

Summary Report from
Session Sixteen of the Bradley University Campus Conversations Series (BUCCS)

Supporting Students and Learning with 21st Century communication technologies, Blogs, Wikis, Second Life or how the personal can be professional was held on November 18-19, 2008. BUCCS 16 was developed and hosted by Meg Frazier, Information Literacy Librarian and Barb Kerns, Director of Instructional Technology Assistance Center and featured a panel of practitioners talking about how they use Blogs, Wikis, Facebook and Second Life to support students and learning. Each speaker gave a 10-minute presentation on how they used a social technology in an educational setting. Small group discussion followed centered on advantages, disadvantages and effective use of the technology. A list of available technologies and who to contact was distributed.

Use of Blogs for courses by Peg Cook and institutional recruitment by Jim Crone

- Blogs are quick to use, can include photos, videos, links and can allow for comments. It also provides opportunity to teach technology skills, link content, organize files, and new ways to use technology.
- Collaborative aspect and can have a public nature of the Blog – writing for real public audience. Blog can be set as viewable to public but not “google-able”.
- Recommendation that each student is to post at least 1x per week – brevity and frequency is best.
- Some social networking sites don’t promote or even allow filtering for different audiences.
- Not all social networking sites are the same. There is a difference between more social/peer networking sites like Facebook and Myspace and more professional networking sites like livejournal and linkedin.
- Recommendation of establishing expectations, etiquette, ethical use policy, privacy and personal boundaries.

Use of Wikis in higher education by Eli Collins-Brown

See presentation here: <http://wikisinhighered.wetpaint.com/?T=anon>

- Enable rapid creation of documents or materials where multiple authors can contribute content of text, images, files, and links to other web sites.
- Can have layers of control: authors, comments, viewers. Must consider confidentiality settings.
- Wiki project for POD allowed the organization to take a list serv and put the expert content in a Wiki – to save it and make it searchable and accessible. Support dispersed collaborations and asynchronous team work.
- Many software options; ex. - Google docs, google sites, Wiki matrix, wetpaint, media wiki*(harder), etc.
- Many uses: reflection journals, research project and proposals, research presentation, peer review, collaboration – committee meetings, KB, multiple contributors, collaboration project, schedule meetings.
- Are low-threshold technologies - users do not need much technical knowledge but will require some time to learn.
- Accessibility may be a problem for visually impaired.

Educational opportunities in Second Life by Barbara Galik

- Is a virtual reality platform and has elements of real world, including people (avatars), objects, commerce, interaction. Does require large bandwidth. There is a steep learning curve for navigating SL and even steeper for creating things. You can participate in second life for free.
- Is available to users 24/7, which extends opportunities for collaboration.
- BU’s Second Life presence includes Cullom-Davis Library, campus buildings and some classrooms; a class on how to use Second Life as a research tool; showcase of student photography and engineering work.
- Some opportunities include teaching at courses, collaborating with colleagues, poster presentation, new friends, prospective students, alumni, immerse yourself in another language or culture.
- There are over 50 Islands in the Educational Area: lots of resources.
- You can communicate with others using either voice or chat technology. Using chat technology, you can save a chat log, leaving a record of the conversation that occurred. So, for example, if teaching a class in Second Life and a student misses a class, they have a complete log of what happened during that class.

Using Facebook to reach Bradley Students (Oct. 18th only) by Rob Bertram

- When new doctoral program was established the department found itself overrun with questions about housing and the outlying community. He set up a Facebook account and added the prospective students as “friends”.
- Immediately they were able to connect with each other and share advice about where to look for houses and apartments, and so forth.
- He also quickly saw a disadvantage in that he was seeing a very personal and private side of his students that would impact his ability to give professional references in some cases. This has presented a learning opportunity for the department and the students.
- Advantages - promote connectivity, becomes a way for faculty to keep on top of students, gives professor idea of what a student life is like, new students coming, doctor, daycare, helpful for networking potential, good place for students not going straight to grad school to be able to track faculty down, outcome assessment using Facebook.

- Disadvantage- time management - students can get overwhelmed with Facebook, connected to so many friends, professor/students how they should see each other and crossing boundaries.
- Physical Therapy, Alumni Center, Library, Student Affairs currently use Facebook.