

Abstract: Television and film are engaging media, with significant potential as educational resources. The increasing availability of authorised archives of TV and radio programmes for use in teaching means that it is timely to produce an annotated collection of recommended programmes and clips suitable for teaching bioscience.

Biology on the Box is being developed specifically to maximise the potential of media streamed via Box of Broadcasts (BoB). Colleagues are invited both to utilise the identified resources in their own teaching and to contribute recommendations of their own. A student authoring team is also being established.

Introduction: Television programmes represent a rich repository for teaching, but one whose potential has not been fully exploited in tertiary education^[1]. The emergence of copyright-authorised streaming services, such as Box of Broadcasts (BoB), ushers in the possibility for the development of innovative uses of audiovisual material.

BoB is one of a number of tools developed by the British Universities Film and Video Council (BUFVC), for promoting the use of multimedia in education. TV and radio programmes from over 60 channels can be recorded and kept indefinitely. There are already over a million programmes in the archive and this is growing daily. BoB itself is a subscription service, but over 80 UK Universities are now members. All users (staff & students) in member institutions can choose and record programmes, select clips and create playlists. Programmes can be tagged with user-generated bookmarks (though this service is relatively basic at present – hence the need for a more comprehensive, bespoke, resource such as Biology on the Box).

Current project: In the past, usage of broadcast media in teaching was constrained by a number of factors including lack of knowledge about what had been transmitted, lack of vision for how to utilise these materials in HE level teaching, and lack of access to copies of relevant programmes.

The emergence of copyright-authorised streaming services, such as BoB, ushers in the possibility for the development of innovative pedagogic uses of audiovisual material. For example, as well as showing relevant clips to enliven traditional lectures, it now becomes possible to use programmes as part of a “flipped classroom” approach (in which greater emphasis is placed on independent study prior to face-to-face teaching), and to develop module “viewing lists” alongside reading lists.



Figure 1: Biology on the Box gathers together recommendation for TV clips to use in teaching

Biologyonthebox.wordpress.com (Figure 1) is a new open-access website where recommendations about programmes and clips for teaching of bioscience are being collated. Posts vary from simple notification of the existence of a relevant clip, through to more details advice and structured activities.

It is hoped that this will become a shared resource, with a community of practice drawing upon the recommendations of colleagues as well as offering additional suggestions of their own. Anyone interested in taking an active role in this project in invited to email the author.

Reference:

[1] Willmott C. (2014) Boxing clever: television as a teaching tool. Times Higher Education, 26th August 2014

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