

IMD 4th Year Project Proposal Form

Section 1* Project Proposal and Procedural Information

Note: section 1 is also for used for ethical approval

Student Name: Victoria Baker

Project Title: Pow! Or how interaction can meaningfully improve the comic book format

Project aims:

- Investigating the existing format and delivery of comic books
- Determine if interaction can be used to improve the comic book format
- Determine how women relate to narratives and technology

A description of your main idea:

The theme for this project is sequential art and how both feminist perspectives and technology can transform it. This means I will be investigating women's culture, how they as users relate to the medium and technology. Alongside this a study of existing services targeted at women may be considered to be a source of inspiration, such as the delivery of comics for women in other cultures. I aim to move away from a researched based project and into a more practical 'real-world' approach – potentially creating a new platform or service for comic books to be received by women.

User-Centered challenges and research methods:

The participants will be predominantly women with differing experience with comic books and computers.

They will be recruited from the University campus to willingly participate in the study, more technologically literate users may also be found on the internet and asked to join in online discussion or questionnaires.

I am also interested in performing a cultural probe to determine the reading trends and opinions of women on particular topics which may prove as a rich insight into my user group. I look to providing a select number of individuals with a pack consisting of a variety of questions, different types of comic strip and participants may also be asked to sketch responses. They may also be asked to reveal information regarding technology and how they use it in their everyday lives in order to discover patterns of use, hopefully this may reveals suitable portable platforms which could be used as a tool to convey comic stories.

As well as cultural probes I hope to also implement a questionnaire - determine more broadly differences between male and female readers/technology users, product evaluation – to evaluate the successes and failures of existing comic book formats and a prototype evaluation – looking at the solution(s) I propose as a possible result of exploring the theme of interaction for comic books.

I aim to conduct most of the studies either online or within IMD studios. Some of the information to be collected such as cultural probes may reveal information from outside these environments.

I hope to carefully tailor a selection of questions allowing me to determine on a practical level how to progress the project forward in a meaningful manner.

Technological challenges and mode of implementation:

Technological challenges revolve around the difficulties faced by users in interacting with digital presentation formats – that of digital comics, such as web comics and interactive comic books. Women are not always confident users of technology and this may be revealed in trying to test technology platforms.

Other challenges involve the potential creation of comic books – in adapting an analogue process with technology, finding appropriate programs for generating comic book pages.

Design challenges and methods of execution:

As part of the final outcome of the project I aim to produce:

- A website
- Interpretation of statistical collection
- A collection of raw statistics and user feedback
- Scrap-book
- Prototype exploring the theme

Informed Consent:

Each participant will be given an Informed Consent Form to sign. Additional consent forms will also be signed by a parent/guardian where necessary. The study will only be conducted if signed consent has been obtained. The consent forms to be used are attached below (see section 4). If the participant is a young child or cannot read, the researcher will read out the form to the participant, making sure that the participant has understood what they are signing.

Contact Information:

At the beginning of the experiment, the participant will be offered information that describes the purpose of the study in general terms. In the first instance all questions should be directed to the student running the project. If there are further questions beyond this, the participant is encouraged to contact the IMD Course Director, Dr. Shaleph O'Neill, School of Computing, University of Dundee, Dundee DD1 4HN. He can be contacted by phone on (01382) 386533 or by email at s.j.oneill@dundee.ac.uk

Section 2 Tart Weighted Marking Sheet

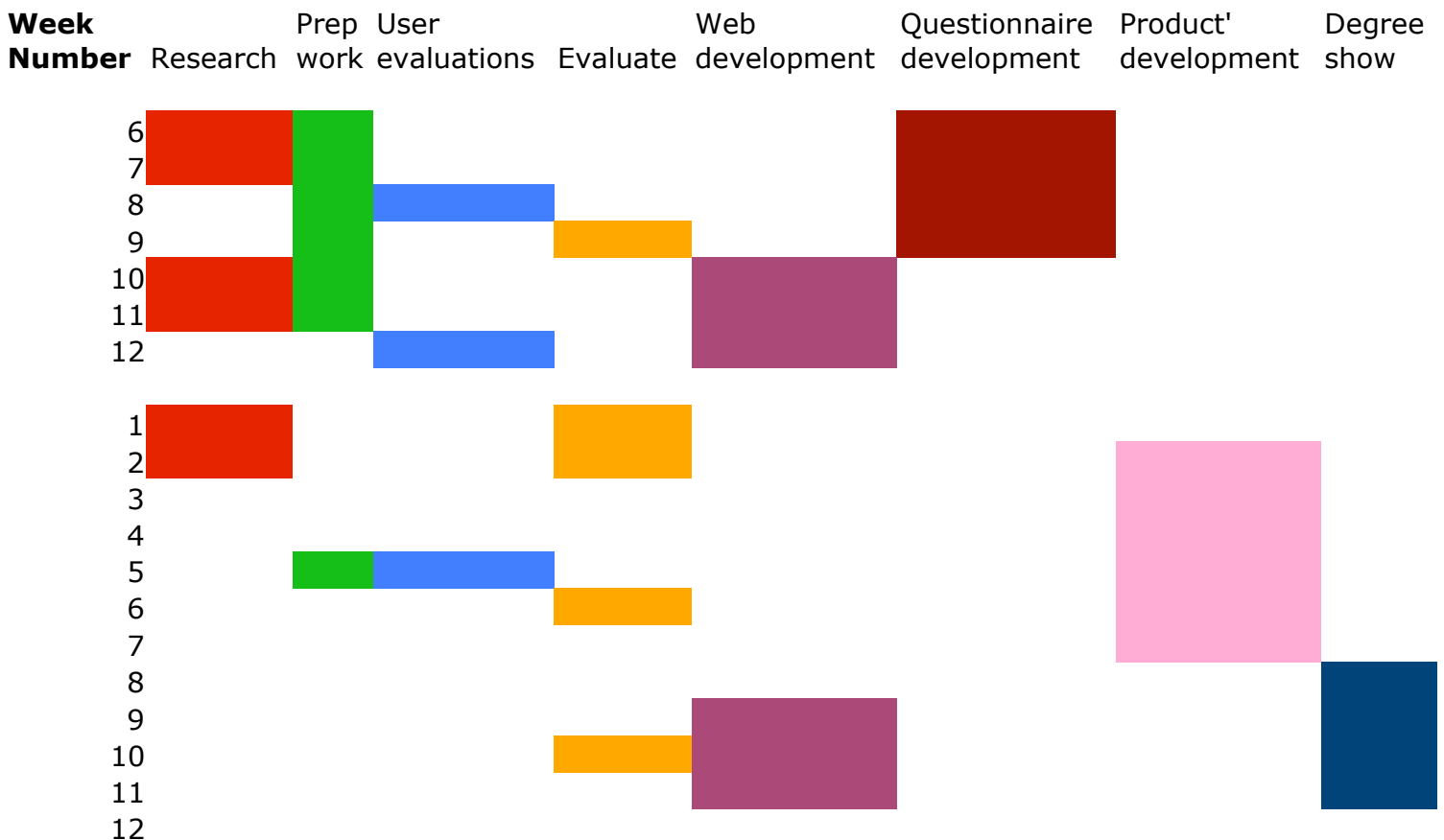
Summarize your project as described in Section 1 and include your preferred mark weighting.

<p>Topping 20%</p>	<p>Project aims and presentation methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating the format and delivery of comic books to determine if interactive presentation methods are suitable for the medium and intended user group – that of women. This research will hopefully lead to an informed proposal about comic book content and presentation format potentially leading to a practical implementation of findings. I also aim to retain the spirit of comics as a format – such as the portability, one of the reasons why comic books are so popular. 		
<p>Filling 60% (e.g. 10, 20, 30)</p>	<p>User Issues 30 %</p> <p>Researching how the targeted user group, women, respond to materials representing sequential art offered to them. Discovering how technology fits into their lives and attitudes as users. Existing background knowledge uncovered from my dissertation work will support research in this area.</p>	<p>Technical Issues 10%</p> <p>Access to comic book narratives and programs allowing for the creation of comic stories.</p>	<p>Design Issues 20 %</p> <p>Strong visual elements exploring how the comic format can be successfully adapted to alternative technology platforms. The solution will be specifically tailored to the female user group.</p>
<p>Base 20%</p>	<p>Project management strategy and milestones</p> <p>Main milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A website – reflecting the process, research, progress and critical reflection gained during the duration of the project. Interpretation of statistical collection – the meaningful interpretation and presentation of statistical data including figures from questionnaires and cultural probes. This may also take the form of a website attached to the main process website. Prototype exploring the theme 		

Section 3 Project Timeline

Please attach an outline of your project timeline (e.g. Gantt chart) here including:

- Deliverables
 - A website – document the process, progress, research and critical reflection/evaluation
 - Interpretation of statistical collection – the logical presentation of data collected from questionnaires and cultural probes. This may also take the form of a website as a sub-site attached to the main process/evaluation site.
 - A collection of raw statistics and user feedback – presented as part of additional material generated within a portfolio of work
 - Scrap-book – a notebook containing thought process and research related to the project also presented as part of the portfolio of work.
 - Prototype exploring the theme – may be presented using a variety of digital and paper-based methods depending on the direction indicated by the user group.
- Key milestones



In the above Gantt chart various titles are used to represent different project stages:

- Research – investigating themes, issues and product topic area

- Prep work – preparation stages compiling items for the purposes of gaining the opinions of users.
- User evaluations – performing testing and other product evaluations with core focus group.
- Evaluate – Interpreting feedback received from the testing process and reflection on project process.
- Web development – development of website and presentation of work, including the compilation of statistical figures.
- Questionnaire development
- Product development – the development of a final prototype based on user feedback
- Degree show – preparation of materials for degree show

Milestone

- 6 Determine core User group
- 7 Choose products for evaluation
- 8 Evaluate products with users
- 9 Review user evaluations, finalise questionnaire
- 10 Develop cultural probe workbook & web development
- 11
- 12 Give workbook to user group

- 1 Evaluating feedback from core users & questionnaire
- 2 Begin product development
- 3
- 4
- 5 Test product with core users
- 6
- 7 Development ends
- 8 Preparation for degree show and web implementation
- 9
- 10
- 11
- 12

- Resources anticipated
 - Access to the user group
 - Computer use – both hardware and software, for the purposes of presenting material to the user group and developing a project solution.
 - Samples of materials for use during user sessions – this may take the form of paper-based items to those presented on a variety of screen-based formats.
 - Materials for cultural probe packs – includes materials that allow users to sketch and write responses to questions.
 - Degree show installation materials