

Social Networking Tools in Online or Web Enhanced Courses

Social networking tools, such as Web logs (blogs) Wikis and web Bookmarking tools, are influencing how instructors are communicating and collaborating with students and colleagues. These tools allow the class to share resources, post comments to the instructor and to each other, collaborate on group projects and receive student-centered instruction almost anywhere, anytime and at any pace (Serim 2007). Instructors often view these new tools with some suspicion and are hesitant give up the “tried and true” methods of instruction. McGee and Diaz (2007) look at it this way “Regardless of pedagogy and technology, instructors and learners are doing the same things they have always done throughout the instructional process. For example, instructors must communicate, assess, provide feedback, observe, present information, and organize activities. Learners read, present a point of view, search/collect/analyze information, practice, create, and respond. It is easier to consider technologies for adoption within the context of these existing teaching and learning activities.”

Blogs, for example, have been used by professors to post comments on assignments, role play points of view, give and receive feedback on projects and allow the student community to interact with one another. Not only do the blogs allow students to interact, instructors can use the blog to help develop critical thinking and writing skills. Yan (2008) reports that receiving feedback about coursework from peers and the outside world can be very empowering. Some blog sites have the ability to host photos and videos uploaded by users.

Wikis are similar to blogs, but allow anyone with proper access to add, delete or otherwise edit the content.

This editorial process is being called “Darwkinism” and attempts to describe the evolutionary ecology of wikis where content is constantly reviewed, edited and corrected by the users themselves. Questionable information is discussed and weeded out as users browse the site and correct content that had been posted earlier. Most wikis are easy to set up and use and are often used in higher education as a collaborative tool to work on a specific project in a shared-work area.

Online social bookmark sites allow users to share web bookmarks with other users. Students can “tag” bookmarks and share them with classmates who are working on a collaborative project. These tags describe and organize bookmarks in interesting ways and allow users to discover web based resources and information that they might not have discovered otherwise.

— Jess Lamphere
eLearning Support Specialist

Free Blogs, Wikis and Bookmarks

Blogs

www.Blogger.com

www.Blogspot.com

www.Edublog.org

Wikis

www.PBWiki.com

www.Wikidot.com

www.Wikispaces.com

Social Bookmarks

<http://www.blogmarks.net/>

<http://del.icio.us/>

<http://www.jumptags.com/>

McGee, P., & Diaz, V. (2007). Wikis and podcasts and blogs! oh, my! What is a faculty member supposed to do *Educause Review*, 42(5), 28-41. Retrieved April 21, 2008, from <http://connect.educause.edu/Library/EDUCAUSE+Review/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazineVol/44989>

Serim, F. (2007). The new gold rush: Establishing effective online learning policies. *Learning and leading with technology*, 35(2), 12-16. Retrieved April 21, 2008, from http://www.iste.org/Content/NavigationMenu/Publications/LL/LLIssues/Volume_35_2007_2008_/September_October_No_2_/35212s.pdf

Yan, J. (2008). Social technology as a new medium. *New England Journal of Higher Education*, 22(4), 27-29. Retrieved April 18, 2008, from http://www.nebhe.org/info/pdf/nejhe/NEJHE_Winter08.pdf

Online Courses—Summative Surveys

Students in online courses (01W, 02W...) are required to complete a summative survey approximately two weeks prior to the close of the term. Survey administration dates and delivery of the survey results to faculty and department heads is provided in table below:

Term	Dates Surveys are Administered to Students	Results to Faculty/ Department Heads
Jan 14-May 9 (16 Weeks)	Apr 25-May 2	May 16
Jan 31-May 9 (14 Weeks)	Apr 25-May 2	May 16
Feb 4-May 9 (13 Weeks)	Apr 25-May 2	May 16
Mar 24-May 9 (7 Weeks)	Apr 25 - Apr 29	May 16
May Mini 2008	May 23 - May 26	June 4

ClassLive Pro Tip

WebCam Buttons Unavailable

When you launch the use of your WebCam from within a session in your online course, and the 'transmit button' is not available, it may be that you need to clear your Java temporary Internet files using the Java control panel.

In that there are several versions of the Java control panel. Each looks and acts a bit differently, contact one of the Instructional Design team members for assistance, or contact the Elluminate helpdesk at <http://illuminate.com/> support or call 866.388.8674 (toll free).

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