

11th annual

academic technology institute

January 18, 2007

Institute Information Packet

Schedule of Events

- Breakfast Reception** Alumni Hall
9:00am - 9:30am
- Opening Panel** 9:30am - 10:45pm
Social Networking: Examining the Potential for
Teaching and Learning, a Panel Discussion
- Faculty Led Sessions** 11:00am - 12:30pm
- Arts and Technology: Access, Aesthetics and Applications
with *Lisa Donovan and Kerrie Bellisario*
Wolfard 202
- Beyond the Brainstorm: Deepening Online
Dialogue for Learning with *Sarah Haavind*
Library 403
- Get Tapped In: A Web-based Learning and
Community Environment for Educators
with *Mary Mindess*, assisted by Students Lauren Dodge and Michael Sustick
Library 401
- Audubon Ecological Teaching and Learning Program:
Experiences Extending the Learning Community Online
with *Coleen O'Connell*
Library 301
- Lunch Reception** Alumni Hall
12:30pm - 1:30pm
(lunch provided)
- iPod Shuffle Raffle Winners Announced
Overview: What's New in myLesley?
- myLesley Workshops** 2:00pm - 3:30pm
- Linking Full-Text Articles from Library Databases to
your myLesley Course with *Constance Vratos*
Library 301
- New features in the myLesley Discussion Board
with *The Center for Academic Technology Staff*
Library 401

Schedule of Events / Descriptions

Breakfast Reception Alumni Hall
9:00am - 9:30am

Opening Panel 9:30am - 10:45pm

Social Networking: Examining the Potential for Teaching and Learning, a Panel Discussion

Much has been reported in the media about the use of "social" technologies such as mySpace, Facebook, flickr, YouTube, blogs and wikis. Even if you do not use these tools directly, chances are many of your students (or your student's students) do.

The institute kicks-off with a panel discussion with Lesley undergraduate and graduate students, and their faculty, discussing the uses of social technologies and implications in and out of the classroom. Students and faculty will show examples of their work and invite discussion with the audience. This session provides an excellent chance to hear and see directly from students on how they personally relate and use these tools in and out of academic life.

Panel Participants

Rebecca Petersen (Moderator) Director, Academic Technology Division

Bruce Logan (Moderator) Associate Professor - Lesley College

Sarah Jones Director of Student Activities

Keith MacLeland ('08) Graduate Student, Adjunct Faculty, Staff - AIB

Dave LaMorte ('08) Graduate Student - GSASS

Aaron Stockwell ('09) Undergraduate Student - Lesley College

Lauren Dodge ('08) Undergraduate Student - Lesley College

Leah Valley ('08) Undergraduate Student - Lesley College

Thomas Morgan ('09) Undergraduate Student - Lesley College

Faculty Led Sessions 11:00am - 12:30pm

Arts and Technology: Access, Aesthetics and Applications

with *Lisa Donovan* and *Kerrie Bellisario*

Wolfard 202

In this presentation, Kerrie and Lisa share the results of their year-long Academic Technology Fellowship. Their research highlights how issues of arts, aesthetics and creativity theory are woven into the online learning environment. They specifically provide two examples of how they integrated their research into technology-based components for their courses Drama and Critical Literacy (Donovan) and Art, and Culture in Community (Bellisario).

Beyond the Brainstorm: Deepening Online

Dialogue for Learning with *Sarah Haavind*

Library 403

Successful online learning depends on instructors facilitating learner collaboration in text-based asynchronous dialogue. Focusing and deepening online dialogue among learners is challenging. Many instructors are satisfied to stop at active brainstorming. The potential for deepened learning using online tools is largely untapped. Clear guidelines are needed for using voice (conceptual facilitator, personal muse, mediator) and critical thinking strategies (identifying a direction, making connections, sorting for relevance) to leverage early brainstorming toward deeper learning goals. How does an online instructor focus dialogues where postings about new content are widely divergent? What course of action might an instructor take if discussants do not engage directly with content or begin to wander off-topic? Sarah will introduce

a practical approach to addressing these challenges and provide specific examples of how to effectively facilitate online collaboration.

The session will include interactive components, whole group discussion and presentation. Bring your online teaching challenges, questions and insights to share.

Get Tapped In: A Web-based Learning and Community Environment for Educators

with *Mary Mindess*, assisted by Students *Lauren Dodge* and *Michael Sustick*
Library 401

Explore the possibilities for making community and learning connections through Tapped In, a free online resource for educators and students. Session participants will learn how to enhance their teaching with Tapped In and hear directly from Lesley students how they have used Tapped In as an avenue of collaboration outside of the Lesley University environment.

Audubon Ecological Teaching and Learning Program: Experiences Extending the Learning Community Online

with *Coleen O'Connell*

Library 301

Coleen will share and provide examples of what have been simple but successful experiences extending the face-to-face community online. A discussion and sharing time will follow. This session is especially geared towards beginners who are looking for ways to connect between face-to-face meetings.

Lunch Reception Alumni Hall
12:30pm - 1:30pm

(lunch provided by the Institute)

iPod Shuffle Raffle Winners Announced

Overview: What's New in myLesley?

myLesley Workshops 2:00pm - 3:30pm

Linking Full-Text Articles from Library Databases to your myLesley Course with *Constance Vratton*

Library 301

In this session participants will learn how to make stable, secure and legal web links to full-text articles from their myLesley course site. Ludcke librarians will show how to enhance courses by providing links to scholarly and relevant full-text articles available from the library databases. This session will enable participants to save time and provide durable links that students can access both on and off-campus.

New features in the myLesley Discussion Board

with *The Center for Academic Technology Staff*

Library 401

There are a number of new and exciting options available to both instructors and students in the latest myLesley discussion board upgrade. In this workshop we will examine changes to the user interface while exploring the options that have expanded this tool beyond its primary use as a communication medium. Participants will see first hand how the addition of these tools can transform online discussion into a comprehensive and true interactive teaching tool that fosters deeper academic exchange, collaboration and dialogue.

Evaluation Form

Please take a few moments to fill out this evaluation form. The information we gather will be influential in how we plan and organize future technology events. Thank you.

You can return this form at any point during the Institute, either to the Registration desk in Alumni Hall, or to any presenter after a workshop. After the Institute you can inter-office mail this form to: CAT, LL Porter Exchange

Name *(Optional)* _____

School & Division _____

Select one:

- Full-time Faculty
- Adjunct Faculty
- Faculty Administrator
- Lesley Student
- Lesley Staff
- Other _____

How did you hear about the Institute?

Select all that apply

- Email announcement
- Lesley news announcement
- Letter sent to home address
- Friend or colleague
- Lesley's event calendar
- Phone Call
- Other _____

Is this your first time attending the Institute?

- Yes
- No

How many Institutes have you previously attended?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

I thought the Opening Panel was:

- Excellent
- Very Good
- Good
- Somewhat Good
- N/A –did not attend

Did you find the Opening Panel applicable to your work at Lesley? Why or Why not?

Please state any additional comments you have about the Opening Panel.

What topics or skills would you like to see covered at future events (Institute or Workshops) that were not discussed today?

Select all that apply:

- Podcasting
- Video
- Blogging
- Social Bookmarking
- Course development & organization
- Other _____

Would you be interested in participating in online professional development (*i.e. taking a mini-course or workshop online about specific topics*)?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Do you have any additional feedback about the Institute?

If you attended a workshop(s) today please take some time to evaluate the presentation.

please turn form over

Sessions

11:00am - 12:30pm

Session Attended:

Select one:

- Arts and Technology: Access, Aesthetics and Applications with Lisa Donovan and Kerrie Bellisario
- Beyond the Brainstorm: Deepening Online dialogue for Learning with Sarah Haavind
- Get Tapped In: A Web-based Learning and Community Environment for Educators with Mary Mindess
- Audubon Ecological Teaching and Learning Program: Experiences Extending the Learning Community Online with Coleen O'Connell

How would you rate this session?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Were you able to emerge from the session with new knowledge relevant to your work? Why or Why not?

Would you recommend a future session on this topic to others? Why or Why not?

Please list any general comments you have about this session:

myLesley Workshops

2:00pm - 3:30pm

Workshop Attended:

Select one

- Linking Full-Text Articles from Library Databases to your myLesley Course with Constance Vrattos
- New Features in the myLesley Discussion Board with The Center for Academic Technology Staff

How would you rate this session?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Were you able to emerge from the session with new knowledge relevant to your work? Why or Why not?

Would you recommend a future session on this topic to others? Why or Why not?

Please list any general comments you have about this session:

How many courses have you taught using myLesley? _____

What features do you most commonly use?

Select all that apply

- Announcements
- Discussion Board
- Send Email
- Groups
- Gradebook
- Other _____

What are your two most common sources of support you use when you need assistance with myLesley?

- 888-myLesley
- The Center for Academic Technology
- UT Help Desk
- Other _____

7 things you should know about...

Social Bookmarking

Scenario

Professor Smith does much of his work on the Web these days. When he is not teaching or doing primary research, he spends time on the Web looking for information related to his area of expertise. Dr. Smith gets his information from many sources: he receives e-mail newsletters from professional organizations and colleagues, he subscribes to several dozen RSS newsfeeds, and he uses search engines to help uncover resources that may be of value in his teaching and research.

He uses folders in his Web browser to organize bookmarks of online resources, but this practice has become inefficient. If a resource is relevant to several topic areas, he has to save that bookmark in multiple folders. At times he will discover that his essential bookmarks are on his home machine while he is at the office. Other times he is fairly confident that the bookmarked site is on his machine, but the process of finding one site out of hundreds of bookmarks is more difficult than refinding it using Google. Often Dr. Smith needs to share bookmarks with students and colleagues; this task requires finding the reference and e-mailing it.

Dr. Brown has all of the same needs as Dr. Smith but uses del.icio.us to manage her bookmarks. When Dr. Brown finds a Web site to bookmark, she “right clicks” the site to add it to her del.icio.us account and “tags” it with a few relevant keywords. Since her list is public, she can easily direct colleagues and students to it. Others can find the list through the keywords. Dr. Brown has a few other advantages as well. When she bookmarks a site, del.icio.us tells her how many others bookmarked the same site. If she clicks on that number, she can see exactly who else bookmarked the site and when they found it. A further click shows her the bookmark collections of others interested in “her” site. Finally, if she chooses a common tag, Dr. Brown can see all of the other sites with that tag. This makes group collection and aggregation of bookmarks very easy.

Dr. Brown has broken from the model of using private folders to organize information. Social bookmarking creates a true web of resources and connections—one that is not limited to individuals and their folders but represents the interests and judgments of a community of users.

What is it?

Social bookmarking is the practice of saving bookmarks to a public Web site and “tagging” them with keywords. Bookmarking, on the other hand, is the practice of saving the address of a Web site you wish to visit in the future on your computer. To create a collection of social bookmarks, you register with a social bookmarking site, which lets you store bookmarks, add tags of your choice, and designate individual bookmarks as public or private. Some sites periodically verify that bookmarks still work, notifying users when a URL no longer functions. Visitors to social bookmarking sites can search for resources by keyword, person, or popularity and see the public bookmarks, tags, and classification schemes that registered users have created and saved.

Who is doing it?

Social bookmarking dates back just a couple of years, when sites like Furl, Simpy, and del.icio.us began operating. Other social bookmarking sites include de.lirio.us, an open source version of del.icio.us, and citeulike, a social bookmarking site for academic papers. Social bookmarking is particularly useful when collecting a set of resources that are to be shared with others. Anyone can participate in social bookmarking.

How does it work?

Social bookmarking opens the door to new ways of organizing information and categorizing resources. The creator of a bookmark assigns tags to each resource, resulting in a user-directed, “amateur” method of classifying information. Because social bookmarking services indicate who created each bookmark and provide access to that person’s other bookmarked resources, users can easily make social connections with other individuals interested in just about any topic. Users can also see how many people have used a tag and search for all resources that have been assigned that tag. In this way, the community of users over time will develop a unique structure of keywords to define resources—something that has come to be known as a “folksonomy.”

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Social Bookmarking

Why is it significant?

Activities like social bookmarking give users the opportunity to express differing perspectives on information and resources through informal organizational structures. This process allows like-minded individuals to find one another and create new communities of users that continue to influence the ongoing evolution of folksonomies and common tags for resources. Using a folksonomy-based tool for research lets you take advantage of the insights of other users to find information related to the topic you are researching, even in areas that aren't obviously connected to the primary topic. If you are looking for information about sailing, for example, you might find that other users saw a connection between sailing and boat repair, taking you in new, potentially valuable directions. These kinds of tools also encourage users to keep coming back because the folksonomy and the collections of resources are constantly changing. It's easy to imagine assigning a value for individual resources, resulting in a ranking system that functions as a collaborative filter.

What are the downsides?

By definition, social bookmarking is done by amateurs. There is no oversight as to how resources are organized and tagged. This can lead to inconsistent or otherwise poor use of tags. For example, if a user saves a bookmark for a site with information about greyhounds but only tags the site with the term "greyhound" and not also with "dogs" or perhaps "dog racing," that resource might never be found by someone looking for information about breeds of dogs. Because social bookmarking reflects the values of the community of users, there is a risk of presenting a skewed view of the value of any particular topic. For example, users might assign pejorative tags to certain resources. In addition, social bookmarking means storing data in yet another location that you have to maintain and update.

Where is it going?

The technology behind social bookmarking is not complex, which means the threshold to participate is low, both for Web sites offering such services and for users. The ideas that social bookmarking is built on are working their way into other applications; the practice of tagging information is being extended to other types of resources, such as multimedia files and e-mail. This shift away from formal taxonomies may have important implications for how user communities are born and how they function. As the landscape for online resources changes and new systems of classifying those resources emerge and mature, the design and function of databases themselves may ultimately be changed to accommodate new ways of managing information.

What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Tagging information resources with keywords has the potential to change how we store and find information. It may become less important to know and remember where information was found and more important to know how to retrieve it using a framework created by and shared with peers and colleagues. Social bookmarking simplifies the distribution of reference lists, bibliographies, papers, and other resources among peers or students.

7 things you should know about...

YouTube

Scenario

For her term project in ecology, Maria decides to focus on the effects of logging near her hometown of Bellingham, Washington. Maria thinks that a documentary is the perfect way to demonstrate her knowledge of ecosystems while showing something she believes many of her classmates—at a state university in the southwest—know little about. From her parents, she collects hours of video taken near her home, spanning the two decades since she was born. When she goes home during fall break, she takes more video of the same areas.

Maria pieces together a video outline of her project, lacing together narrative, data charts, and footage of areas that have been logged. She posts the outline on YouTube, with access limited to the class. Her professor reviews the outline and provides feedback, as do several students. On a whim, she makes the outline public and is surprised by the number of people who watch her video and offer comments. One viewer suggests that she discuss different logging techniques and include information about proposed state legislation. Another viewer gives her tips about using video software to better match the sound and picture channels.

Over the semester, Maria enhances her video and fine-tunes it, posting updated versions as it evolves. Several YouTube users subscribe to her video and are notified each time Maria posts a new version, and she finds them to be a valuable resource in improving her project. One of them even includes her video on his blog about environmental issues. Because of the size of the video files and the bandwidth necessary to stream them, IT staff discourage Maria from using departmental servers for her project. With YouTube, Maria can keep all versions of her video available, allowing her professor to watch them sequentially at the end of the semester to see how it grew from a rough sketch to its final, polished form.

What is it?

YouTube is a video-sharing service that lets users upload files to YouTube servers, where they are available online. With the exception of content that is offensive or illegal, videos can be animations, footage of public events, personal recordings of friends—virtually anything a user wants to post. Videos can be informational, entertaining, persuasive, or purely personal. One of an emerging class of social applications, YouTube allows users to post and tag videos, watch those posted by others, post comments in a threaded-discussion format, search for content by keyword or category, and create and participate in topical groups. YouTube ties into several blogging applications, giving users a quick way to blog about a particular video and include a link to it. Users can view profiles of individuals who have posted or commented on videos, see their favorite videos, and contact them.

Who is doing it?

Since its debut in 2005, YouTube has become extremely popular, streaming more than 100 million videos per day, ranging from clips of just a few seconds to 10 minutes or more. Although many videos on YouTube are simply for fun, some people use the site to explore video production as aspiring professionals or hobbyists. People who dream of being producers, directors, or journalists share their videos on YouTube and gauge responses from the community. A budding reporter posting video and narration from the site of a natural disaster, an aspiring director of music videos, an amateur documentary film maker hoping to sell his work to a distributor—these and others find in YouTube an outlet for their creativity and a resource to get feedback from and interact with users who seek out content that interests them. Others use video to distribute content that is not necessarily tied to the medium, such as a video artifact demonstrating mastery of a physical skill (such as archery), or a video study of a sculpture.

How does it work?

YouTube is free, though people who want to post videos or comments must register with the site, creating a profile. Videos—which include tags, a category, and a brief description—can be public or restricted to members of specified contact lists. Several tools allow viewers to sort through videos to locate those of interest. Links allow a user to share a movie through

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e-mail, add it to a list of favorites, post a text-based or video comment about it, and read (or watch) the comments others have posted. A user can subscribe to all of another user's postings or to content that is tagged with particular terms. Each of these actions becomes a part of the user's profile. When others look at a user's profile, they see his favorites, comments, and videos he has posted. As a result, profiles are constantly updated to reflect each user's history and tastes. YouTube also allows videos hosted on its site to be embedded in other Web pages, such as blogs or personal Web sites.

Because of the size of movie files and the number of formats, sharing video has not always been simple. YouTube has made sharing video easy by addressing the storage and server questions, as well as the issue of file format. The Flash player is the only player required, and it works consistently on various platforms. In addition, videos on YouTube generally stream smoothly, without lags or slowdowns.

Why is it significant?

The ease of watching and sharing videos, combined with the fact that the site is free, opens the experience of online video to a wide range of users. YouTube offers opportunities for expression through video—a new spin on the notion self-publishing, making content available for anyone interested in consuming it. The social-networking tools further engage users, drawing them in to an environment that encourages them to meet new people, read and share opinions, and be part of a community. The interactive features allow members of communities to earn the respect of peers and increase their stature in the group.

What are the downsides?

As with other applications that disseminate electronic content, YouTube raises questions of copyright. Despite a statement warning users against improperly using copyrighted material, users are free to upload any content they have. A major record label has alleged that YouTube is responsible for copyright violations committed by its users. On the other hand, another record label announced a deal to make its content available through YouTube in exchange for a portion of the site's ad revenue. Legal questions also surround footage that depicts illegal behavior or that was taken of someone without the person's knowledge or consent.

Users who embed YouTube videos on other pages, such as in an e-portfolio or on a course Web site, rely on YouTube to continue to make that content available. If YouTube went out of business or changed how it functions, links from other Web resources could become nonfunctional.

Like other social software, YouTube also raises questions of privacy, appropriate use, and trust. For several months, a YouTube user under the moniker "lonelygirl15" posted regular videos of herself, creating an online diary of sorts. After attracting many thousands of fans who followed lonelygirl15's posts, the scheme was exposed as a fabrication. In other cases, YouTube users have been harassed by individuals who stalked them using information found in their profiles.

Where is it going?

The way YouTube is used for music videos is one indicator of possible directions for the site. Fans have posted their own versions of music videos for some bands' songs, prompting others to modify those videos or create new ones, resulting in an active community of users with a common interest. Some record companies have seized on this concept, sponsoring contests for amateurs to make official videos for selected artists. These kinds of activities give rise to very narrowly focused interest groups, which are often capable of developing compelling new material. These groups are also extremely valuable for marketers, who increasingly rely on "narrowcasting" to reach a targeted, self-identified population. In addition, because it works well with other applications, YouTube has the potential to provide distribution for content that is displayed elsewhere, such as e-learning tools. While YouTube has similarities with other self-expression tools, such as blogs, the medium may grow in popularity because of how it differs from them.

What are the implications for teaching and learning?

YouTube draws users into the experience of viewing videos and engaging with the content as commentators and creators, activities that heighten students' visual literacy—an important skill in today's electronic culture. Even if most of the content on YouTube lacks an educational goal, the application encourages experimentation with new media. Many educators believe that the act of creating content—in virtually any form—is a valuable learning exercise, helping develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and the tools used to create that content. To the extent that YouTube facilitates such creation, it has the potential to expose students to new insights and skills, as well as link them to various online communities. As a social-software application, YouTube is part of a trend among Net Generation students to replace passive learning with active participation, where everyone has a voice, anyone can contribute, and the value lies less in the content itself than in the networks of learners that form around content and support one another in learning goals.

7 things you should know about...

Facebook

Scenario

Angela will spend next semester studying at a university in Budapest, and—so she can make the most of her time in Hungary—she wants to learn as much as possible before she leaves. For a couple of semesters, Angela has had a profile on Facebook but hasn't posted much information about herself and doesn't use the site frequently. Because she attends a relatively small college without extensive resources for study-abroad students, she decides to find out what she can learn from other Facebook users.

Angela starts by updating her profile to include information about her upcoming semester in Budapest and her major. She joins several Facebook groups related to studies abroad and international student-exchange programs. Through these groups, Angela finds students at her own college who have studied abroad—even some she knows but who never told her they had studied overseas—and many more from around the country. Contacting members of these groups gives Angela insights into aspects of studying abroad that she otherwise would not have gained until she got there. She searches for users with “Budapest” or “Hungary” in their profiles and finds dozens of students from that part of the world or who have traveled there. From their perspectives, Angela learns about the current and past political climate of former Soviet Bloc nations. This, in turn, leads Angela to other Facebook searches focused on European politics and culture generally.

As the weeks progress, Angela's Facebook profile becomes increasingly detailed. She creates several new online groups, one of which quickly has more than 200 members. Other Facebook users regularly contact Angela, sometimes with questions, sometimes with answers to questions. By the time she leaves for Budapest, she has a good understanding of what to expect in terms of the study-abroad program and of local culture, restaurants, and weather. She has also met online several students from other universities who will be studying in Hungary next semester and whom she will meet for lunch in Budapest her first week there.

What is it?

Facebook is a social networking site designed to connect users. Sites such as MySpace and Friendster are similar, but Facebook is generally considered the leading social networking site among college students. Facebook allows individuals to create profiles that include personal interests, affiliations, pictures, and—with some limitations—virtually anything else a user wants to post. Information entered in a profile links that user to others who have posted similar information. For example, all users who list a particular band or movie as a favorite or who share the same hometown constitute a group. In user profiles, each of these pieces of data is a link; clicking on it displays everyone else in the network who included that element in their profiles. Other connections are more structured, based on user-created groups that typically have descriptive titles, such as “Feminists are fun!” or the name of a fraternity.

Who's doing it?

Although some faculty and staff have profiles, most Facebook users are students. Because social networking sites constantly create connections among users at participating institutions, the appeal is broad. Jazz aficionados, women in science, aspiring veterinarians—all of these and others have built groups of friends on Facebook. Others are starting to use Facebook also. At some institutions, following an incident such as a party that got out of hand, campus police have found information or photos on Facebook that incriminate the students responsible. Some employers look up students on Facebook to get a fuller picture of applicants. Not all Facebook profiles result in positive outcomes for the students.

How does it work?

To create a profile, users—current students, alumni, faculty, or staff—must have an e-mail address in the domain of an institution that is affiliated with Facebook. Once you establish an account, you can update it as often as you like, adding or changing information including pictures, favorites, and blog-type entries. Users build networks of “friends,” people who have agreed to be added as friends to users' profiles. You can browse profiles based on criteria such as age, relationship status, or major or search the database for people you already know and contact them through

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private messages or public notes on their profiles. You can also send group announcements, such as a message about a political rally to all users at a particular institution who identify themselves as politically liberal.

Why is it significant?

Creating or refining one's self-identity and values is an important part of college. College students are encouraged to discover who they are and how they relate to others. For many, Facebook has become a tool in that development, allowing them to define a profile, find others with similar interests, and then reassess how well they fit. This freedom can be liberating, but it also carries risks for students whose "just joking around" comments might be taken seriously by readers of their profiles. Facebook offers unprecedented ability to find other users based on specific criteria. It's a mass-market tool that facilitates niche relationships. Using Facebook, students can build the kinds of connections—with students and in some cases with faculty—that make them feel like they belong and are accepted. Connections with others are an important factor in student retention. At the same time, surrounding yourself with only those who have similar interests potentially limits your exposure to new ideas and experiences.

What are the downsides?

Concerns about Facebook center on its being public even though it feels like a private forum. Moreover, there is little assurance that the people behind the profiles are who they represent themselves to be. The number of connections you have is sometimes considered a measure of personal popularity, and the desire to have a cool profile and large groups of friends tempts users to post information or photos that in other contexts they would keep private, such as embarrassing pictures or boasts about drinking. Although some students understand how and when to separate private from public content, many lack the discretion to present themselves—and others—appropriately online. Not only can students find themselves in hot water over pictures and comments about themselves, questions of libel and copyright come into play when users post content created by others or comments about other people. Internet caching exacerbates this problem, making Web content available even after it has been changed or removed from a Web site. Stories of "Facebook addiction" are also common. Many users say that after creating a profile, they found themselves spending hours a day updating their pages, looking for people with shared interests, and reading others' profiles and looking at their photos—exactly the kinds of activities Facebook facilitates. A seemingly infinite web of connections, however, poses a risk for never-ending wandering, seeing who knows who, who likes what, and how it all fits together, with no particular goal in mind.

Where is it going?

Students will continue to think of creative ways to use Facebook to collect and share information among an always-changing network of friends and colleagues, moving beyond the strictly social aspect of the site. For some, the ability to send messages to targeted groups of users is the most important feature of Facebook. Leaders of campus groups can select a data point, such as political affiliation or hobby, and share messages and resources to all such self-identified users. If this practice grows, students not using Facebook may feel pressure to join so they can participate in and contribute to areas of interest.

As social networking sites become more mainstream, online groups might begin to resemble existing campus communities and be influenced by the social norms and protocols inherent in such academic communities. As users become more sophisticated and a broader population is represented online, students will start to use social networking sites to make professional connections with people through topics of deep intellectual interest to them. Connections to faculty and alumni might also provide new opportunities for professional development and networking.

What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Information literacy—the ability to negotiate the opportunities and risks of the Internet age—is an increasingly important aspect of higher education. Facebook presents students with choices about how to use technology in creative and useful ways while avoiding the pitfalls. Even as a purely social activity, Facebook has the potential to teach students about appropriate citizenship in the online world. Like many emerging Internet applications, Facebook also emphasizes the importance of creating content over simply consuming it. By encouraging students to craft compelling profiles, Facebook allows students to express themselves, communicate, and assemble profiles that highlight their talents and experience.

Facebook has struck a chord with millions of college students, drawing them in to an online world where they spend countless hours browsing profiles, meeting new people, and exploring relationships. Any technology that is able to captivate so many students for so much time not only carries implications for how those students view the world but also offers an opportunity for educators to understand the elements of social networking that students find so compelling and to incorporate those elements into teaching and learning.

7 things you should know about...

Blogs

Scenario

Professor Thomas has been looking for new ways for students in her International Politics course to connect—with her, with one another, and with the material. Knowing from experience that reflecting on concepts and writing about them helps crystallize her thoughts, she decides to experiment with blogs. Blogs are personal online journals that serve to capture thoughts and comments and post them to a public Web site for others to read and respond. Blog entries can be informal and are posted without the approval of a moderator or editor.

She gives a brief demonstration of the blogging application, showing the students that it's quick and simple to create an entry. Going to her blogging application, she types in her comments, includes a link to the related article online, and adds minor formatting. With a single click, the entry is posted to her blog online.

Each student creates his or her own blog. Dr. Thomas instructs the students to set aside regular time for blogging, encouraging the students to write about topics discussed in class and how events in the news inform their understanding of global politics. She tells the class to read each other's blogs, as well as her own, and to comment on the postings. In her own blog, Dr. Thomas models the kinds of blog entries she hopes students will write, and many of her entries are her responses to student blog posts.

As the course proceeds, she finds that most students take to blogging. When she uses a student blog entry to seed a posting on her own blog, she generates much more interest among students than had been possible in previous years. The *trackback* feature allows Dr. Thomas and the students to reference individual blog posts, similar to an informal literature citation. She also enjoys the community dialogue that results from others' commenting on her postings—or challenging them.

By the end of the course, Dr. Thomas sees that introducing her students to blogging is a straightforward and interesting way for them to generate, share, and keep up with timely and topical class information. They form rich connections with one another and the content and—because of the reflection and sharing—find great relevance in the material. Several students continue to blog after the course is over. Dr. Thomas plans to include richer media, such as photographs and short audio segments, in the blogs in her next class.

What is it?

A blog—a shorthand term that means “Web log”—is an online, chronological collection of personal commentary and links. Easy to create and use from anywhere with an Internet connection, blogs are a form of Internet publishing that has become an established communications tool. Blogging has evolved from its origins as a medium for the online publication of personal diaries to a respected vehicle for editorials on specific topics. In their latest incarnation, blogs represent an alternative to mainstream media publications. The personal perspectives presented on blogs often lead to discourse between bloggers, and many blog circles generate a strong sense of community.

Who's doing it?

Although online journals have been around longer than the term “blog,” they gained momentum with the introduction of services that allow users to publish blogs easily, without needing to code HTML. Today, thousands of people use services including Blogger and Moveable Type to simplify, automate, and accelerate the online publishing process.

Blogs are showing up in venues ranging from entertainment and commerce to news and politics. Many blogs are the musings of a single author; others focus on a particular topic and feature the voices of several authors. There are group blogs, family blogs, community blogs, and corporate blogs. WarBlogs (a product of the Iraq war), LibLogs (library blogs), and EduBlogs (targeting education) are just some of the emerging types of blogs. In educational settings, faculty are using blogs to express their opinions, to promote dialogue in the discipline, and as an instructional tool, and students are increasingly using blogs both as personal commentaries and as a required part of certain courses.

How does it work?

A blog can be thought of as an online journal, and maintaining a blog is as simple as using an online e-mail program. Bloggers enter posts into a blogging application, add formatting or hyperlinks, and save the post. The application adds the entry to the blog, making the content available online and alerting users who have subscribed to that blog's content. Entries can include text, hyperlinks, images, or multimedia. Visitors can read postings, submit com-

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ments, find blog entries by date, and search the site by keyword. Most blogs allow visitors to subscribe using an RSS feed or another service. Effective blogs tend to be updated on a regular basis.

Most bloggers solicit feedback, fostering two-way communication between readers and authors. Readers can provide feedback by leaving comments on the blog page itself or by posting a response on their own blogs and linking back to the original post—a feature called trackback. Trackback notifies bloggers when one of their posts is referenced by another blog, making it possible to determine the popularity of a post based on the number and diversity of incoming links to a post. Through linking, commenting, and feedback, good (or at least popular) ideas spread quickly through the informal network of blogs (the “blogosphere”), while unpopular ideas are simply ignored. Being referenced by a popular blogger brings instant attention and often credibility, and repeated linking enhances the reputation and authority of a blogger. Through this system of recommendations and referrals, a collaborative filtering capacity has emerged in the blogosphere.

Why is it significant?

Because blogs engage people in knowledge sharing, reflection, and debate, they often attract a large and dedicated readership. Blogs are becoming an important component of the Internet landscape, providing authors and readers with an avenue for unedited expression, reaction, and connection, without the censorship of mediated chat rooms or formal media outlets.

The simplicity of creating and maintaining blogs means that open discussions can be established almost immediately, making blogs an ideal venue for far-reaching discussions among the Internet community on new or timely topics. Blogs foster the growth of communities, and the dynamics of collaborative filtering and recommending/referring may provide new ways to evaluate, vet, and critique student-created knowledge.

What are the downsides?

Because blogs are often produced and maintained by individuals, they can include biased or inaccurate information. Users visiting a blog might see it as factual or authoritative when, in fact, it is the online equivalent of a soap box: a place to speak and to be heard. Unlike chat rooms, blogs are unmediated and therefore offer a different type of venue for individuals to express themselves and air their opinions, ideas, and attitudes. While this may be acceptable for a personal blog, it might be inappropriate for a blog hosted on an institutional server. Intellectual property is another area of concern for higher education, given the implications of hosting blogs that might include content that has been used without proper attribution.

Blogs are also highly volatile. Bloggers can edit or delete posts, and this transient nature can make blogs difficult to archive or index. In addition, the time-limited relationship of students to

institutions influences the length of time a student blog should be hosted, yet removing posts from the blogosphere once a student has graduated could confound those who linked to the post.

Where is it going?

Blogs are proliferating at an exponential rate. Estimates suggest as many as 50 million people are now blogging. Because blogs are easy to create and modify, they occupy a unique niche in cyberspace—that of highly personalized discussion forums that foster communities of interest. Blogs are public and long-lived, and they weave themselves into close relationships with other blogs. As such, they may serve as an educational tool for reflection, knowledge building, and sharing.

Blogs continue to benefit from several years of experimentation and evolution, both within and outside of education. By carefully evaluating their strengths and weaknesses, educators are learning to set guidelines and expectations to maximize the benefits of blogs. Structured exercises and clear goals are further enhancing the value of blogs in education.

What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Put into practice with an understanding of their benefits and limitations, blogs are an increasingly accepted instructional technology tool. Blogs can be used for reflection about classes, careers, or current events; they can also capture and disseminate student- and faculty-generated content. RSS feeds make blog content accessible through newsreaders, allowing bloggers to increase the sharing of this information among interested individuals.

Blogs offer students, faculty, staff, and others a high level of autonomy while creating a new opportunity for interaction with peers. Blogs provide a forum for discussion that goes beyond coursework to include culture, politics, and other areas of personal exploration. Students often learn as much from each other as from instructors or textbooks, and blogs offer another mechanism for peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and acquisition.

7 things you should know about...

Podcasting

Scenario

John had to leave class a bit early last Monday, but he knew he could catch up on all of the missed material by subscribing to his professor's podcast and downloading the recording to his MP3 player. As he headed for the bus that Wednesday morning, he was confident that he would be as prepared as his friend Joanne. She had stayed through the whole class and reported that there had been an interesting issue during the end-of-class demonstration. Walker, the class clown, had tried to match wits with the instructor's (again) and had almost won. "Check it out, John!" she said.

As John rode the bus, he searched for the "incident" and listened intently. The atmosphere in the lecture hall was electric—and the laughter and banter in the class could be clearly heard through his headphones.

By the time he got off the bus, John felt he hadn't missed too much—the podcast had been nearly as good as being there in person. He also knew that he would now have enough questions for the interview he was conducting later in the day of a visiting wildlife conservationist. Part of the reason she had agreed was John's promise to share the session with his colleagues—via a podcast.

What is it?

"Podcasting" is a term inspired by the Apple Computer Corporation's iPod—a portable digital audio player that allows users to download music from their computer directly to the device for later listening. The term is no longer specifically related to the iPod but refers to any software and hardware combination that permits automatic downloading of audio files (most commonly in MP3 format) for listening at the user's convenience. Unlike traditional radio or other Web-based streaming media, podcasts give listeners control over when they hear the recording. Podcasting makes use of the Internet's Real Simple Syndication (RSS) standard. It differs from broadcasting and Webcasting in the way that content is published and transmitted via the Web. Instead of a central audio stream, podcasting sends audio content directly to an iPod or other MP3 player.

Who is doing it?

Podcasting can involve practically anyone with an Internet connection. With its roots in the blogging world, part of the appeal of podcasting is the ease with which audio content can be created, distributed, and downloaded from the Web. Professional broadcasters and syndicated radio shows are starting to make their content available as podcasts. Amateurs are flocking to podcasting, sharing their content and opinions. Campuses are starting to make content available as podcasts as well.

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How does it work?

Podcasting is a unique innovation in content publishing based in large part on its inherent simplicity and ease of use. Users simply connect their portable audio devices to their computer, log on to a podcasting subscription service, and subscribe to that site's feeds. Audio content is then "pushed" from the original source directly and automatically to the user's iPod or MP3 player. All of the tools needed to create, modify, and distribute podcasts are within reach of anyone with a reasonably well-configured laptop. The desire to improve the quality of podcasts has resulted in rich Web-based resources outlining principles of sound, equipment recommendations, and shared experiences. Podcasting demonstrates the power of audio over text (listening as opposed to reading), allowing podcast users to listen and learn while they walk, jog, ride the bus, or are otherwise away from their computer screen. Perhaps most significantly, podcast technology empowers users to publish audio content directly and seamlessly onto the Web.

Why is it significant?

Podcasting allows education to become more portable than ever before. Podcasting cannot replace the classroom, but it provides educators one more way to meet today's students where they "live"—on the Internet and on audio players. Barriers to adoption and costs are minimal. The tools to implement podcasts are simple and affordable. Podcasting is predicted to soon become a mainstream application, much like video-on-demand recorders (such as TiVo).

What are the downsides of podcasting?

Users must have sufficient bandwidth to download the podcast. Beyond access, there are potential issues with the format. Podcasting is primarily an audio delivery technology and, as such, has limited usefulness for the hearing impaired. Podcasting is not designed for two-way interaction or audience participation. Podcasters are essentially "sound amateurs" producing and publishing audio feeds. The quality of speakers' voices, speech patterns, intonations, and other sound effects may not be the same as those of a professional broadcast. Faculty who wish to record their lectures or other instruction for podcasts may need some training, both in handling an audio-only medium and using the technology.

Where is it going?

Podcast enthusiasts see no limit to the potential uses of this technology, particularly in education, and the number of podcast aggregators (sites that collect, categorize, and then make available podcasts for subscribers) is growing. It is possible that specialized higher education-based aggregators will emerge, offering students access to missed lectures, instructions for laboratory experiments, and so forth. Interlacing podcasts with video applications—listening to a podcast while viewing related material on the Web—is another area of experimentation in education.

Podcasting is evolving at a rapid rate. New features—categorizing, navigating, and indexing—are being demanded by users. Consequently, designers and producers of podcasts are seeking new ways to add layers of richness to simple audio files—creating audio experiences that are both entertaining and instructive.

What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Podcasting allows students to use their technology-based entertainment systems (iPods, MP3 players) for educational experiences. Because students are already familiar with the underlying technology, podcasting broadens educational options in a nonthreatening and easily accessible manner. For example, podcasting allows lectures or other course content to be made available to students if they miss class. Beyond missed lectures, podcasting can provide access to experts through interviews. Podcasting is not limited to content delivered to the student, however; students can create their own podcasts—as a record of activities, a way to collect notes, or a reflection on what they have learned.