Chapter 15

The Use of Web 2.0 Technologies by Students from Developed and Developing Countries:
A New Zealand Case Study

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Web 2.0 technologies have not had the impact many perceived they would in many higher learning institutions in both developing and developed countries. Its potentiality has hardly been realised. Great strides have been made in designing and using Web 2.0 technologies to help students learn in the cognitive (mental), behavioural (psychomotor), and affective (feeling) domains. The major challenge is the application of Web 2.0 technologies to the conative (will) domain, which relates to an individual's intrinsic motivation to achieve goals. Students' participation in the Web 2.0 learning environment is influenced by their cultural background, language proficiency, communication style, socio-economic and technological circumstances, learning styles, and prior knowledge. This chapter explores the participation from various groups of students from developed and developing countries. These students are located in learning environments within a tertiary institute, which are facilitated by Web 2.0 technologies. It observes that the students' learning and successful participation in the Web 2.0 environment largely depends on the state of student's conative domain and the interface between their cultural background and learning preference.

INTRODUCTION

The first generation Web or Web 1.0 is viewed as an educational and communication resource (Cormode & Krishnamurthy, 2008) similar to traditional classroom resources (Greenhow, et al., 2009). Web 1.0 is predominantly read-only and has conventionally been seen as a source of information like a book or a means of representing information like a poster or a means of communicating information like a visiting speaker to provide authenticity to classroom learning. Most users browse, read, and gather information from a common entry point (Greenhow, et al., 2009). Web 2.0 characterises a shift from read-only to a read and write phase and more recently to a participatory (Anderson, 2007) and interactive phase. This has dramatically changed the way *users* engage and interact with computers, especially online technologies. Users are now construed as participants, collaborators and distributors in the business of creating and sharing knowledge (Pillay, 2007) both in the formal and informal spheres of their everyday activities (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006). The wider social ramifications of Web 2.0 have a bearing on the organisation and delivery of higher education. According to Sife *et al.* (2007), the pedagogical and socio-economic forces that have driven tertiary institutions to adopt and incorporate Web 2.0 technologies in teaching and learning include greater information access; greater communication; synchronous and asynchronous learning; increased co-operation and collaboration; cost-effectiveness and pedagogical improvement. However, Sife *et al.* (2007) also observe that the overall impact of these technologies is limited compared to what its original significance was anticipated to be, in meeting students' learning needs in tertiary institutions both in developed and developing countries.

It is accepted that the first wave of Web 2.0 has over-promised and under delivered (Kruse, 2004). Research conducted by Snow and Farr (1987), Kolbe (1989), and Reeves (2004), indicate a shift. This shift is away from designing and deploying Web 2.0 technologies to help people learn in the cognitive, behavioural, and affective domains to a focus on the conative domain. Conation refers to the connection of knowledge and affect to behaviour and is associated with the issue of *why* (Huitt, 1999). It is the personal will, the intention and striving to make choices with the purpose of achieving a goal (Jasinki, 2004). It is closely related to the concept of volition, which is the freedom to make choices about what to do. Huitt (1999) argues that conation is critical if an individual is to successfully engage in self-direction and self-regulation. This chapter explores this notion and proposes that cultural background, language proficiency, communication style, socio-economic and technological circumstances, learning styles, and prior knowledge impact upon an individual's conation, and this in turn has an effect on participation and engagement in a Web 2.0 learning environment.

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