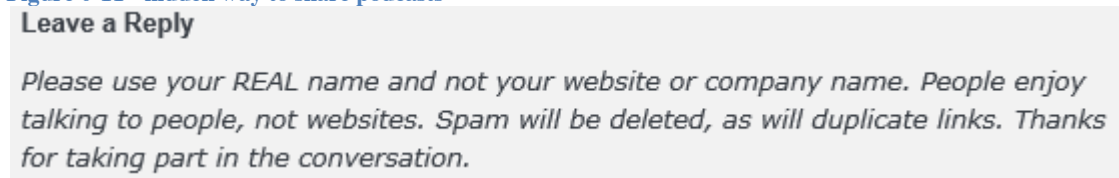


Figure 0-12 - notice to use real identities on uncornered market

Uploaders' Comments (nayders07)



Figure 0-13 - example of Uploaders' Comments section

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

#### Top Comments

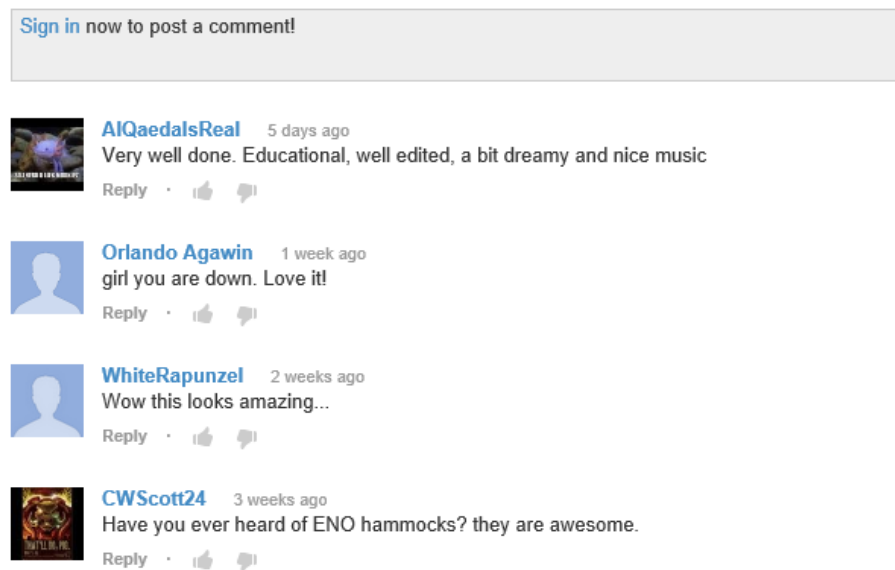


**epayne6** 3 weeks ago  
"We wanted to break up our trip to Rio, which has so far consisted of beach, party, beach, beach, and Christ the Redeemer!" then she ends the video with her hang gliding in the perfect summer weather.  
I just finished shoveling last nights 2 extra inches of snow off my driveway, took a nap and eat a microwave dinner before going to work. ARRGGGGHH!! Must... Contain... Jealous... Rage... Building... inside me!  
Reply · 15

**jtwebman** 3 weeks ago  
How do I get your job?  
Reply · 14

Figure 0-14 - example of Top Comments section

All Comments (52)



Sign in now to post a comment!

**AlQaedalsReal** 5 days ago  
Very well done. Educational, well edited, a bit dreamy and nice music  
Reply ·

**Orlando Agawin** 1 week ago  
girl you are down. Love it!  
Reply ·

**WhiteRapunzel** 2 weeks ago  
Wow this looks amazing...  
Reply ·

**CWScott24** 3 weeks ago  
Have you ever heard of ENO hammocks? they are awesome.  
Reply ·

Figure 0-15 - example of an all comments section

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton



Figure 0-16 - example nayders07 twitter conversation

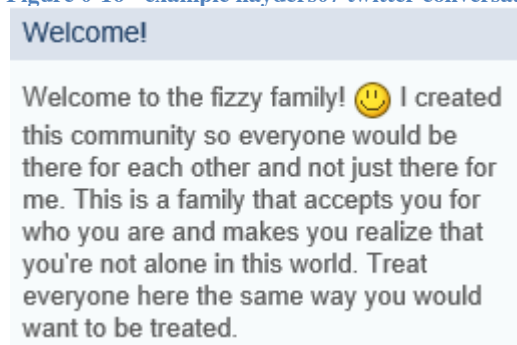


Figure 0-17 - fizzy family welcome box



Figure 0-18 - example of link from website to social media tools

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

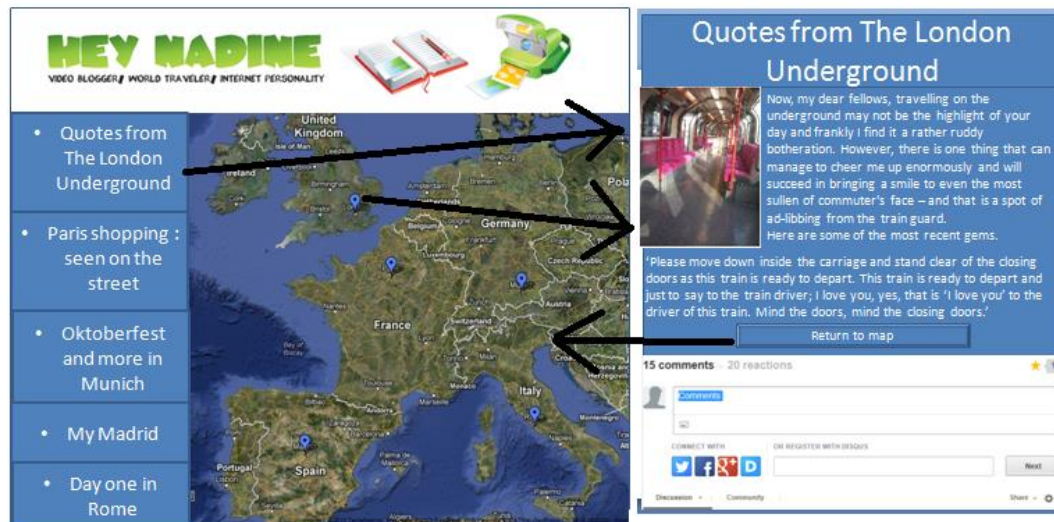


Figure 0-19 - Example part of PowerPoint design A

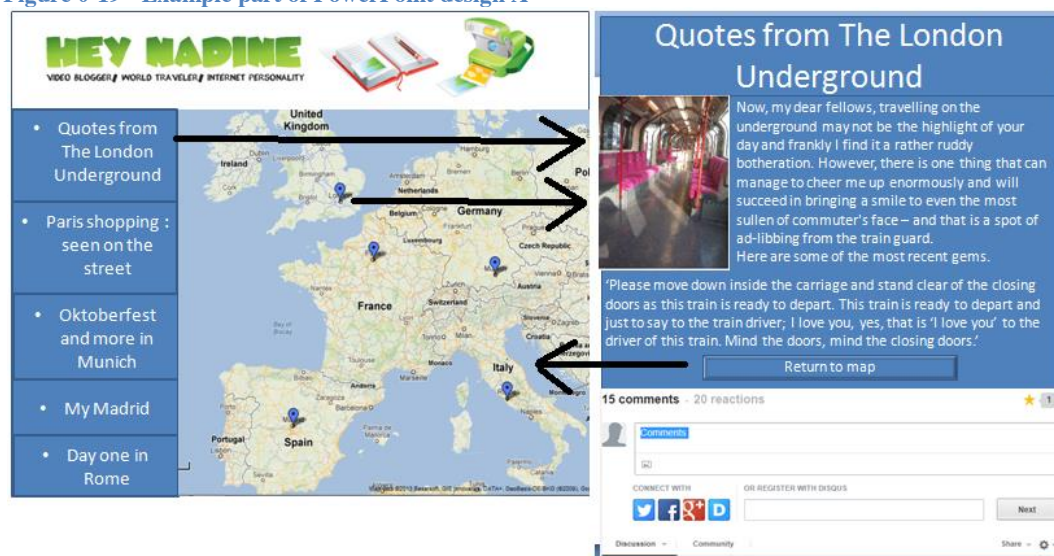


Figure 0-20 - Example part of PowerPoint design B

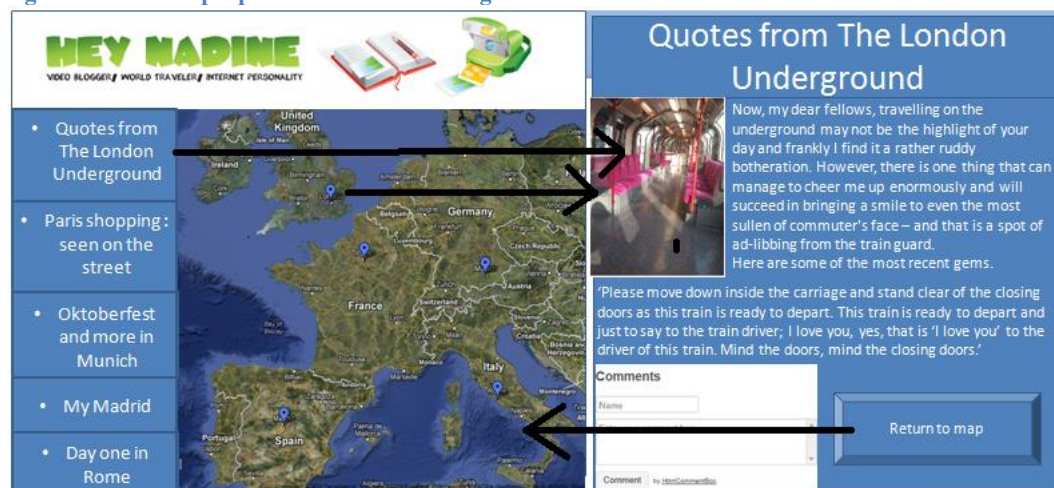


Figure 0-21 - Example part of PowerPoint design C



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

- Quotes from The London Underground
- Paris shopping : seen on the street
- Oktoberfest and more in Munich
- My Madrid
- Day one in Rome

### Quotes from The London Underground

Now, my dear fellows, travelling on the underground may not be the highlight of your day and frankly I find it a rather ruddy botheration. However, there is one thing that can manage to cheer me up enormously and will succeed in bringing a smile to even the most sullen of commuter's face – and that is a spot of ad-libbing from the train guard.

Here are some of the most recent gems.

'Please move down inside the carriage and stand clear of the closing doors as this train is ready to depart. This train is ready to depart and just to say to the train driver; I love you, yes, that is 'I love you' to the driver of this train. Mind the doors, mind the closing doors.'

Figure 0-22 - Example part of PowerPoint design D

# I'M *not a ballerina*

## I'M A TRAVELLER AND A THINKER

WHY TRAVEL IS IMPORTANT, AND WHAT TRAVEL HAS TAUGHT ME

[Anne Frank House and super-memorable travel moments](#)  
[Art galleries and kids: Startine them young](#)  
[Beyond boring travel diaries - my new course on travel writing for everyone](#)  
[Bus travel is NOT my favourite way to get around](#)  
[Digital scrapbooking and recalling Japan a decade on](#)  
[Exploring my "privileged places" and how Vienna's stations confused me](#)  
[Kanai versus Kanto, or why there's more to Japan than Tokyo](#)  
[Let's go grab a camel! \(said a Tunisian man to me\)](#)  
[New year, new travels: My plans for 2013](#)  
[Preparing a 3-year-old for travel with a playdough Brezel](#)  
[The ever-changing landscape on the Trans-Siberian train](#)  
[When people equate talking about travels to bragging or showing off](#)  
[Where is Yoko?](#)  
[Can we find my long-lost Japanese friend?](#)  
[Why travelling with kids is essential!](#)

Figure 0-23- front page of not a ballerina

## How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?

Thomas Norton

Bus travel is NOT my favo


file:///G:/DropboxPortableAHK/DropboxPortableAHK/Dropbox/websites/Google%20Maps%20API%20...  
Suggested Sites Web Slice Gallery Options - Personal S... Other bookmarks

# I'M *not a ballerina*

## I'M A TRAVELLER AND A THINKER

WHY TRAVEL IS IMPORTANT, AND WHAT TRAVEL HAS TAUGHT ME

### Bus travel is NOT my favourite way to get around

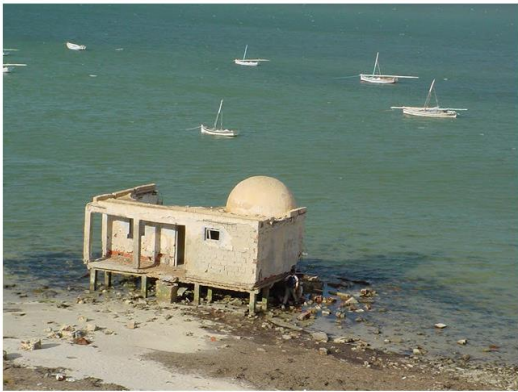


think it's well-documented that I love train travel. But what has featured a whole lot less on this blog is bus travel. There is a good reason for this. It's probably my least favourite way to get around, unless it's just a twenty-minute trip to a museum or somewhere.

et me start with the exception, though, because it's always too general to say that I hate all bus travel (or anything, for that matter). Once, when I ed in Japan, I took an overnight bus trip from Osaka to Hiroshima. I was on a really tight budget (otherwise I would have taken the very speedy and comfortable shinkansen train instead) but a colleague had assured me that this bus was actually very comfortable.

They were right. It was amazing. It was a double decker bus and it was designed for and dedicated to overnight travel - there was a large gap between each seat and most importantly, the (comfortable) seats reclined nearly fully, a bit like a lie-flat seat in an aeroplane (or so I hear), and I was actually able to sleep well for most of the trip.

f course, 99.9% of bus trips are not like that. I can name a couple of particularly horrid bus journeys I've had over the years. One was in Tunisia, turning from Hount Souq on Djerba to the capital, Tunis. I was actually planning to take the overnight train. I'd heard that tickets didn't go on sale until a particular time and I was ready and waiting at the ticket office at exactly that moment - only to be told that all the seats had already been sold. I never managed to figure out what went wrong but I did figure out that the only way back to Tunis was on a long night bus trip. The roads weren't great, I was exhausted, the bus was crowded, and after arriving at the bus station at Tunis at around 3.30am I had to sit and wait there until 6am for any transport into the city. I remember that day as being slightly torturous.



A ruin at Hount Souq ... I felt like a ruin after my bus trip away from Hount Souq

But worse was a bumpy bus ride I had in Vietnam, on the way from Hanoi out to Halong Bay. It was a fairly small bus and again the roads were r from ideal, but what really made it a shocking bus trip wasn't the fault of the bus as such - I'd picked up some kind of food poisoning and spent most of the trip trying not to vomit (but failed ... I won't go into the gory details). I was immensely relieved to get out on a boat that afternoon - fortunately I don't get any kind of seasickness and the fresh air out on the water of the bay was just what I needed.

hese days, wherever possible and even if it costs more, I try to stick to trains over buses. I feel like I've 'been there, done that' with bad bus trips and I don't need to repeat those experiences to remember how beautiful it is to travel in a train.

<< RETURN TO MAP <<

Comments:  
Hey... say something!  
Submit

Figure 0-24 - example article on not a ballerina

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

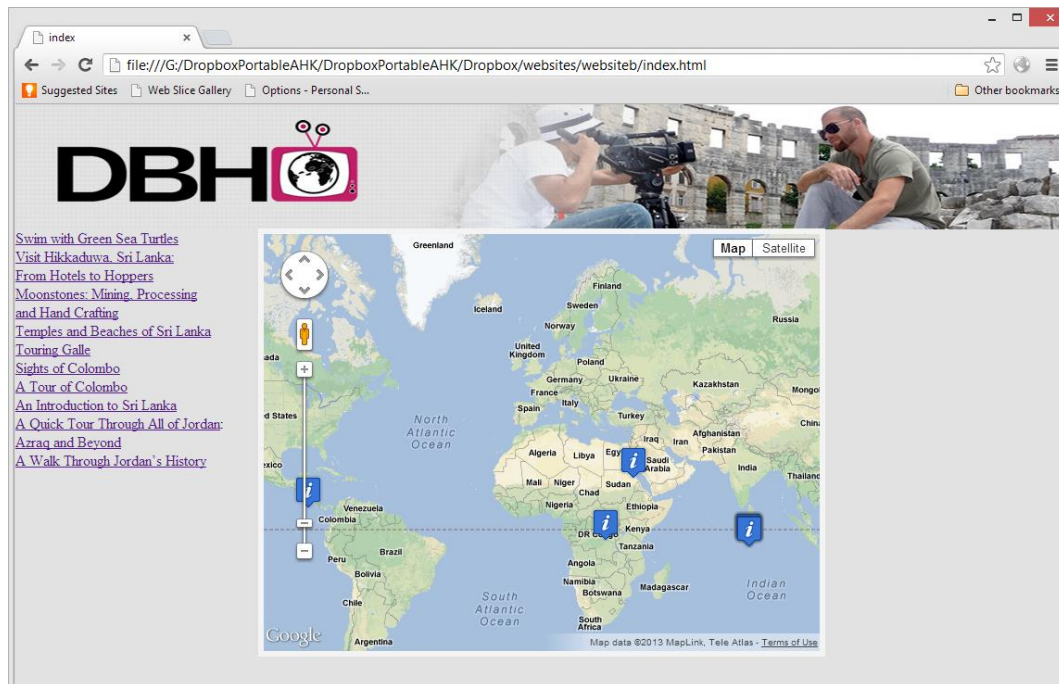


Figure 0-25 - front page of DBH

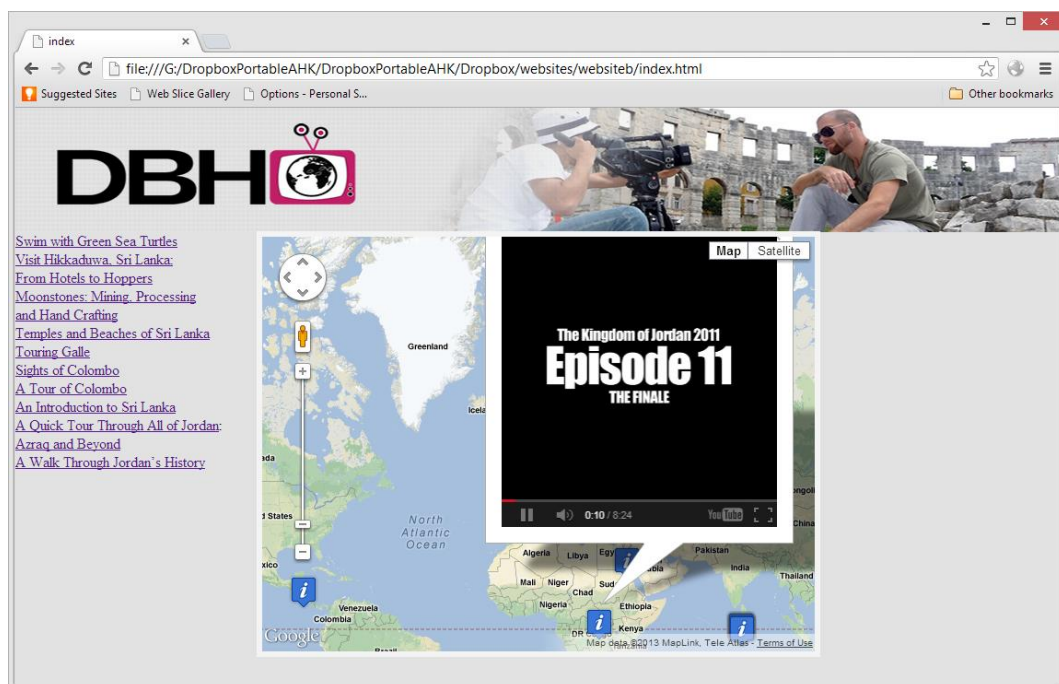


Figure 0-26 - video on map view on DBH



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

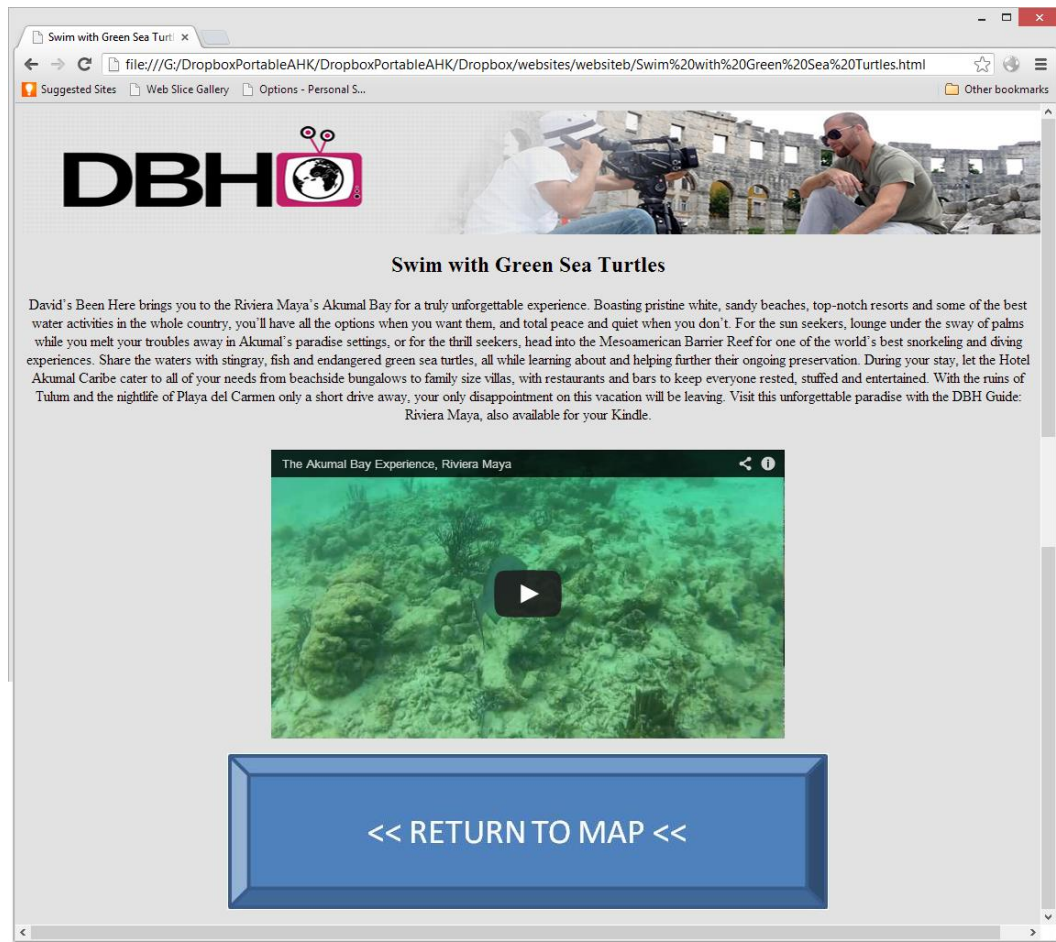


Figure 0-27 - example article on DBH



Ballerina ⇒ Real (1st) (A)  
clicky around miss stuff.  
42 → 145 Vienna stations

when → last 5 yr  
where → Perth  
why → Birth Place ⇒ event,  
Author → Gretch  
Event →  
interest to tell more.

15 yr. Pic  
Japan Osaka.  
Remanise/work  
No ⇒ Person Project  
Momento of city buildin

Presentation ⇒ Picture dear 2 interest  
word. Not distant.

Bit wolly wishy washy.  
legomple ⇒ other eq  
More enough (not.) nice.

4.30 → 5.40 → 6.20  
Actually not an article but Part of  
an article ⇒ My ties to Osaka.  
Paragraph Bake up. No life in Picture.  
Nostalgia → 5 Moved.

Figure 0-28 - Notes from participant A first blog they viewed which was the current encoding of notaballerina.com

DHS  $\Rightarrow$  Sake (2nd)

(A)

clicked on map.

15  $\Rightarrow$  7.17. 7<sup>min</sup> videor

gali<sup>o</sup> ⇒ temple.

Didn't know that.

watched it all.

High Quality.

When — about 2008

where — Sri Lanka, Gallo

Why / event - fact sand finding

Author — David Ba.

presentation - Yes  $\Rightarrow$  Documentary  
local inclusions.

20 10

Maya.

celebrate 2 inform

X David.

Nothing impress  
no locals.

Birds eye.

Interesting overall  $\rightarrow$  Blog video.

more understanding  $\rightarrow$  blog. video.

clear Presentation  $\rightarrow$  Proj. Video.

Learned more from  $\rightarrow$  ~~watching~~ Videos.

~~More interesting~~

Y Pick  
location

Been

Good quality but safe.

Not  $\Rightarrow$  Don't Bother

Same Confusion Remove  
Videos 2

• Habit Not

moving map

This one  $\angle$

Diff location from Map.

7

**Figure 0-29 - Notes from participant A second blog they viewed which was the new encoding of [travelvideosblog.davidsbeenhere.com](http://travelvideosblog.davidsbeenhere.com)**

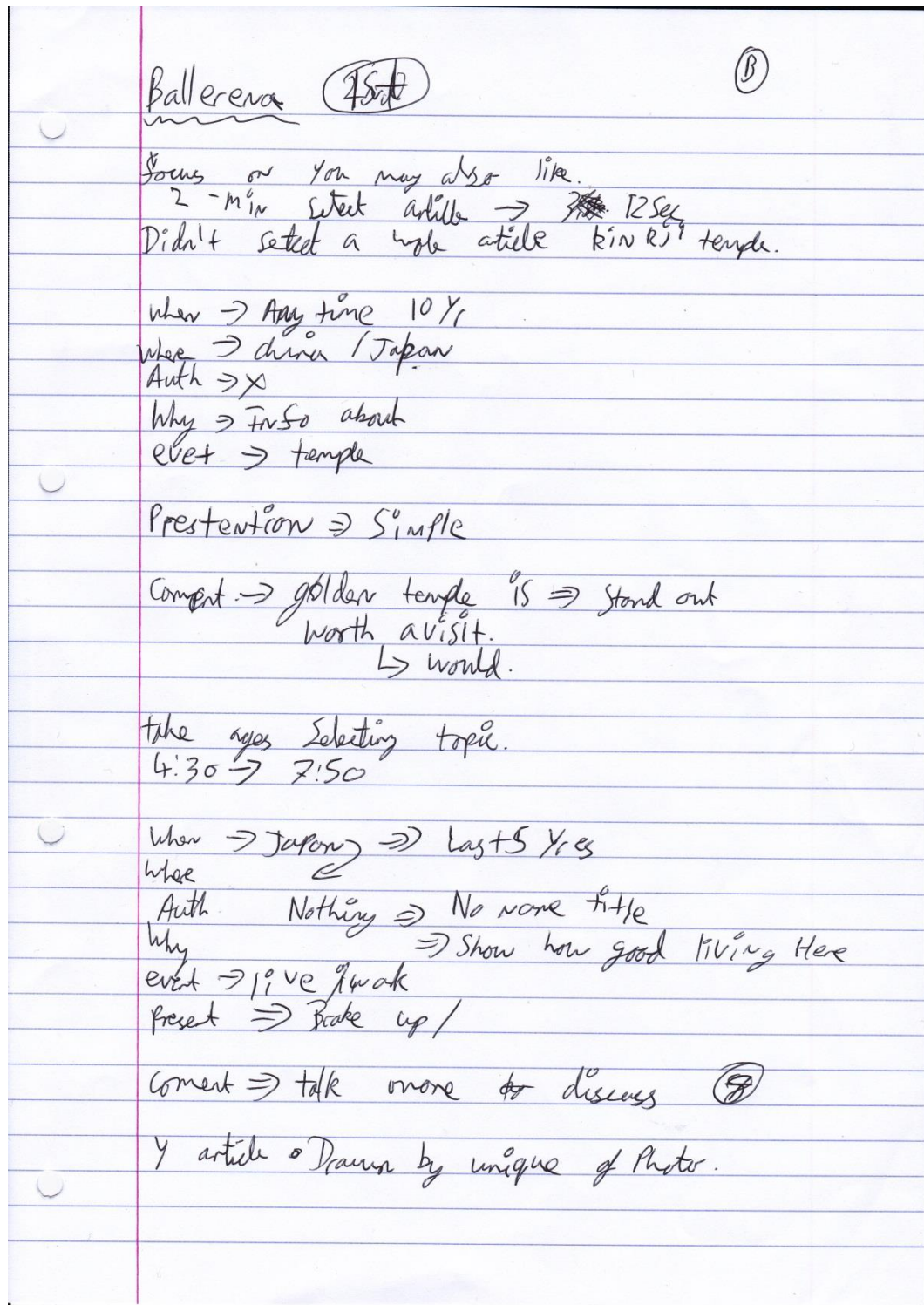


Figure 0-30 - Notes from participant B first blog they viewed which was the current encoding of notaballerina.com



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

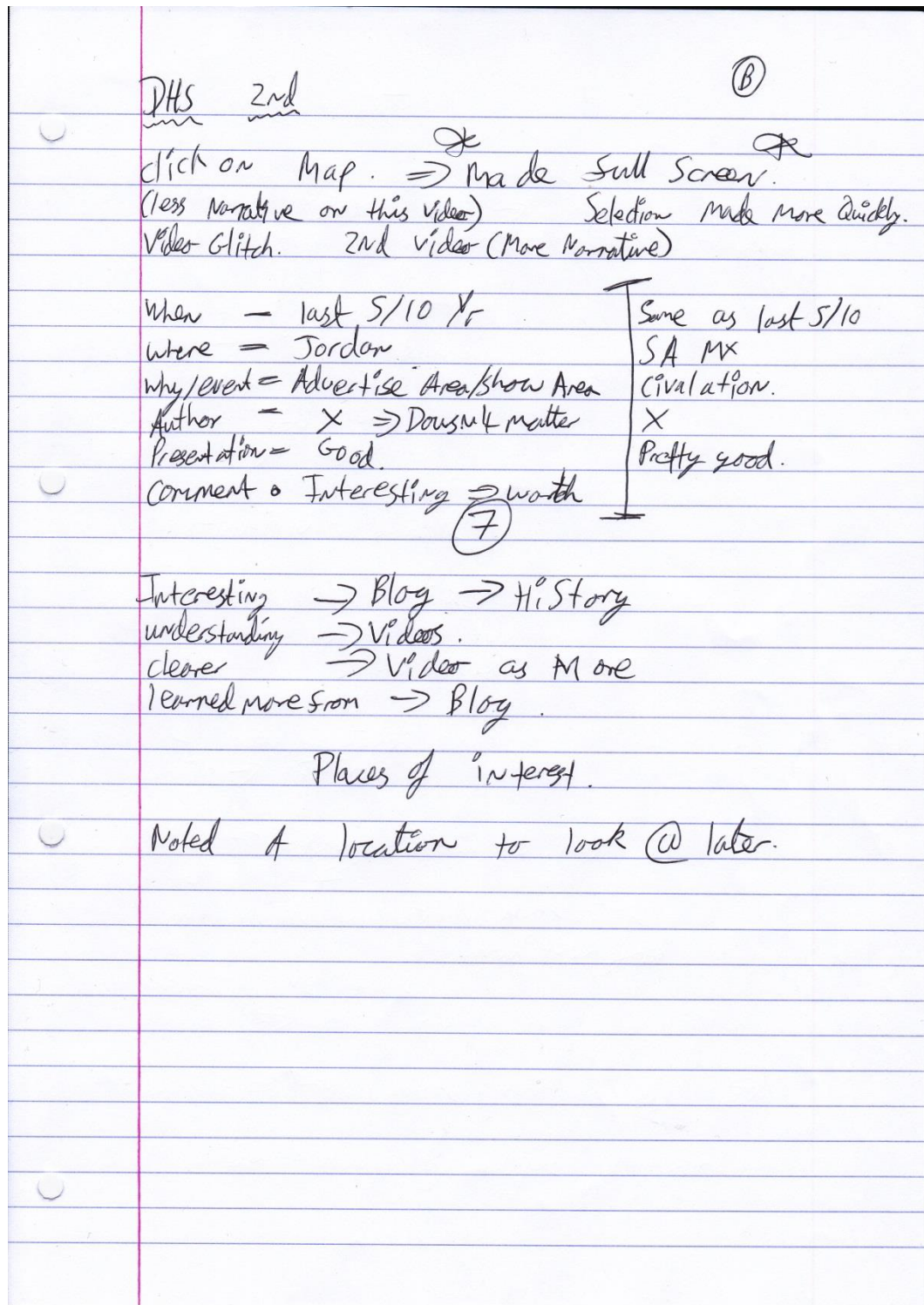


Figure 0-31 - Notes from participant B second blog they viewed which was the new encoding of [travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com](http://travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com)

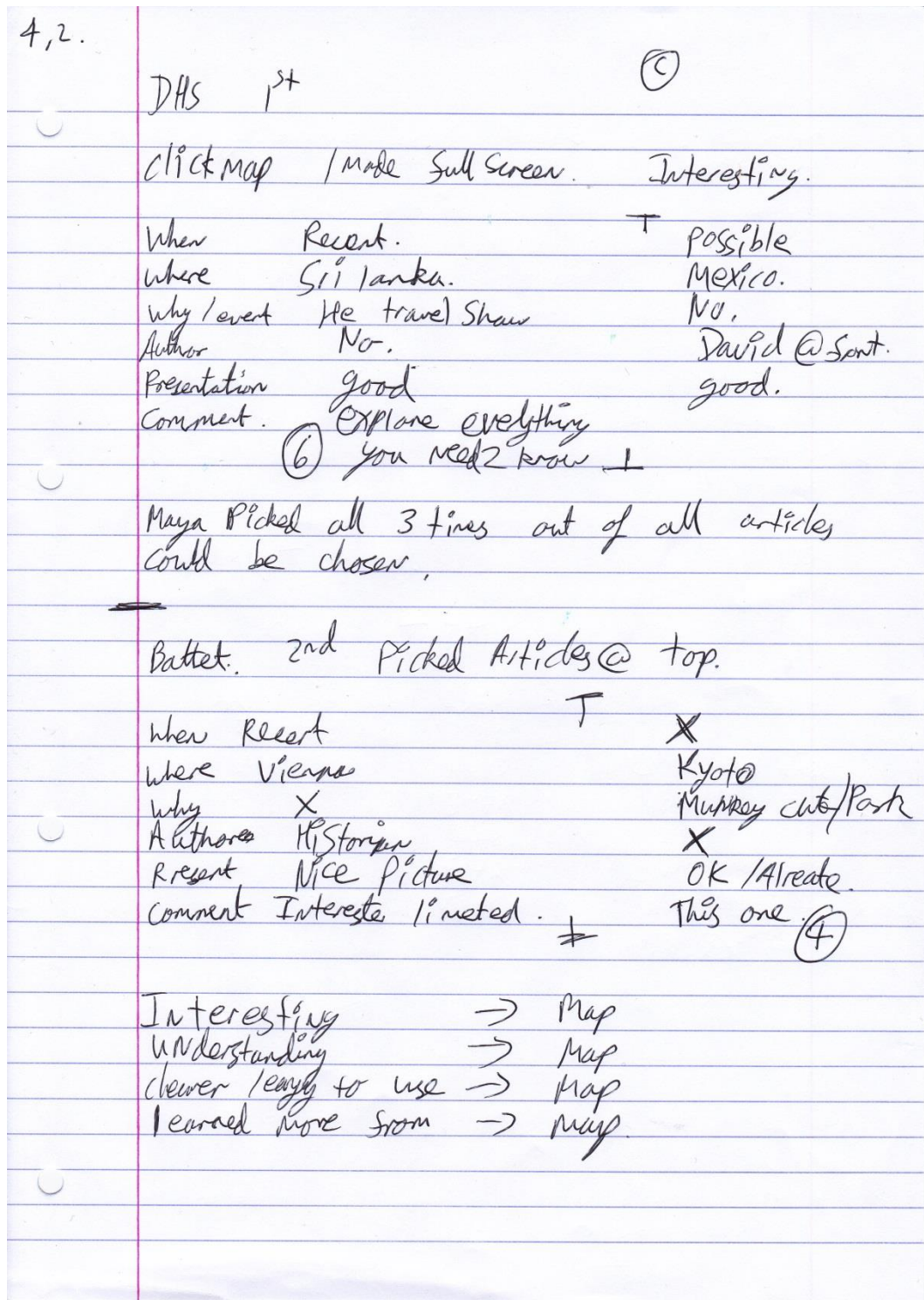


Figure 0-32 - notes from both blogs participant C looked at

①	DHS	①st
Mouse	cliky the video?	
When	• last Yr/2	2005
Where	• Colombo.	Higidawa 3hr from colombo
Why/event	• Show transport Pkts inform.	Show ass Hotel 2 location
Author	• David.	David.
Presentation	→ No Detail Prices • content.	Patchy ⇒ lack commentary. Detail. cost.
comment	→ More info Price Drawbacks	②
Investigate	going their overview good.	Find out Questions
Use	the back Button on the browser.	
Y choose.	→ Random.	

Figure 0-33 - Notes from participant D first blog they viewed which was the current encoding of [travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com](http://travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com)



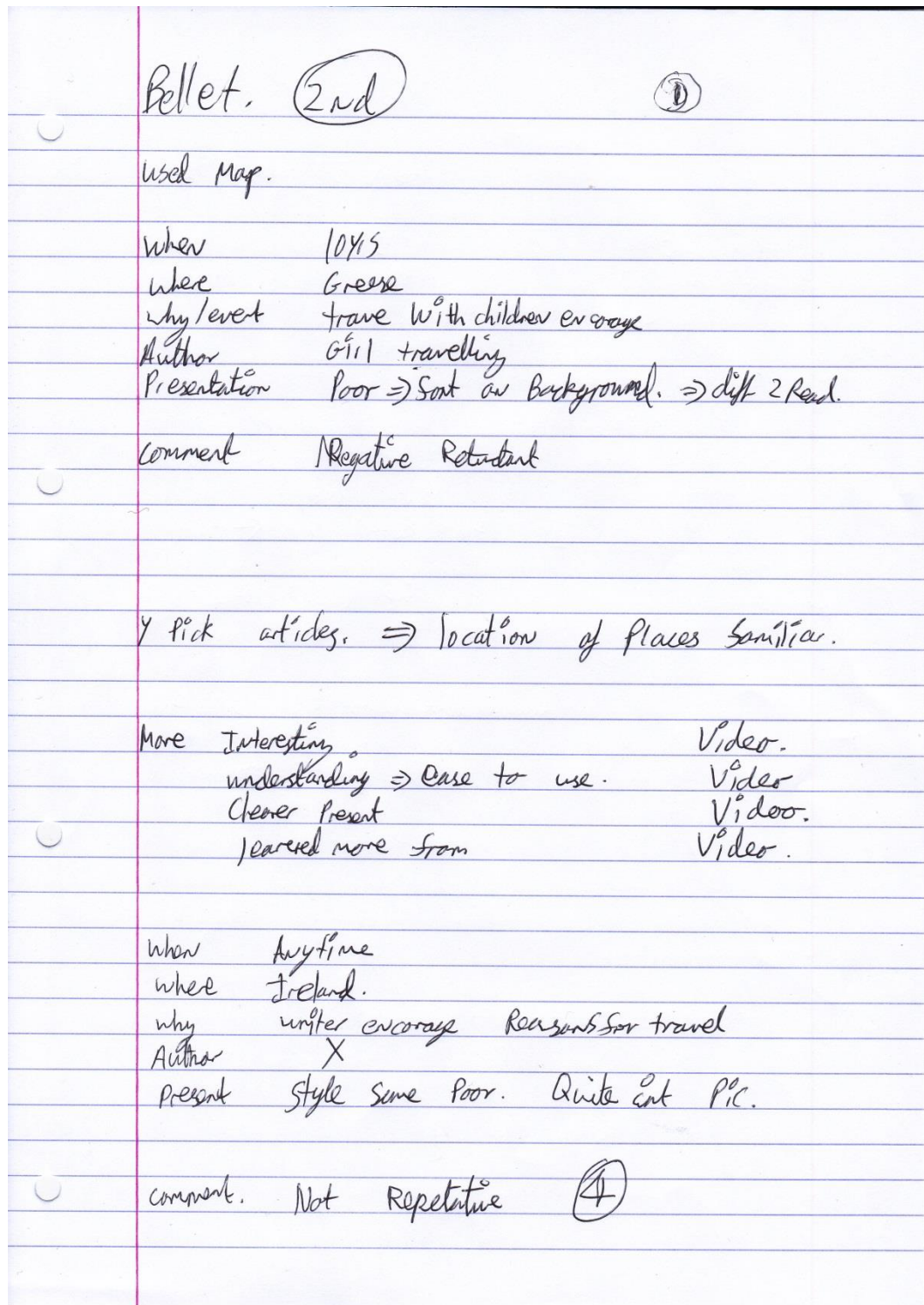


Figure 0-34 - Notes from participant D second blog they viewed which was the new encoding of notaballerina.com

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

	DBH	1st	(E)
When	Recently.		Zoll
Where	New caroon.		Sri Lanka
Why / event	Promote area/turtles		tour David Holt
Author	X		David Hoff
Presentation	easy to get there.		Not as good as movie
Comment.	well done, visit mentioned.		long winded.
		① → more professional	
	Y Pick locations	⑥	
	use Back Button ⇒ after getting lost.		
	got another of 1st video from the 2nd one.		
	title liked → Interest → location or turtles.		

Figure 0-35 - Notes from participant E first blog they viewed which was the current encoding of [travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com](http://travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com)



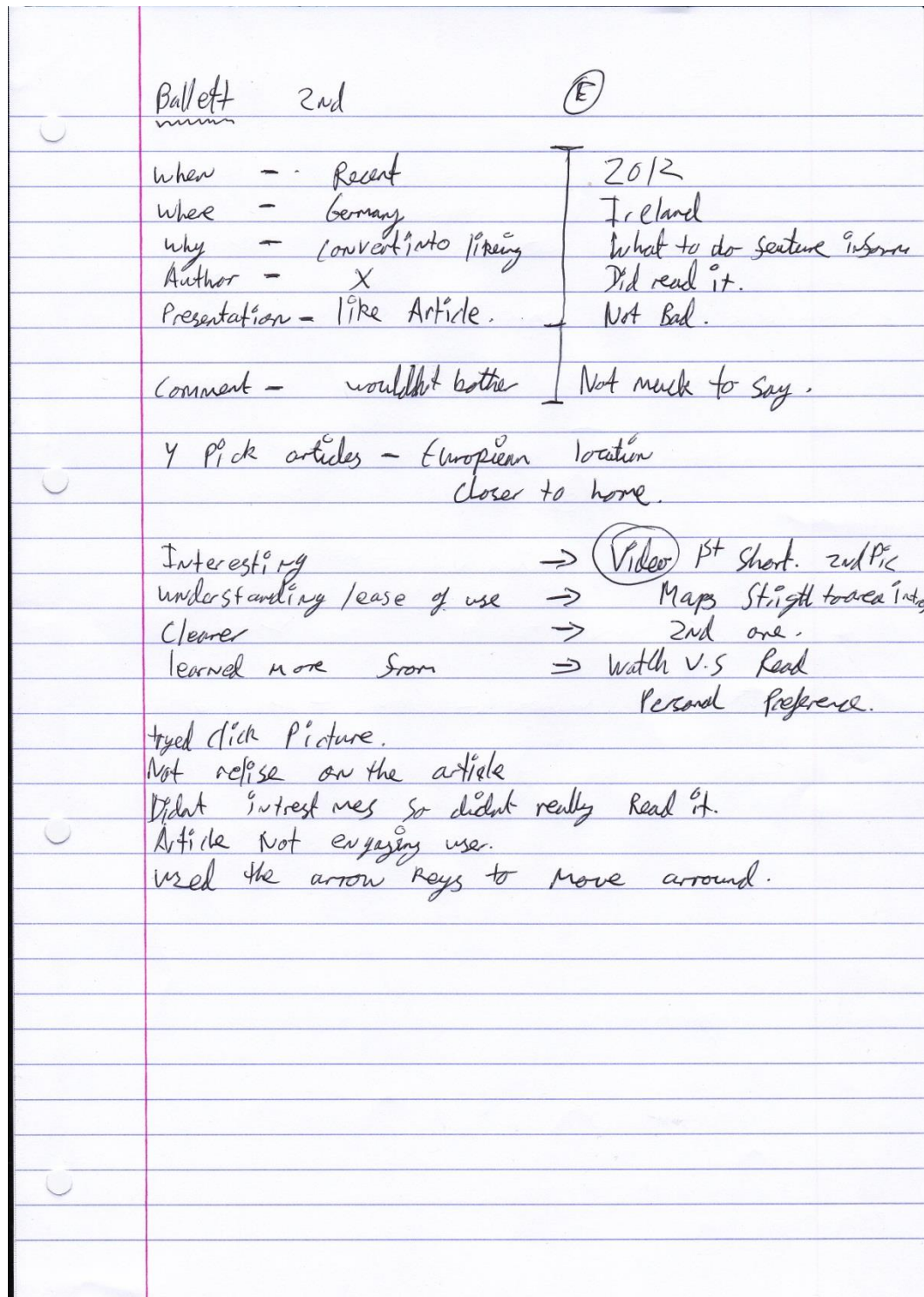


Figure 0-36 - Notes from participant E second blog they viewed which was the new encoding of notaballerina.com

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

Ballerina ⇒ New	(1st)	(F)
When	Recent about 10 yrs	X
Where	Japan	Siberia. train
Why	Scrapbook	Response to travel class.
Author	X	Author detail
Cost	Job in Japan	Him travel.
Presentation	Simple easy to Read Pic	Pictures <sup>tricky</sup> ask questions
Comment	More of Scrapbook.	↳ Think
	↳ Face book. more info	Ask question
Y did you Pick Articles	↳ don't use.	↳ More 8/9.
	↳ Map ⇒ less familiar location	
Did use Map ⇒ New.		
use Map 2nd time		

Figure 0-37 - Notes from participant F first blog they viewed which was the new encoding of notaballerina.com

	DHB ⇒ Real	(2nd)	(F)
When	X		Sen Yee ago
Where	Riviera Maya		Hikraduma
Why	Selling ⇒ Intent of Blogger.		Adversing.
Author	David.		David
Event	Being there		Stay there
Presentation	Reiterate ⇒ Selly. too Professional		Same as other video too long. Advert rather expensive ↳ local culture explanation
Comment	wouldn't ⇒ Nice to Selly		Neither
Read underneath ⇒ First 2 only to Notice 2 Read. Read underneath Puring			
YPick → at the Top			
Interesting	• 1 <sup>st</sup> way ⇒ Map 2 options.		
More understanding	• 1 <sup>st</sup> one ⇒ Forgot video.		
Clearer to find article / presentation	• 1 <sup>st</sup> one → scroll to find		
learned more from	• 2 <sup>nd</sup> one		↳ for second. wouldn't as sound on 2 <sup>nd</sup> .

Figure 0-38 - Notes from participant F second blog they viewed which was the current encoding of [travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com](http://travelvideoblog.davidsbeenhere.com)



## How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?

Thomas Norton

Participant	Blog viewed	time	location	purpose	event	Author
A	current encode of not a ballerina	3	4	4	3	2
A	current encode of not a ballerina	3	4	4	3	2
A	new encode of davidsbeenhere	2	4	4	4	4
A	new encode of davidsbeenhere	2	4	4	4	4
B	current encode of not a ballerina	2	3	3	3	1
B	current encode of not a ballerina	3	3	3	3	1
B	new encode of davidsbeenhere	3	4	4	4	1
B	new encode of davidsbeenhere	3	3	4	4	1
C	new encode of davidsbeenhere	3	3	3	3	1
C	new encode of davidsbeenhere	3	3	1	1	4
C	current encode of not a ballerina	3	3	1	1	2
C	current encode of not a ballerina	1	3	3	3	1
D	current encode of davidsbeenhere	3	3	3	3	4
D	current encode of davidsbeenhere	1	3	3	3	4
D	new encode of not a ballerina	3	3	4	4	3
D	new encode of not a ballerina	3	3	4	4	1
E	current encode of davidsbeenhere	3	4	4	4	1
E	current encode of davidsbeenhere	2	3	4	4	4
E	new encode of not a ballerina	4	4	4	4	1
E	new encode of not a ballerina	4	4	4	4	1
F	new encode of not a ballerina	3	3	3	4	1
F	new encode of not a ballerina	1	4	4	4	2
F	current encode of davidsbeenhere	1	4	4	2	4
F	current encode of davidsbeenhere	2	4	4	2	4

Figure 0-39 - summary of participants understanding of different elements of narrative

KEY	
no understanding	1
incorrect understanding	2
vague understanding	3
full understanding	4

Figure 0-40 - key of understanding encoding for charts and graphs

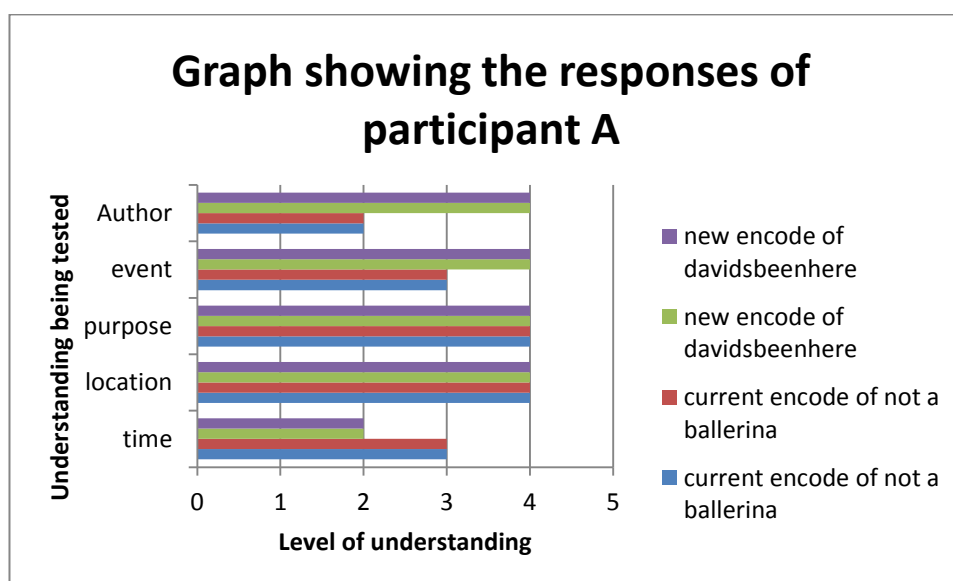


Figure 0-41 - Graph showing the responses of participant A

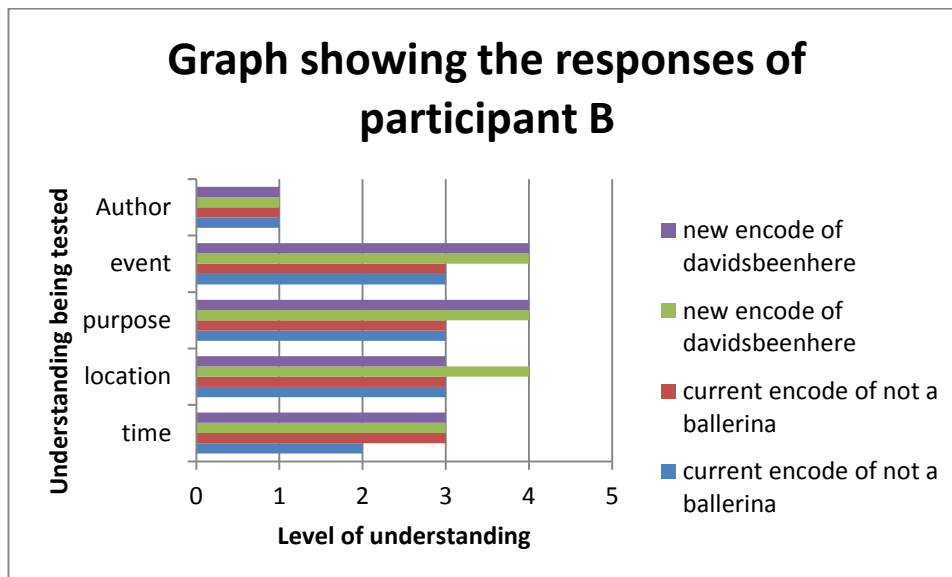


Figure 0-42 - Graph showing the responses of participant B

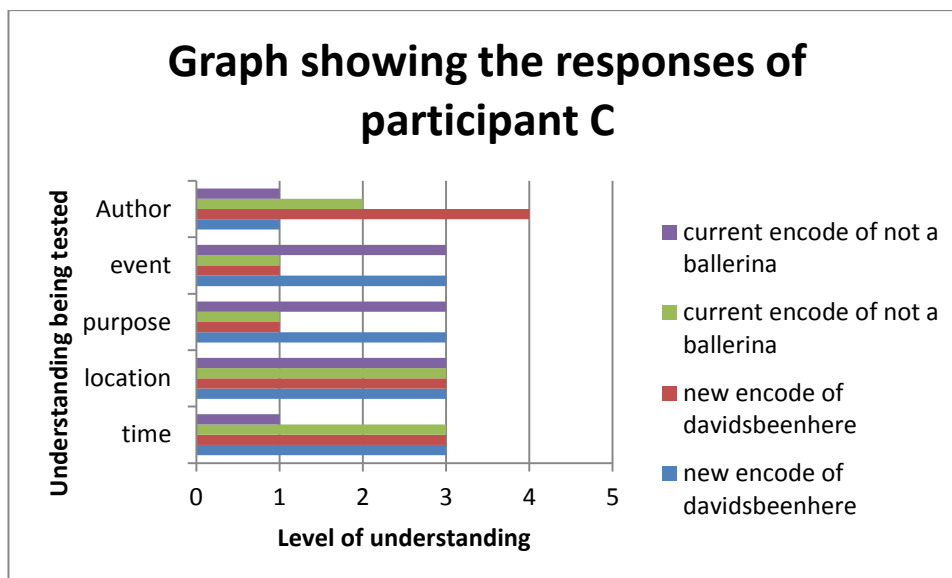


Figure 0-43 - Graph showing the responses of participant C

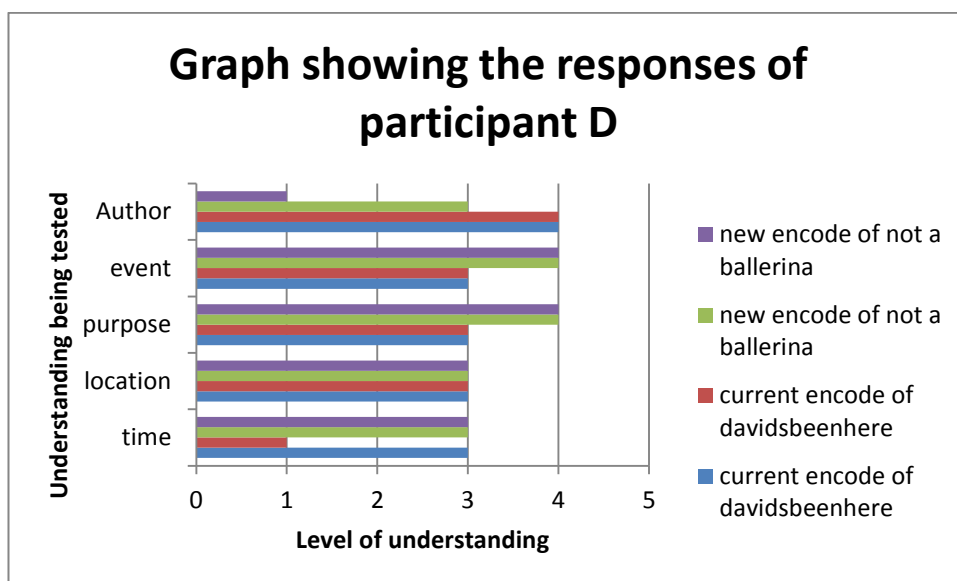


Figure 0-44 - Graph showing the responses of participant D

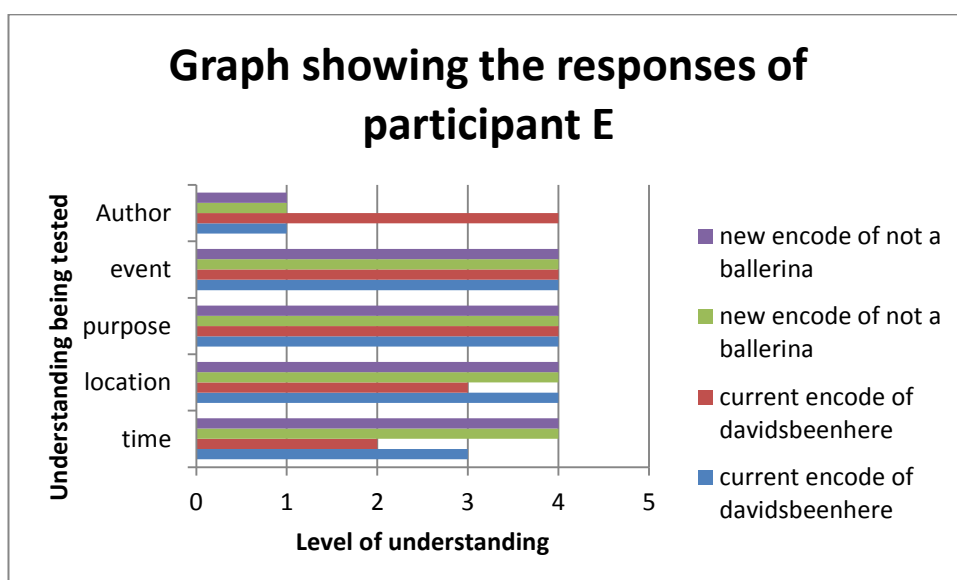
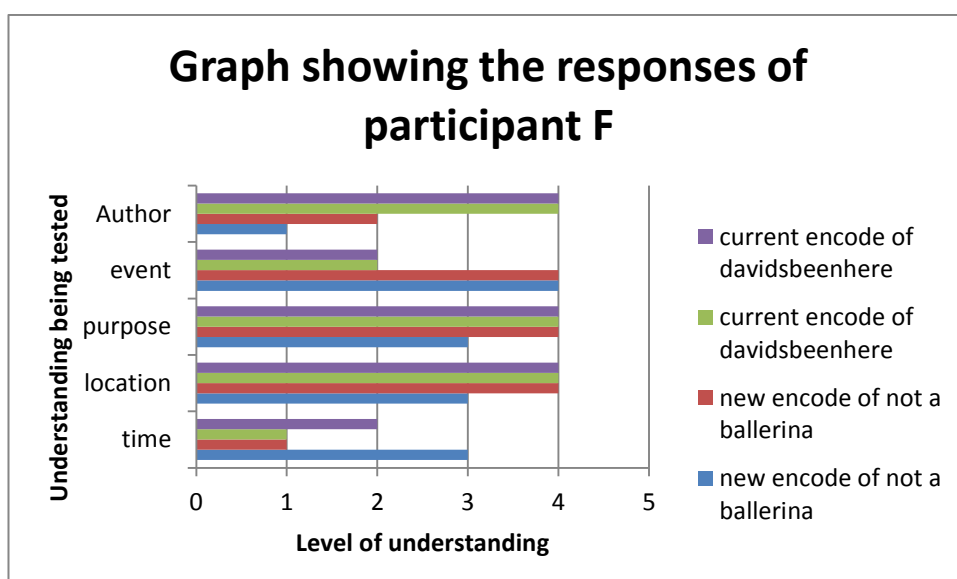


Figure 0-45 - Graph showing the responses of participant E



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

Figure 0-46 - Graph showing the responses of participant F

current ballet	frequency				
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding	1	0		1	3
incorrect understanding	1	0		0	3
vague understanding	4	4		3	5
full understanding	0	2		2	0
new ballet	frequency				
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding	1	0		0	4
incorrect understanding	0	0		0	1
vague understanding	3	3		1	1
full understanding	2	3		5	6
current davidwashere	frequency				
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding	2	0		0	1
incorrect understanding	2	0		0	0
vague understanding	2	3		2	0
full understanding	0	3		4	5
new davidwashere	frequency				
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding	0	0		1	3
incorrect understanding	2	0		0	0
vague understanding	4	3		1	0
full understanding	0	3		4	3

Figure 0-47 - frequency of understanding participants got for each website for each element of narrative

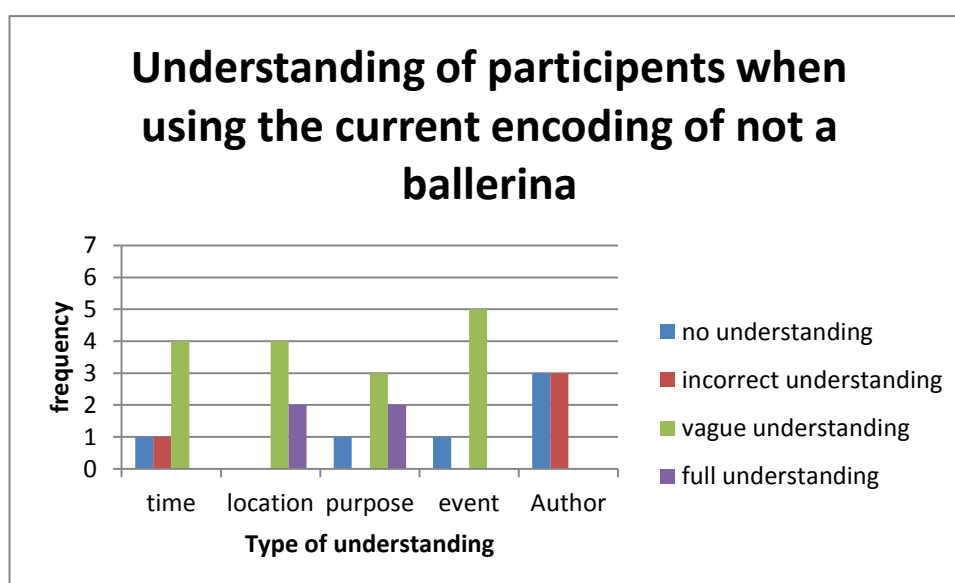


Figure 0-48 - Understanding of participants when using the current encoding of not a ballerina

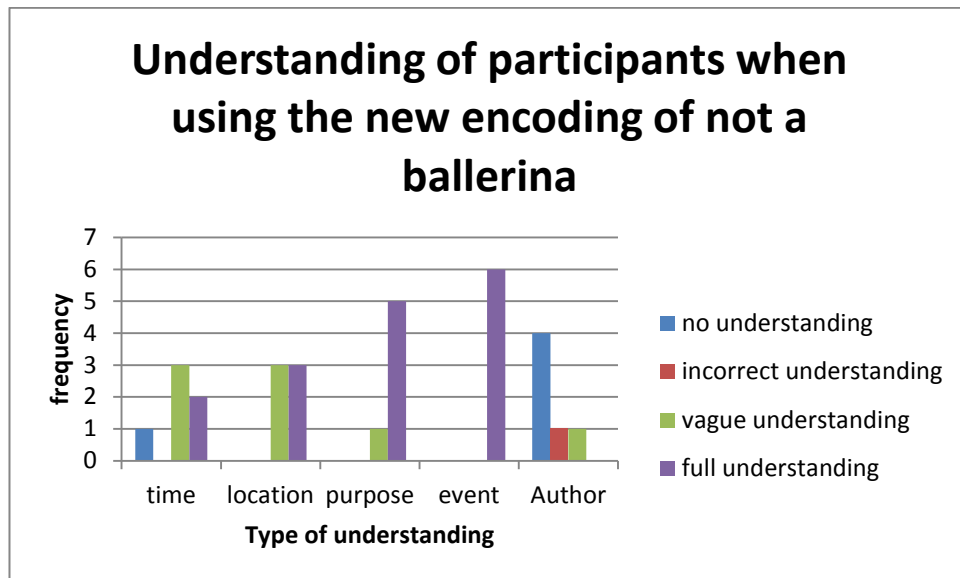


Figure 0-49 - Understanding of participants when using the new encoding of not a ballerina

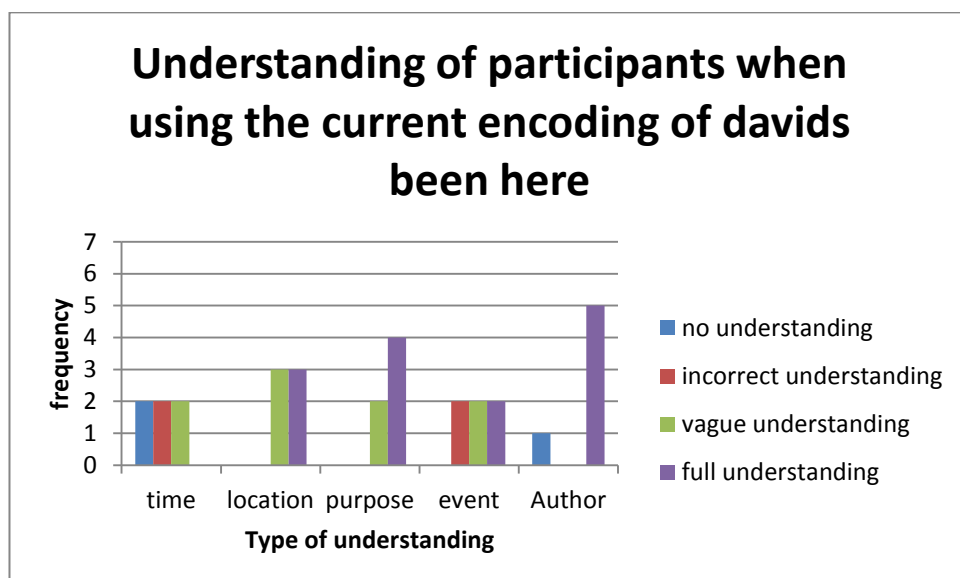
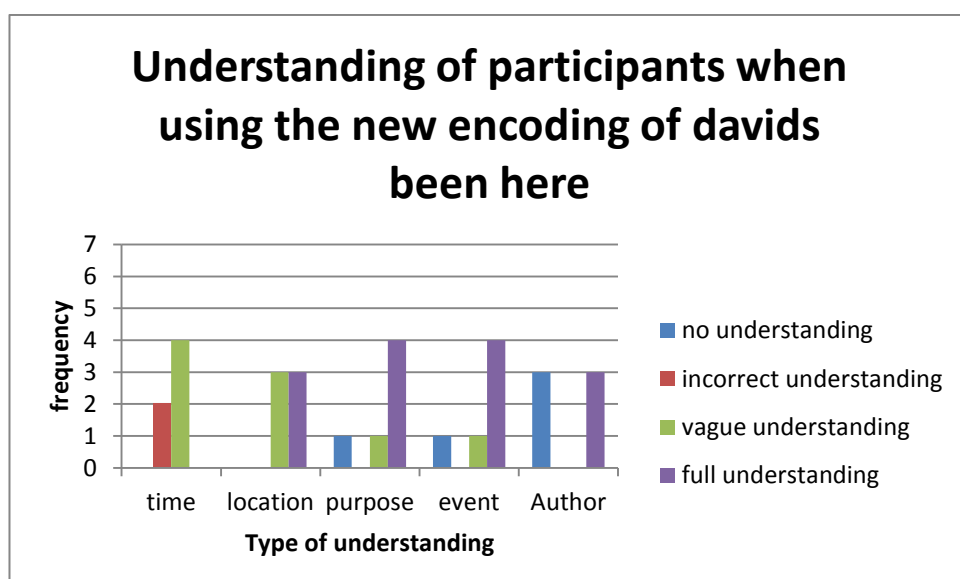


Figure 0-50 - Understanding of participants when using the current encoding of davids been here





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Figure 0-51 - Understanding of participants when using the current encoding of Davids been here

Not a ballerina					
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding of current encode	1	0	1	1	3
incorrect understanding of current encode	1	0	0	0	3
vague understanding of current encode	4	4	3	5	0
full understanding of current encode	0	2	2	0	0
no understanding of new encode	1	0	0	0	4
incorrect understanding of new encode	0	0	0	0	1
vague understanding of new encode	3	3	1	0	1
full understanding of new encode	2	3	5	6	0
Davids been here					
type of understanding	time	location	purpose	event	Author
no understanding of current encode	2	0	0	0	1
incorrect understanding of current encode	2	0	0	2	0
vague understanding of current encode	2	3	2	2	0
full understanding of current encode	0	3	4	2	5
no understanding of new encode	0	0	1	1	3
incorrect understanding of new encode	2	0	0	0	0
vague understanding of new encode	4	3	1	1	0
full understanding of new encode	0	3	4	4	3

Figure 0-52 - comparison of old and new encode of websites

## Appendix B – Consent forms

### Consent forms for “8.6 - End User feedback on Designs I”

#### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment ☒

I consent to my data being used as part of the project ☒

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time ☒

I wish to take part in the experiment ☒

Sign *PERA*

Date *24/2/2013*

### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment ☒

I consent to my data being used as part of the project ☒

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time ☒

I wish to take part in the experiment ☒

Sign 

Date 24/2/13

### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

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I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment

☒

I consent to my data being used as part of the project

☒

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time

☒

I wish to take part in the experiment

☒

Sign *AE Norton*

Date *23-2-13*

### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

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I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign 

Date 23/02/13

### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

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I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign *Alice Sharp*

Date *23/02/2013*

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

### Briefing script

Upon starting the experiment you will be shown five different designs in turn. As you are shown each design I will explain how the design would appear on the screen. At this point I will invite you opinions about the design itself and any reservations that you have about each design. This will be done through an informal chat however I may ask for further clarification. The chat will be recorded to be used as part of the project. In addition to this I may try to direct you to different parts of the design or direct your thinking about the design. After looking at one design you will be shown the next design and a similar discussion will take place about each. After you have looked at all of the designs I will ask you to rank the designs for a number of criteria.

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I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign

*Wj Norton*

Date

*23/2/13*

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

## **Consent forms for “Study comparing different ways of presenting narrative in travel blogs”**

### **Briefing script**

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign

Date

05/04/2013



How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

### Briefing script

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

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I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment

☒

I consent to my data being used as part of the project

☒

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time

☒

I wish to take part in the experiment

☒

Sign

*Diane Shap*

Date

*05/04/2013*

How are blogs used to share travel narratives, and is there a better way?  
Thomas Norton

### Briefing script

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign *Alan Norton*

Date *5-4-13*

### Briefing script

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign 

Date 5/4/13

### Briefing script

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

On completing the experiment you will receive my and the supervisors contact details in order to answer any later questions that you have.

During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment ☒

I consent to my data being used as part of the project ☒

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time ☒

I wish to take part in the experiment ☒

Sign 

Date 05-04-13

### Briefing script

In this experiment you will be asked to view and use two different blogging sites. You will be asked to perform a number of tasks independently using the sites. During the tasks you may be asked to explain what you are doing or what your opinion of the site. In addition you may be asked questions about the content of the site that you are viewing.

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During the study you are free to stop at any time and withdraw consent from the experiment. In addition you are free to ask questions about the experiment and the future use at any time during, before or after the experiment.

I consent to being recorded using a Dictaphone as part of the experiment



I consent to my data being used as part of the project



I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time



I wish to take part in the experiment



Sign

M Sharp

Date

6.04.2013

## **Appendix C - Glossary**

Blog - Frequently updated Web page with dated entries in reverse chronological order, usually containing links with commentary. (Blood, 2002)

Blogging platforms – The tools used to create blogs such as WordPress.

Character based stories – Narrative or Story is given through the interaction between people most likely between the blogger and their audience (Camanho et al, 2008)

Coherence – How a story or narrative is continued between one post and the next.

Community blogging - This is where a large organisation will have an individual or team in charge of dealing with building a community around a business .

Content aggregators – Bloggers who take and relay the stories or post of “content creators”.

Content creators - Bloggers who publish content in any form that is about their own experiences.

Commenting - Something that you say or write which gives an opinion on or explains somebody/something (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2011)

Deep structure – How the blogger uses the design elements such as the words they choose to use. (Nack, 2011)

Event - Occurrence happening at a determinable time and place, with or without the participation of human agents. It may be a part of a chain of occurrences as an effect of a preceding occurrence and as the cause of a succeeding occurrence (Business Dictionary, 2013)

Guest blogging - Process in which a blog or website will accept and publish content written by another. (Salcido, 2013)

Hashtag - The specific name for a tag in twitter. (Huang et al, 2010)

Informers – Bloggers whose posts that are designed to inform their audience. (Naaman et al, 2010)

Intercommunication – The communication between the blogger and their audience.

Inter-relationships – The communication and relationships that exist between the reader and the writer.

Lurking - Lack of participation in the intercommunication. (Ganoe et al, 2010)

Mediums – The bloggers selection to use the different styles to present their narratives such as text, videos, pictures and/or sound.

Meformers - Bloggers whose posts are predominately about them and their thoughts. (Naaman et al, 2010)

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Merging dialogs – Conversations which include lots of the audience and the blogger in a similar way to how a group of friends would talk to one another. (Baumer et al., 2008)

Narrative - Making a comment about a certain event, following an idea about the medium and form of presentation, which is ground in one's own motivational and psychological attributes. (Nack, 2011)

Ordering – The layout of different posts or design features on a page.

Plot based stories - The audience get the narrative from the set posts provided to them from the blogger (Camanho et al., 2008)

Post – An individual article on a blog.

Presentation – Is the deep and surface structures that make up a blog.

Story - A set of blog entries that are about a specific issue and that reflect a discussion in blogspace between members of an online community (Qamra, et al., 2006)

Surface structure – Layout of the design elements on a blog page. (Nack, 2011)

Tags - short free form labels used to describe items in a domain. They help people remember and organize information such as email (GMail), web sites (del.icio.us), photos (Flickr), blogs (Technorati), and research papers (CiteU-Like) (Sen, et al., 2006)

Travel blogs - Express the experiences of the visitor at a specific destination. (Pan et al., 2007)

Two way dialogs - Conversations between two members going back and forth about a topic. Normally between the blogger and a member of their audience. (Baumer et al., 2008)

Motivation - an idea or concept we introduce when we undertake to explain behaviour (Bolles, 1975)

Psychological attributes – The aspects of the big five indicator

Openness – Assessment of the rigidity of beliefs and the range of interests of the blogger. Part of the big five indicator. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

Big 5 indicator – Assessment of the psychological attributes of the blogger based on openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness and neuroticism. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

Conscientiousness – Assessment of the desire of the blogger to impose order in their posts. Part of the big five indicator. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

Extraversion – Assessment of the bloggers level of comfort with relationships. Part of the big five indicator. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

Agreeableness – Assessment of the bloggers ability to get on with others. Part of the big five indicator. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

Neuroticism – Assessment of whether a blogger can maintain a balanced emotional state in their posts. Part of the big five indicator. (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2010)

## **Appendix D – Example code**

### **Extract of code used to set up pin using Google maps API**

This Javascript code was created in order to set up the map part of the designs for the final study. It starts by initialising the map and shows how the first blog post is added to this map. The other posts are added to the map in a similar way and this can be seen in the full code found at the rear of the dissertation on a CD.

```
$(document).ready(function() {  
  // Create a LatLng variable to set the center of the map  
  var latLng = new google.maps.LatLng(24.046464,53.4375);  
  
  // Creating an variable to pass in the options to set up the map  
  var options = {  
    zoom: 3, // This defines the starting level of zoom for the map  
    center: latLng, //set the variable in order to set the center co-ordinates of the map  
    mapTypeId: google.maps.MapTypeId.ROADMAP // Sets the style of the map to the  
    preferred style from the powerpoint study  
  };  
  
  // Creating a new map  
  var map = new google.maps.Map(document.getElementById('map_div'), options);  
  // Define the style of the pins to show locations  
  var image = new google.maps.MarkerImage('images/information.png',  
    // tell the map the size of the new pins  
    new google.maps.Size(32, 37),  
    // no parts of the image to exclude  
    new google.maps.Point(0,0),  
    // tell the map the part of the image that shows the location of the pin pointer  
    new google.maps.Point(16,0)  
  );  
  
  //set up a pin for the blog article Swim with Green Sea Turtles  
  var marker1 = new google.maps.Marker({  
    //tell the map the position that the article is  
    position: new google.maps.LatLng(20.426953,-87.293115),  
    //indicate which map the pin is on  
    map: map,  
    //use the custom pin set up earlier in the code  
    icon: image  
  });  
  
  //set up the behaviour of the pin  
  google.maps.event.addListener(marker1, 'click', function() {  
    //this pin should open up a new window with the content of the video blog post  
    video1 = new google.maps.InfoWindow({  
      content: '<iframe title="YouTube video player" class="youtube-player" type="text/html"  
width="299.25" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/xv52uVUIC18"  
frameborder="0"></iframe>  
    })  
    //set the bahaviour to the pin on the map  
    video1.open(map, marker1);  
  });  
});
```