Final Report

Aside from the organisers Cassice and Shruti, we had three University of St Andrews lecturers attend, a PhD student at the St Andrews and Stirling Graduate Programme in Philosophy presented a paper, two MLitts from the University of St Andrews attended to listen to papers and network, three University of St Andrews Film PGRs attended, two visiting speakers from Cambridge University and University of Birmingham presented papers, Professor Patrick Brereton was our keynote from Dublin City University and a lecturer from Abertay university presented a paper. Unfortunately a speaker from Goldsmiths, University of London was unable to attend at last minute.

Having spoken to those that attended, all were extremely happy that the topic of survival media finally had been given the space of a symposium to be discussed and to allow networking. We all benefitted from hearing each other’s work and how they all connected around this central idea. It was fruitful as well to hear how we were each tackling the topic in a different manner, either through methodology, discipline or form. The MLitts that attended expressed how pleased they were with the program and the guest speakers and the opportunity to meet with visiting scholars. Professor Patrick Brereton was kind enough to permit us to send his PowerPoints to all those that attended as many of the speakers requested them to read through. All speakers have expressed their interest in a follow up event and to continue networking.

On the face of it, we gained valuable experience of applying for funding, budgeting and organising a symposium. More than this however we developed many skills that are best learnt and practiced by putting on an event. In the early planning stages, we worked together and with lecturers to plan an appealing and fruitful event. We surveyed students to gauge interest and appropriateness of the event. These initial stages helped to shape our symposium as an interdisciplinary event and led to us approach the lecturer from Abertay university to speak on climate change video games. This initial research helped us in writing to funding bodies as we had a clear list of outcomes. This also helped us in promoting the event as we positioned the symposium as an opportunity for interdisciplinary research and networking.

We gained experience of writing Call For Papers, managing those speakers who wished to attend and planning the symposium program. On the day itself, we gained practical experience of managing the symposium, greeting speakers and insuring the timing ran smoothly. Before the symposium began we checked the technology was working (and fixed it when it did not work at first) and greeted Professor Patrick Brereton who arrived early. We each delivered a paper and ensured the panels kept to time and did not overrun. We fielded the Q&As for the two panels and lead the survival games. We had a participant drop-out at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances, so we came up with an interactive Netflix-related survival activity. We learnt to change the programme in such a way that the slot was still relevant to the symposium and of value to all participants.

Overall, we feel that the experience of putting on the symposium has been overwhelmingly positive and we would be very keen to hold a follow up event.