HINT Final Report form

Name of partner: Geopark Shetland

Period covered by report: 01/03/2013 to 30/06/2013

Key objectives during report period:

- Work with Zolk[C] to complete and launch iPhone version of app
- Work with Zolk[C] to create and launch online version of app
- Work on plans for final launch of all products during Shetland Nature Festival
- Devise means of gathering feedback about final products
- Complete HINT project shared outcomes online and in hard copy.
- Complete HINT project financial management / admin and final Leader claim.

Did you meet all your objectives?
(Highlight/explain any problems)

Mostly! We are currently tying up some lose ends on the partnership project as the deadline was extended to accommodate all partners.
We are still working to get the Content Management System for the app up and running owing to some difficulties finding a suitable server.

Summary of progress to project completion

We finished checking the content of the iPhone version and this went live in June. (Once an app is submitted to iTunes it takes about 10 days to become publicly available to download as Apple have a quality control system).

The Geopark Shetland app public launch took place on Sunday 30th June as part of the Shetland Nature Festival. We have created a QR code linked to the 'app info' page on our website. It has been added to Geopark posters at Tourist Information Points so that people can easily find out where to download the app.

As we had some underspend on the project we have purchased an iPad mini and a Tablet (Samsung Google Nexus 10) that we can use to demo / use the app with

groups / school classes etc. The app is compatible with such devices as long as they have GPS (e.g. iPad Mini Wifi & Cellular) and a rear facing camera (to use the Augmented Reality Feature). Some picture quality will be lost when viewing the app on larger devices.

The online version of the app will be added to our existing website so that it is available to those who do not have a smartphone. Zolk[C] has compiled a set of html (web) pages containing the app content and passed it to NB Communication (the web developer for our organization) who will shortly publish them online.

We are still working to get the Content Management System for the app up and running. The CMS will allow us to make updates to the content that will then be passed on to anyone who has downloaded the app.
The problem with the CMS is that it uses java, which requires a compatible web server to run it. The server our organization uses for its websites is not compatible so we are currently exploring other options, such as renting space on a 'virtual private server' ('cloud server') on a pay-as-you-go basis. Examples are:
http://www.rackspace.co.uk/cloud-servers/
http://aws.amazon.com/ec2/

We are able to monitor download statistics and ratings of the Android version via Google Play, and we are exploring the data we can collect from iTunes. We will get more focused feedback by canvassing opinion through social media (Tweets, FB comments, FB poll, Survey Monkey etc.)

With regards to the partnership project, final reports have been received from partners and we have collated the information into a Best Practice Guide in hard copy. Partners can print this off and circulate it as they wish. It will be added to the HINT website as a pdf. We have issued the final partner invoice but have still to put in our own final Leader claim.

What have you learned from this project?
(Highlight/explain how you are developing your knowledge/use of new technologies)

General

1) Do your research first! Be clear about what you want to achieve and look at the range of technology is available. Talk to people with experience or contact potential developers to see what is possible within your budget. It can be a good idea to use 'tried and tested' rather than 'cutting edge' since some 'new technology' can flop or have a very short shelf life.

2) Make sure the technology fits your needs; don't try to tailor your requirements to the available technology. There is no point in using digital tools just for the sake of it - you should use them because they will give you something that you don't already have. Technology is always changing and you can't reach all of the people all of the time so it is best used as part of a wider interpretive plan that involves a range of media.

3) Be aware that you can't always have quite what you want and sometimes compromise is necessary. Unexpected difficulties can arise which can result in delays so an element of flexibility is needed in your approach and in your deadlines. In such cases it is important to keep funders informed.

4) You need to develop a good relationship with your software developer. It helps to meet in person to discuss ideas initially so that both parties are clear on what is happening and you can ask questions about things you don't understand. Whenever there is uncertainty during the project, flag it up immediately and have a conversation so that any problems can be addressed immediately.

5) Clarify exactly what you will need to develop and maintain the project at the start, in terms of human resources, practical resources, technical resources and finance (for example, expertise/software to develop app content, in-house skills/knowledge/training, additional hardware/ software, web hosting services etc.) This will ensure that you can budget for all eventualities. Bear in mind that ongoing updates may be required to keep your product up to date and fresh.

6) There are lots of handy online tools that can be downloaded for free. It can pay to do a Google search on a particular requirement to see what is available.
We used:

- Google maps 'what's here' function - to plot lat/long coordinates
- Google maps 'street view' - to work out written directions
- Nearby.org – to convert OS grid references into lat/long coordinates
- Faststone resizer- to alter multiple images (e.g. filetype, size)
- Gadwin printscreen – to capture a computer screenshot

7) A digital product such as an app has the great advantage that you can alter, remove and add content as and when you wish even after it is launched.

8) A digital project such as an app generates content, (e.g. images / text / audio / videos) that can easily be used in other digital forums such as websites / social

media / static computer displays etc.

9) Using text for the main content, rather than audio (as we originally intended) is practical since it allows anyone to make updates quickly at any time without having to record (and pay for) new audio files with a particular person or people.

10) Using an app outdoors in the field can have drawbacks - if it is cold and you are wearing gloves you can't use the touchscreen function unless you have 'e-tips'. If it is a sunny day you can't always see the screen to read the content. If it is a windy day it is difficult to hear audio content.

11) Augmented Reality points do not always show up exactly where you want them through the camera view, depending on how high above sea level you are positioned when you view them. It would be helpful for us to have extra time to improve the location of some of our AR tags.

12) If you are in an area where wifi / mobile phone reception is patchy then you will need to develop an app that can be downloaded in its entirety up front. That way the user will not have to rely on wifi / mobile connections to use it. However, this makes the filesize of the app relatively large which takes up space on the user's phone memory and takes time to download. Our app is 42MB and takes a minute or two to download.

13) There are variations in the functionality of different devices. For example Androids have a built in 'back' button but iPhones don't, so in the iPhone version it was necessary to put a 'back' button on each page. iPhones allow you to pinch zoom images and move them around so you can hone in on different areas. Androids allow you to pinch to zoom images but you cannot move them to zoom in on different areas. Something that works well on one platform may work less well on another so if you are trying to cater for multiple devices you may have to compromise on specifics.

How have you tried to ensure best practice throughout the project?

(Highlight any support/advice you have received)

We mapped out the entire app structure with the developers at the start of the project, based on our aims and their abilities, and set deadlines for the delivery of specific content so the app could be built and tested in stages.

We created 'layered' content so that the app could appeal to a range of users, with basic information supported by more detailed information that users can

access should they wish.

We consulted with experts to ensure that the content was factually accurate

We engaged with the community where possible to gain feedback at key points during the development of the app. This allowed us to pitch the content at the right levels, make the app intuitive to use, and ensure that the design did not impact adversely on people's ability to view and read content.

We were prepared to make substantial changes at times to address problems, even if this meant discarding a lot of content that had been developed.

Is there anything you would do differently in the future?
(Explain)

We would start with a particular region or theme and perfect the functioning of the app that way, and then add further content once it was perfected. This would have allowed a small but complete app to be thoroughly tested very early on in the process. That way we would have known exactly what worked and what didn't and saved time developing content that ultimately was not required.

We would get the specifications for optimum image dimensions and resolution at the start of the project to allow us to obtain exactly tailored images of key features and maximize the quality we could get with a small filesize.

Overall do you feel the project has been a success?

Yes, we achieved what we set out to do, which was to develop a map based app for Android and iPhone to help visitors and residents explore and interpret Shetland's geology. The project was an experimental pilot. We have learned a lot about the possibilities and limitations of this kind of technology and engaged with new audiences and contractors, with whom we may work in the future. We have been able to support other groups and individuals considering similar projects and identified potential for future linked activities.

List any publicity for your project (e.g. newspaper article, radio, magazine etc.)
(Please attach a scan or text where possible)

HINT project website
http://www.hintproject.eu

Geopark Shetland website / Facebook
http://www.shetlandamenity.org/geopark-app
https://www.facebook.com/geoparkshetland

Shetland Nature Festival 2013 website / Facebook / programme
http://www.shetlandamenity.org/whats-on
https://www.facebook.com/shetlandnaturefestival

Project movie and Youtube channel
(http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHINTproject?feature=watch)

Geopark Shetland Awareness Scheme – displays in Tourist info and factsheets for tourism operators.

Articles:
European Geoparks Magazine – Jan 2012
Royal Scottish Geographical Society magazine – May 2013
Shetland Times Summer Feature and follow up – Jun 2013

Press releases:
HINT website launch and the Arouca conference - Sept 2012
Android launch – Feb 2013

Radio:
Radio Shetland - HINT meeting / Android beta version launch – Jun 2012
Radio Shetland – Android official launch Mar 2013

Presentations:
ISGM in Chablais – Sept 2011
Shetland Neighbourhood Information Point training day – Nov 2011
Visit Scotland Industry Event - Nov 2011
British Geoparks Forum, UNESCO HQ London – May 2012
Shetland HINT meeting – May 2012
European Geoparks Conference Arouca, Portugal – Sept 2012
Scottish Geodiversity Forum conference – Dec 2012
British Geoparks Forum, English Riviera Geopark – March 2013
Shetland Heritage Association AGM – Apr 2013
Scottish Natural Heritage training workshop – May 2013
Skerries Development Group worskhop – May 2013

Shetland Heritage Association workshop – May 2013
Visit Scotland staff training – June 2013

Please give details of any community engagement (e.g. workshops, schools activities, volunteer opportunities, launch event etc.)

- App testing (adult volunteers and school pupils)
- Shetland Neighbourhood Information Point training day – Nov 2011
- Visit Scotland Industry Event - Nov 2011
- Scottish Natural Heritage training workshop – May 2013
- Skerries Development Group worskhop – May 2013
- Shetland Heritage Association workshop – May 2013
- Visit Scotland staff training – June 2013
- Shetland Nature Festival app launch at Bigton Sunday Teas – Jun 2013

Give details of any feedback you have received on your use of technology

During testing we sought feedback on 4 key areas:

- Content
- Functionality
- Design
- General impressions

Where possible we incorporated suggestions into the final version of the app.
So far general feedback has been positive. One user posted on Facebook *'The Geopark android app is great! Nice maps and loads of detailed information which is easy to understand! Cheers'*

We have received one false review on Google Play (apparently from a troll), which is frustrating but we have reported it.

Any other comments?

Technology is an integral part of daily life and it is inevitable that it has become an interpretation tool, but working with it requires a particular set of skills. Many people employed in heritage interpretation are employed because of their enthusiasm and ability to communicate their subject, but not necessarily for their digital skills. As technology constantly develops it can be hard to keep up. Some things come and go, and it can be tricky to predict what will be a success.

However, it seems reasonable to assume that smartphones, social media and touchscreen technology will be with us for the foreseeable future. It may be easier for future generations, who have grown up with these media, to find increasingly sophisticated and successful ways of bringing them to bear on heritage interpretation. The important thing is not to lose sight of the purpose – community engagement, awareness raising, worthwhile experiences, promoting understanding, and encouraging people to value and protect their heritage and resources.