

Abstract

Investigating the impact of mobile apps on the emotional reaction and engagement of visitors to the Cultural Quarter, Leicester

This talk will present the findings of an evaluation study into the impact of two different mobile phone apps on the experience of visitors to the Cultural Quarter in Leicester. Once home to hosiery and footwear manufacturers the district of St George's experienced significant industrial decline after the 1960 and by the late 1990s the area was largely abandoned. Regeneration funding has transformed the area into a hub for creative industries with former warehouses and factories now converted into urban apartments. The area remains rich in historical and cultural heritage with notable examples of Victorian architecture and industrial heritage although its presence may not be immediately obvious to the casual visitor.

Hidden Stories and *Sounds of the Cultural Quarter*, mobile phone apps, were created as part of *Affective Digital Histories*, an AHRC funded project based at the University of Leicester which explored stories of the people who lived and worked in the Cultural Quarter from the 1970s until the late 1990s. Using archive material personal stories of individuals and communities were collected, analysed and digitised in to a publicly assessable collection. Specially commissioned soundscapes and creative writing were used to develop the apps.

This evaluation study focussed specifically on the engagement of visitors with the Cultural Quarter before, during and after their visit considering such factors as learning, enjoyment, empathy, curiosity and connection. Visitor attitude toward to the location was also assessed to see what emotions, positive and/or negative were triggered regarding the location, through the use of the app/s.