

1a)

Research is essential during the construction of media texts. It allows you to identify audience demographics, conventions, existing market trends and more. I feel that with the transition from my Foundation Portfolio to my Advanced Portfolio, my skills and ability to conduct effective research have developed considerably.

For my Foundation Portfolio I produced pages for a music magazine- the front cover, contents page, and a double-page feature spread. My research was limited and this is reflected in the quality of my final product.

I undertook basic market research by identifying existing magazines of the specific genre I had chosen (Indie music) such as 'Kerrang!', NME and Q. These were analysed for recurring codes and conventions which I could note in my production blog and later adapt or challenge in the production stage. Although this was useful, in hindsight now my ability has developed I could have performed a semiotic analysis of the key conventions; or analysed the real texts in greater textual detail for more than simply common conventions. This would have ensured a much more effective final product, based on both producer creativity and market research; rather than just what I felt was best.

In addition to this I used the internet to carry out research into target audience – demographics of readers of existing media texts and how I could use these to refine my target audience and further identify their wants and expectations. This is something I feel I could have built upon considerably. It is secondary research; I missed the opportunity to carry out primary audience feedback in the form of questionnaires and similar to gain first-hand opinions of my target audience. The level of research and uses for it during my Advanced Portfolio however represents a clear increase in ability and a development of skills.

For my audience research this time, I distributed questionnaires locally to identify audience demographics, readership statistics for local newspapers (my task was to produce the first 2 pages of a local newspaper) and audience requirements from a new local newspaper. With the results of this primary research I created bar charts so trends could easily be identified.

Focus Groups also played a major role in my research. I decided that this time, constant audience feedback and further research during the construction stage would improve the overall effectiveness of my final product. From my target audience I selected 10 people to become part of a focus group, which I would then present with potential fonts, layouts, images and other micro-elements for feedback; showing how I have considered primary research more.

In addition to this, for my Advanced Portfolio I also analysed existing media texts of the same genre as with my Foundation Portfolio.

However this time I performed a full semiotic analysis on the front covers of existing newspapers using Roland Barthe's levels of signification, therefore enabling myself to identify how real media texts target their audiences and draw attention from a semiotic approach.

When compared with my basic textual analysis at AS; the semiotic approach used in addition to a more complex textual analysis at A2 demonstrates a development of my skills and an increased knowledge in the importance of research into real media texts.

I carried out further primary research for the Advanced Portfolio using digital technology by e-mailing the editors of existing real newspapers enquiring about how to effectively capture an audience's imagination and what constructs a successful local newspaper. This I believed would provide vital primary research, giving me an insight into the construction

process in the contemporary newspaper industry which I could then apply to my own production. This would have created an effective final product if I had used it at AS as I did at A2, and arguably contributes to the skills development that led to my A2 product being much more effective.

In conclusion with the progression from Foundation to Advanced Portfolios, my use of primary research as opposed to secondary and adaption of more complex research techniques highlights a development of my skills and offers an explanation as to why my final A2 product was a deal more successful than AS.

Strengths

Weaknesses

Assessment Objective	Max Mark	Mark Awarded
EEA	10	
EG	10	
T	5	