

# case study

*Carmarthenshire*  
**CONNECT**



**CYSWLLT**  
*Sir Gaerfyrddin*



**Documenting the Progress of  
Project Higher Using ICT**

**Community ICT Engagement Case Study**

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## Summary

This case study outlines the use of digital media technologies in documenting a seven month youth project. Carmarthenshire Connect supported young people to use low cost digital stills and video cameras to record project activity and each others' reactions throughout the process.

## Background

Project Higher was a seven month youth music video project that addressed the issues of under-age binge drinking and the effects and consequences of such behaviour. This innovative youth led bilingual project was run in partnership by Upper Amman Valley Communities First, Mess Up The Mess Theatre Company, Menter Bro Dinefwr and Tinopolis Production Studios.

The project engaged young people from the Upper Amman Valley in the process of creating a music video for local singer Tom Hamer and his song 'Higher-Uchela'. Project participants worked alongside Llanelli based production company Tinopolis, learning about the process of planning, filming and editing a music video. The film was set in a house party and starred the young people involved.

## Engagement Purpose

Carmarthenshire Connect facilitated project participants to document and reflect upon their experiences of the project using mobile phone cameras, digital cameras and 'Busbi' digital video cameras. The media collected was then uploaded to both Carmarthenshire Connect's blog and a newly created Project Higher blog, engaging participants in the benefits of blogging in the process.

## Engagement Process

Carmarthenshire Connect got involved with the Project Higher at early planning meetings, where project participants welcomed the concept of documenting the progress of Project Higher through photos and videos and publishing them on a project blog.

A sub group was gathered to set up the blog and design a project logo and identity. Carmarthenshire Connect met with the group in the local library's IT suite, where the blog was set up using Google's 'Blogger' system. The sub group uploaded the first few blog posts, explaining what the project was all about. All project participants were then invited by email to contribute to the blog.



*Left to right: Setting up the Higher blog; a Higher blog screenshot; one of the 'Busbi' digital video cameras used by the group*

Carmarthenshire Connect engaged participants in digital camera technology during six project sessions and equipment was loaned to participants for one session. Photos and videos were taken at a project tour of Tinopolis' studios, planning meetings, filming sessions, voice-over sessions and the launch event.

Carmarthenshire Connect engaged participants in mobile phone camera and digital camera technology by encouraging them to take photos of project activity. To engage participants in digital camcorder technology, participants were asked to record videos of each other reflecting on and summarising their experiences. Question cards were created for some sessions so that participants could record videos quickly and easily during the busy filming schedule.

The media captured was then checked, sorted and uploaded to the Carmarthenshire Connect and Project Higher blog. Additionally, project participants who had their own camera equipped mobile phone were invited to upload media captured independently.

This overall process benefited participants in several ways. Firstly, participants were engaged in the digital camera and camcorder technology. Secondly, participants grasped how this technology could be used to enhance a community project. Thirdly, the process of recording videos meant participants had to reflect on their experiences and what they'd learnt. This process of reflection might not have otherwise occurred.

A blog of project participants' thoughts, photos and videos had some advantages to Project Higher. The project took seven months to complete – the blog acted as a good record of activity that had taken place in this time and allowed participants to communicate with each other between sessions. Having an online presence also provided the project with the opportunity to share information with a much wider audience, making it a good promotion tool. The videos in particular offered the project delivery organisations a good source of feedback from their participants. They provide insights that might not otherwise have been gained.



*Left to right: filming the music video; dressed up in a doctor costume for the video's hospital scene; at the launch event*

## **Benefits and Drawbacks**

### *Benefits*

- Participants learn about digital cameras and camcorders
- The blog acts as a record of project participants' experience and the progress and development of the project as a whole. This allows participants to see for themselves how much they've done
- The blog provided all participants with a platform to share their thoughts with fellow participants in their own time
- Recording videos of participants' experiences *throughout* the project resulted in a continuous feedback, rather than just an overall evaluation at the project end
- Filming the videos required participants to reflect upon their experiences. This reflection made participants think more about their involvement with Project Higher and therefore highlighted the positive outcomes of their experiences.
- Using the web enables the project to share information with a wider audience and share news easily with the local community

### *Drawbacks*

- Checking, ordering and uploading the captured media to the web is time consuming

## **References**

See the Project Higher Uchela blog at <http://higheruchela.blogspot.com/>

See posts from Project Higher Uchela on Carmarthenshire Connect blog at

<http://www.carmsconnect.org.uk/labels/Higher%20Uchela.html>