1 Research for creative media production

The media world is bursting with creative media products trying to get our attention, and our money. Media producers put a lot of time and effort into planning and researching these creative media products.

The computer games, websites, television programmes, magazines and radio shows that we consume need to be carefully produced to appeal to the right audience. They need to generate enough income through sales, appeal to the right advertisers or sponsors and attract a good size of audience to justify their position in today's competitive media market place. Researchers play a very important role in the creative process and the information that they gather can change the content of the finished media product from the one that was originally planned.

This unit provides you with the opportunity to learn about the research methods and techniques that media producers use to try to make their creative media products a success. You will develop and use your research skills to investigate an existing media product that you are interested in. You will also research and gather material for your own creative media production. You will then have the opportunity to summarise your findings and present the results of your research.

Learning outcomes

After completing this unit you should:

1. know about research methods and techniques
2. be able to use research methods and techniques to investigate an existing media product
3. be able to use research methods and techniques to gather material for a media production
4. be able to present results of research.

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Assessment and grading criteria

This table shows you what you must do in order to achieve a **pass**, **merit** or **distinction** grade, and where you can find activities in this book to help you.

To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that you are able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, you are able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, you are able to:
P1 outline research methods and techniques **See Assessment activity 2.1, page xx**	**M1** describe research methods and techniques with some detail and with reference to appropriate illustrative examples **See Assessment activity 2.1, page xx**	**D1** evaluate research methods and techniques with reference to precise and detailed illustrative examples **See Assessment activity 2.1, page xx**
P2 use appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research into an existing media product **See Assessment activity 2.2, page xx**	**M2** use research methods and techniques competently to carry out reliable research into an existing media product **See Assessment activity 2.2, page xx**	**D2** use research methods and techniques skilfully to carry out substantial research into an existing media product **See Assessment activity 2.2, page xx**
P3 use appropriate research methods and techniques to carry out research for a proposed media production **See Assessment activity 2.3, page xx**	**M3** use research methods and techniques competently to carry out reliable research for a proposed media production **See Assessment activity 2.3, page xx**	**D3** use research methods and techniques skilfully to carry out substantial research for a proposed media production **See Assessment activity 2.3, page xx**
P4 present research results **See Assessment activity 2.4, page xx**	**M4** competently present research results in some detail **See Assessment activity 2.4, page xx**	**D4** clearly present precisely detailed research results **See Assessment activity 2.4, page xx**

How you will be assessed

This unit will be assessed by a number of internal assignments designed to allow you to show your understanding of the unit outcomes. Most of the assignments that you will complete for this unit will relate to work that you are doing in some of your other units. This means that the research that you undertake will relate directly to the media products that you are studying and the media products that you are producing.

Your assessments could be in the form of:

- presentations
- case studies
- practical tasks
- written assignments.

Student voice: Frank

This unit helped me to understand the things that I needed to do before I got my hands on the equipment to make my media product. It also showed me that all types of creative media production take careful planning and research to be successful.

I enjoyed using the internet and my centre's learning resource centre to find out more information about the films, television programmes and computer games that I like. It was good to do my own questionnaires, interviews and surveys and I became a lot more confident in talking to lots of different sorts of people. I even managed to run my own focus group, and was really surprised at the things I found out.

There were lots of practical tasks and activities for this unit, which made it more exciting for me. The bit I enjoyed most was planning and researching my own video production and gathering all of the material that I needed for it. It was great fun – and really interesting to see how all of my research material and information came together in the final production.

I was a little nervous about the final presentation of my research results as I had chosen to do this in front of an audience. However, it went really well and the positive feedback I got really boosted my confidence. Standing up and doing presentations in front of people is now not a problem. In fact, I love it!

- What areas of this unit might you find challenging?
- Which section of the unit are you most looking forward to?
- What preparation can you do in readiness for the unit assessments?

1. Know about research methods and techniques

Favourite television programme

What is your favourite television programme at the moment?

Write down the different methods you could use to find out the answers to these questions about your favourite television programme.

- How many people in your class watch this programme?
- What do they think about it?
- How many people in the UK watch it?
- Is it more popular with girls or with boys?

Discuss your findings with the rest of the class and then use the best suggestions to find out some of the answers.

To be able to undertake successful research for creative media production you need to have a good understanding of the main research methods and techniques that are used within the industry.

When you carry out your own research later in this unit you will need to use both **primary** and **secondary** research methods.

Primary research

The first question about your favourite television programme should have been easy for you to answer, but to answer the others you will need to do some **primary research**. Primary research is original research that is undertaken to find out new information. This involves asking people questions. The main techniques used by researchers when conducting primary research are asking people to complete a questionnaire, interviewing people in the street or over the phone, or running a focus group.

Key term

Primary research – original research to obtain new information using techniques such as interviews, questionnaires and focus groups.

Did you know?

Recent primary research in America showed that 52% of teenagers played computer games that involved thinking about moral and ethical issues, 43% played games in which they made decisions about how a community, city or nation should be run, and 40% played games where they learned about a social issue.

Computer game designers will use information like this to help them plan, design and produce a computer game that will appeal to a teenage audience.

In the creative media industry, a film company, television producer or games developer will show a preview of their new product to a group of people, often called a focus group, and ask them what they think of it. The answers that the focus group give often lead to changes being made to the product before it is launched.

Activity: Producing a simple questionnaire

1. In small groups, discuss what media-related information you would like to find out about the rest of the class. You might want to find out:
   - the most popular games console in the class and the top five games played
   - the radio station that people listen to and their favourite DJ
   - the number of times people visit the cinema and what film they saw last
   - how many people have satellite television and how many hours they watch in an average week
   - which social networking site people use and how many contacts they have on it.
2. Produce a simple questionnaire that your group can use with other members of the class to find out this information.
3. After completing the questionnaire, collate the results and discuss the findings with the rest of the class.

Functional skills

Producing the questionnaire will help you to develop your **English** skills in writing.

PLTS

Collaborating with others when working on your questionnaire will help develop your skills as a **team worker.**

Using a questionnaire is an example of a primary research technique. Which primary research techniques have you used?

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Secondary research

Sometimes a media organisation will decide to use research information that has already been gathered and analysed by somebody else. This is called **secondary research**. Secondary research techniques include finding information from books, magazines and archive material, searching for information on the Internet and taking notes from research studies that have already been undertaken.

A media organisation will often use secondary research to save time and to add to their own primary research. They will also use it to help them prove that what they are saying is true. For example, a magazine publisher might want to prove to an advertiser that their magazine really is read by thousands of teenage boys, and will use information from an organisation such as the National Readership Survey (NRS) to support what they are saying.

Key term

Secondary research – research using information already gathered by other people or organisations. Often available in books, magazines or websites.

Did you know?

Media research organisations such as the National Readership Survey (NRS) and the Broadcasters Audience Research Board (BARB) undertake primary research of their own and then sell the results to other media companies. This information is then used as secondary research to add to any primary research that media companies carry out themselves.

Activity: Media research organisations

1. Visit the NRS and BARB websites and find out what information they have available about different media products. (See Hotlinks section on p.xx for links to their websites.)
2. Find out what other organisations undertake media research. Find out what information is available from them. Here are three to get you started:
   • Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)
   • Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR)
   • Office of Communications (Ofcom)
3. Discuss what you have found out with the rest of the class.

Quantitative and qualitative information

When you undertake your own research you will obtain two main sorts of information. The first is called **quantitative** and the second is called **qualitative**.

Quantitative information can be measured and counted. It can usually be shown as a set of numbers and is often presented in the form of tables, charts and diagrams.

Both primary and secondary research methods can produce quantitative information. Media companies need information on how many people are reading their magazines and newspapers, watching their films and television programmes, clicking on their websites and listening to their musical products. Factual information about ratings, circulation and viewing figures, website hits and market analysis can all be represented as quantitative data, see Figure 1.1 on p. 7.

Key term

Quantitative research – research based on measurable facts and information that can be counted, producing numerical and statistical data.

Qualitative research – research that is based on opinions, attitudes and preferences, rather than facts and figures.

Qualitative information is more subjective and is concerned with people's opinions, views and preferences. Both primary and secondary research methods can produce qualitative information. It is often very important within the creative media industry as it is used to find out what individuals and groups think and feel about a particular media product.

The results of qualitative research are often more difficult to analyse than quantitative data and the information is often difficult to represent statistically, particularly if the responses are personal and subjective.

Table 1.1: Responses from a sample of students surveyed about their thoughts about a social networking site

Name	Response
Rob	I really liked the site and found it easy to use. Colours were bright and made me feel very positive. I will probably visit it again
Siobhan	Hated it. Too busy. Colours too bright. Difficult to navigate around. Boring. Won't be using it again.
Raj	Loved the design but found it a bit tricky to use. Prefer Bebo. Lots of information. Colours reminded me of the countryside. Overall I like it and will visit again.

When a computer game company asks a focus group what they think about a new game they are about to launch, it is likely they will receive both quantitative and qualitative information. The following are some examples.

- Before playing the game the group fills out a short questionnaire. The results show that 75% of the boys and 48% of the girls regularly play this type of computer game. This is quantitative data.

- After playing the game, the company asks each individual what they thought about it. What did they think about the graphics? What were their feelings about the main characters? What did they understand about the storyline? How did the gameplay compare with other games that they have played? These questions will provide qualitative information.
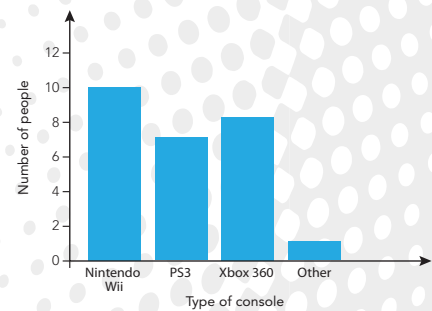
Figure 1.1: Type of games console owned by people in a class. This is quantitative data. What type of games console do you have at home?

Activity: Perceptions

Make a list of your perceptions of the social networking sites that you use.

What's your favourite computer game? Why?

Activity: Different types of questions

1. Which of the questions below will produce quantitative data?
2. Which of the questions below will produce qualitative data?
    a) Are you male or female?
    b) Which age range are you in?
       Under 16, 16–19, 20–25, Over 25
    c) What are your thoughts about getting old?
    d) Are you thinking about going to university when you are older?
    e) How do you feel about going to university?
    f) What job would you like to do in the future?

Research techniques

One of the skills needed in planning an effective research project is the ability to choose the right research techniques so that you can get the correct information. Remember that some techniques are used in primary research and others are used in secondary research and most can be used to gather both qualitative and quantitative information.

Table 1.2: Advantages and disadvantages of research methods.

Research technique	Primary or secondary	Advantage	Disadvantage	Can be used to...
Using the library/reading	Secondary	Wide range of information available	Can be time-consuming and involve a lot of searching for the right information	Find reliable, published information on media products and for the content of media productions
Using the Internet	Secondary	Can quickly find a lot of information Easy to download and print material Able to undertake searches for specific information	Some sources not always reliable Can produce too much information, some of which is not relevant	Find information on media products and for the content of media productions
Searching archives	Secondary	Good for historical information	Information can be outdated	Find information on old media products and for the content of media productions
Interviews	Primary	Quick way of getting people's views and opinions about things	Easy to forget what people have said so need to record interview	Find out what people think about something The interviews might be good enough to be in the media product itself
Observations	Primary	Easy way of seeing for yourself what is happening	Can be limited information as it is only your opinion	Researching for a media production

Activity: Choosing the correct research techniques

The table below contains more research techniques. Copy and complete the table to help you decide on the best techniques to use for your own research projects.

Research technique	Primary or secondary	Advantage	Disadvantage	Can be used to...
Questionnaires/ surveys	Primary			Find out what people think about something
Focus group				
Recce		Helps you to plan how you are going to do the actual production. Makes you aware of potential problems in advance	Can be time-consuming	Research a media production

Information trail

You need to be organised when you are undertaking your own research and it helps to have a record of the information trail that you have followed. The best way of doing this is to keep a log of all of the library, Internet and archive searches that you have undertaken whilst carrying out your research.

Figure 1.2 shows an extract from a research log that details the information trail undertaken by a media student when researching for one of her own media products.

Date	Source of information	Description of information obtained	Notes
12/9/10	Website: www.eatwell. gov.uk	Information about healthy diet. 8 tips for eating well. Food myths	Good, reliable source of government information. Can be used as captions in final video
13/9/10	Website: www.bbc. co.uk/health	What makes a balanced diet. Food needs for different age groups	Another reliable source. Age information is good to use and we can select right info for our target audience
13/9/10	Book: Romanoff J, The Eating Well Healthy in a Hurry Cookbook, (Norton 2005)	Healthy food recipes	Good recipes but not suitable for our target audience
14/9/10	Interview with Mrs Foxton the school cook	Lots of information about cooking meals for target age group	Be good to record an interview with her for the documentary. Consent form would need to be signed.
14/9/10	Recce of canteen area	Suitable locations identified (see photographs in research folder)	Health and safety would need to be checked and approval from head

Figure 1.2: Extract from a research log. What information do you include in your research log?

Collating and storing research material

The amount of information that you will gather when undertaking your own research can be very large, particularly when it is linked to one of your own creative media productions, and you will need to collate and store your research material.

Collating your research material involves sifting through all of the material to identify what is useful and what needs to be disregarded. Sort your material into useful categories that will help you to find it easily at a later date. Once you have done this, you need to log, organise and store your research material in a safe and secure way.

It is good practice to create a research folder in which you can store all of your relevant research material. It needs to have a clear index system so that you can easily find a relevant piece of information. Any secondary material that is stored should be highlighted and annotated so it is clear what you have selected from it and what it has been used for.

It is also good to include some form of written commentary in your file that explains to the tutor and moderator what is in there, how it was obtained, why it has been included and how it has been used.

Case study: MTV Online

MTV has become a household name, supplying cable and satellite viewers with a range of television music channels that has grown since the launch of the first MTV channel over 20 years ago.

MTV's target audience is clearly defined, and helped to develop the concept of 'youth television'. When it wanted to develop an online Internet presence it didn't want to assume that what worked for its established television audience would also be successful for its new online users.

The company knew how many people were accessing the site by counting the number of hits, but this figure didn't tell them anything about the people themselves. To find out more, the company devised a questionnaire that asked people about their hobbies and interests, and what they spent on music devices, clothes and going out. The questionnaire was placed on the MTV website, along with an incentive to win CDs for a few lucky winners drawn out of a hat.

The questionnaire proved to be very popular (particularly with the incentive to win CDs) and the company soon had a mountain of information to sift through and collate. By sorting through it carefully and collating it into different categories they were able to produce a detailed profile of their online target audience. The main focus of this research was the youth market; because one of the first questions asked the respondents to put themselves into an age category they were able to disregard the replies from older people.

By putting site users into different categories, MTV was able to examine lifestyle habits and compare them to site usage patterns. For example, they found that the average 18-year-old female who prefers R&B to house music might spend £50 a month on CDs, whereas the male equivalent might prefer to spend £50 a month on DVDs. This kind of information allows MTV to target these individual groups of users more efficiently.

- **The incentive to win CDs worked for them at the time. Why might this be less successful now?**
- **What other incentives do you think would work better if they were to carry out a similar survey today?**
- **Why would the information that MTV obtained be very useful for potential advertisers?**

Research material can be very sensitive, particularly if it contains people's personal views about something, and they might be very unhappy if it is made public or the wrong person sees it. The Data Protection Act is a law that says that anyone who handles personal information has to be very careful about how it is stored and who has access to it.

Activity: The Data Protection Act

Do some research of your own to find out more information about the Data Protection Act.

The website of the Information Commissioner's Office is a good starting point. See Hotlinks section on p.xx for a link to this website.

Research information is also bought and sold by media companies and can be very valuable to them. They will try to keep the information as secure as possible to stop one of their rivals getting their hands on it and using it to their advantage.

BTEC Assessment activity 2.1   P1 M1 D1

You are working as a researcher for a local media company and the boss has asked you to write a report for her about the different research methods and techniques that you could use in the role.

Think carefully about the four key methods of research you have learned about in this unit and the different research techniques that can be used.

1. In your own words, outline the main research methods and techniques. P1
2. Describe the main research methods and techniques with some detail and include some examples of them being used. M1
3. Evaluate the main research methods and techniques and include precise and detailed examples of them being used. D1

Grading tips

To aim for a **merit** grade you need to make some attempt to compare the different research methods and techniques. You should include examples of your own research as well as examples from within the creative media industries. You should also comment on the way in which your results were collated and how you stored the information safely.

To aim for a **distinction** grade you should evaluate different research methods and techniques rather than just comparing them. This means that you should say something about the relative strengths and weaknesses of the different methods and techniques. Your examples will also need to be precise and detailed.

PLTS

Collaborating with others and working towards common goals when undertaking research with other members of your class will help develop your skills as a **team worker**.

Functional skills

Outlining the main research methods and techniques will help you to develop your **English** skills in writing.

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2. Be able to use research methods and techniques to investigate an existing media product

When planning what research you are going to undertake for this learning outcome it is a good idea to link it with the work that you are doing in some of your other units, particularly Unit 3 The creative media sector or Unit 4 Media audiences and products. In these two units you will already be looking at and analysing specific media products and it is good practice to choose one of these products for the investigation for this unit.

Activity: Choosing your media product

1. In small groups discuss the work that you are doing in your other units. Draw up a list of potential media products that you could investigate further for this unit.
2. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each product, writing down the key points as they are discussed.
3. Summarise the key points of the discussion and decide which product each member of the group is going to investigate further.

Examples of media products that you could investigate for this unit include:

- local or national newspaper
- lifestyle or hobby magazine
- television programme
- film or DVD
- social networking website
- computer game
- radio programme.

This list gives only some of the examples and it is best if you discuss the options with your teacher and pick an existing media product that you are interested in.

You should aim to use both primary and secondary research methods when investigating an existing media product and obtain both quantitative and qualitative information.

You might use books and the Internet to find out some factual information about your product, such as who its target audience is and how much it costs to produce. You might then design a questionnaire or organise a focus group to find out what a sample of the audience thinks and feels about the product

Purpose of research

Before undertaking any research it is important that you understand what the main purpose of the research is. One of the main reasons that media companies pay for and undertake their own research is to gather information about the audience for particular media products. They are interested in the composition of the audience, its size and how the audience reacts to and feels about the product.

The composition of the audience for the product that you are investigating should be an important focus of your research for this learning outcome as media companies will design their products for a specific target audience.

When undertaking research, media producers describe their target audience by age, gender, culture and social class.

Age

The age of the target audience is important because some kinds of product can only be shown to or bought by certain age groups.

The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) puts an age category on all films (shown at the cinema and available on DVD) that are available in the UK. It is now classifying many of the computer games as well.

Many advertisers are also interested in what different age groups are reading, watching and interacting with as they can then decide whether or not to advertise their products within particular media products.

Suitable only for persons of 15 years and over

Contains strong bloody violence

Not to be supplied to any person below that age

Many computer games now have age restrictions. Look at the age restrictions on the computer games that you own.

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Age of Facebook members
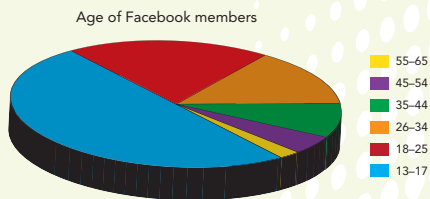

- 55–65
- 45–54
- 35–44
- 26–34
- 18–25
- 13–17

Figure 1.3: This chart shows the age breakdown of Facebook members. What products do you think would be suitable to promote to this age group on the website?

For example, Figure 1.3 shows the age of members of the site Facebook. It shows that over 50% of the members are between the ages of 18 and 25. A potential advertiser would be interested in this information so that it can decide what products to promote on the site and the best way to do so.

Gender

Gender is also an important category to media companies as many media products are targeted at either men or women. This is most clearly seen within the magazine market, which has specific magazines targeted at males and others targeted at females.

Culture

People's needs and wants as consumers will also vary according to their culture, language and background, and many media products are available that target people from a particular cultural background.

The media industry is now very much a global one and newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes from all over the world are readily available to people living in the UK.

Activity: Magazines for men and women

In small groups, look at a selection of magazines and write down the main features that help to target each one at either men or women.

Can you think of any magazines that target both men and women?

There is a growing production base in Britain for media products that target different cultures and ethnic groups. What different groups of people might a media product in your local area want to target?

Social class

You can also categorise an audience according to a rough idea about their social class. Social class is often linked to a person's income, which can be important for advertisers. For example, it is no good advertising an expensive top-of-the-range sports car to people who are unemployed or have a low disposable income.

Most companies involved with media research and production use a scale that puts people into categories according to the sort of job they do and the amount of income that they have. The scale is a very rough one and does make some very broad assumptions about what people earn.

Table 1.3: Rough guide to social status according to occupation

Social grade	Social status	Chief income earner's occupation
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners, casual or lowest grade workers

Activity: Newspaper readership

The table below shows the readership of two popular national newspapers according to their social class. What does this tell you about the content of the two papers? What features and advertisements are you most likely to find in each of the papers?

Table 1.4: Readership of The Guardian and The Sun, broken down by social class.

Title	AB	C1	C2	DE
The Guardian	60	30	4	5
The Sun	11	23	31	36

Comparing similar products

As well as looking at audiences, media companies are also interested in comparing similar products. A games design company looking to launch a new computer game needs to know what other products are on the market so that it doesn't produce one that is too similar to an existing one.

They will however be interested in knowing what the most popular games are at the moment and they might want to launch a similar type of game that can also cash in on that trend.

Activity: Types of computer games

In small groups write down the different types of computer games (sports games, role play, adventure, etc.) and then try to think of at least five specific examples of each type that are currently available.

Which is the most popular one in each category? What makes it so popular? Are the other ones trying to copy the most popular one or are they trying to break new ground?

Investigating production processes

A media company will also be interested in how other media products are produced and what techniques and technologies are being used. The way a product looks and sounds can be very important, particularly if the target audience is young and fashion-conscious. The last thing a company will want to produce is a product that looks stale and old-fashioned.

Activity: Evolving products

As audience expectations change and production processes develop, so do the media products themselves. For example, a magazine aimed at teenage girls today looks very different to the ones produced in the 1970s, and will contain very different issues and articles. Can you think of any other examples of products that have changed over the years?

Think about the magazines you read. What features appeal to you and what would you change?

BTEC Assessment activity 2.2 P2 M2 D2

You work as a freelance researcher and have been approached by a creative media production company to help them with some research. They are gathering information about a specific sector of the market and have asked you to help them by investigating a particular media product within this sector.

1. Plan the research methods and techniques that you are going to use to investigate the chosen media product.
2. Undertake the investigation, using both primary and secondary research methods to obtain quantitative and qualitative data.
3. Collate and organise your research material and analyse the results.

Grading tips

To aim for a **merit** you need to choose carefully which research techniques and methods you will use and have a clear idea about what you are trying to find out. You will need to sort through the information gathered and decide what you are going to keep and what you can discard. Store the material that you select so that you can easily find a specific piece of information

To aim for a **distinction** you need to show a clear sense of purpose in carrying out your research and use appropriate procedures and techniques to good effect. You will need to work carefully and methodically to produce a substantial amount of material from a wide range of sources. All information obtained should be evaluated and sifted, and the relevant material stored in such a way that any given piece of information is easily traceable.

Functional skills

Undertaking secondary research via the Internet when investigating a media product will help you to develop your **ICT** skills in selecting and using a variety of sources of information.

PLTS

Planning and carrying out your research into an existing media product will help you to develop your skills as an **independent enquirer**.

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3. Be able to use research methods and techniques to gather material for a media production

When you are planning the work for this learning outcome it is good practice to gather material for one of the media productions that you are undertaking in one of the other specialist practical units. For example:

- you can use the skills and knowledge that you have developed in this unit to help you to research and gather material for the video product that you are going to make in Unit 5 Video production

- you could choose to gather material for a production you are undertaking in Unit 6 Audio production, Unit 7 Print production, Unit 8 Interactive media production or Unit 18 Advertising production, among others.

Activity: Choosing your production project

Discuss what practical production units you are doing with the rest of your class. Write down a list of the practical projects that you will be working on. Discuss the options with your teacher and write down the issues that you would need to consider for each one.

Whichever unit you choose, the process of gathering material will be very similar and you will need to use both primary and secondary research methods, and obtain both quantitative and qualitative information.

You might use books and the Internet to find out more about the production processes involved and the technology you will need to use. You might also use the Internet, magazines and books to gather information for the actual content of your production. Interviewing people is another good way of getting information to include in your media production.

Think about what you want to find out from your interviewees. How will you record their responses?

Think about it

If you were planning to produce a student magazine for Unit 7, what type of features or articles could you include in the magazine? Where could you get the information to help you write the stories?

You will need to target your media production at the right audience and find out what that audience expects to find in the product that you are going to make. You will need to survey a sample of your target audience and use some primary research techniques to gather this information.
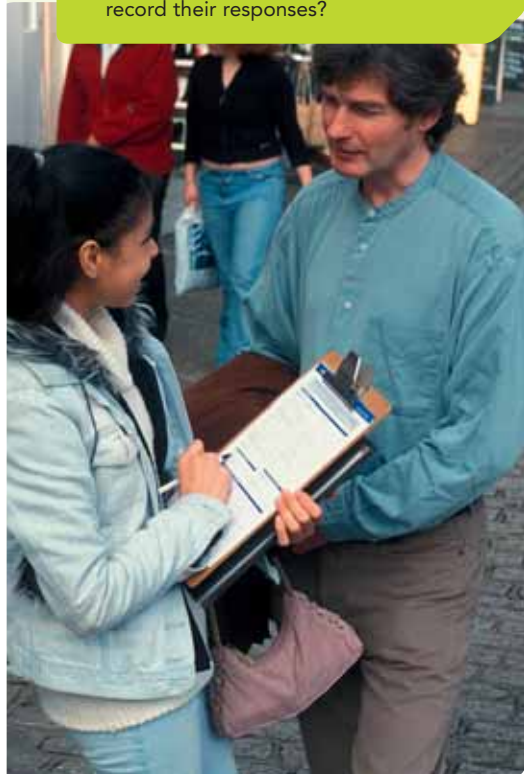
BTEC Assessment activity 2.3   P3 M3 D3

You work for a local media production company who is planning to launch a new product onto the market. You have been asked to use your skills as a researcher to help gather material for the new media production.

1. Think carefully about the production that you will be undertaking and put together a plan of the different research methods and techniques that you are going to use to gather material for the media production. You should plan to use both primary and secondary research methods to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information.

2. Carry out the research to gather the material that you will need for the production.

3. Carefully sift through the material, discarding what you do not need, and then collate and organise it so that you can easily access it during the pre-production and production stages.

4. Analyse your results.

Grading tips

To aim for a **merit** you need to choose your research techniques and methods carefully and have a clear idea about what you are trying to find out. You will need to sort through the information gathered and decide what you are going to keep and what you can discard. The material that is finally selected will need to be stored in such a way that it can be easily accessed so it is easy to find a specific piece of information.

To aim for a **distinction** you need to show a clear sense of purpose in carrying out your research and use appropriate procedures and techniques to good effect. You will need to work carefully and methodically to produce a substantial amount of material from a wide range of sources. All information obtained will be evaluated and sifted, and the relevant material stored in such a way that any given piece of information is easily traceable.

PLTS

Asking questions to extend your thinking when trying out alternative ways of researching for a proposed media production will help you to develop your skills as a **creative thinker.**

Functional skills

Collating and storing your research material on a computer will help you to develop your **ICT** skills in managing information storage.

4. Be able to present results of research

You will have completed at least two pieces of research for this unit and you now have the opportunity to present the results of this research and summarise what you have learned.

Format

You can present the results of your research in the form of a written report, as an oral presentation to the rest of the class or in an audio-visual format. If you do an oral presentation you could include PowerPoint slides to help structure and support what you are saying and undertake the presentation on your own or as part of a group. Discuss the options with your tutor and decide which format is best for you.

If you choose to present your findings in the form of a presentation, you must make sure that it is recorded so that your mark can be checked by the moderator towards the end of the course. Many job interviews now include giving a presentation to a panel of people, so presenting the results of your research in this way is good practice for you.

What would be the best way of presenting your research?

Content

Whichever format you choose to use to present the results of your research, you need to make sure that you include all of the following required content:

- An introduction to your research project in which you explain clearly what the purpose of the reseach was. In other words, what exactly were you trying to find out and why were you doing it?

- A section in which you describe and explain the research methods and techniques that you used in your research project, and the procedures that you carried out.

- A summary of the data that you obtained, presented in a form that is easy to understand. You might want to use a selection of graphs, charts and tables to help you do this.

- A section in which you explain and analyse the results that you obtained, and draw some conclusions. What did the results of your research show? Did you expect these results or were some of them a surprise to you? Do these results change your views on what you were researching? How will you use these results?

- A summary of the sources that you have used, including a **bibliography** of any published works. When referencing books, include:

  o the author's surname followed by his or her initial

  o the title of the book, which is often written in italics or in bold

  o the name of the publisher and the year that it was published in brackets

  For example:

  Berger, A – *Media Research Techniques, 2nd Edition* (Sage, 1998)

  You should also include a list of other sources you have used such as newspapers, magazines and websites.

When creating a presentation, think carefully about the contents of each slide:

- Don't cram in too much – brief bullet points will get your message across more clearly than a full page of text.

- Each slide should provide a summary of what you are saying rather than a running commentary.

Expression

The way in which you communicate the results of your research to your audience is very important if they are to understand fully what you are telling them. Table **1.4** shows four key factors that you need to think about: they are important whichever format you choose to present your results in.

Key term

Bibliography – a list of books that you have used in your research project.

Remember

Don't be tempted to use too many visual and sound effects with your slides as the audience will easily tire of such gimmicks. They can also distract from your message.

Table 1.4: Key factors to consider when presenting your results.

Key factor	What it means	Top tips
Structure	The order in which you present your results and the way in which you divide it up into different sections.	Use a logical order when presenting your results: • Start with an outline of what you were trying to find out. • Explain your research process. • Show the results. • Explain what you did with the results and what impact it had. Use sub-headings to help to structure your report or presentation.
Clarity	To be successful you have to be clear in what you say. This means having a clear plan from the start and explaining what you did and found out in a straightforward way that your audience will understand.	Have a clear plan of what you are going to say and stick to it. Practise and record your presentation so that you can watch it. Make sure you can understand it and your meaning is clear. Draft and redraft your written report and check the final version so that it makes sense.
Register	This refers to the actual words used, whether spoken or written, and how technical or formal you want to sound.	Don't use words that are too technical or will confuse your audience. Think carefully about your words: too informal ('Alright mates') or too formal ('Good morning ladies and gentlemen') might set you off on the wrong footing. A simple but straightforward 'Hello and welcome to my presentation' might be a better way to start.
Audience	You will need to have a good understanding of who is in your audience and make sure your language, structure and content is appropriate for them.	Don't assume that your audience already knows what you have done. Remember that your work may well be looked at by somebody from outside your centre who hasn't seen you working throughout the year and they will need to be able to understand what you have done from the work that you present to them.

Think about it

Think about your communication skills:

• How confident are you when talking in front of a group of people?

• What can you do to improve the way in which you get your ideas across?

• What about your writing skills?

• Do you need help in structuring and organising your written work?

Activity: Recording yourself

Practise different ways of delivering your spoken language. Record the results and then listen back to see what you sound like. Be warned: your recorded voice will sound very different from what you are used to hearing.

• What do you sound like?

• Do you speak too quickly?

• Do you sound confident?

• What can you do to improve the way in which you deliver your spoken language?

Case study: Shenica's presentation

Shenica is a student doing the First Diploma in Creative Media Production. She decided to deliver the results of her research in the form of a presentation to her classmates.

Her tutor was also in the audience so he could assess what she had done, and he had arranged for one of the other members of the class to record the presentation on video tape so that he had a record of the work that he could then show to the moderator at the end of the course.

Shenica was quite nervous about the presentation because she had never really talked in front of an audience before. However, she had prepared what she was going to say beforehand and had done a run through at home in front of her friends.

She decided to structure her talk using PowerPoint slides so that she always knew where she was in her presentation and knew what came next.

She also decided to hand out some of the graphs that she had produced from her survey results and to ask the class, in pairs, to look at the graphs and try to work out what they were showing.

Despite a nervous start, Shenica soon grew in confidence and was actually starting to enjoy it towards the end. She asked the audience some questions in the middle of the presentation to add some variety and to check that they were paying attention. The presentation went very well, and the rest of the class said that they had learnt a lot from her talk and liked the way she had presented the information to them in the form of the graphs.

- What slides would you produce to help to structure your presentation?
- Do you have data that you could present in the form of a graph or a chart?
- What questions would you ask your audience to help keep them engaged?

Follow this checklist to make sure you have a successful presentation.

- Plan what you are going to say and have a set of cue cards ready to remind you.
- Practice makes perfect, so make sure that you do a complete run through before the big day.
- Dress to impress by looking smart.
- Think carefully about your body language and try to communicate a confident attitude to your audience.
- Try to look at each member of your audience at least once during the presentation. This will make them feel at ease.
- Use PowerPoint slides to summarise what you are saying. Keep the words short and simple and don't be tempted simply to read from the slides.
- Ask the audience questions to get them engaged and keep them interested.
- Summarise your main points at the end of the presentation.
- Thank your audience for listening and invite any final questions.

PLTS

Inviting feedback to your presentations and dealing positively with praise, setbacks and criticism will help you become a more **reflective learner**.

Functional skills

Developing the presentations of your research will help you to improve your **ICT** skills in entering, developing and formatting information.

BTEC Assessment activity 2.4 P4 M4 D4

You need to present the results of the following two main research studies that you completed for this unit:

- Your investigation into an existing media product.
- Your research for one of your own media productions.

1. Discuss the options with your tutor and decide what format you will use to present the results for each of the two research studies.
2. Gather all of the research material that you have produced and make sure that it is collated, organised and stored securely.
3. Work on the content of your report or presentation, making sure that you cover all of the required aspects.
4. Complete the final report or deliver the final presentation.

Grading tips

To aim for a **merit** grade, the summary of your research should be more than a simple outline of what you did. You should include some detailed description of the research methods and techniques used and some detail of the results obtained.

To aim for a **distinction** grade, you should provide a full account of the research methods and techniques undertaken and precise details of the results obtained.

Practise your presentation in a mirror, in front of your family or record yourself. What improvements could you make to your delivery?

WorkSpace Josh Zimsek
Researcher

I am working on a short-term contract as a researcher with a local radio station. It is a bit like an apprenticeship as I am getting involved with lots of different tasks and meeting lots of different people.

I have to do boring things like making the tea and doing photocopying, but I also do more interesting things like searching on the Internet for information about the guests who are coming onto the programme. This research is very important as the presenters who interview the guests on air need to know what questions to ask them.

I also do audience surveys to find out what our listeners think about us. Sometimes I will do this by asking questions over the telephone. Other times I will use a questionnaire and ask people in the street.

Being a researcher is all about information – knowing where to get it from and being able to get it quickly. You then have to check to make sure it is accurate and put it into the correct format and get it to the right person on time.

I have to work quickly and accurately and have good attention to detail. I also have to be a good communicator as I have to talk to lots of different types of people.

This is my first job in the industry and I am trying to make a good impression with the company so that I can get another contract with them or make sure they give me a good reference if I apply for a job with another company.

Think about it

1. What areas have you covered in this unit that provide you with the knowledge and skills needed by a researcher working within the creative media industries? Discuss with the rest of your class and produce a written summary of your key points.
2. What further skills might you need to develop in order to be successful in this role? Write a list and discuss what you have written with the rest of the class.
3. What do you think you need to do next to improve your chances of getting a job within the creative media industry? (consider the courses you might do, e.g. National Diploma, where you might study, e.g. college or university, and work experience that could help you develop the right skills.

Just checking

1. What are the two main methods of research used in the creative media industries?
2. What are the two main types of information that a researcher will aim to gather?
3. List the main research techniques that you can use when gathering information about a media product.
4. Which practical units link well with this unit when you need to gather some information for a media production?
5. What four categories are commonly used to divide up a target audience?
6. What does 'register' mean?

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Assessment tips

- Try to get some practical experience of using the different research methods and techniques. This will make it easier for you to talk about them when you do the assessment activity for LO1.
- Link the research that you do for LO2 and LO3 to the work that you are already doing in your other units. This will make the research more meaningful to you and will save you valuable time.
- Carefully sift through the research material that you have gathered and try to make a judgement as to what is important and what is not. Do not be tempted to include all of your research material in your final portfolio. Quantity is not the same as quality!
- Think carefully about the way in which you present the results of your research. Don't assume that your audience already knows what you are trying to achieve.
- It is often better to present quantitative data in the form of tables, graphs or charts. This can be a visually appealing way of showing complex information more clearly.
- Check through all of your work before you finally submit it. A well-organised folder that has a logical structure, is clear in what it is trying to say and is well written with no spelling mistakes will make a good impression.