

Q Julia Bishop (researcher)

A Meredith M (Horse-riding school owner)

Q So, just to go through the consent, first of all, it's that you've read and understood enough about the project, and whether you would like to ask any questions about it before we start?

A No, it's pretty self-explanatory.

Q And are you okay to take part in the project by providing this interview?

A Yes.

Q And you understand that it's voluntary, I've given you the chance to withdraw, and you understand you can withdraw at any time from it.

A Yes.

Q Thank you, that's great. And then I just want to go over how the information will be used during the project, and afterwards. So, your personal details will not be revealed to anybody outside of the project, and the words that you say may be quoted in our publications and reports, but you wouldn't be named in any of those, unless you want to be. Is that all right with you, those two things?

A Yes.

Q Also, obviously we've got your data, but it would only be authorised researchers who are part of the project can use it, and they would have to preserve the confidentiality of any information that you supplied, including keeping yourself anonymous. Is that okay?

A Yes.

Q Thank you. And yes, that you allow us to use any information that you give us to do our research with. And that you agree to give copyright in the materials you generate, in other words this recording, to the University of Sheffield, please.

A Yes.

Q Thanks, Megan. I'll send you the form again, and perhaps you could complete it so we've got the written consent as well.

So, just to clarify that when we're talking about technologies in this study, we're talking not only about the kind of digital devices that children might have access to, like phones, cameras, games consoles, and computers. But we're also interested in any media associated with those, so it might be the apps, and websites, and digital games that children play.

We're also interested in coding, and robots, and digital artefacts, 3D printers, social

media, pretty much anything, and so the widest possible definition, and any sort of popular culture that might come from that, as well.

I wondered if you could just give me an idea about your equestrian centre, what happens there, and what your role is in the equestrian centre, please.

A I'm the business owner, I pretty much do all the work. We're a livery yard and riding school, so it means that people pay to have their horses on the yard, and we look after them. Obviously the riding school is where people come for lessons and hacks, which Essa did.

Q Do you hold riding lessons every day of the week, or is it just at weekends?

A They're every day, apart from Fridays.

Q So it's a business, so your income stream is from the people that you either look after their horses, or from the lessons, there's no sort of charitable funding or anything like that coming into this?

A No.

Q So, as we mentioned just before I turned on the voice recorder, Essa just came for the very first time, and that was as a result of a birthday present, I think. Were you involved in that, apart from selling the gift voucher, as it were, is there any kind of connection there, or was it just a coincidence that this [unclear]?

A It was the staff that dealt with him, Essa, I was away at the time. It was just they'd booked it in that I did, with his mum.

Q And you haven't had any contact with the family prior to that, or anything like that?

A No, just a phone call to book him in really.

Q So, can you give me an idea what sort of things might beginners like Essa, I think he is classed as a beginner rider, what they might do in a lesson?

A So, in the first lesson they will learn to hold onto their reins, they'll learn to mount a horse, obviously dismount a horse towards the end. They'll learn to walk, they'll learn to halt, which is stopping the horse, they might get into a little bit of turning. And depending on how many people were in the lesson, because it was only his first time, first lesson, he might have had a bit of a trot, he might have not.

Q And do you tend to teach in groups, or is it individuals?

A Just to the customer's preference, really. We do groups, shared, privates.

Q Okay, so it's a range of things. So, do technologies and media feature in any way as part of what you do?

A Well, would advertising count?

Q Yes, absolutely.

A Just mainly advertising, I would say, and obviously dealing with customers, booking in through message, phone calls, etc.

Q Do you use Facebook or social media at all?

A Yes, we use Facebook.

Q Can you tell me a bit about how that works for your business?

A We've just got a Facebook page, which people can obviously message through, get in touch, they can like the page, see any updates that we've got, etc, and everything. If we've got an availability, we'll pop it on there, or if we're doing an offer, if we've got activities going on over the school holidays, etc, obviously we'll pop it on there.

Q I see, yes, that's all on the Facebook page. Do you ever take photographs, get consent, and display those on the site, or anything like that?

A Yes, as a new customer we have a rider registration form, which also has a form attached onto the back, which states how we secure their rider registration forms, how we dispose of them when we do that. And also, a little tick-box at the bottom whether they consent/do not consent to photos. Obviously if they consent, then they consent for us to take pictures and put it on our website, or Facebook, etc.

Q Is that something you would do regularly, would be to take photos and stuff, or is it fairly infrequent, would you say?

A I would say infrequent. We will probably do them on pony days and stuff, and special activities, obviously if we've got consent to do so, but just for a day-to-day lesson we don't really take them that much.

Q And is that something that's just part of your normal business activity that you'd have a Facebook page, or is there anything that you're modelling that on or thinking about when you run that? Is it just because that's the done thing now to have a Facebook page, have you done it before?

A I just find that everybody's on Facebook. It's free to advertise, unless obviously you want to pay for the adverts to reach further, but we have quite a lot of people coming in through Facebook, so it's just a good advertisement.

Q Do you use any other form of social media, WhatsApp, or Twitter, anything like that?

A We've got an Instagram account for the business, but I don't really use it.

Q So, do you use any technologies or media at all, or do you recommend them for people to use at home when they've had their lesson? Would there be anything relating to horse-riding online that you might point to, for example?

A Not really. Obviously there are plenty of YouTube videos of how to ride, and stuff like that, that kids seem to enjoy watching, but we never say to go away and watch anything.

Q How are you aware, is it just the things you've looked up yourself, or do kids come and say, oh, I saw this, or I saw that, or anything like that?

A Yes, just a lot of them saying that they've seen this on YouTube, etc. I don't really watch YouTube myself, [unclear].

Q How useful is it when they say stuff like that, does it have any kind of impact on their lessons, would you say?

A It just obviously gets the chat going, really.

Q Do you find they come with any sort of prior knowledge that they've gathered from these sorts of films, from watching riders and riding lessons?

A I think it's more just they've watched a video and they've asked if they can do that. So, it might be somebody doing... We're talking more like children that have been coming for a long period of time now and been riding a lot more. So, they're really into it, and they watch these things, and they might say, oh, we can do this today, like they've done in this video, and they'll explain what happened in the video. So yes, just like that, really.

Q Ah, that's really interesting. Can you think of a specific example of that, what they might have asked you to do, is there anything in your mind?

A One girl asked if we could do some pole work, so she explained where the poles were on the floor, it was like raised trotting poles.

Q So, you were able to comply with that request and just ring the changes a little bit, something like that?

A Well, they're paying for a lesson, so if that's what they want to do, that's what they can do. [Unclear].

Q So, that, as you said, would be perhaps a more competent rider?

A Yes.

Q Is it also slightly older children, would you say, that might come with that, or young people?

A Older children as in maybe seven years plus, but they're not really old.

Q That's really interesting to know what age.

A So, it's customers that have been coming back for years now, and that are more competent, I would say. You wouldn't get a beginner asking that.

Q No. Did you say earlier that sometimes you get children...? Sometimes does their interest in riding, does that ever come from perhaps seeing it on YouTube, or TV, in a film, or something like that, would you say?

A Well, I suppose it's got to come from somewhere, so maybe.

Q You've not had any sign of that though in something that's been said?

A No, they've never said I wanted to start horse riding because I watched a film.

Q So, your aims in using the technology, it's mainly related to the business side, isn't it, running your business?

A Yes.

Q Do you ever do things like training for your staff, or anything like that? Is there safety, or hygiene, or anything like that online that you might use for training purposes?

A Obviously instructors are qualified, so they've had to take exams. As yard staff we're obviously trained to look after horses, etc, so first aid, safeguarding, fire safety, just your general stuff that you need to run a business.

Q And so those would be online courses that you would take?

A Not the instructors' courses, you've got to go away and do them. Same for first aid and safeguarding, you go on training days for them.

Q But some of the other things are more online-based.

A I've not done an online exam, no, I've always had to go somewhere.

Q Okay, that's fine. So, we've covered a little bit where children might suggest things that they've seen onscreen, as it were, to actually practically carry out. I don't know if there's anything else relating to...I don't know, there might be horse games, or horse films, or things that you've found having an impact on the children in the lessons, or anything like that? Things that they say, names that they might use to, or things that are suggested for the horses. I'm not at all sure there is anything, but...

A One thing that they mention when they're all talking amongst themselves in Pony Club, or on pony days, is a series called Heartland, on Netflix.

Q Oh, is there? Okay.

A That's it, really.

Q Can you tell me a bit about that? I don't know it.

A It's just a series on Netflix, about horses.

Q Is it fictional? Is it a soap opera, or factual, like a reality thing where they go and follow a stables, or something like that?

A It's about a girl who helps horses through natural horsemanship.

Q Oh, that's really interesting. So you find the ones that come to Pony Club, did you say, they might be talking about that and be fans of that?

A Yes.

Q So, just more questions relating to your own perceptions of technology and media. Do you have any feelings about whether technologies and media are particularly positive or negative for children who come to your club or activity?

A What, on whether it benefits from my business, or my thoughts on it altogether?

Q Yes, that's right. Just overall, in a general way.

A Well, I think they're too into their phones these days. I do think maybe they're having quite a negative impact nowadays, just because they're spending more time, as soon as they've finished school, they're straight home and on their Xbox, or PlayStation, or whatever other devices they've got these days. We encourage children to come up to the yard to have some outside time, and just to interact with each other, because kids these days don't know how to interact and have a conversation because all they're doing is typing the words.

Q So, do you feel that your activity offers them quite a different kind of experience that helps to in some ways offset the online and media interactions that children have?

A Yes. Say if we have somebody who comes every week, and they do stuff like Pony Club, they're learning how to look after a horse, so it's teaching... I can't think of the word that I'm thinking of, now. Oh, it's gone out of my head.

Responsibilities. It's obviously teaching them responsibilities, having to get up and out of bed to come and see to a horse, that they can't just forget it's not there. Obviously it might not be a horse they have, but if it's a dog, or a cat, it's there, it needs seeing to, it's not something you can just pass aside and forget about because you can't be bothered to get out of bed that day. I think it just teaches them to think more and just generally be active really, and not just sat on their bed, playing Xbox.

Q Do you get parents coming to you who are wanting their children to be more active, and say, oh, this'll be a good way of being able to get them to be more active? Not necessarily doing a sport, like football, or those sorts of things, but something that involves an animal, and all the other things that horse riding brings?

A Yes. Horse riding is a sport though, and it's hard work, and hard graft. Don't get me started on the football/horse riding debate. But yes, definitely, it gets you out there, it uses all your muscles, you're having to think, and you're having to respect both the instructor and the animal that you're riding.

Q Do you have any concerns about children's experiences with technologies and media, or do you have any experiences of that? Or do you have any concerns about data privacy, and that side of things?

A Not with my business, no, because obviously we just have a phone, they either

consent or they don't. And if they don't consent to any of it then they don't come to our centre, it's as simple as that, really. But I know there's a lot of bullying that goes on these days online, not through our business obviously, but we have children that come up that have got their own horses on the yard, and there have been times where they've come up and said that they're getting bullied online. And obviously the parents have got involved and they've sorted that issue out.

Q Yes, so you have had experiences of that.

A So yes, I have found that in technology, in social media.

Q Do you think there's a kind of therapeutic aspect to coming to your horse when you've maybe had that experience, do you ever feel that you're fulfilling that kind of role?

A I feel like we get a lot of autistic children, it's proven that horses, or animals in general, do help them and seem to soothe them, because well, they just listen and they can't talk back, really. Yes, we have quite a lot of children that are autistic, or Asperger's, etc, and they come out of their shell when they're around the horses, so definitely therapeutic, yes.

Q Oh, that's really interesting, the breadth of the work that you do. How important are technologies for yourself, or media for yourself, in your life, would you say?

A On a business perspective, or...?

Q Yes, and in personal terms actually, if you wish to talk about that. You don't have to, but it's just to get a sense of where you're situated.

A Personally, I don't really have time to do anything, because I've got too many [unclear], and it's a 24-hour job. But business-wise I need it for advertising, and obviously to get in touch with people, and clients, so it is probably quite important for business. But personal life, I don't really get time to use it, just because I want a life [?].

Q Yes, I can imagine it's a, well, 150% type of job. So, we're interested in exploring the link between playing with technologies and media, and children's emotions and wellbeing, and I just wondered if you have any thoughts about that topic that you'd like to share?

A I don't know, really. Like, the link between children's emotions with social media?

Q Could be, yes. You've touched on the cyberbullying obviously, and the upset that you've witnessed as a result of that.

A [Unclear] look, and just see, I think it's more on Instagram these days, people in a better shape than them, or they think they're prettier than them, etc, and they just want to be these people. They get too caught up into that, that they're not being themselves.

Q I wondered if you felt there was a role for technology in relationship to obviously your business, or whether you feel quite strongly that it's something you'd like to keep technology fairly limited as part of?

A Like I said, we don't really use technology other than for advertising. Obviously the vets have got to have technology, so whether that'd come into it. The vets that come out, they need technology, so obviously that's something that is important and they need to keep developing. But for my business again it's just advertising and getting in touch with clients, we don't use any other sort of technology.

Q And presumably parents take photos during lessons, and sometimes anywhere, and that sort of thing, do you find that that can be quite creative, or encouraging, or educational for the children in any way? Do parents take film, and that sort of thing, have you noticed?

A They take videos of them riding.

Q Yes, that's right, with their own children, and so on.

A Well, when we have private lessons obviously they can't do it in groups. I think there have been some that have had their own YouTube whatever you call it, I'm not really into all that, so whatever they call it.

Q Like a channel, or something?

A Yes, and those ones, their dads, parents, whatever, take videos of them riding, and they'll upload it so all their friends can see it. And I know some adults, to be fair, some adults may ask for them to be videoed so they can see improvements.

Q Oh, that's interesting. So, that last use that you said, a video, that's not for the instructors, that's just to show the parents that the child is improving?

A Yes. It might be if I'm teaching an adult, they might ask me to video them, and maybe a few sessions later, video them again, so they can see if they're improving.

Q What sort of points does it help you or them to pick up on, then?

A It's more for rider position, so making sure they're sat up straight, got their heels down, etc.

Q Do you think that they benefit from that, do you think that's useful for them?

A I think it is, because sometimes people are visual learners, so if they can see what they're doing wrong it might help them correct it.

Q That's really interesting. Do you have any further thoughts, or anything that I haven't touched on that you'd like to tell me in relationship to this?

A No.

Q I was just thinking about the ones, I think it's young people that you said who talked about the TV programme and stuff, whether you think that sort of thing increases sociability with them that they share these sorts of things while they're at the stables?

A Yes, because it gives them something to talk about, they're obviously all interested in



horses, but if they all watch a programme too, then they'll talk about what happened in that series. Just like we do really, if we watch a series and somebody else watches the series, it's just a conversation starter.

Q Yes, so there's a little bit of a sociability thing going on there, perhaps.

A Yes.