

Nº 8 • April 2008

eLearning Papers



Editorial

Openness and learning in today's world
Roberto Carneiro & Lluís Tarín

Articles

Is the world open?
Richard Straub

Web 2.0 and New Learning Paradigms
Antonio Bartolomé

Universities and Web 2.0: Institutional challenges
Juan Freire

"Innovation is for everyone. Learning is for everyone"
An interview with Anna Kirah

Grandparents and Grandsons: poetics of an intergenerational learning experience
Aina Chabert Ramon & Monica Turrini

eLearning Papers



eLearning Papers is a digital publication on eLearning by elearningeuropa.info, a portal created by the European Commission to promote the use of ICT in education and training.

Edited by: P.A.U. Education, S.L.
E-mail: editorial@elearningeuropa.info
ISSN 1887-1542



The texts published in this journal, unless otherwise indicated, are subject to a **Creative Commons Attribution- Noncommercial- NoDerivativeWorks 2.5** licence. They may be copied, distributed and broadcast provided that the author and the e-journal that publishes them, eLearning Papers, are cited. Commercial use and derivative works are not permitted. The full licence can be consulted on <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/>

Editorial: Openness and learning in today's world

In an open world as ours, interactive communication technologies generate an impact which has an influence on both individual learners and the organisations administrating learning processes. This new issue of eLearning Papers aims to contribute to the debate highlighting several articles which address the openness and changing world of learning as well as the pervasive nature of some related public policies.

Richard Straub argues that the idea of “openness” is emerging as a dominant attribute of key developments in our current economic and social fabric. Open systems are like living organisms with significant elements of self-organisation. But now, says Richard Straub, we have the necessary infrastructure and tools to operate in new ways in open systems. These new ways have a clear impact on business, employees, learners and innovation, and they require changes in our individual behaviours and institutional adjustments.

In this changing process, Web 2.0 has a significant role. Antonio Bartolomé offers a clear frame around the concept of “Web 2.0: ideas, technologies and implications for learning.” The article argues that Web 2.0 resources seem to have little impact on the structure and conception of the old learning paradigms on which today's curricula are built. So, where are the new paradigms? The author says it is too early to speak of a new paradigm, but there are some elements that do not fit easily in the old eLearning models.

What about the changes at eLearning institutions due to Web.2.0? Juan Freire analyses this in the article “Universities and Web.2.0: Institutional challenges.” He describes a list of bottlenecks which constrain the institutional adoption of Web 2.0 when universities and their managers assume an active role to adapt to the new reality. The article concludes pointing out a set of elements for a Web 2.0 adoption in universities.

"Openness" is also associated with values such as tolerance, individual freedom, lifelong learning, intercultural cooperation and innovation. In the interview with Anna Kirah we appreciate her vision of innovative thinking and education. The first question invites us to read the rest: How did an anthropologist end up in teaching person-centred and innovative thinking to business managers?

We experience every day what openness means and the benefits it may offer. The article submitted by Aina Chabert and Monica Turrini describes an intergenerational learning experience and shows us an example of enhancing democratic values in the open world. The digital literacy and elclusion of older citizens can be promoted with a help of “digital facilitators” and experiential learning, providing the elderly learners with real life experiences when learning to use ICT.

Enjoy reading these articles!

Roberto Carneiro, Director, eLearning Papers
Lluís Tarín, elearningeuropa.info



Richard Straub

European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD); European Learning Industry Group (ELIG)

“ While many of the thoughts about openness and the need for more open social systems have been around for some time, this new infrastructure and new tools accelerate the movement. ”

Keywords

openness, collaborative web, open systems, globalisation, cooperation, participation

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media15526.pdf>

Is the world open?

We talk about open societies, open innovation, open standards, open ecosystems, open source and open architectures. The idea of “openness” is emerging as a dominant attribute of key developments in our economic and social fabric. Richard Straub argues in this paper that “openness” is the defining quality of 21st century globalisation.

In today’s world of business we experience every day what openness means and what benefits it brings to bear. Openness is associated with values such as tolerance, individual freedom, lifelong learning, participation, empowerment and cooperation, as opposed to typical closed-world values of command and control, top-down management, centralized and bureaucratic governance, over-regulation and collectivist dominance over individual freedom. Monopolies or near-monopolies are examples of the closed world as are traditional hierarchies with their burgeoning bureaucracies and disconnected silos are typical manifestations.

The rise of social networking sites, virtual worlds, blogs, wikis and 3D Internet give us a first idea of the potential of the “interactive and collaborative web” dubbed Web 2.0. Now we have the infrastructure and tools to operate in new ways in open systems. While many of the thoughts about openness and the need for more open social systems have been around for some time, this new infrastructure and new tools accelerate the movement.

An open world is a world of great opportunity and challenge. It requires changes in our individual behaviours and attitudes and it demands major institutional adjustments. How can business respond to it?

This article has been published previously at Global Focus, Volume 2, Issue 1 (2008). Publisher: European Foundation for Management Development www.efmd.org



**Antonio
Bartolomé**

University of Barcelona,
Spain

“ During the coming years, eLearning 2.0 will be used as a commercial promotion concept, with courses including Web 2.0 resources without touching the knowledge authority and the business control access. ”

Keywords

eLearning, Web 2.0, innovation, learning, paradigm, courses, distance, non-formal

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media15529.pdf>

Web 2.0 and New Learning Paradigms

Since 2004 the term “Web 2.0” has generated a revolution on the Internet and it has developed some new ideas for Education identified as “eLearning 2.0”. The ambiguity of both terms does not allow the affirmation of a new paradigm for technology-enhanced distance education, but it seems that some ideas do change key aspects in the old curricula:

- the Net as the platform, or the multi-device oriented system, changes the concept of studying at any place, any time;
- collective intelligence and rich user experiences affects the concept of authority in educational systems;
- tags and RSS readers allow us to revisit traditional taxonomy, knowledge organization and information retrieval;
- the option to choose between several devices to work on learning tasks (PDA, iPod, computer...) seems to be a technical and not relevant question, but that implies the option to learn at every time: while travelling, walking, etc. In Web 2.0, the difference between study times and other times seems to disappear.

This article is sceptic about the current changes at eLearning institutions and businesses, but points out some of the changes that will take place outside their courses and programmes. During the coming years, eLearning 2.0 will be used as a commercial promotion concept, with courses including Web 2.0 resources without touching the knowledge authority and the business control access. However, at the same time, a distance-learning attitude will be developing, mainly in non-formal education, which will end the separation between learning and living.



Juan Freire

University of La Coruña,
Spain

“ The adoption of a Web 2.0 approach to learning in universities is a complex process confronting important technological, managerial and human barriers. ”

Keywords

Web 2.0, universities, openness, knowledge, managers, establishment, bottlenecks

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media15530.pdf>

Universities and Web 2.0: Institutional challenges

The irruption of the Web 2.0 internet in universities does not modify only learning models - organizative models are also challenged, creating important fears among the managers of the institutions. Teachers, researchers and students started some years ago to use social software tools, but in few cases these experiences have allowed any scaling from the individual to the institutional level.

The promises and potential of web 2.0 in universities need an adequate strategy for their development which has to confront the bottlenecks and fears common in these institutions, which could explain the lack of adaptation. Some of the bottlenecks highlighted in this paper are: a) the rejection by the users, personnel and students, b) the lack of an incentive system, c) the available pre-web 2.0 technology, and d) universities show in some cases a culture of aversion to innovation and entrepreneurship.

The adoption of a Web 2.0 approach to learning in universities is a complex process confronting important technological, managerial and human barriers. For these reasons, the design of a set of objectives and a strategy accepted and promoted by the managers, especially those in charge of knowledge management, is absolutely needed. This first step requires in many cases radical cultural changes for people used to work and make decisions in a different scenario.

The introduction for the web 2.0 approach to learning in universities must be done through an adaptive strategy, one that may be designed integrating previous experiences of educational, research and business organizations.



Interviewee:
Anna Kirah

Future Navigator;
Kirah Consult, Denmark

“ Many leaders don't recognise the innovation when they see it because they are not connected to the very people they are innovating for. ”

Keywords

Innovation, interculturality, global, dialogue, openness, mindset

Full text

<http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media15531.pdf>

“Innovation is for everyone. Learning is for everyone” An interview with Anna Kirah

Anna Kirah is a design anthropologist specialised in people-centered innovation. She has collaborated with many companies such as Microsoft and Boeing and is currently working as innovation leader at a Danish Future Navigator and at her own consulting company. She is also a key speaker at the EDEN Annual Conference 2008. In this interview she shares with us her thoughts about innovation training, learning and finding a meaning to everyday's life.

Team work is a key factor for successful change within companies in order to achieve a people-centred approach. From her experience, Anna Kirah has learned that change does not happen until all the areas of a company assimilate the language and the culture of the people they are innovating for and that there is an interdisciplinary dialogue across different departments. According to this specialist, virtual environments have come to play a central role in the daily routine within companies. LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and document share sites have a huge impact on what we do and how we learn and hold on to new knowledge. However, she points out that eLearning and personalised learning environments must be easily adaptable to team thinking and team work.

From her point of view, it is important not to repress the children's natural curiosity and creativity. Moreover, the development of an innovative mindset should be encouraged from the beginning: the key challenge is to bring back “Why” to everyday's life. Posing the question “Why” challenges people to apply it in existing products, services and organisations, and enables discovering meaningful innovative solutions.

Anna Kirah knows that anyone can be an innovator. However, the politics and cultures of innovation in organisations quite often prevent us from seeing and reaching the real changes. Many leaders don't recognise the innovation when they see it because they are not connected to the very people they are innovating for.

Intercultural learning challenges us to face new experiences and enables us to develop a global mindset, not only physically but also in the cyberspace. Innovation and learning comes from new experiences, from exceeding the safety of what we know and living something new and different. A global mindset allows us to transcend the constraints of our own culture and to see the world for what it really is.



Aina Chabert
Ramon



Monica Turrini

SCIENTER, Italy

“ The project has investigated intergenerational learning and how it can promote the exchange of approaches between older and younger students, enriching the needs of each collective. ”

Keywords

intergenerational learning,
eInclusion, digital literacy,
elders

Full text

[http://www.elearningeuropa.info/
files/media/media15532.pdf](http://www.elearningeuropa.info/files/media/media15532.pdf)

Grandparents and Grandsons: poetics of an intergenerational learning experience

The article presents results and recommendations from a Grandparents & Grandsons project, financed under the European Commission's eLearning programme. The project has investigated intergenerational learning and how it can promote the exchange of approaches between older and younger students, enriching the needs of each collective. Through the involvement of vocational training students and upper secondary schools in the role of volunteer "digital facilitators", the project intends to teach internet browsing and e-mail use to the elders, fostering thus their active digital citizenship role.

Nowadays, learners over 55 years old have to fight with a total new panorama, where most of their mental references have been modified, recomposed or disappeared. At the same time, the young generations encounter a fickle society, where it seems very difficult to establish a sense of belonging on a particular context, a fact that has direct consequences on the historical memory and the identity construction.

The following article presents a set of reflections across the preliminary outcomes of the project, emphasising its contribution to the improvement of the intergenerational learning process, particularly in terms of political dimension, roles and methodology. Finally, this paper proposes some recommendations, based on the previous results, not only for the improvement of the learning process but also, and especially, with the idea of facilitating an intergenerational learning model transfer.