Promising Practice Case Study
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**Title**
Social TV and Second Screen Applications

**Module**
CS5041

**The idea**
This module asks students to create the design, prototype, evaluate, and develop the justification for software applications which by and large do not exist in reality or yet in the market place.

**How it works**
They start with the interaction design by themselves of a "multi-display user interface for a photo album creation application". Imagine creating a photo album with the layout on a tablet device and all the photos on a smartphone. You pour, flick or throw the images from the phone to the tablet. This sort of application does not yet exist (due to a host of technical, usability, experience and expectation problems).

Following this the students work in teams in a project which while closer to reality is further away from being a day to day product due to other challenges. In this second assignment each team takes on a user-centered interaction design process for the development of a Social TV and Second Screen Application. They complete a survey and analysis, requirements capture, paper prototype, low-fidelity mockup, testing the mockup with at least three users, then refining the mockup. There is a brief report and a public presentation and pitch of the refined mockup.

**Benefits/impact on students/staff**
The students are asked to think far beyond the here and now of technology in the world and to imagine new forms of interaction which could become common place in the years ahead. It encourages them to question all the assumptions they have about devices, interactivity, what is computing, what is a computer, what is a service and what future collaborative interaction might look like. More than anything it forces them to engage in a process of reflection where they need to understand "I am not the user" and what the user wants is not yet clear. By taking an iterative refinement approach across two very different projects they come to refine their skills, understand the process and appreciate how to document and reflect on their actions and learning while trying to reach a high fidelity prototype which could be developed in hardware and software.

**Student feedback**
"Beside the engaging and stimulating lectures, both assignments contributed to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The tasks allowed me to discover and fill my personal knowledge gaps, and faced us with practical issues which arise from the inter-disciplinary character of HCI. I especially enjoyed working in a group, the collaboration with different people from different backgrounds leveraged our creativity and productivity. I did not just learn how to apply a user-centred design approach, but also realised that 'simplicity is the ultimate sophistication'. In a nutshell: an excellent opportunity for HCI students to gain practical experience and to broaden their thinking."