



SYMPOSIUM: Using iPads and iPhones in Communication Classes

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It is hard to remember when an iPad and an iPhone weren't part of my digital life. Because I teach multimedia creation and video storytelling at Cabrini College, a mobile tool with camera recording, classroom-presentation and media-consumption capabilities seems like a must-use device.

Creating Ebooks

One of my more interesting recent uses of iPad technology involved turning our Communication Department's award-winning multimedia senior capstone project website into an ebook.

The website www.YouthVoicesRise.com is video-rich and contains infographics, photos, and text. Cabrini College seniors partnered with a class of graduate political science students at The American University in Cairo as the revolution continued in Tahrir Square in early 2012. Using social media, our students also connected with journalists and photographers covering the events. The result is powerful original reporting that tells stories of discontent caused by decades of political autocracy. Students documented the political awakening of young people who expressed their hopes for better lives in the aftermath of the upheaval. This site won the College Media Association's 2012 Pinnacle Award for Best Multimedia Feature Site.

Converting the website into an ebook involved using Apple's iBooks Author program and my laptop to reformat and reassemble the students' Web media.

The interface of iBooks Author parallels Apple's other programs, such as Keynote. As the ebook creation progressed, the only way to proof the book was by looking at a preview through iBooks on the iPad.

The students' online stories of autocracy, awakening, and aftermath conveniently converted to book chapters, and each submenu of the site became an ebook chapter section. The resulting ebook *Arab Awakening: A View From The Inside* is a free download from the iTunes store: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/arab-awakening-view-from-inside/id576503379?mt=11>. At this point, the book can be viewed on an iPad only.

Paperless Workflow

Although many of our students are "fluent" in iPhone for media consumption, I want to encourage the same fluency in media creation for both the iPhone and iPad. Modeling technology use works well with our students, so I began last year by using my iPad to take notes during student presentations in class and during meetings. Sometimes I'd use the iPad's audio-recording functions to make annotated recordings of meetings. Then last spring, one student used his iPad to present storyboard panels of his proposed website design to a group of 13 people sitting around a table. Soon, other students began bringing iPads to class for both note taking and presenting.

Because I am a major advocate of paperless workflow, common documents in my classes are available

only in the cloud (mostly in Google Docs). Last spring, a student who directs our weekly college video news program began using his iPad to direct the show rundown and script, which were stored in the cloud as Google Docs. Going paperless allowed him to easily make “live” last-minute script changes. And on-camera talent used iPads as teleprompters during video recording sessions, a move that also accommodated last-minute changes to the script.

Multimedia Acquisition

The most potentially ubiquitous iPad/iPhone leap for our students is in multimedia content acquisition. Although our video content is shot in high definition using good prosumer cameras and microphones, in many situations an iPhone or iPad works wonderfully for acquiring audio and video. I’m training our video news and multimedia crews to use iPhones for single-person interviewing. Proper positioning and framing using an iPhone with a connected microphone lead to good quality interview footage. That footage is easily integrated with graphics and other media in the post-production editing process.

Here’s an example. Our journalism students recently visited five different college campuses to interview hundreds of students about their voting preferences in the 2012 presidential election. They gathered media with four uses in mind: as text with infographics and photographs for the online and print student newspaper; as Web-linked video packages for the paper; as segments for the weekly video news program; and as parts of audio pieces for Cabrini’s radio news program.

In planning these trips, students could have taken along a print reporter using pencil and paper, a photographer with a DSLR camera, a videographer with a shoulder-mounted camera, and a radio station reporter with an audio recorder. That gaggle of media-gatherers would have placed an intimidating barrier between an interviewee and the desired quotes about voting choices. An iPhone proved to be a more efficient and effective way to acquire raw media. An iPhone with an attached microphone can gather video, take photos, and provide a source of audio (when stripped from the video for radio pieces). That way, the media acquisition team could consist of an iPhone

operator and a reporter—a far less intimidating presence. One finished project, an audio slideshow, is here: http://theloquitur.com/?p=34846&doing_wp_cron=1353286805.2041990756988525390625

In this case, one of the media acquisition team members also functions as the project manager, cataloging, backing up, and distributing the pieces necessary for each medium’s packages. That job is made much easier by a clever Apple-designed use of the iPad, which I discovered while traveling overseas this summer.

Media Backup and Archive

Each evening of our summer travels, after a day of gathering photos and videos on my iPhone, I transferred the media to iPad’s built-in photo app using an Apple adaptor that enabled the two devices to couple. My iPad functioned as an external hard drive, allowing me to delete transferred media and free up space on my iPhone for the next day’s shooting.

Here’s another wonderful aspect of the iPhone/iPad photo app. Because I have an iCloud account and enabled Apple’s Photostream, the cloud sucked up and stored my media every time I entered a WiFi hotspot. When I got home, all my photos and movies were both on my iPad AND backed up in my Photostream in iCloud.

As an alternative to iCloud, perhaps the same photos and movies could be uploaded to a college’s Dropbox-type account, which makes the media available to students for download and editing. This kind of streamlined file distribution system requires judicious uploads in view of video file sizes, but it might encourage more efficient shooting if students know there is a cap on the amount of raw footage that could be stored.

I found it exciting to watch multimedia production become second nature to our students. This is really dependent on the fact that video and photo files are now as easy to send and store as text files. I’m eager to see whether the new iPad Mini pushes that along even faster.

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