

**Institution: University of Bedfordshire**

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

**a. Context**

Our research development, since 1996, when we launched the *University of Luton Press* and the journal *Convergence*, and established an *MA Media Culture and Technology*, has engaged with international issues, digital technologies, media industries, and the world beyond academia, a trajectory we have maintained. The *Research Institute for Media Arts and Performance (RIMAP)* formerly the *Research Institute for Media Art and Design*, was established in 2005 to support and promote research and dissemination. Our main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries and audiences are: social policy makers; journalists, politicians and educators in Africa; those involved in digital technologies and publishing; video game users and the game industry; people establishing or running community radio stations; the local community; and interested citizens.

**Main types of impact**

- *Informing and influencing policy debate and practice, emergent and developing practices of political journalism, media and democracy, and journalism training.* This relates to the work of the *Journalism Research Group*: Gaber on political journalism, Silverman on law, crime and social policy, Brake on social media, Mellor on Arab journalism, and Gordon and Hallett on community radio.
- *Contributing to emergent media forms and practices, which have potential for transferring the insights and knowledge from research to create wealth in the manufacturing, service, creative and cultural sectors.* This relates to the UNESCO network: *New Media Forms of the Book*, led by Weedon; and to our *New Media Research Group* and their annual conference *Under the Mask*, which attracts academics, gamers and game designers.
- *Contributing to public debate and public engagement; creating and interpreting cultural capital to enrich and expand the lives, imaginations and sensibilities of individuals and groups.* This relates to our public events and conferences (e.g. *Spaghetti Cinema*, *Embodied Encounters: Psychoanalysis and Film*, and the series of events on documentary), practice-based research, and the public screening and discussion of films made by members of our team.
- *Contributing to the development and delivery of public services or legislation to support understanding or empowerment and contributing to media forms that inform citizenship.* This relates to the work of Silverman on drug policy; the *Journalism and Democratic Transition in Africa* project involving universities in the UK, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Namibia, and Gordon and Hallett on community radio development.

**b. Approach to impact**

RIMAP develops links between theory, research, dissemination, and non-academic audiences in a range of forms. RIMAP funds and supports the *Centre for International Media Analysis Research and Consultancy (CIMARC)*, our research groups and project teams. RIMAP encourages, monitors and records the impact of these research initiatives.

Journalism: From 2005 our recruitment policy enabled the development of applied research within CIMARC, underpinned by appointments that combine professional practice with research, for example, Professor Gaber (2006) and Professor Silverman (2007). Their range of contacts has enhanced our ability to develop international networks. Gaber and Silverman are co-heads of CIMARC. Their work on political journalism, producing the *Journalism and Democratic Transition in Africa* project, involved universities in the UK, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Namibia. Gaber launched an African/UK Journalism training scheme in 2012, supported with £30,000 from UNESCO.

The Book: The UNESCO chair, Professor Weedon, leads a research group in new media forms of the book, examining the book's relationship with other media platforms. Researchers from industry and academia are developing models that aid understanding of the book as a source text for

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contemporary media industries in various cultural contexts -for example, UK/EU, Australia, India and China. The group has established a method to analyse audience response to cross-over of narratives and characters between the book and other media forms. They are applying insights from case studies to practice-led research into digital forms of the book. Partners include University of Utrecht, Jadavpur University, Monash, and Communications University China. The *Crossing Media Boundaries* project, lead by the UNESCO chair involves, at UoB, four research students and a Research Fellow. Outcomes and products have been communicated through trade expos and policy fora (International Digital Publishing Forum, Trade Standards Organisation New York; Publishing 2013). The project team contributed to a Westminster Forum event, attended by MPs and people from the book industry, presenting research that is informing policy changes to the public lending right, and author collecting societies. The project research is also informing practice on e-lending and adding value to e-books (FutureBook Conference, Booksellers Association, London). The project team has had direct contact with book trade companies and associations (Society of Authors, Kobo Ltd, Curtis Brown Ltd) and is having direct impact on the practices of publishing companies. Dubit Ltd sponsor a project team member who is working with the author Duncan Pie on e-book development, and the research findings will be utilised by Dubit.

Psychoanalysis and cinema: The *Embodied Encounters: Psychoanalysis and Film* conference, funded by RIMAP, launched research monographs by Hockley and Piotrowska (listed in REF2). Piotrowska is developing her work on trauma in filmic form with a project on laughter. Piotrowska's films re-present theoretical concepts in filmic form to non-academic audiences. Hockley's clinical psychoanalytic practice and presentation of work at medical conferences links academic research to practical application.

Journalism and the Olympic Games: In 2005, Professor Whannel, then Head of CIMARC, established the international *Journalism and the Olympic Games* group (JOG) a collaboration between six senior scholars from different institutions to research reporting of sport in the media prior to the London Olympics. Whannel advised Beijing journalists and press officers between 2003-08 and JOG members have published extensively and contributed to public debate at such venues as The British Library, the Museum of Sydney and the Bishopsgate Library. *Understanding the Olympics*, by Whannel and Horne was published in 2011.

Community Radio: in 2007 Dr Gordon's community radio research, supported for many years by the University, lead to a BBC World Service Trust commission, and to a Report on UK and Australian models of community radio. Funded by the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights Programme (EU), the Report in turn produced legislative revision. In 2011, Gordon established the student-run local community radio station, *RadioLAB*.

### c. Strategy and plans

Our five-point strategy is fully outlined in REF5. Within this strategy, impact will be developed by strengthening existing external links and developing new links, refocusing our research priorities around making connections – with appropriate local, regional and international organisations and projects. RIMAP promotes research, supports and funds forms of public engagement, through exhibitions, performances, screenings and conferences at non-academic venues. We are focusing on four elements – local, regional, international and industry-linked.

Local: RIMAP aims to develop stronger links with local groups. *The River Lea project*: We are developing a documentary film using the theme of the River Lea to examine the town and its history. The project team are working with stakeholders such as the local authority, schools, local history groups, and community groups, including poet John Hegley and photographer Ruth Grimberg. Our *Spaghetti Cinema Festival*, staged at the Luton Public Library Theatre and publicised to the local community, will become an annual event. Our community radio station, *RadioLab* is building links with the local community and providing ways in which productive connections can be forged between the university and local community organisations.

Regional: RIMAP has begun a series of documentary film events in the south east of England, in collaboration with Birkbeck College (*BEDS-DOCS-FEST*), to showcase the work of our staff and students, celebrate and examine the work of eminent documentary film makers, and to generate discussion and debate. The first two screenings of Dr Piotrowska's films *The Engagement Party*,

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and *The (Un)finished Portrait of Lech Walesa*, took place at the Birkbeck Cinema in conjunction with the Derek Jarman Lab. We are utilising mailing lists, co-ordinated publicity, and networks (e.g. of documentary film makers) to build a regular audience for these events. The first two were attended by between 70-90 people, many attending both events. The *Psychoanalysis and Film* conference at The Freud Museum (Sept 2013) has provided a model which we will build on to reach and address non-academic audiences.

International: Gaber and Silverman are developing training-based links between African journalists and African and UK educational institutions, connects with our development of a research cluster around journalism, social media and politics in the Middle East. As part of our research interest in journalism, social media and the Middle East, Professor Mellor has established a research group on Arab media. We anticipate that the research work emerging from this area of our work in the next few years will have great relevance beyond academia, especially in the regions concerned. We already have seven research students who are working on topics such as Production & Management on Arabic News Channels; social networks in the Arab Spring: Media Development In Post-Conflict Sudan; New Media Use by Saudi Arabian women; We have established an Associate Research Fellowship, studying public art, based in Cairo. Dr May Witwit who completed her doctorate at UoB in 2013, has just commenced a 3-year Leverhulme-funded Fellowship into representation of Arab women; and we currently have a visiting research fellow working on Arab religious television channels. We will build on the journalism training experience of Gaber and Silverman in Africa, seeking to work with journalists and media organisations in emergent democracies and more open societies.

Industry and other end-users: The *Future of the Book* project, and other related research developments are not conceived simply as research; but will also foster links with software developers, end-users and stakeholders, in turn enabling our development of e-publishing initiatives. Our augmented book project, *Sherwood Rise*, is going to be featured at the International Digital Publishing Forum (the publishing industry trade standards organisation, and the Book Expo of America) in New York in May 2014. Our long standing interest in digitalisation and the 'new media' increasingly links our various research areas. The *New Media Research Group*, with its engagement with practice and links with the industry, connects our research areas of e-publishing; journalism, politics and the social media; and documentary film production. To help development of our media industry links, we have appointed Torin Douglas MBE (former BBC Media Correspondent, 1989-2013) as a Visiting Professor.

#### **d. Relationship to case studies**

RIMAP funds initiatives that can build networks beyond academia. In our case studies, CIMARC and the journalism research group help connect our overall approach to specific impact. With the work of Profs Silverman and Gaber on social policy and media, and journalism education in Africa, the subjects of our two case studies, we are creating links between research, analysis, consultancy and development, and in turn, building links with policy makers, African journalists, and educators. Gaber is an international expert in media and politics. He has been an expert witness before Parliamentary committees, a European Union Media Monitor for the Ukrainian Elections (2002), has led Council of Europe Seminars and advised the British Foreign Office and the Department for International Development. He has advised politicians and journalists in over 20 countries, including China. He has been consultant to ITN for the past four general elections. He is an expert on African media, as Media and Elections Consultant to BBC World Service Trust, in Nigeria and Tanzania, and establishing an EU-Funded national news agency in Uganda. Silverman was for 25 years the BBC expert in criminal justice and war crimes and is an internationally recognised authority. In 2004 he was commissioned by the Aegis Trust to chair the inquiry on the media and genocide prevention and has worked as a consultant on journalism and the law/criminal justice for the UNDP (Lithuania); Council of Europe (Croatia); EU (Bucharest and Brussels). Silverman advises the Home Office, and police and prison services on issues from minority ethnic groups in the criminal justice system to international war crime inquiries; and has worked with the Fair Trials Abroad and Just Umbrella charities.