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Anthropology and iPads: A Different Career

*Matthew Trevett-Smith, Academic Technology Consultant
Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology, University of Richmond*

Mine is a different career path than you might normally ascribe to an anthropology Ph.D. My job is multifaceted. There are two roles that come together which facilitate this article. First, is my position as a Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (CTLT) liaison to the social science faculty at the University of Richmond. I regularly work with over 100 social science faculty, of which anthropology is one of those disciplines. The second is as my position as the program lead on the CTLT's mobile device initiative. In this respect, I work with all of the faculty on campus who are interested in incorporating mobile devices into their curriculum. Specifically, iPod Classics, iPod Touches, and iPads.

Using this technology, learning becomes a knowledge creation process not only a knowledge consumption process. Each of the supported projects aimed to teach students how to build their learning network and take advantage of the learning opportunities presented by the iPad2. The instructors became more than bearers of knowledge, they became learning architects, modelers, learning concierges, change agents, synthesizers, connected learning incubators, and network gurus. CTLT liaisons, like myself, were able to work with each faculty member to develop a course, which used technology and teaching styles that were relevant to their (faculty & students') daily lives. When students perceive a concept or assignment as relevant, they see it as valuable and important.

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Message from the Editor

Happy Summer!

Okay, this is supposed to be the Spring News but it is coming out in the summer instead. I hope you are enjoying the sun and having fun.

The 2012 conference at Bridgewater State University was quite a success. It was so nice once again having so many students participate.

In this News you will find an intriguing piece by Matthew Trevett-Smith. Unfortunately I was unable to hear Matt's conference presentation on Saturday morning. But I was with him the rest of the conference every time someone came up to him and told him how interesting his presentation was...and of course, that makes him a target to write a piece for the News. Whether you are a novice technology user or a very active one I think you will find his piece shows how technology can help with data collection.

Our second contribution is a "book notice" by Alan Leveille. Alan discusses *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West* by Blain Harden. What I particularly like about Alan's contribution is that though the book clearly moved him, he was willing at the same time to explain why he cannot recommend it to all readers [I wish more NEAA members would submit book reviews or notices].

Last, please start planning to attending the 2013 NEAA Annual Conference hosted by the University of Maryland.

Enjoy your summer,
Jessica Skolnikoff
Editor-in-Chief

2012 Conference Recap

Curtiss Hoffman, Bridgewater State University

On March 9th and 10th, the 52nd annual meeting of the Northeastern Anthropological Association was held at Bridgewater State University in southeastern Massachusetts. The meeting was co-hosted by the Massachusetts Archaeological Society (MAS) and the Greater Boston Anthropology Consortium.

One hundred and thirty-two students, faculty, and MAS members attended this conference, which featured two days of presentations about all facets of anthropology. A total of 68 papers and posters from 24 local and regional institutions were presented. In addition, MAS held an Open House on the Friday evening at the Robbins Museum of Archaeology in nearby Middleborough, Massachusetts for conference participants, which featured two showings of the new film, *We Still Live Here*, on the Wampanoag

Language Project. The keynote speaker on Saturday evening was Dr. John Carlson of the University of Maryland, who presented an insightful talk on what the ancient Maya would have expected to take place on December 21, 2012.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Donald Pollock
SUNY at Buffalo

My first pleasant task as the new NEAA president is to thank my immediate predecessor, Pierre Morenon, for his excellent leadership over the past two years. Pierre, and before him Barry Brenton, set a high standard of organizational skill that I think of as a worthy model. I am also grateful to the NEAA Board for their efforts, especially to Alan Hersker for his careful management of the NEAA's finances, Anne Galvin for her work as NEAA Secretary, and Jessica Skolnikoff for her editorial talents, and I am also pleased to be able to thank Alan Hersker again for his willingness to serve as President-elect. Really, I cannot imagine a more dedicated board, each member of which already has plenty on their professional plates. Knowing their dedication makes my new position easier to handle.

At Bridgewater State University in March, I was also pleased to be able to thank Curtiss Hoffman and his colleagues for a truly outstanding NEAA conference, and I wanted to remind all NEAA members that our annual conference is an excellent opportunity for professional anthropologists, graduate students and undergraduates to meet and interact in a friendly spirit of cooperation and support. Next year's conference will be held at the University of Maryland, hosted by their Department of Anthropology and organized by Paul Shackel; it should be a great chance for NEAA regulars to meet up with colleagues from the more southern reaches of our northeast region.

NEAA members who attended our conference at Bridgewater State will also remember that we have launched an NEAA Bulletin series with the first volume, *Borders, Margins, and Passages*, skillfully edited by Anne Galvin, and available at a bargain price to all members. (I should point out that Anne not only edited the first NEAA Bulletin, she also handled all of the development of an attractive format that we can use for subsequent issues.) The Bulletin series is open to any NEAA members who would like to propose a volume, and it's an especially nice opportunity to bring together and publish papers from one or more sessions at our conference.

I'll wish you all a great summer, productive, relaxing, or both.

A Cruel Demonstration of Humanity in a Void

A book Notice by Alan Leveillee, Contributing Editor- Archaeology

On occasion, historical and political events give anthropologists opportunity to consider culture and humanity in situations that no ethical or sane social scientist would ever condone or be part of. Such events are all too common on both grand (genocide, slavery) and small (domestic violence) societal scales. A recent example from which we, as anthropologists and archaeologists, can draw significant

cultural insights is the subject of a book by Blain Harden entitled *Escape from Camp 14*, subtitled *One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*. It is published (2012) by VIKING, a division of the Penguin Book Group. The subject of the book is Shin Dong-Hyuk, who was born in the squalid bottomless deprivation of a place devoid of culture as we know it. Camp 14 is one of several compounds for the internal political enemies of North Korea. Labeling it so succinctly however falls far too short of appropriately describing the horrible criminal insanity and assault on humanity that it is. *Escape from Camp 14* is a story of survival and eventual escape from a world without love, without compassion, without adequate food and clothing, and without hope. Primal instinct, innate intellect, and adaptability are all that keep you alive hour by hour, day by day, and year by year, as those around you disappear or are tortured and killed.

I'm calling this a book notice rather than a review; to describe, in any detail, examples of Shin Dong-Hyuk's life and experiences in Camp 14 would be approaching salaciousness, and neither time nor space allow specificity. Neither can I suggest that this book is a *must read*. I've recommended it and given my copy to colleagues, several of whom returned it saying they couldn't force themselves through the horrific conditions and experiences it describes. What I find compelling about *Escape from Camp 14* isn't the horror (which is difficult to read through without eliciting nightmares) but the infinitesimal ember of humanity that somehow survives in this terrible political experiment in social and cultural deprivation. It is a *should-read* for anthropologists and archaeologists. We take our own material and cultural surroundings as a given as we consider other cultures - past and present. This book affords opportunity to consider culture, or lack thereof, in a completely deconstructed and nihilistic social crucible. From which, despite efforts to the contrary, emerges undeniable evidence of humanism.

Trevett-Smith continued from page 1

Since the spring of 2006, the University of Richmond's Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology has helped UR faculty to incorporate mobile technology into a number of their courses. For the first time during the 2011-2012 academic year, six (6) UR faculty received iPad2s as part of this mobile device initiative. Because of this faculty involvement, 85 UR students were loaned iPad2s for an entire semester (43 in the fall of 2011, and 42 in the spring of 2012).

One of the faculty utilized the iPad for an Ethnographic Field Methods course redesigned to take full advantage of the technology. Teaming up with myself, and two librarians, the instructor created a fantastic course. Students in this class used the iPad as an all-in-one field tool during a semester long ethnography project. The iPad facilitated student interviews, participant observation, as well as project analysis, and reporting.

A course is not taught by the technology, of course, so it is important to highlight the teaching strategy of this professor. The professor's general teaching strategy is to involve her students as much as possible in the knowledge production process. In this perspective, it is important for students to understand that although the instructor may know subject matter of the course better than the students, each of them has experience and fresh visions of the material to contribute. Especially in a course such as Ethnographic Field Methods, the result of the theory and practice as experienced by the students will always vary in how they learn to collect data from people going about their everyday lives.

In this ethnographic field methods class, the iPad was used by eight students who worked together to research, understand, and produce a presentation on how UR students use, feel, and think about UR's Boatwright Memorial Library. The iPads served as an "all-in-one" tool – the students used it to photograph, record and video interviews and focus groups, take notes, read articles, and draw maps. Having a single piece of technology made it possible for each student to do any of the required tasks (observation, interviewing, field note taking) at the spur of the moment. Their research results therefore reflected the spontaneous and contemporaneous nature of their experience in the library. They could also report back to each other and to the instructor as they discovered new information and analyzed their findings. The iPads helped to make this a truly collective learning experience for the students and for the professor.

In many ways, the iPad is an ideal tool for conducting fieldwork, because it is light, small, unobtrusive, and unthreatening. It also allows researchers to stay connected to each other and to produce presentations and findings.

In most cases, experts who assume that they know how students use libraries design libraries. However, librarians will be the first to tell you that there is much more to learn about how students conduct their research, socialize, and collaborate... all in the library. This type of ethnographic research powerfully represents the experience of library users. The results of this particular semester-long study have already proved helpful to the library staff as major library renovations are now being carried out, which were directly influenced by this student research.

For more information on this, and any of my other projects, please visit my professional blog at: <http://blog.richmond.edu/mtrevett/>



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MEMBERS RECEIVE 4 ISSUES OF THE NEAA NEWSLETTER PER YEAR

