

# Student-led development of a physiotherapy apps database: A Digital Innovation Project

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## Introduction

Software Applications or Apps were first developed in the 1970s, since then numbers have grown exponentially. To-date the Apple store contains over 2 million apps many of which are designed to aid education, however, there are difficulties identifying useful apps. As a Digital Innovation Project (DIP), a physiotherapy lecturer (NCB) and third year physiotherapy student (OB) aimed to identify a system to review physiotherapy educational apps and build a database that could be continually updated and rated by the student cohort.

## Method

NCB and OB met with Blackboard technology experts (TB and NC) to identify the best way to upload and rate apps. A blog was set up by OB and sample apps (see figure 1) were uploaded. A survey and/or test for each app was devised so that each app could be rated. NCB and OB identified four other volunteer students who spent a month searching for appropriate apps, uploading them and rating them. The students then took part in a focus group to discuss the process.



Figure 1. Sample apps identified

## Results

18 apps were found (see table 1) and the average rating for all apps was 16.5/50 (some apps were not rated). The anatomy apps rated the highest.

Apps	Number	Average rating (max score 50)
Anatomy	4	25
Cardiorespiratory	1	0
Musculoskeletal	3	6
Neurology	3	15
Pathophysiology	1	0
Revision	4	20
Other	2	0
Total	18	16.5

Table 1: number and types of apps found

## Results (cont)

The focus group identified five themes: positives of apps, negatives of apps, difficulties with searching, difficulties with uploading and solutions for an ongoing system (see figure 2). Overall the group were positive towards the process and system identified.

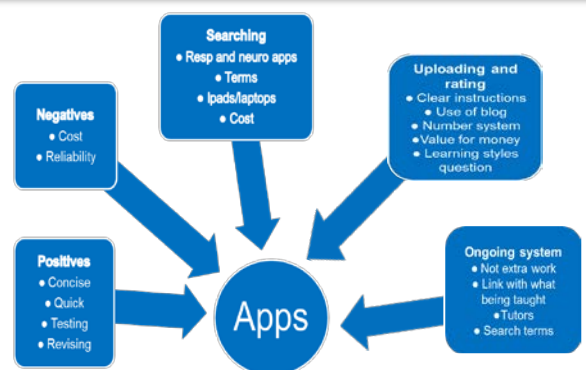


Figure 2. Focus group themes

## What have we learnt from the DIP experience

### Student perspective:

Contribute and influence course/Experience of primary research/Problems outside of my normal curriculum/Work as a co-worker with lecturer

### Lecturer perspective:

Student more digitally able and had great ideas/ Able to understand the student perspective/ Enthused other students/ Helped to understand future difficulties

### The future:

The physiotherapy department have now set up an app area on Blackboard which will be maintained by NCB and a third year physiotherapy student who will change every year. The third year student will help maintain the blog and set up surveys and tests to rate the apps. First year students will find, use and rate anatomy and pathophysiology apps and second and third year students will find, use and rate speciality learning apps. The process will be continually assessed each year with questionnaires and focus groups.

### Digital literacies:

In relation to the Digital Literacy Framework (JISC) this has increased our understanding of:  
ICT proficiency (software, services and devices);  
Information, data and media (sharing digital content for learning) and  
Digital Learning and teaching (digital devices, services and apps.)

## Conclusion

An ongoing up-to-date database of physiotherapy educational apps can be developed and maintained by students and lecturers as long as they are engaged with the process and supported to use the system.