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Digital storytelling

the methodology applied and example stories from Denmark

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Digital storytelling - the methodology applied and example stories from Denmark



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Project Digital Storytellings:
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A storytelling workshop methodology

In order to produce the first digital stories the Danish team designed a setup to facilitate members of the L@jost target group in producing digital stories. The design consists of two phases, 1) before participating in the workshop; and 2) the workshop where the stories are produced. In phase 1), the participants are encouraged to reflect on their experiences with job seeking from various perspectives. The reflection is inspired by the Cultural Probes method (Boehner, Vertesi, Sengers & Dourish 2007, Gaver, Dunne & Pacenti 1999, Gaver, Boucher, Pennington & Walker 2004). In phase 2) the participants share their thoughts derived from the reflections on the cultural probes; interview each other and produce the digital story they want to share with other jobseekers. The stories are multimedia-productions that contain text, graphics and audio. They are produced in digital video format in MS PhotoStory.

The process of interviewing each other and recording these interviews with webcams at the same time provided valuable insight into the individual job-seeking process of the participants. Analysing these gave input to a number of written stories. Consequently, the result of the workshop was two multimedia digital stories and number of stories that have all been made available as blog-posts to the L@jost community.

The process

In Denmark a workshop was held on the 10 March 2009 (from 2-6 pm), with 6 participants who were all former or current students from DPU. DPU offers post-graduate (master level) educational programmes; therefore the participants that currently studies at DPU already have a bachelor degree from other institutions. The participants were: One, who had just finished her master degree and was in the first week of beginning of a job seeking process (but had worked previously as teacher before studying at DPU). Two who had finished their master degrees recently and now got new jobs. Both were already employed, while they were seeking these new jobs. One got her new position 10 months ago; the other had just got it, but not begun yet. Three who were at present students at DPU, but who had many, many years of work experience and two of them still employed at the same place as prior to beginning studies at DPU.

The workshop took place as an arena for exploring needs and possibilities, as well as a forum for experimenting with user-driven digital storytelling using multimodal representations. The participants were invited through

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notice board and mailing lists at the few existing DPU alumni organisations. The six participants thus volunteered to use their everyday spare time to join in this workshop. Prior to the workshop the participants were asked to use 1 hour of preparation. Here they had to consider the question: *How did you find your current position, what challenged you and what helped you during the process and where there elements in the requirements or the process that surprised you?* In order to consider these questions, we mailed them material in advance (so called probes, which consisted of postcards with questions that we had made, which they should fill out. These postcards had a front-page that we designed and probing questions on the backside, but leaving the most of the backside blank for their notes. Figure 1 shows one of these postcards. We also asked them to collect pictures (from the Internet, magazines...) which illustrated their process and bring them to the workshop.

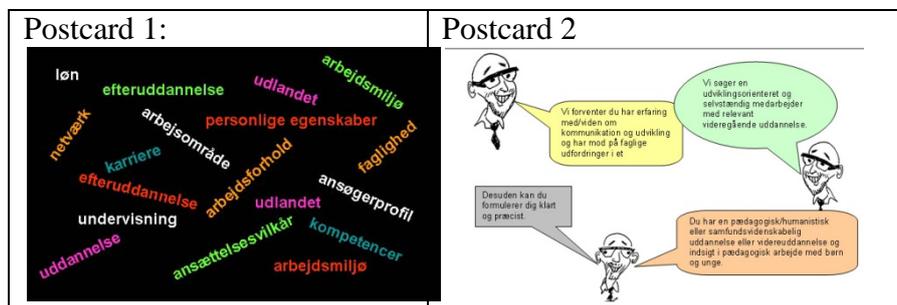


Figure 1: Thumbnail version of picture side of Cultural Probe postcard

The idea of the postcard 1 in figure 1 is to inspire reflections on job seeking in as many directions as possible. Thus, the words that are scattered on the picture side are: Wage, in-service training, being abroad, work environment, network, domain, personal interests, carrier, education, terms of employment, profile etc. The idea of postcard 2 is to inspire the participants to reflect on job seeking in terms of job interviews. Thus, the faces on the picture side symbolize the interviewer and the speech balloons contain phrases that are frequently used in news paper job advertisements: 1) We expect that you are experienced and know about communication and development and that you feel like professional challenges in an inspiring environment. 2) We look for a development oriented and independent employee with a relevant higher education. 3) Additionally we expect you to be able to express your self clear and precise; and 4) You have a pedagogic/ human- or social science education and possess sound pedagogical acumen with regard to children and youth.

At the workshop the participants worked individually and collectively – facilitated by us. At first they were asked to carry out a peer-to-peer

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interview, that was recorded using a pc with a web-cam and afterwards they worked on producing the actual digital stories, using the webcam interviews and recording their stories at the end of the workshop. (figure 2 illustrates this process of working with the materials and producing stories). Three participants managed to finish their digital stories using the multimodal software Photo Story. The whole workshop was in addition documented using video, photographs and post-notes. According to the Danish legislation on empirical research, the participants were asked to sign an ethical consent allowing the produced material for public release. The consent was also signed by the L@jost project manager.

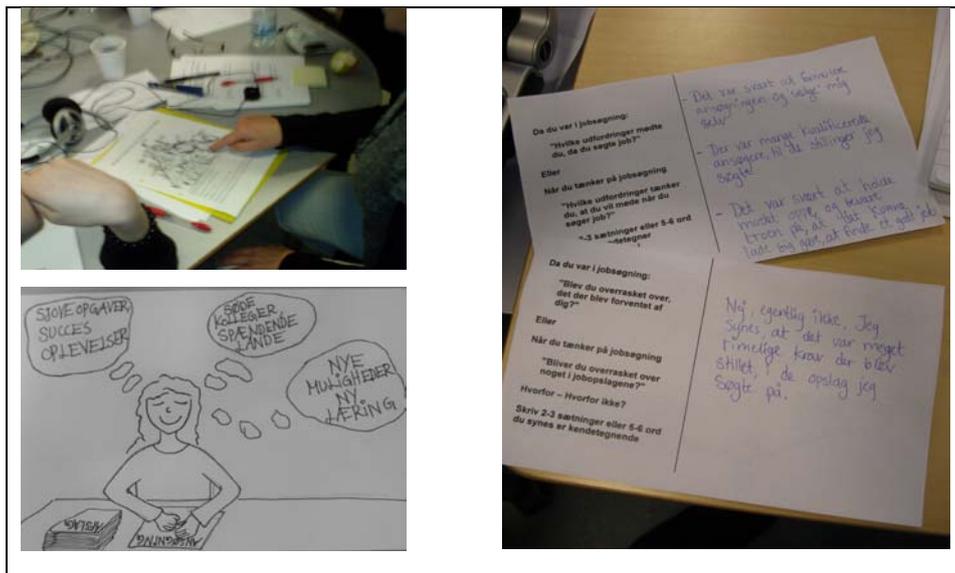
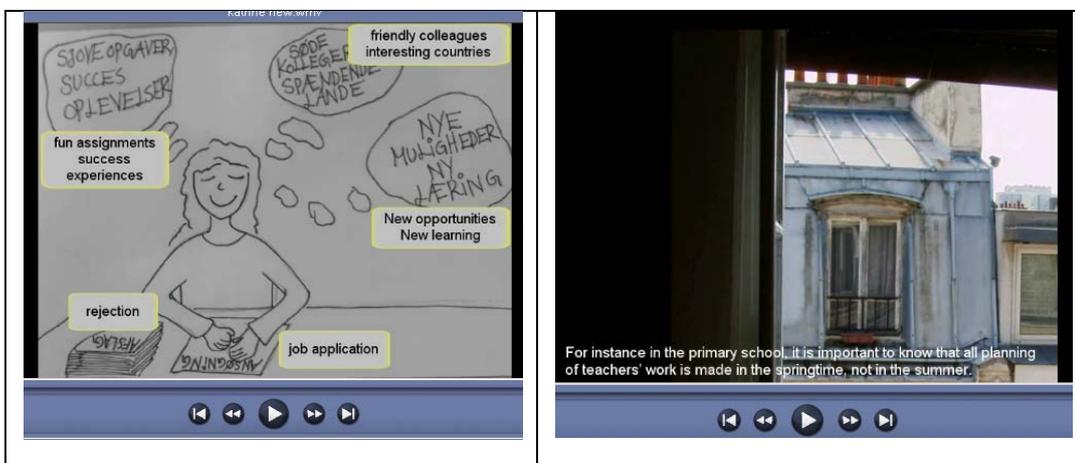


Figure 3: Cultural probes at work – the stories taking form



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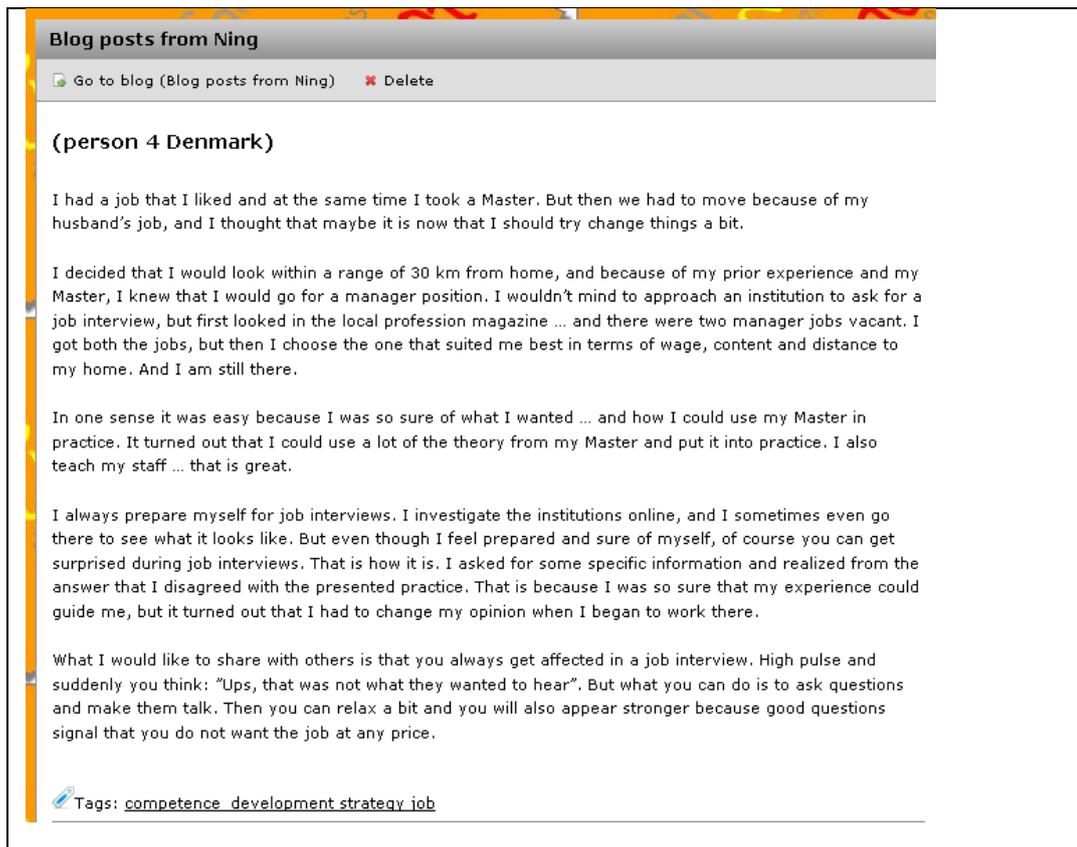


Figure 4: screen pictures as examples of the final translated digital stories

As a L@JOST story, the original Danish narration by the workshop participant has been kept in the photostories. Rather than dubbing, the final digital story, has for the convenience of the L@JOST users been translated to English. See figure 4 for examples of the photostories and the written digital stories.

References

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