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Digital access to Shakespeare

David Hopes discusses his research and work on improving digital access to Shakespeare.

Title: **Digital access to Shakespeare (/schools/edacs/departments/shakespeare/research/videos/DavidHopes.aspx)**
Duration: 3.31 mins

My name is David Hopes, I'm a Research Fellow here at the Shakespeare Institute.

The focus of my research is digital access to museums, libraries and archives material and the principle collection that I'll be focussing on is the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Collection which is also based in Stratford-upon-Avon.

So my post is a joint post, a joint research fellowship which runs over three years, very much focussing on how we can use digital technologies to facilitate access to all different types of users to some of the primary material which gets us closer to Shakespeare. The post itself will involve a lot of practice, so it's probably quite a unique fellowship in that sense, in that I'll be working very closely with the Institute and the Trust to facilitate partnerships and partnership projects over the course of three years and hopefully beyond.

One of the things I'm working on at the moment is a roadmap to suggest ways that we can streamline working between the Institute and the Trust. I'm also working on a digital development plan for the collections department at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust so that they can go digital in everything that they do, embed digital in everything that they do.

And some of the commentary around that I think will be interesting to the University of Birmingham because it has various different departments, not least VISTA, which is concerned with museum practice and the use of digital images.

Another thing I'm working on at the moment with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is an application, mobile phone application so probably from about October onwards visitors will be able to start using an application which employs the digital images which we'll create from the collection at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to add value to a visit to Stratford. So you can imagine downloading an application on your way top Stratford, I pay maybe £1.59 for it. That application will use GPS (Global Positioning Systems) so that you can locate yourself in the streets of Stratford and then say for example you visit the birthplace of Shakespeare you'd be able to call up images of items in the collection which will add value to standing outside the birthplace.

It's a partnership project not just for the University of Birmingham but the University of Coventry, and the Serious Games Institute. And one of the 'wow' factors we hope from that application will be the use of augmented reality, so for example you can stand opposite the site of New Place, Shakespeare's last home, which is no longer there - it's a gap site - you'll be able to hold up your camera, your phone, and lo and behold you'll be able to see an image of New Place. You might be able to get your family to pose in front of this virtual New Place and produce a postcard from it.

So it's that kind of technology that we're looking for and also unique ways of monetising the collections - something that the University and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust will want to look at.

The real original research I think from this post will be primarily in virtual environments for learning. Shakespeare Institute at the moment runs a very successful Distance Learning course which is quite small at the moment but a growth area is engaging people from across the world in some of the great teaching that happens here and I think there's a real opportunity to work with Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to use artefacts in a virtual sense an interactive sense, to facilitate that great postgraduate teaching that happens here.

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