POTCASTING IN VETERINARY ANATOMY

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Summary
This abstract outlines work carried out at the RVC to develop anatomical "potcasts" for use by preclinical veterinary students. Preserved specimens in the anatomy museum produced over the years were used. While the pots are artistic and carefully made, students have to be helped using dissection guides or through practical classes to label and understand them. The approach to teaching using the 'potcasts' aims at bringing 'life' to the specimens and integrates the basic information with the clinical. Digital imaging is combined with an audio script and saved in MP3 format for use with PDA, iPod or computer.

Introduction
The Royal Veterinary College (RVC) has an anatomical museum with a large number of anatomical pots and specimens. Many of these were produced by staff and students in the past and offer stunning examples of the art of dissection. Unfortunately, the modern day student has less time or opportunity to spend on these basic skills and must therefore depend on interpreting the work of their predecessors. To compound the problem many of these pots carry little more than the name of the original dissector and perhaps only the identity of the principal organs on display.

At the RVC we are now attempting to bring some of the old art of dissection alive with the new technology of "potcasting", a variation of podcacting. The project started with second year students being asked to identify specimens related to the central nervous system that they found difficult to interpret. We recorded a range of short audio script for each specimen pot which was then edited by a member of the e-Media team and stored in MP3 format. These files were uploaded to the College VLE from where students downloaded using iTunes or saved them onto a computer hard drive. In some cases these audio tracks were enhanced by annotating digital images of the specimen to help students identify key structures. Students then had the opportunity of reviewing a specimen while on the move using the audio track or image on a hand held device or listening to the audio track while viewing the real specimens in the museum.

Evaluation
The impact of potcasting is still being evaluated as part of the IMPALA (http://www.impala.ac.uk/) project. However informal feedback from students has been enthusiastic and positive. This initiative has been well received by the anatomists at the College with several adapting the basic potcast model to support their own teaching.

Conclusion
Video potcasting is proving an effective way of demonstrating 3D anatomical features and supports student's independent learning.

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