



A Facebook R.I.P. Group and Charlotte Eades' Video Diary

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SITE 1. Facebook R.I.P. public group: Remembering a friend on Facebook

The screenshot above is taken from a public Facebook R.I.P. group, created in 2012 as a tribute to a young adult aged 18, who died in a car crash just eleven days before his school graduation. His classmates created this Facebook memorial group as a way of extending socially, spatially and temporally the memorials and vigils held in the community immediately after his passing. The different tributes flooding the memorial wall attest to individual moments of remembrance in the here-and-now, recording personal reactions, thoughts and feelings about their loss; in the process, this community of mourners is collectively (re)writing the life of their dead friend as a life worthy of being mourned and celebrated. By engaging in this type of sharing, bereaved users bond and support each other in coping with the loss of their friend. Posting updates on the online memorial also allows sharers to narratively re-integrate their friend into their lives and gain online visibility for themselves as participants in this collective diary of mourning. The accumulating tributes end up being much more than just memorial posts: they represent acts of affective participation to the creation and sharing of a life story of friendship, which flows and grows with every single new post.

SITE 2. CHARLOTTE EADES' VIDEO DIARY (VLOGGING ON THE EXPERIENCE OF DYING)



Charlotte Eades – YouTube channel. Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6bE4OSCx99n7pF3vtZQMrw>.

The above screenshot is taken from a video diary—also known as vlog—one of the key media for broadcasting the self as life-writing of the moment. The vlog was created by Charlotte Eades, a teenager who was diagnosed with a rare form of brain cancer when she was 16 years old and eventually died from it, age 19.¹ Charlotte has appropriated the vlog medium to tell, show and share her story of living with dying with others; she uploads and curates short clips about her cancer, but also about all

the things she really loves about life—beauty and fashion—and invites viewers to ask her questions or make requests for clips on specific topics. Through her vlog updates, Charlotte shifts between different positions vis-à-vis her audience and herself: she is the main teller of her personal story of living with cancer, but she's also a 'guru' of cancer, a fashionista, and an inspirational influencer who is reclaiming control over her life, story, and legacy. This compelling video diary of living with terminal illness renders tellable and visible not only the 'small' and 'big' battles with cancer, but also the everydayness of life with and despite dying.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Korina Giaxoglou is lecturer in English Language and Applied Linguistics at The Open University, UK. Her research lies at the intersection of linguistic anthropology, the sociolinguistics of narrative, and (mediated) discourse analysis. Her work has appeared in peer-reviewed journals, including *Applied Linguistics Review*; *Discourse, Context, & Media*; and the *New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia*. The publication of her research monograph on *Sharing small stories of mourning online* by Routledge is forthcoming. Email: korina.giaxoglou@open.ac.uk

NOTE

- 1 Petersen, H.E. (2016). Cancer vlogger Charlotte Eades dies aged 19. *The Guardian* [online]. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/feb/26/cancer-vlogger-charlotte-eades-dies-aged-19>. Accessed 10/04/2018.