

PhD Vlog 6 Month's On Jack Donaghy

TIME	SPEAKER	DIALOGUE
0:00:00	On Screen Text	<p>Name: Jack Donaghy</p> <p>PhD: Urban Studies</p> <p>Location: Glasgow</p> <p>A snapshot of my PhD journey.</p>
0:00:04	Jack Donaghy	<p>Hey folks! Okay, here I am just checking in, letting you know how I'm getting on with my PhD. It's been a few months since I did my last video and my whole conception of time has kind of gone all upside down. It feels as if it's been both like ten years since my last video and it also feels as if it's been no time at all. I don't know what's going on! But let me tell you what's been going on in my project. So whenever I first spoke to you guys, I was doing my PhD on...</p>
0:00:34		<p>... unlawful eviction in the private rental sector and I'm not going to do it anymore! Various reasons for ditching that project but the main issue that I had with it was recruiting participants. Unfortunately trying to get people who have been unlawfully evicted, trying to figure out even who they are! I think a lot of people who have been unlawfully evicted probably don't even know that they've been unlawfully evicted and those who do know they've been unlawfully evicted often don't seek help and when they do seek help, often it's quite hard to talk to the people who they sought help from. So...</p>
0:01:04		<p>... trying to get access to the people who have experienced illegal eviction – very difficult! I think the... I tried lots of ways to get access and it just wasn't going to work out. So I've come up with a new project. My new project is on amateurism and professionalism within</p>

		the private rented sector. So what do I mean by that? Well there's lots of different ways of categorising landlords. The common ways of doing it are thinking about the... on the basis of the...
0:01:34		... number of dwellings that they own, thinking about them on the basis of whether they're incorporated or whether they operate as individuals. You can think about them on the basis of, you know, are they sideline landlords? So maybe they only spend a minority of their time managing their private rented centre assets and they only get a minority of their income... only a minority of their income comes from their private rented sector portfolio. Or maybe they're more business...
0:01:34		... orientated where most of their time and most of their income comes from their portfolio. So there's lots of different ways that have already been established for categorising landlords. I want to look at this new kind of distinction which has been drawn within both policy academic papers and within government papers, and that is on the basis of professional landlords and amateur landlords. So government... for example, Scottish government and UK government for many, many years have talked about this idea that the vast majority of landlords are professional.
0:02:34		But they don't really explain what they mean by professional and they also don't explain how they came to that conclusion and the fact is that although I'm sure most landlords are operating as landlords with the best of intentions, the fact is that a lot of them are... could be categorised as amateur which is another word which really comes up and that's that, you know, most of them haven't been landlords for very long, most of them

		have very small portfolios, most of them do it on a sideline basis and most of them...
0:03:04		... don't have a strong grasp of the legal framework within which they operate. So that's what my new project is on. It's about understanding how can you say that we have a professional private rented sector when most of the operators in it are amateurs? So I want to look at how this division, how this kind of categorisation manifests itself. So I want to talk to landlords, I want to talk to tenants and I also want to talk to regulators.
0:03:34		But enough about that! So what have I been doing? Well right now I'm right in the middle of annual review process. So not on the Monday there but on... No, on the Friday just there but the Friday before, I had to hand in a project proposal to the PhD convener and it had to be between 10,000 and 15,000 words and the annoying thing is I had a good 10,000 to 15,000 words done for my previous projects like in March but I had...
0:04:04		... to throw quite a lot of that out because of this new project. So I kind of pulled together 13,000 words on this new topic – it wasn't the best 13,000 words I've ever written – I think it may not have really come to a point but I did that thing like at the end of every section I said, "This section is incomplete. In my final thing, I want to talk about this and I want to talk about this and I want to talk about this." So I told him what I'm going to tell him in the future, so I hope that's alright! What else?
0:04:34		So that was the Friday. On the Monday, I had to give a presentation based on my new topic to all the staff and some students within the department which is very nerve wracking and it was interesting because I had only actually come up with my research questions

		literally a week before I gave this presentation, so it wasn't as polished as some of the other student's presentations, but at the same time, I think that it won't take too much...
0:05:04		... to get it to a similar standard as the other students, which was good and I think that I definitely have a topic which is interesting and which is worthy of pursuing so I'm quite happy with that. So that's the... I had to hand in that document, I had to do my presentation. The final part of the annual review process is on... it's currently Sunday I'm filming this so it's tomorrow, on Monday, I have to have a meeting with my two supervisors and with the convener...
0:05:34		... of the PhD programme in the department and I'm not sure how that's going to go. We'll see how that goes. Spoken to some people who have been through it and they said not to be worried about it, so hopefully I'm going to be able to go in, answer the questions. I don't think it's like an exam. I don't think that they're going in there and they're going to try and like intentionally trip you up. I think it's going to be not quite like that. I think they want just a frank discussion of where I'm at and where I think I'm going, so hopefully it'll be alright.
0:06:04		But what I'll do is I will leave you guys just now and I will pick this up again on Tuesday – by that time I will have done the meeting and I should also hopefully have my result where they'll let me know whether they think I should continue or not. So wish me luck and I will pick you guys up again on Tuesday.

		Okay folks, it's now Wednesday. I'm glad to report that I survived the whole annual review process.
0:06:34		And they're not going to kick me out which is a good first piece of news to start on I think. So what happened was I had the meeting with the convener and with my supervisors and basically they said that the issue we had was that the project was at any early stage and that it was at an earlier stage than most of the other students because they... a lot of people had not changed their focus as late...
0:07:04		... and as significantly. So as a result of my late change in project, changing the project so close to the annual review date meant that it was especially in the kind of theoretical side, it was not... didn't really have much theory in it at all. It was largely... what I handed in was largely a kind of discussion of the existing literature on kind of empirical facts...
0:07:34		... without much theory involved. So that was the key weakness of what I've got just now but they said well written, that it seemed to add up to an interesting story, it seems like a topic which is worth continuing with but that they want me to do a kind of... before we... basically everyone else gets a kind of... once they go through the annual review, they get a one year until the next one, they want me to come back in three months...
0:08:04		... just so I can show them 10,000 words on the theory which I intend to use as the basis for this work which is fine because that means that I've got three months to focus just on one area and to do something which I really need to do but which I'm not as good at theory, I'm much better at reading government papers and stuff. I'd say I've definitely been a little bit scared of theory

		because I'm not familiar with it but I feel like I've got...
0:08:34		... three months to focus on it and I think that it'll be good because previously I had... I could look at the empirical stuff, the theory or think about methods and theory was always the one that kind of got put on the back burner. But having three months to just sort out theory is good and I'm glad I've got this little bit of extra time. So the review process itself, the actual meeting is a little bit unusual. I was expecting it to be kind of like an exam. In fact I think I approached...
0:09:04		... the whole review process wrong and I think other people did as well. A lot of people definitely thought of it like an exam which it wasn't, you know, kind of thinking about it as an exam perhaps especially if you're unprepared gives you... it makes you think that maybe you should, you know, if you don't know a question, you should just make up an answer to it and hope that, you know, it just gets put through and you can scrape a decent mark! But the annual...
0:09:34		... review process, now that I've been through it, I know is really not like that. It's much more... I mean I know people always say exams are there to help you – I mean what a load of rubbish! But this... I feel actually this particular process was here to help me and it definitely did help me, especially the meeting with the convener. I was expecting it to be a real grilling on the topic but it was much more... it was more of a discussion about...
0:10:04		... the project itself, kind of what I've written, she had a few questions just where I hadn't been clear about, you know, where do I intend to do the fieldwork and things like that which was quite easy to answer. And then because my supervisors were there as

		well, we entered into a whole discussion about well I don't have a theoretical framework so what do we think, what should I use? And it was extremely helpful, you know, especially seeing these people quite frequently, it's easy to forget that they're really...
0:10:34		... really smart and they're really experienced and they now so much which I don't know. So hearing them just kind of having a discussion, all of it was just a discussion amongst themselves because, you know, they were just saying we need to come up with some theories; so what would be a good area to look at? And so I was just listening to them talking all about potential theories and kind of areas of research that they'd read and done and which could be useful. So it was so helpful! It was extremely helpful! And I'm very glad...
0:11:04		... that I went through it because I think it will be, you know, I've got some really good info... good kind of directions to go in now. So that's where I'm at. If you've got your annual review coming up, don't worry about it because it should probably be alright. Approach it as something which is there to help you as opposed to just to, you know, get in your way because at least for me, it really was a big help and...
0:11:34		... yeah, so I'll check in again in a few months. Chances are that the next time we talk I'll be talking about a review process again! And hopefully this time I will be all good and... but yeah, you'll just have to tune in next time to find out. So I'll see you all next time.
0:11:51	On Screen Text	Jobs.ac.uk Great jobs for bright people

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