



Chapter 14

A Survey of Recent Approaches Integrating Blogs in School Education

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ABSTRACT

Web 2.0 tools are frequently integrated in education. The main goal of this integration is to provide enhanced learning experiences to students. Among other Web 2.0 tools, blogs are often used. Many approaches have been presented that successfully exploited blogs in all levels of education. An aspect of interest is to outline main directions of the corresponding research work that will provide insight to researchers, teachers, students, developers, and policymakers. This chapter provides a brief survey of approaches integrating blogs in primary and secondary education. Initially, main concepts regarding blogs as Web 2.0 tools and educational blogs are briefly discussed. Then, 16 approaches concerning the use of blogs in primary and secondary education are surveyed. The results derived from these approaches are analyzed. The analysis shows that the results are positive, and blogs turn out to be useful tools for school education. It is likely that more such approaches will be presented in the future. The chapter also outlines future research directions.

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INTRODUCTION

A trend in education is to use Web 2.0 tools because they place emphasis on sharing, participation, interaction and collaborative authoring of content (Conole & Alevizou, 2010) and these features may be exploited by learners and teachers. Among several types of Web 2.0 tools available for educational purposes are blogs. Researchers have studied the integration of blogs in education and the results have shown that they provide advantages. Blogs may be used in different teaching subjects as they involve reading, writing, thinking, interaction and collaboration.

There are many studies involving the use of blogs in higher education but an interesting topic is to study their use in primary and secondary education. There are specific reasons for doing this. During the last years, emphasis is placed on use of ICT in early childhood, primary and secondary education as indicated by the goals of the corresponding curricula, the available technological infrastructure in educational settings and the education of teachers. Students at a young age need to realize the role of ICT for educational and productive purposes and acquire digital literacy skills required in the digital world. To perform their tasks, school students may use applications that adults also use (e.g., Office, multimedia and Web applications) and educational applications specifically addressed to them. For example, visual programming tools addressed to young learners and their teachers have become popular as they combine programming with the implementation of 2D and 3D multimedia applications (i.e., digital stories and games) (Prentzas, 2016). In general, educational applications and content are available for all teaching subjects. Devices besides computers may be used such as robots assembled and programmed by children and (semi-)autonomous robots (Prentzas, 2013).

Web-based tools are exploited in school education because several and diverse tools are available. Blogs may prove useful in school education because they are one of the earliest types of Web-based applications focusing on user-created content and social interaction (Andersson & Räisänen, 2014). The purpose of this chapter is to survey briefly recent research approaches on the integration of blogs in school education and highlight the main results that have been obtained.

This chapter is organized as follows. The following section provides background regarding blogs as tools of Web 2.0 in general and educational blogs, then followed by recent research studies concerning the integration of educational blogs in primary and secondary education. Future research directions are then presented. Finally, the chapter concludes.

BACKGROUND

Blogs are Web-based applications. According to Blood (2002), the term *weblog* was first used by Barger (1997), and the term *blog*, a truncation of *weblog* and was accredited to Merholz (2002). The first blog was created by Berners-Lee (1992) and considered a website that provided information and updates on new websites (Williams & Jacobs, 2004). Blood (2002) claimed that blogs looked like journals or diaries and reflected their creators' personalities. In general, blogs are used for publishing posts and for discussing these posts (Andersson and Räisänen, 2014). Blog users may read, write and comment (Andersson and Räisänen, 2014). Blog posts are displayed in reverse chronological order which means the most recent posts appear first, followed by less recent ones (Duarte, 2017) with the original post appearing last. The main types of blogs are journalist blogs, product sales blogs, personal blogs and educational blogs (Duarte, 2017).

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