

Privacy

Innovation Case Study

Arts & Digital

What were the questions?

Can we find new ways of developing live audience participation in the commercial theatre?
Does the general public understand the implications of sharing its data?

Who were the collaborators?

Donmar Warehouse; Anthony Lilley, CEO, Magic Lantern Productions; and a total of ten students from the Departments of Digital Humanities, English, and Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies.



What did we do?

Ten King's students took part in workshops as part of the R&D process for *Privacy*, a play by James Graham. The play examined the extent to which social media intrudes into private lives and the extent to which users understand what is happening to their data. It needed high levels of interaction with the audience and their smartphones. The students were all from disciplines that have a strong interest in the digital world or in theatre.

The workshops were led by Anthony Lilley and focused on ways of using social media as the tool for interaction with audiences during a performance. One of the key questions that the play examined was whether the general public really understood the implications of publicly sharing its data, and if data might be being used in ways we do not understand. It therefore faced production challenges that are not normally encountered, especially the need to understand in detail the behaviours of possible audience members regarding technology, and in particular, social media.

The workshops were an important part of the R&D process for the production. They were particularly important in testing ideas for audience participation because the students involved were of a similar age range and demographic to the Barclays Front Row audience with whom the creative team were planning to interact.

What was the outcome?

Privacy had a highly acclaimed run at the Donmar Warehouse from 10 April to 31 May 2014. A number of MA students in Digital Humanities chose to write about the issue of privacy in the digital world as part of their coursework. The students also benefited from seeing a play in production: Katie Brown, second year PhD student in the department of Spanish, Portuguese & Latin American Studies said, 'As a theatre lover, it was fascinating to go behind-the-scenes and get a glimpse of just how much work goes into transforming an idea into a play.' A film about the project is available here: youtu.be/S_NySJ-9wks.

