

Workshop

Educating the Net Generation: The talk and the walk – Sharing lessons and resources from an ALTC project

Workshop creators

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Outcomes

Participants who complete this workshop will be able to:

1. understand and apply recent evidence regarding ‘digital natives’ and ‘digital immigrants’ in Australian universities.
2. plan modifications to curriculum, assessment, learning designs and activities to incorporate student-created content using blogging, photo-sharing, podcasting, social bookmarking and wiki-writing.
3. try out web 2.0 tools and sites to share notes about technical, administrative and pedagogical issues of social web computing within an academic community.

Intended audience

This workshop will be of interest to undergraduate teaching staff, student learning skills advisors, curriculum and staff developers, university IT services professionals, academic planners and administrators and higher education researchers. Workshop activities and materials are suitable for novices through to experts in working with educational technology.

Facilitator

This workshop will be led by Kathleen Gray. Other members of the project team may assist. Kathleen has a PhD in Science Education and has an applied research focus on web-based learning and teaching. She has many years of undergraduate teaching experience. She has held academic roles with significant responsibility for academic staff development and for educational technology policy and strategy. She is a lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences at The University of Melbourne.

Background

Debate about the educational needs of today’s young people has been stimulated by Marc Prensky’s (2001a, 2001b) commentaries on ‘digital natives’ and ‘digital immigrants’. Prensky claimed that the skills and preferences of digital native students contrast markedly with those of their digital immigrant teachers, and that the disparity between the ICT experiences of current students and the sophistication and degree to which these technologies are employed by teaching staff is the “biggest single problem facing education today” (2001a, p.2). This workshop shares experiences from a project which tested these claims in three Australian universities (Kennedy et al., 2006, 2007, 2008), through empirical research comparing students’ and lecturers’ use of ICTs and through cross-case evaluation of implementing social web technologies in undergraduate learning and teaching.

Overview of activities

This workshop will share with the HERDSA community the activities of “Educating the Net Generation”, a 2006-2009 ALTC-funded project. You will explore and discuss recent evidence regarding ‘digital natives’ and ‘digital immigrants’ in Australian universities; lessons from the evaluation of university learning activities that use web 2.0 for student-created content; and the use of web 2.0 tools and sites to share ideas about technical, administrative and pedagogical issues of social web computing. (Optional) Participants are encouraged to bring details of a web 2.0 learning activity you are interested to try or are already using with your students and / or your wireless-internet enabled notebook computer, digital camera and / or digital voice recorder.

Detailed plan of workshop activities

Part 1. Busting myths about the Net Generation. Participants will:

- review the ideas of the key Net Generation commentators.
- explore and compare their own expectations and experiences of “digital natives” and “digital immigrants”.
- relate these to empirical evidence from a study of 2500 first year university students and 100 staff in 3 Australian universities in 2006.
- identify key implications for implementing new and emerging technologies in education and for undertaking research into learning and teaching with these technologies.
- have the opportunity to use data collection tools with which they can do their own further research into other university cohorts.

Part 2. Designing / debugging Education 2.0. Participants will:

- review 2008 student and staff feedback on the use of web 2.0 tools for 8 different undergraduate learning activities, and study artefacts of 2008 student work.
- apply these evaluation findings to develop or revise one or more learning activities of their choice that involves student-created content using web 2.0 tools.
- have the opportunity to use planning tools and resources for educational design, technical specification, and learning management that have been developed and implemented in the ALTC project.

Part 3. Hands-on content creation (will be offered subject to participants' interest and internet access). Participants will:

- be invited to create content reflecting their learning in this workshop, using a selection of web 2.0 tools, and share it via the online community associated with the workshop.
- be directed to a range of other web 2.0 forums and tools where they can interact about issues of education 2.0 within an academic community of practice.

Acknowledgement

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References

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