

**Institution: Southampton Solent University**

**Unit of Assessment:** 36. Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

**a. Context**

Solent's UoA 36 submission draws on staff research produced in the Schools of Media and Communication, located in the Faculty of the Creative Industries. In order to maximise the excellence and impact of our research the Faculty created, over a decade ago, a research environment based on Research and Enterprise (R&E) Clusters. The R&E Clusters that shaped research and its dissemination for UoA 36 were: Solent Screen; Music Culture and Technology; and Creativity and Communication. Since this Unit covers such a broad range of disciplines it has mainly focused on impact relating to ideas, attitudes and practices. As such it has engaged with a wide variety of national and international communities and audiences via publications, exhibitions, films, festivals, radio broadcasts, public lectures/talks, internet sites.

The following are a few examples of the breadth of exposure achieved by UoA 36 staff: the first analysis of mainstream television screenwriter Russell T Davies (Aldridge); internationally distributed documentary on sanitation in Kenya co-produced with WorldView, Skillset and other partners (Steyger); first reassessment of the Frankfurt Media School in 20 years (Berry); *FifthEstate Online* (International Journal of Radical Mass Media Criticism) (Berry); Sorbonne Music Culture seminars, invited speaker (Dockwray); a BBC commissioned film for 'Inside Out': *Voices of Courage* (Morris); a six year relationship with film education charity City Eye and Southampton Film Week (various staff); a Choice award winning publication for *Masculinity and Film Performance* accruing over 800 sales in less than two years (Peberdy); a radio interview examining 50 years of James Bond (Hines); One World in Berlin and Urbanity in Calgary (de Valk; Alamouti); documentary film screenings for journalists at the internationally renowned The Frontline Club and The Foreign Press Association (Desmond; Alamouti); 'The Wire Salon' Café Oto, talk and broadcast, examining *Kraftwerk*, chair (Albiez). Verbal and written feed back to the above via direct engagement or other forms of communication or via reviews have been overwhelmingly positive in terms of impact.

**b. Approach to impact**

The theory and practice based disciplines in this UoA determined our 'approach to impact' in which we decided over a decade ago to provide coherent research structures that would not only support faculty, group and individual research objectives but also provide continuing guidance on achieving maximum impact from our research. The Research and Enterprise Clusters provided the main structural element that enabled staff to test research quality and impact prior to national and international dissemination. Staff-development programmes contributed to the development of concepts such as Research Informed Teaching and the promotion of post research enterprise and impact activities. The SD programmes were held during lunchtimes or as full day sessions with invited speakers providing specialist guidance. Research Seminars and events during Southampton Film Week – and *Smile* Festival, co-organised by our staff – provided a forum in which reach and significance is achieved through information dissemination, debate and engagement outside of academia.

## Impact template (REF3a)

Direct public engagement, publications in journals, edited collections and monographs along with film and television outputs and master classes, have collectively contributed to the creation and support for new forms of artistic expression, creative practice and the creative economy, stimulating discourse and debate in new areas of screen, music culture and communication studies. In addition to research designed to support curricula activities and other strategic requirements, staff were encouraged to pursue research impact agendas by seeking out new subjects for research and to venture into unexplored territory by either reassessing existing material, such as de Valk's reconsideration of Foucault's work on the body via the medium of experimental film or, to bring to public attention important but hitherto largely unrecognised figures such as the political activism of the musician and author Gilad Atzmon in Alamouti's documentary which has now been screened in over 100 countries. Berry revisited the debates concerning the influential Frankfurt School of thinkers including Adorno, Horkheimer, Marcuse. Berry also critically assessed public policy issues in relation to key thinkers within political philosophy such as Plato, Aristotle, Aquinas and Marsilius of Padua focusing specifically on concepts such as the 'common good', the 'good life', 'well-being' and happiness and further exploring how they impact on contemporary public policy thinking.

University resources such as workshops, studios, IT suites, printing facilities and a broad range of equipment are consistently made available to support staff research and to enable the research to achieve impact. The recently built Media Academy has quickly become the locus for theory/practice research across many media disciplines. One of the determining factors in on-going Skillset accreditation was the quality of the staff research profiles. The University's web research presence, the Mountbatten Library and the Solent Electronic Archive (SEA) are utilised by marketing to stimulate reach and wider access in order to make staff research publically available (SEA's results feature in Google searches on relatable topics). As a result we have seen a significance increase in PhD applicants and invitations to disseminate our research.

One of the measurable ways in which we assess impact achieved by our postgraduate research students is through quantifying the number of theses that appear in the public domain via books, journal articles, TV and radio programmes, conference papers, or influential web-resources. The following are a few examples of the range of subjects that have resulted in arts and humanities publications and websites: 'Propaganda', 'Family Melodrama' and 'Media Events' in *Critical Dictionary of Film and Television Theory*, Routledge; *Horse Opera: The Strange History of the 1930s Singing Cowboy*. University of Illinois Press; *The Big Show: British Cinema Culture in the Great War*, Exeter University Press; *The Fundamentals of Creative Advertising*, Fairchild Books; Searching for the Holy Grail: the creative skills that various stakeholders value. *Journal of creative communications*; *Art direction*, AVA Publishing. In addition to post-thesis impact achieved via publications, current research students are encouraged to achieve impact during the research process using any appropriate form of dissemination and engagement, subject to supervisor agreement.

### c. Strategy and plans

Our future research and enterprise objectives will continue to remain focused on quality research that promotes enterprise and has a meaningful and beneficial impact on people's lives. Current developments include film festival collaboration with City Eye for an annual south-coast event linking Bournemouth, Southampton and Portsmouth in order to provide a

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public forum for film production underpinned by critical theory and research. We are also working with City Eye to provide research-informed film education courses to filmmakers aged 16-19 in an educational partnership with the BFI. Currently the first phase of content development is being finalised to support a new Solent-run online TV channel IPTV – a University-wide initiative emerging from the Film and Television group which is the first of its kind. The Solent Screen Research group will continue to run its research seminar series investing in a postgraduate symposia in February 2014 and a Porn Studies panel discussion held in April which shall be live streamed to engender public debate. Further collaboration with BAFTA, the BFI and Creative England – especially around the emergence of the newly created talent centres - is part of the strategic development to ensure impact continues to be at the forefront of the theory/practice research undertaken here. Berry is currently undertaking research on the role of Marxism in cultural studies with a book due out in April 2014.

**d. Relationship to case studies**

The research conducted by the staff represented in the case studies made a major contribution to internationalising Screen research, in some cases by challenging existing forms of dissemination. For example Alamouti, having exhibited his film work by regular industry means has also moved into exploring online interactive forms of distribution and collaboration in order to reach global audiences without discarding more traditional means (e.g. film festivals and broadcasting across tv territories). This has resulted in significant measures of reach and at the same time generated opportunities for international collaboration on work such as *The Citizen's Project* (2009). Other examples that have seen impact yield as a result of this UoA's approach include Kerr, the Research Cluster coordinator, being invited to publicly discuss early cinema's sexually explicit short films relationship to the emergence of short hard-core films online; Peberdy was responsible for creating *Diegesis* – a film and TV critical review magazine that publishes articles on cinema, sex and sexuality and fosters new voices in screen criticism. It has a readership that extends far beyond academia and its successful online presence connects it to film festivals and distributors.