"Yeah, There's an App for That":
Using Mobile Applications in Public Speaking Instruction

Matthew H. Barton
Southern Utah University, USA

Kevin A. Stein
Southern Utah University, USA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To help students: 1) learn to use mobile applications as the basis for speech topic selection; 2) identify new outlets for using technology to acquire information and solve problems; 3) learn to use cloud based information management tools to identify and organize research; 4) explore public speaking tools that can improve presentation and delivery skills.

BACKGROUND: RATIONALE

For those who have taught a public speaking course, the refrain "I can't find a topic for my speech," has likely become both familiar and somewhat irritating. Aside from a few examples in a course text, students are often directed to websites featuring a static list of topics, often a single term (e.g., the environment, gun control) to solve their problem. This advice often frustrates more than it illuminates due to age and/or lack of familiarity with the potential a topic might have when displayed in a list format. This activity implicitly argues that such a practice is outdated given the explosion of apps, with Apple reporting hundreds of thousands of apps and counting.

Today's students are raised in front of screens, including those found in class-rooms, video games, television, movie theaters, computers, and all variety of handheld devices. Moreover, cell phone use is omnipresent in and out of university classes and research on learning styles points to the rising need for high sensory visual experiences and multi-tasking based instruction in order to maintain student interest and focus.

Thus, this activity calls for students to explore computer applications as the basis for topic selection during required public speeches and presentations. Students are asked to search for an app (along with accompanying research) and pursue one of three paths to identify an appropriate topic: 1) Find an app that is relevant to audience need and create a speech about the app and corresponding social issues; 2) Find a group of apps around the same theme (e.g., health and fitness) where the theme is the focus rather than a specific app; 3) Use apps to help research a topic and present it.

Research skills are enhanced with the chosen app because students are not only using a medium with which they are familiar, apps are highly visual, promote ac-tive learning, fun, inexpensive, and easy to use. In addition, many of them are free (or range from $1-5) and there appears to be a steady stream of them entering the market via iTunes, Amazon Marketplace, and Google Marketplace (which are also themselves apps).

PROCEDURE

Instructors should work through the process before presenting it to students to im-prove clarity in explanation and confidence in execution.

1. Students are asked to find a speech topic for their first presentation that would interest class members or college students generally. This topic must be about a specific app (or group of apps). Students are encouraged to explore (e.g., play with) these apps and then write a list of at least three compelling reasons why other people might want to know about such an app. Reasons may include saving money, making schedules more efficient, etc.
2. Students are required to not only talk about their chosen app in the follow-ing class session, but to demonstrate it. The goal is to show as many apps as possible, thereby generating ideas for topic selection. The instructor should include a brief discussion about criteria for assessing how this app might fit (or be shaped to fit) the speech criteria. For instance, how does this app impact the way people live on a daily basis?

3 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: www.igi-global.com/chapter/yeah-there-app/82566

Related Content

Learning Exceptions to Refine a Domain Expertise
Rallou Thomopoulos (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1129-1136).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-exceptions-refine-domain-expertise/10963

Learning Temporal Information from Text
Feng Pan (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1146-1149).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/learning-temporal-information-text/10966

Secure Building Blocks for Data Privacy
Shuguo Han (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 1741-1746).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/secure-building-blocks-data-privacy/11053

Clustering of Time Series Data
Anne Denton (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 258-263).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/clustering-time-series-data/10830

Efficient Graph Matching
Diego Reforgiato Recupero (2009). *Encyclopedia of Data Warehousing and Mining, Second Edition (pp. 736-743).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/efficient-graph-matching/10902