Enhancing feedback in careers and employability activities: to what extent can formative feedback provided by Careers Advisers to students and graduates be improved using screencasting technology?

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Abstract

In this HECSU-funded study, the impact of introducing screencasting as a method of providing effective remote feedback on the CVs of students and graduates is investigated. Background literature suggests that using this technology in university settings has been found to increase the quality of feedback provided, in terms of the depth, the extent to which it can be a personal experience and level of understanding of the feedback. However, there appears to be an absence of published work on the use of using screencasting to provide remote guidance on CVs to students or graduates; this study endeavours to address this lack of knowledge and data on the subject.

During June and July 2017, 79 students and graduates seeking feedback on their CVs were provided with this feedback via screencast recordings. A mixed research methods approach was adopted to explore the perceptions and impact of using this technology. This included a participant questionnaire, a participant focus group and a careers professional questionnaire. These methods explored the perceptions of those involved and in this way, relate to stage 1 of Kirkpatrick’s four level model of evaluation (how they reacted to the introduction of the new method). In addition, in order to examine the actual learning gained as a result of implementing screencasting, a CV rubric was designed to measure the improvements to the participant’s CVs resulting from the screencasting feedback. This impact of the screencasting relates to stage 2 of the Kirkpatrick model, which explores the extent to which learning took place and also stage 3, which investigates the degree to which the learning had been applied.

The findings indicate that the majority of students and graduates found screencasting to be a preferred format for remote feedback on CVs and concurred that this method did provide feedback which was more personal in nature, contained greater detail and led to a deeper understanding than other forms of feedback may have done. Using the CV rubric demonstrated that a deeper level of impact had occurred, beyond simply enjoying this form of feedback: the participants had applied what they had learned, with positive results, in terms of quantifiable improvements made to their CVs. The perceptions of the careers professionals were more mixed in nature, both in terms of the quality of the feedback produced using this medium and also of the time taken, compared to written feedback. This varied response is reflected in the fact that as a result of this study, 50% of the careers professionals indicated they intend to continue to adopt the use of this technology in their practice, whilst 50% indicated that they would not.

As a result of this research, it is hoped that careers professionals at other institutions will consider exploring the use of screencasting as a means of providing effective feedback; the recommendations included in this report have been outlined to enable these individuals to gain from the experiences of the researchers in this study.
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1. Introduction

1.1 What is screencasting?

In the context of its pedagogical use, screencasting can be seen as an instructional technology in the form of a software programme that is used to capture images from a computer screen to produce a video. Guided audio instruction can be recorded concurrently with the captured images. The screencast is then sent electronically to a student and accessed independently (Hoepner & Hemmerich, 2016). Screencasting has been identified as a form of technology that can help to improve a student’s perception of the feedback that they receive (Marriot, 2012).

1.2 Context

It is expected that most students will be required to create a Curriculum Vitae (CV) during their time at Keele, in order to be successful in applying for a job or postgraduate course. Hillage & Pollard (1998, cited in HEA, 2013) state that ‘in simple terms, employability is about being capable of getting and keeping fulfilling work.’; they note that a component of employability development is ‘presentation’ (e.g. CV writing), as it forms part of the key element of being able to present oneself effectively to employers (and those recruiting for postgraduate courses). At Keele, many students seek help from Careers and Employability in creating a CV and whilst some seek this help face-to-face, others, in particular graduates, ask for guidance via email. When providing this remote support in the past, careers professionals have given written feedback using Microsoft Word comments. However, it is sometimes wondered if students fully understand the points being made; it can be challenging to suggest the major corrections that are sometimes required, whilst also providing encouragement to a student in their job searching. In addition, this written feedback that can involve inserting comments to the majority of the lines of the CV and can be time consuming for a careers professional to provide. Screencasting software would allow a student to hear an audio recording of a careers professional whilst watching a ‘video’ of that professional highlighting changes or indicating certain parts of the CV or application form on the screen.

This can be seen against the backdrop of the current climate of increased university tuition fees, where students can be viewed as consumers, providing a satisfying student experience and ensuring student engagement are seen as key priorities for UK universities (BIS, 2011). Feedback nationally has been consistently identified as an area for improvement through the National Student Survey. The importance of feedback has been described as “one of the most potent influences on student learning and achievement” (Jonsson, 2012, p. 63). Often requests for feedback on CVs are time sensitive, in that the student or graduate is working to a date dictated by the submission deadline set by the opportunity provider. Moreover, timely provision of feedback to students has been linked with effectiveness of that feedback (Jonsson, 2012 and Borup, et al., 2015). One challenge for careers professionals is not necessarily in how to provide effective feedback face to face, rather how to provide quality feedback remotely when a timely response is highly desirable. Typically, for CVs this would often be by text added to a Word document using the review feature or via telephone. But is there a more effective approach available?

Recently a pilot study was conducted at Keele University that investigated the use of audio feedback as a tool to aid students in improving their CVs. Forty students who were seeking feedback on their CVs were provided (via email) with an audio file using a digital voice recorder. Although overall participants were positive about receiving feedback in this way, it also highlighted that if given the
choice 59% of students would opt for visual as well as audio feedback. This suggests that screencasting, which provides both visual and audio feedback, would be received even more positively by students (and graduates).

It has also been recognised that within the UK University sector technology is underutilised in supporting the development of student employability (JISC, 2015). In this report, “screencasts” and “video” were singled out as examples of “potential for greater adoption” (JISC, 2015, p. 20).

The use of screencasting could also benefit students living off campus, who may find it more difficult to access a face to face appointment. Unanticipated additional benefits of adopting screen casting (and in particular, the audio feedback element of this) could include improving the service provided to students who have English as a second language (as suggested by MucCullogh, 2010) or for students with dyslexia (Rotherham, 2009). In addition, Lunt (2010) notes that audio feedback is preferable for students with visual impairments. This removal of potential barriers for certain groups of students would demonstrate an innovative approach to supporting them to develop employability skills.

1.3 Research questions

The aim was to investigate the use of technology when providing feedback to students and graduates. More specifically, to explore the use of screencasting as a tool to aid students in improving their CVs. The project aimed to determine if screencasting could enhance the perceived quality of feedback given remotely from a student/graduate and careers professional perspective.

1. To what extent do students and graduates perceive screencasting to provide an enhanced quality of feedback in the following areas:

   a. *Depth* (more feedback and greater detail)?
   b. *Understanding* (in terms of knowing what the feedback means and how to implement it)?
   c. *The extent to which it is more personal* (in terms of being unique and distinctive to them)?

2. To what extent does screencasting have an impact on student and graduate action on the feedback (in terms of improvement)?

3. To what extent do careers professionals perceive screencasting as a method that enhances feedback in the following areas identified above (a, b and c)?

4. To what extent do careers professionals consider screencasting to have an impact on the time taken to provide feedback (when compared to written feedback)?
2. Literature Review

A literature review using Library Search revealed that there is no published research on the use of screen casting for feedback on CVs. A further search conducted using the AGCAS (Association of Graduate Careers Services) Journal, Phoenix, again revealed no relevant results. This suggests that there is a significant gap in research and that there is currently no academic or professional literature specifically around screen-casting feedback on CVs. However, the use of screen-casting for feedback has been an area of research in various subject disciplines.

Audio (recorded) feedback, which is an element of the multimodal approach that is screen-casting, has been associated with enabling more feedback to be delivered in a shorter period of time (Orlando, 2016; Crook, et al., 2012; West, 2016). This highlights the differences in communicating via text and via audio in terms of efficiency when it is considered that the production of a 10-minute screen cast is “approximately equivalent to 1000 words of written feedback” (West, 2016, p. 407).

Screen-casting has been associated with increased student understanding of feedback (West, 2016). Markers have reported that using screen-casting encourages them to focus on feedback useful for deep learning such as content, rather than surface learning such as spelling and punctuation (Vincelette, 2013). Students have reported that the ability to hear the feedback and then see exactly where this feedback applied in their work leads to greater understanding than just written or audio feedback alone (Orlando, 2016). As well as aiding understanding, hearing the tone used in delivering the feedback is associated by students with a more personal feedback experience (Thompson, 2012; Vincelette, 2013). In Vincelette and Bostic’s study they found that students made more effective revisions of their work when feedback was provided via screen-casting (Vincelette, 2013).

In terms of saving time for staff providing feedback, (Rotherham, 2009) notes that some of the staff in his study did report that it took them less time to give feedback. He adds that favourable circumstances for this time-saving to occur include when the staff member is comfortable with the technology, when they tend to type slowly but record speech quickly and a substantial amount of feedback is given. A summary report by JISC on the same ‘Sounds Good’ study stated that the majority of practitioners taking part have continued to use the technique after the project, claiming that this is due to the ability to give ‘more extended feedback within the same time, or less’ (JISC, 2009).
3. Methodology

3.1 Method

Quantitative data was collected through a questionnaire and qualitative data collection through free text boxes and a focus group. Questionnaires are useful in terms of collecting survey data and offer a scalability that means that large numbers of participant data can be collected (Wilson & Mclean, 1994), moreover when anonymous, can lead to greater candour in responses (Norton, 2009). Focus groups are useful in gaining insights and richer data than possible from a questionnaire alone, they are seen as being particularly useful in gathering data on opinions and attitudes (Cohen, et al., 2011). The rationale behind using this mixed methods approach is that it would allow for richer data collection, it is also an approach that has the potential to provide a more complete picture in terms of the student experience of receiving feedback via screencasting and increased accuracy of data (Descombe, 2008).

During the data collection period, screencasting was used to provide feedback in response to all requests (for CV feedback) received via email. All Year 1, 2 and finalists from Keele University were also contacted via email and invited to submit their CVs. This probability sampling approach is recognised as having less risk in terms of bias (Cohen, et al., 2011). The feedback was sent to the students, together with a request to join the research project and a questionnaire. All participants recruited in this way were encouraged to act upon the feedback and re-submit their updated CV. They were also invited to take part in a focus group. The four careers professionals conducting the screencasts and providing the feedback were asked to complete a questionnaire. The table below represents the student/graduate sample involved in the research project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Screencasts</th>
<th>Completed Student/Graduate Questionnaires (Participants)</th>
<th>Re-submitted CVs</th>
<th>Focus group participants</th>
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<td>79</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
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3.2 Design

3.2.1 Participant questionnaire. Using a Likert item scale (“Strongly agree” to “Strongly disagree” options) the questionnaire measured agreement to statements relating to their opinions of Screencasting as a method for receiving feedback in the following areas:

- Clarity: whether the feedback was clear and easy to understand.
- Understanding: whether it aided their understanding.
- Depth: whether they received feedback that is more detailed.
- Tailored: whether they perceived the feedback as being more personal.
- Preference: their preferred method for receiving feedback.

Each question was followed by a free text box to collect qualitative data.

3.2.2 Re-submitted CVs. A CV marking rubric tool was created to score the CVs before and after feedback provided by Screencasting to measure distance travelled in terms of action on the feedback. The construction of the rubric was informed by the “Part-by-Part Development of a Rubric” process (Stevens & Levi, 2005, pp. 6-15). Although Stevens and Levi suggest starting with a 3-scale rubric, for the intended use of the Rubric it was decided that a 3-scale rubric would not be a
sensitive enough measure of distance travelled in terms of action on feedback by students. Initial evaluation of the rubric was conducted using the Metarubric evaluation checklist (Stevens & Levi, 2005, p. 94). A Delphi method was used, involving the careers practitioners at Keele University to gain consensus on the suitability of the CV rubric for assessing CVs and to calibrate it as a tool.

3.2.3 Focus group. A semi-structured group interview approach was used. This interview was recorded and transcribed. A constant comparative type method was used to analyse the quantitative data and identify themes.

3.2.4 Careers professional questionnaire. Using a Likert item scale ("Strongly agree" to "Strongly disagree" options) the questionnaire measured agreement to statements relating to their perceptions of Screencasting as a method for providing feedback in the following areas: Overall experience: whether they liked Screencasting. Time taken: to provide feedback in comparison to written feedback. Clarity, depth, understanding and “tailored” (as defined above) and their preference for method of feedback (Screencasting only, written only or audio only).

3.3 Resources used. Screencasts were recorded using Screencast-o-Matic software, https://screencast-o-matic.com on desktop PCs. Logitech 960 USB PC headsets were used to record voice feedback. Due to the potential difficulty associated with electronically sending large data files it was decided to upload the Screencasts to a shared Google drive and then send feedback via a link included in an email.
4. Results

4.1. Participant questionnaire

4.1.1 Overall Experience: “I like this form of feedback”
The most frequently occurring response, the mode, with 30 out of 46 participants selecting this response was “Strongly Agree”. With 45 out of the 46 participants selecting either “Strongly Agree” or “Agree”, the majority of participants overall were positive about Screencasting as a form of feedback for CVs. Overall then respondents were favourable in terms of liking Screencasting as a method for feedback on their CVs.

![Figure 1: The extent to which the participants agree with the statement: “I like this form of feedback”](image)

4.2 Quality of feedback

4.2.1 Clarity: “The audio and visual feedback was clear and easy to understand”
The most frequently occurring response, the mode, with 24 out of 46 selecting this response was “Strongly Agree”. With 9 respondents selecting “Strongly Disagree” and “Neutral” the median response is still “Strongly Agree” indicating that overall participants agreed with the statement. However, with almost 20% (19.5%) of total participants selecting “Strongly Disagree” this does highlight a potential issue with the clarity of the feedback. Quotes from respondents were analysed and 4 respondents provide a small amount of context to this issue; “the sibilance on the "s" and "t" consonants were difficult to bare”, “Microphone was a bit crackly at times”, “the clarity of the microphone could be better” and “sound was good but a little bit fuzzy”. These responses highlight a specific issue with the sound (with no respondents referring to the visual quality of the feedback).
4.2.2 Understanding: “Screencasting aided your understanding of the feedback given in your CV”
The most frequent response for this statement, with the mode being “Strongly Agree”. Taking responses as a whole the median response was still “Strongly Agree”. Of the 13 qualitative responses provided by participants all were positive. 8 of the 13 participants highlighted that they found the combination of audio in explaining with visual in showing, particularly useful; “All of the points were verbally explained and well evidenced, watching them work through it also helped to understand any issues from a recruiters perspective”, “visual and audio instructions worked well together”, “see exactly what areas were being critiqued”, “It allowed me to link specific comments to the specific sections of my CV” and “It meant that the careers advisor (Ben) could make edits and show me what he means about his feedback, rather than just describing it verbally. This was really useful” are indicative responses that illustrate this.

4.2.3 Depth of feedback: “Screencasting provided more depth of feedback than expected”
The most frequent response for this statement, with the mode being “Strongly Agree”. Taking responses as a whole the median response was still “Strongly Agree”. Of the 10 participants who provided qualitative responses 4 referred specifically and positively to the amount of feedback they received in their screencasts; “I did not expect that I would be gaining the sheer amount of feedback that I did”, “I wasn’t expecting a 20 minute video and was pleasantly surprised”, and “Yes a perfect
amount!’. With one respondent making a direct comparison to written feedback “considerably more detailed than an email could ever be”

4.2.4 Providing tailored feedback: “Screencasting was more personal than other forms of feedback might have been”

Participants responded positively to this statement with the mode and medium being “Strongly Agree” and only 2 respondents selecting “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree”. Of the 6 participants who provided qualitative responses to this statement 3 linked the ability to see their own CV being commented on as confirmation that they were not simply receiving generalised statements or feedback; “Screen casting meant that I could actually see my own CV, and knew that the feedback being given was specific to me rather than just generic comments” being indicative of these responses. No qualitative data was provided that could explain the 2 respondents who selected “Disagree” or “Strongly disagree”.

Figure 4: The extent to which the participants agree with the statement: “Screencasting provided more depth of feedback than expected”

Figure 5: The extent to which the participants agree with the statement: “Screencasting was more personal than other forms of feedback might have been”
4.3 Future planning

4.3.1 Changes to feedback: “What, if anything, would you change about the feedback you received?”
The data collected from this question was qualitative. 19 participants in total responded to this question. Of these respondents 14 indicated that they would not change anything; “nothing, I was more than happy with it”. 3 respondents indicated that they would like the screencasting feedback to be backed up with “written version”, with 1 respondent suggesting specifically a “quick summary”. 1 respondent suggested the inclusion of links to websites that included examples and templates of CVs. 1 respondent suggested that careers professionals could make the changes for them on the CV and return it!

4.3.2 Preference for method of feedback
With only 2 respondents reporting a preference for written feedback and no respondents reporting a preference for audio feedback, Screencasting was the clear preferred method in terms of receiving feedback.
4.2 Participant focus group

Four participants (2 male, 2 female; 2 current students, 2 recent graduates) attended the focus group, which was facilitated by a careers professional (one who did not act as a researcher in this study). This section which describes the results of the focus group in terms of themes which have been identified is split into two main parts: one which describes anticipated themes (where key areas identified from relevant literature were explored) and one which describes new themes (which emerged from the focus group discussion).

4.2.1 Anticipated themes

4.2.1.1 Quality of feedback

One theme which the participants were asked consider was the impact that using screencasting had on the quality of the feedback; this was discussed in terms of the extent to which this format aided understanding of the feedback provided, the depth and detail provided and how tailored this feedback could be.

Regarding the extent to which screencasting aided understanding, the focus group participants were in agreement that this format had assisted their understanding of the feedback provided. Indicative statements included: “I think it was really clear, because the screencast can highlight exactly what they’re talking about” and “You could just highlight bits and actually see which bits you’re referring to, whereas if it is just written feedback, it’s kind of trying to describe it so it’s clear.” This is in accord with the results of the participant questionnaire, where 93% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that the screencasting aided understanding of the feedback.

Secondly, in terms of the depth of the feedback, participants concurred that this format allowed for an increase in this, with statements such as: “it’s a lot more detailed” and “it was very detailed so it was easy to make changes”. This reflects the findings of the participant questionnaire, where 91% of the respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that the screencasting did allow for greater depth in the feedback provided. Finally, regarding how tailored or personal they had found the screencasting feedback to be, the focus group participants indicated that they had found the feedback to be more personal. Statements indicating this include: “it was also very personal, so the person who was doing the recording was saying things that could help me as well, not just with the CV, but with potential jobs and things like that”; another added “I liked that it was personal and it was almost, like even though you couldn’t reply, it was very conversational”. Another suggested that the tone of voice was key: “so I liked the tone it was delivered in and that’s really useful when we’re doing something that’s quite important”. Again, this echoes the results from the participant questionnaire, where again 91% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that screencasting was more personal form of feedback than others might have been.

4.2.1.2 Clarity of the screencasting recording

As 20% of the respondents to the participant questionnaire had indicated that they strongly disagreed with the statement “The audio and visual feedback was clear and easy to understand”, this was a subject the researchers were keen to explore during the focus group. However, when asked about the clarity of the recording, all focus group participants stated that this had been clear and no issues were noted; statements relating to this included: “I think it was really clear - sometimes if you’re recording something it’s a bit muffled, but it was really, really clear” and “there’s no background noises or nothing, there’s just the voice of the person talking so it’s just crisp and clear for me”. This is in disagreement with the 20% of respondents from the participant questionnaire, which, along with the fact that 76% of questionnaire participants indicated that they
agreed or strongly agreed that the feedback was clear, suggests that perhaps the issue could be with the equipment owned by those who found the recording unclear. This is a concern, however and further consideration should be given to what can be done about this potential issue.

4.2.1.3 How have the participants used the feedback so far?
When asked what they have done with the screencasting feedback so far, the focus group respondents had different responses. One had adapted their CV and resubmitted it for further feedback, two others were working on the suggested alterations to their CVs and the fourth had used the CV to apply for a job and had been successful in obtaining this (this participant noted: “I’m really happy with the way my CV is set out now…it’s much more professional now”).

4.2.2 New themes

4.2.2.1 Accessing the Screencasting
A theme which emerged through the focus group discussions related to how the participants had accessed the feedback. One sub theme was around the issue of the type of device used; several participants noted that they had first accessed the feedback on their mobile phones, but when they understood the extent of the feedback, had then decided to use laptops. Several participants described how they used a ‘split screen’ approach on their laptop/PC, where they could view both the screencasting recording and their own CV at the same time. All four participants described how they used the pause function on the screencast, so that they could edit their CV as they listened to the feedback. One described this: “so I turned my laptop on, had my CV on one side and the screencasting on the other side, I pressed play and the just did all the alterations from there...and then I went back and just made sure I’d done everything”. This is not something that had been anticipated by the researchers, but demonstrates a practical way for a recipient to observe the feedback, whilst also making alterations to their CV. This is perhaps something that could be suggested to students and graduates receiving feedback via screencasting in the future, to enable them to update their CV as they absorb the suggestions made.

Others mentioned that this flexibility in the way the feedback could be accessed, at a time that suited them, was one of the elements they enjoyed about screencasting, for example: “what I like about it is you can go back and sort of pause and you can come back and review it at a later date”. Another participant described how they sat down with their father, to obtain their advice on which alterations to make, as they watched and listened to the screencasting recording; they added that they found the opportunity to reflect on the suggestions in this way to be helpful.

4.2.2.2 Timing considerations
Whilst all the focus group participants concurred that the length of time (which they noted was approximately 20 minutes) of the screencasting recording was appropriate and helpful; one stated “the time itself I just found really useful because obviously it’s someone taking the time out to spend that much time on it”, whilst another noted that the flexibility with accessing the feedback (when it suited them) meant that the length of time of the recording less of an issue: “if you’re a bit busy you can pause it, go do your thing and come back and just carry on doing your CV, so I think it’s really good with the timing”. This was unanticipated and several careers professionals had noted that felt the need to restrict the length of the recording due to anticipating participants’ short attention spans (Barnes et al, 2007 describe a decrease in attention span for university students, compared to previous generations); it would appear that this concern is unwarranted.
4.2.2.3 Comparisons with other experiences of receiving feedback

Another emerging theme related to making a comparison with previous experiences of receiving feedback, via written feedback from academics at university and also via face-to-face appointments with careers professionals. Firstly, on several occasions participants mentioned that screencasting was a more effective way of receiving feedback than the feedback they had received on assignments from academic staff. One stated “it’s a lot more detailed”; another described their feedback from academic staff as being general and that they had to make assumptions about what it was referring to, “but on the screencast, you can tell which point they’re talking about”.

Secondly, at various points during the focus group, three of the four participants described the screencasting feedback they had received more favourably than one-to-one meetings with a careers professional. One stated that the fact the screencasting feedback was recorded meant that you could use it to remember what had been said, which could not be done with a face-to-face appointment. The same participant, describing how she had found it useful that she and her father could sit down together to listen to the screencast also noted: “obviously if I was having one-on-one careers meeting at Keele, I wouldn’t be able to have one of my parents there”. Two other participants described how they liked the easy access of the screencast, compared to having to organise a one-to-one meeting; one stated: “I think [screencasting] is a lot better because normally you’ve got to take time out to come and meet someone and talk to them”, whilst the other added: “if you went to a one-on-one interview you think of all the time prior, like getting there and whatever, when you can just click on [the screencast] straightaway”. Whilst careers professionals are likely to consider that in a face-to-face appointment and the conversation this involves that more in-depth guidance can be provided, this an interesting finding and could have possible implications for future provision of guidance and advice.
4.3. CV rubric assessment

Using the CV rubric, the CVs from each participant who had resubmitted their CV for further feedback were given a score. There are four dimensions (or sections) to the rubric: Presentation, Structure, Linguistic Quality and Content; a CV can be awarded up to 5 ‘marks’ in each of these sections, leading to a total score which is out of 20 marks. The researchers scored each resubmitted CV independently using the CV rubric, scores that diverged were discussed and an overall score agreed upon. Using this measurement tool, it was possible to examine the improvement, or ‘distance travelled’ from the first CV submitted, to the second CV submitted by the same participant, after they had received screencasting feedback and acted upon this feedback.

To show the ‘distance travelled’, the marks allocated for each of the four dimensions (Presentation, Structure, Linguistic Quality and Content) for every CV were added together and compared to the total scores for each of the four dimensions after the recipients had received screencasting feedback. As can be seen in Figure 7, the total scores for each dimension were higher for the CVs submitted after feedback than the original CVs. The greatest increase for the total scores of the participants CVs was for the Content section, which increased by 12.5. The total scores for Structure increased by 9 and for Linguistic Quality by 8, whilst the total scores for Presentation increased by 5.

Figure 7. The change in total scores for each dimension of the CV rubric before and after screencasting feedback

Figure 8 overleaf shows a more detailed examination of the changes in score (between first and second versions of the CV) for each participant. As can be seen there is significant variation in where the changes have occurred, in terms of the elements of the rubric. This is perhaps to be expected, as the participants are individuals and they submitted very different CVs; some first CVs were already of a high standard and required only small suggestions of changes to be made; these participants may not then have a high score in terms of the improvements made, or ‘distance travelled’. Others needed more alterations and therefore, if these participants responded to the suggestions made via the screencasting, it was possible for these to receive a higher score.
In addition, some participants’ CVs may have required improvement in some elements of the rubric more than others and so may have received a higher score for this section than other participants.

It can be seen that the second CVs of participants 2 and 5 actually had a negative change in score in one dimension (in Structure for participant 2 and in Presentation for participant 5). This is perhaps due to a misunderstanding in the feedback provided, perhaps more research is required to ascertain the reasons for this. However, overall, every participant’s changes in response to the first feedback via screencasting resulting in a second CV which scored higher on the CV rubric than their first CV had scored. This is a positive result and indicates a deeper level of impact than can be demonstrated by the participants’ perceptions which are recorded in sections 1 and 2 of this Results section of the report.

Figure 8. Participant changes in score for each dimension of the CV rubric
4.4 Careers Professional Questionnaire

4.4.1 Overall experience
There was a mixed response relating to how much the careers professionals enjoyed using screencasting as a medium to provide remote feedback to students and graduates, with two out of four indicating that they had really liked using it, whilst two out of four revealing that they had neither liked nor disliked it. Quotes from those who had liked using screencasting included “overall a very positive experience” and “I found this to be a much easier way to give feedback”. In contrast, one of those who had found using screencasting to be a less positive medium stated “I did not find it any easier for providing feedback than doing so in written format”, whilst another described an issue with recording the screencasting feedback relating to there being no empty rooms in which to do this. Interestingly, all careers professionals indicated an initial apprehension about how they would adapt to using the technology, but several individuals noted that they found it easier after a couple of times of recording screencasts.

When asked what, if anything, they would change about using screencasting as a format, several individuals mentioned the restrictions regarding a quiet space to provide the feedback as a concern, particularly during busy times during the university calendar. Another mentioned that several recipients had commented on the clarity of the recording, adding that it could be helpful to investigate the possibility of obtaining more effective microphones.

4.4.2 Time taken
When asked to compare the length of time to provide feedback via screencasting with written feedback, again, there was a mixed response. The individual who considered screencasting to take more time than other mediums noted that the lack of empty rooms in which to make the screencasting recording did not help; this issue was also mentioned by one of the other career professionals, who also felt that adapting to the new technology may have had a bearing on their response. One respondent noted that although the time taken was the same (as written feedback), they felt that they were using time more efficiently, as the feedback provided was of a higher quality (in terms of amount and depth); the individual who had indicated that screencasting took less time concurred with this: “it took less time to provide more in-depth feedback”.

4.4.3 Quality of feedback
4.4.3.1 Clarity
Regarding the issue of whether screencasting could cause the feedback provided to be clear and easy to understand, there was again a mixed response, two out of four of the careers professionals indicating that they agreed with this, whilst two out of four indicated that they did not. One of those who felt that clarity had been improved stated “I felt that I could explain points I was making more clearly using screencasting”; however, another individual stated that they did not feel that ease of comprehension had necessarily been caused by the screencasting, but by the quality of the guidance provided (regardless of the mode of delivery). One careers professional described some concern relating to sibilance (as had been fed back by some participants) and described how they had sought to reduce this.

4.4.3.2 Understanding
When asked to what extent they agreed that screencasting would aid the students understanding of the feedback given, three out of the four careers professionals indicated that they strongly agreed
with this; however, one respondent disagreed with this concept. One individual noted that the understanding depends upon the individual providing the guidance, as well as the recipient. However, another stated that with screencasting, it is possible to go beyond ‘telling’ to actually showing; examples given included visibly showing the pages of a website rather than just referring to a web address, actually changing elements of the CV to demonstrate what changes could be made and using the cursor to link what is being said to what the recipient sees. Several careers professionals mentioned how screencasting can help when broaching potentially sensitive areas (e.g. where many alterations are required on an individual’s CV) in a positive but constructive way: “with the audio aspect of screencasting you can convey much more through the tone of your voice”.

4.4.3.3 Depth of feedback
Again, there was a mixed response when careers professionals were asked for their views on whether screencasting could enhance the depth of feedback provided: two out of four strongly agreed that it could, whilst the remaining two disagreed with this perception. One of those who disagreed noted: “I don’t feel it enabled me to go into greater depth compared to written feedback”, whilst another described how they were concerned that the recipient would only listen to the audio for a limited time period, which led that careers professional to provide less depth than they would have done in a written version. Contrastingly, another careers professional felt that it was easier to go into more depth using screencasting, as the audio element of this enabled more opportunities to explain the reasoning for the suggestions made. Another stated that “By the end of a screencast, I feel like I have touched on everything I have identified; with written feedback, it always feels like you are prioritising areas of focusing on specific bits...basically, I think you can provide a more holistic level of feedback with screencasting”.

4.4.3.4 Providing tailored feedback
When asked whether screencasting had enabled them to provide more tailored, or personal feedback, the responses ranged from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘disagree’. One respondent stated, “I don’t feel screencasting makes much difference”; another noted “screencasting was personal but no more so than any other form of feedback”. Those who agreed that screencasting could allow for more tailored feedback suggested that addressing the individual by name via the audio recording aided with this; one noted that “this gives the feedback a more personal touch”.

4.4.4 Preference for format used
Reflecting the responses throughout the questionnaire, when asked to indicate which form of feedback they would prefer to give remotely, two out of four stated that they would choose screencasting, whilst the remaining two stated they would choose written feedback. One individual who stated that they would prefer to provide written feedback added that whilst they recognised that some recipients (particularly those who are predominantly auditory learners) may prefer screencasting, their choice was based on their own learning and working style and that they felt they would provide a better product this way. One careers professional who selected screencasting as their preferred option said “for me, this is the easiest and most effective method of providing remote guidance for students and graduates on their CVs”.

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5. Discussion

5.1 The study design
As mentioned in the Methodology section, the four careers professionals providing the feedback via screencasting were asked to complete a questionnaire and the return rate for this was 100%. In addition, 46 out of 79 student and graduate participants responded to the questionnaire, (which is a return rate of 58%); 16% of the participants re-submitted their CVs for further feedback (which enabled the researchers to measure ‘distance travelled’ as a result of the initial screencasting feedback) and the focus group participants represented 5% of the total participant cohort. Obviously, it would be ideal to have a higher rate at each stage of this study, but it is felt that these percentages are adequate to provide an impression of participants’ opinions and of the impact of this new format of feedback. In addition, sampling errors were minimised to a degree as these participants not being part of a particular discipline or year group, which indicates that the results are generalisable, to other students and graduates, both at Keele University and at other institutions. Although it could be argued that the 79 participants who emailed Careers and Employability to request feedback on their CVs, were evidently confident users of technology and that this study could have a selection bias as a result (as it may not include the opinions of those who are less likely to use technology when participating in activities to develop their employability), the researchers consider this bias to be relatively insignificant, as being a user of technology is a requirement of many elements of university life (for example, students are expected to access course information and to submit assignments using technology).

The participant questionnaire and focus group explored how students and graduates felt about receiving feedback via screencasting and in this way falls in to stage 1 of Kirkpatrick’s four level model of evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016), which, in the case of this study examines the extent to which the participants found the method of feedback favourable. However, using the CV rubric to measure the extent of improvement in the participants’ re-submitted CVs extends the breadth of this study to subsequent stages of Kirkpatrick’s model of evaluation: to stage 2 (exploring the extent to which learning took place for the participants) and to stage 3 (investigating the degree to which the participants had applied what they had learned). Stage 4 of the Kirkpatrick model examines the degree to which targeted outcomes occur as a result of the intervention; although one of the focus group participants revealed during the discussion that she had been successful in using her updated CV to obtain a job, this is not something which had been intended to be captured as part of the study design. In order to investigate this final stage in the Kirkpatrick model, a longer-term and more substantial study would be required.

5.2 Usability and accessibility of screencasting for participants
Of the 79 participants receiving feedback via screencasting, none contacted us to state that they had experienced issues in accessing the technology and the four focus group participants indicated that they had accessed the feedback with ease. As described in the Results section, findings from the focus group included an unanticipated theme relating to how the participants accessed the feedback, which involved using a split screen approach, so that they could follow the screencast and pause the recording in order to make alterations as they went along. This flexibility in accessing the feedback was noted as a particular advantage of screencasting by several participants in the focus group.

One advantage of using this technology could be that in terms of remote guidance, it provides a more personalised form of feedback for students and graduates who cannot come to campus for face-to-face guidance on their CVs (e.g. during vacation periods, or for students with caring
responsibilities, or have graduated and now live at a distance from campus). In addition, the audio nature of this format could help students who do not have English as their first language to more fully understand and grasp the meaning of the feedback.

5.3 The effectiveness of screencasting as a tool to aid students and graduates with their CVs

The findings of this study suggest that there are real benefits to using screencasting as a medium for providing remote feedback on students’ and graduates’ CVs. The feedback from student and graduate participants was particularly positive, both in the questionnaire and the focus group. 98% of respondents to the questionnaire agreed that they liked this form of feedback; in terms of the quality of the feedback, the majority of respondents also indicated that the format assisted in the clarity of the feedback, aided understanding, provided more depth than expected and afforded a more personal form of feedback than other forms might have been. Finally, 96% of respondents to the questionnaire indicated that their preference for future feedback would be via screencasting, which strongly suggests that this is an effective way to provide remote guidance on CVs.

The findings of the focus group concur with the indications described in the previous paragraph. Indicative statements relating to the perceived increased levels of clarity, detail and tailored approach can be found in section 4.2 of this report. The focus group provided the researchers with fresh insights into how the participants had accessed the screencasting and also, despite concerns from several careers professionals, a sense of satisfaction relating to the length of the screencasting recordings. Three of the four focus group participants even indicated that there were benefits of screencasting over face-to-face appointments, due to the flexibility and convenience of being able to access the feedback remotely. It should be noted, however, that in this study, screencasting was used to provide feedback on CVs alone; further research would be required to ascertain whether other elements of careers guidance (such as career decision-making) could be provided effectively in a remote way using this format.

Using the rubric to measure the extent to which the participants’ CV had improved after receiving the screencasting feedback enabled the researchers to demonstrate overall positive changes in each CV and in addition, to show evidence of a deeper level of impact. These positive changes were in some or all four dimensions on the CV rubric (presentation, structure, linguistic quality and content). Although it is not possible to demonstrate that these positive changes are greater than would have occurred with other forms of remote feedback (e.g. written feedback only), they certainly indicate that screencasting presents an effective medium for providing this feedback.

The final element of the methodology of this study involved asking the four careers professionals to complete questionnaires regarding their experience of providing feedback using screencasting. When asked to consider if screencasting had taken more or less time than providing written feedback, there was little consensus: whilst 50% felt that the time taken was about the same, 25% felt it took less time and 25% felt than it had taken more time. These results relating to the time taken to produce screencast recordings, are interesting in their variation. Perhaps, as suggested by one careers professional, the length of time taken to produce a screencast could reduce over time (once individuals become more accustomed to the new technology), so it is suggested that this matter should be looked at again, after some time has passed.

As has been described in section 4.4, the opinions on using screencasting to provide feedback from the four careers professionals were mixed, illustrated by the response to the question “I liked using screencasting to provide feedback”, where 50% responded by strongly agreeing with this statement, whilst the other 50% neither agreed nor disagreed. This pattern was followed throughout many of
the questions relating to clarity, perceived understanding, depth of the feedback and the extent to which the feedback could be more tailored than other forms might have been; this split in opinion was also illustrated in the preferences indicated by each professional, where 50% affirmed they would choose to use screencasting in the future, whilst 50% stated they would prefer to use written feedback. It would appear therefore that some professionals had a more positive experience of using screencasting and that, as suggested by one professional, screencasting suits the working styles of some individuals more than others.

5.4 Future plans
Due to the positive response given by participants in this study, at least two of the careers professionals at Keele University intend to adopt the use of screencasting into their practice. These individuals have even started using this format when providing remote guidance on other career-related activities, such as personal statements for postgraduate applications. However, as 4% of the respondents to the participant questionnaire indicated that they would prefer written feedback rather than screencasting, it is held that students and graduates should always be given the option to receive the feedback in a way which suits them.

One issue which had a bearing on the negative experience of using screencasting for the careers professionals during this study was the lack of adequate rooms in which to carry out the screencast recording at times; this is something which should be investigated to see if it is possible to remove this potential barrier to using this format to provide feedback.

The CV rubric, designed by the researchers, was used for the first time during this study; the results indicate that this is an effective tool for examining CVs and quantifying the impact of feedback provided. As a result of using this instrument in this study, the researchers plan to carry out further research into the effectiveness of this tool by consulting with employers and are delighted to have been successful in their bid for further HECSU funding in order to achieve this.
6. Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the impact of introducing screencasting as a method of providing effective remote guidance on the CVs of students and graduates. The research questions led to an investigation of the perceptions of the students and graduates, as well as an examination of the impact on their resulting CVs. In addition, the research questions also resulted in an exploration of the perceptions of the careers professionals and their views concerning the quality of the recordings and the time taken.

The findings indicate that the overwhelming majority of the students and graduates involved in the study agreed that screencasting did indeed provide a form of feedback which was in greater detail, more personal and led to a deeper understanding than other forms of feedback might have been. The use of a CV rubric demonstrated that a deeper level of impact had occurred, beyond simply enjoying this form of feedback: the participants had applied what they had learned, with positive results, in terms of quantifiable improvements made to their CVs.

The perceptions of the careers professionals relating to the quality of the feedback were found to be more varied in nature, with some individuals considering screencasting to be a method which enhances the feedback provided remotely to students and graduates, whilst other did not. Similarly, there were mixed opinions regarding the impact of screencasting on the time taken to provide this feedback.

As a result of this study, several careers professionals intend to continue to provide remote feedback via screencasting and in this way, there will be a positive and lasting impact for students and graduates at Keele University. Additionally, it is hoped that careers professionals at other institutions will consider adopting this technology; the recommendations section in this report has been included to enable others to learn from the researchers’ experiences. Finally, it is intended that further research will be undertaken relating to the CV rubric, in order to further explore the utility of this valuable tool.
7. Recommendations for Careers Professionals

The following recommendations, based on the findings of this study are made for careers professionals who are considering adopting screencasting as a method for providing remote feedback:

- As there are strong indications that students and graduates prefer screencasting to other forms, it is recommended that where this fits with a career professional’s working style, screencasting should be considered as a valuable method of providing remote feedback. This feedback could be relating to CVs, covering letters and also personal statements, where appropriate.

- In order for this to operate effectively, arrangements should be made regarding obtaining appropriate rooms for the screencasting recordings to be carried out without risk of disturbance.

- As there were some comments from participants in this study relating to the sound quality of the recording, it is advised that a thorough investigation is made into quality microphones that have a facility to reduce sibilance and have proven capacity to produce clear voice recording, before they are purchased.

- For career professionals who are new to screencasting, it is advisable to obtain appropriate training in how to use the technology; this will have a positive impact on the quality of the recording and perhaps even the time taken to produce each screencast.

- Whilst recording the screencast, it is advisable to make full advantage of the visual function of this technology in order to make the feedback as detailed and explicit as possible; for example rather than just referring to a website, it is possible to open the appropriate webpages during the recording and show the relevant sections using the cursor.

- In terms of the length of time the screencast recording should be, this study found that this appeared to be of less concern to students and graduates than the careers professionals had feared, due to the flexible way in which the recipients were accessing the feedback; perhaps, then, up to 20 minutes would be an appropriate length (but this may vary significantly, due to the amount of feedback required).

- It was suggested by several participants in this study that a written summary of the feedback, perhaps in bullet points, would be helpful to include in the email sent to the student or graduate; however other participants felt that this would be unnecessary. This is something which could be considered, perhaps if the feedback in the screencast was complex, with many different points covered.

- It is recommended that suggestions of how to access the feedback are included in the email to the student or graduate which contains the link to the screencast. These suggestions could include watching the recording on a split screen (on a laptop or PC), alongside their CV, so that they can pause the recording and make alterations at the time. Other suggestions could be to rewind the recording and re-listen to it as required, or once alterations have been made, to store the file and refer to it again when using the CV to apply for a different position.
8. References


9. Appendices

9.1 Student/graduate questionnaire

Please tick the appropriate boxes and answer the questions below:

A. Overall experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Your overall experience of receiving feedback on your CV via screen casting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>I liked this form of feedback</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

B. Quality of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Clarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The audio and visual feedback was clear and easy to understand</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Understanding the feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Screen casting aided your understanding of the feedback given on your CV</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Depth of feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Screen casting provided more depth of feedback than expected</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments....</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Providing tailored feedback

Screen casting was more personal than other forms of feedback might have been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

C. Future planning

6. What, if anything, would you change about the feedback you received?

7. Your preference

In the past, students have been provided with written feedback on CVs.

Given the choice, would your preference be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screen</th>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Audio feedback only?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....
9.2 Student/graduate focus group indicative questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigating the use of screen casting as a tool for providing effective feedback in Careers Guidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participant Focus Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicative topics to be discussed**

1. What was your overall experience of receiving feedback on your CV via screen casting?

2. Is there anything you would change about receiving your feedback using this format?

3. What are your views on the resulting clarity of using screen casting as a medium for providing feedback on CVs (i.e., how clear and easy to understand was the feedback)?

4. Did screen casting aid your understanding of how to act on the feedback provided on your CV? (If so, why was this?)

5. Do you think that this format can have an impact on the depth of feedback given (i.e. the detail provided or explanations given)?

6. In your opinion, was the feedback provided more tailored, (or personal in nature) using screen casting?

7. If you were to receive feedback on your CV again, which format would you prefer (screen casting, written only, or audio only)?

8. Any other comments?
9.3 Careers professional questionnaire

Please tick the appropriate boxes and answer the questions below:

A. Overall experience

1. Your overall experience of providing feedback on CVs via screen casting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I liked using screen casting to provide feedback</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

2. Time taken

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The time taken to provide feedback using screen casting compared to providing written feedback</th>
<th>Screen casting took less time</th>
<th>Screen casting took the same amount of time</th>
<th>Screen casting took more time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

B. Quality of feedback

3. Clarity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screen casting caused the feedback to be clear and easy to understand</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

4. Understanding the feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screen casting will aid the students’ understanding of the feedback given on the CV</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....
5. Depth of feedback

*Screen casting enabled you to provide greater depth of feedback than expected*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

6. Providing tailored feedback

*Screen casting enabled you to provide more personal feedback than other forms might have been*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....

C. Future planning

7. *What, if anything, would you change about this format of providing feedback?*

8. Your preference

*Given the choice, would your preference for the format used to provide feedback would be:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Screen</th>
<th>Written</th>
<th>Audio feedback only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Comments....