

BUCCS 16

Supporting Students and Learning with 21st Century Communication Technologies...or How the Personal can be Professional

November 18-19, 2008

Featured Panelists:

- Eli Collins-Brown, Director of Instructional Technology Methodist College of Nursing talking about the WIKI project for the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education.
- Peg Cook, Assistant Professor/Assistant Reference Librarian Elmhurst College talking about Using Blogs in a First-Year Seminar.
- Barbara Galik, Executive Director Cullom-Davis Library talking about Educational Opportunities in Second Life.
- Jim Crone, Director of Web Marketing/Communications talking about blogging at Bradley.
- Rob Bertram, Health Sciences Coordinator of Student Advising and Academic Experiences, Dept. of Physical Therapy and Health Sciences talking on using Facebook to reach Bradley Students (Oct 18 only).

Welcome and introductions by Barb Kerns

Peg Cook's presentation on use of blog in first-year seminar:

First-year seminar is

- required for all freshmen
- focused on academic subjects, subjects vary by section
- taught by professors in coordination with student affairs staff members (faculty-staff in pairs, can include co-teaching arrangement)
- includes single required common text as part of course
- includes component on information ethics that has a blog format for student work
- in some sections, most of the student work is in blog form

Eli Collins-Brown's presentation on use of Wikis in higher education:

Wikis: see presentation here: <http://wikisinhighered.wetpaint.com/?t=anon>

- enable rapid creation of documents or materials where multiple authors can contribute
- can have layers of control: authors, commenters, viewers
- are supported by several free wiki-building programs (e.g., Google Docs, housed on Google webspace, allowing you to create or edit your documents wherever you are as long as you have internet access)
- support dispersed collaborations and asynchronous team work
- are low-threshold technologies – users do not need much technical knowledge

Barbara Galik's presentation on educational opportunities in Second Life:

Second Life

- is a virtual reality platform
- has elements of real world, including people (avatars), objects, commerce, interaction
- is less limited than real world (e.g., avatars can fly, teleport)
- is available to users 24/7, which extends opportunities for collaborative
- BU's Cullom-Davis Library has a Second Life presence, and now there is also a BU SL Task Force
- BU prof (Ed Lamoureux) teaches a class on how to use Second Life as a research tool
- BU showcases student work at the BU site – currently posting photography and engineering student work
- there is a steep learning curve for navigating SL and even steeper for creating things
- does require large bandwidth
- what it is, what you do there, advantages- a lot of opportunities- teaching at courses, collaborating with colleagues – poster presentation, new friends, prospective students, alumni
- Connect with students, learning opportunities, build things in 2nd life, use as teachable moments, grief counseling assignment- brought new people to Bradley island, helped them through bad times, Am. Counseling assoc., appreciative that BU is ahead and that is being recognized even among
- Potential to immerse yourself in another language or culture. World of warcraft also a tool

Jim Crone's presentation on blogs as student recruitment tools:

Admissions page blogs

- students from BU blog about what its like to be a BU student
- allows prospective students to explore BU from student perspective
- can include photos, videos, links
- does require housekeeping
- recruiting students –blogging by current BU students to prospective students
- 4-6 students per year, also tour guides, trained on BU perspective and what should or should not be said...but still an authentic voice.
- Each student is to post at least 1x per week – brevity and frequency is best.
- Post is not screened by staff.
- Bloggers have a second email address and post this and invite feedback or topics for future blogs.
- Now they allow comments, but they are prescreened
- Additional ways to share – facebook, delicious, web 2.0 apps.
- Boundaries, ethical use, privacy vs. personal issues
- Filtering – some social networking sites don't promote or even allow filtering for different audiences.

- Not all social networking sites are the same – dif btwn facebook and myspace vs. more professional networking sites like livejournal and linked in
- Establishing expectations.
- Etiquette, ethical use policy, privacy, guidelines

Rob Bertram's presentation on using Facebook to reach Bradley Students (Oct. 18th only)

- 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.

General Discussion

Other Points

- incumbent upon us to use things that the students are receptive to; they read the lectures when they are posted
- Public classroom vs. student private life use
- Using MySpace and facebook within classes, career center e-recruiting events: Student hesitance into personal "space"
- Alternatives are professional social connection sites
- Millennial students' qualities
- Pedagogy should drive the technology not inverse
- Wayne - threatened to text all his lectures so they'd read them
- Kurt – there are a lot of inlets to students' brains that we are not utilizing
- Millennial students and technology- technology is expensive, time it takes to educate students, balance between sophisticated kids and others; ethics/boundary issues- facebook
- Pedagogy should drive technology not vice versa; been threatening to text lectures because they would read them
- Using WordPress for blogs – has different themes and can add photos
- She uses blog for all course work except final synthesis paper (which is turned in on paper)
- Kurt- did not focus on the questions; proposed to Barb and Eli what we envisioned and which technologies would be best for task

- Ex. 9 sections of gen chem.- sense of community for these students- excited about facebook
- 15 sections around gen chem.- lots of questions around test time- almost 400 students, a wiki could be compartmentalized by chapter and sub-topic so students could go in and look at a specific area

Blogs Discussion:

Advantages

- Collaborative aspect
- Audience- many people can access
- Quick to use
- Public nature of the blog – writing for real public audience
- Possibility for comments
- Learn blogging style or writing
- Opportunity to teach technology skills, link content, organize files, and how to use tech.

Disadvantages

- Older professors don't know as much as we think (less plugged in)
- Confidentiality- viewable to public; make it not "google-able" (but is still public)
- Keeping up with new technology
- Time intensive – set up time, teaching students how to use it
- Must encourage students to use it

Wiki Discussion:

Disadvantages

- Time to learn to use
- Accessibility: visually impaired
- Confidentiality: assure and establish

Advantages

- group editable
- comments
- not locked into structure, fluid
- generational differences
- compromising information or pictures
- information literacy and critical analysis
- Q & A done in wiki – built upon by everyone

Other Points

- Helpful for collaborative learning with professors and students

- Must have balanced integrated approach tied with pedagogy. (Guidelines and goals)
- Challenges: consider students when making assignments: Course organizer for class; due dates and formats to clearly reach students.
- Here presentation is a Google Wiki – “Wikis in Higher Ed”
<http://wikisinhighered.wetpaint.com/?t=anon>
- Reference: wikipatterns.com – Mader, 2008, pl 5
- 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.
- Software: many; ex. - Google docs, google sites, Wiki matrix, wetpaint, media wiki*(harder),
- Uses – long list: reflection journals, research project and proposals, research presentation, peer review, etc.
- Collaboration – committee meetings, KB, multiple contributors, collab proj, TAs, schedule mtgs.
- Assessment – 2008 American Society for Engineering – how to assess student contribution using wikis

Second Life Discussion:

Advantages and disadvantages of using technology?

- There are many opportunities for different disciplines, especially International Business!
- There are over 50 Islands in the Educational Area: lots of resources.
- You can create multiple Avatars from one IP address.
- Students can meet and discuss topics in second life, much like meeting face to face.
- Collaboration with colleagues from across the country (e.g. working on a poster presentation together) can be possible using second life.
- 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.
- International educators participate in second life: there are conference possibilities.
- You can participate in second life for free.
- It is possible for people to wander into a classroom, so Bradley classrooms are located in the sky, where you would need to teleport into a classroom. You cannot wander into the sky classrooms, as you need the exact location of the classroom in order to teleport into its location.
- Second life is very interactive: you can meet new students, or connect with Alumni in second life.

- You can meet people from around the world in second life. Another example is a group of Italian professors who meet up and teach Italian in second life to people who want to brush up on their skills.
- It might be difficult to teach by text.
- When designing buildings or locations in second life, you can design something entirely new or recreate something that already exists (e.g. Globe Theater).
- talk with others around the world, alum, prospective students,
- build, share things
- teaching opportunities
- exposure to new audience
- competitiveness

How can we effectively use technology to connect with and engage our students?

- Second life can be used to talk to alumni or prospective students, allowing the possibility of reconnecting with alumni, or answering questions and connecting with new students.
- Second life can be used to teach courses.
- The Counseling program was able to set up the grief counseling curriculum. The American Counseling Association then chose this program for a conference presentation.
- Second life can be a good tool to help teach people new skills or concepts. New skills would include the skills needed to participate in second life, such as programming skills. Students have also found opportunities to teach people new things, such as a student who was able to use second life to create Dreidel and develop a game to teach others about Hanukkah.
- Buildings can be designed in second life that don't exist on campus. So, students can provide input into the second life student center, and we can understand what students want.

Facebook Discussion:

- Advantages- promote connectiveness, 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
- Technology is ahead of where we are

Uses Facebook currently:

- Physical Therapy
- Alumni Center
- Library
- Student Affairs