

## Foreword

Today, I learned my 2:00pm webinar was available to stream directly into my iPhone. I followed the meeting planner's link and in two minutes I downloaded the application and am now untethered from my desktop. Last month, I installed a desktop interactive video conferencing system and now, instead of tying up a classroom, I teach from my office students at four Texas regional campuses. Last year, I joined Facebook and have happily "friended" several hundred classmates from the class of 1976 (high school), 1981 (undergrad), and 1992 (PhD). Next week, I am anxiously awaiting the arrival of my Kindle and will begin the conversion of my paper-based library to digital. I'm only 50 years old (the new 30) and when I began my career, none of this technology existed. Today, students *expect and demand* institutions (and aging faculty) to be technology literate. This book fills an important gap for those of us trying to keep up.

When I arrived at the University of Texas in 1992, I remember lobbying hard to convert email from the mainframe to my PC. I wanted the ability to easily attach files to emails and when that capacity arrived, collaborating within and across universities opened considerably. That marked the beginning of my digital library, both professionally and personally. Today, my computer has thousands of .pdf files of books, government reports, and peer-reviewed published manuscripts. My iPhone has 74 full length books ranging from puppy training to the biology of the brain (Obama and I made the same promise to our children in exchange for moving). Across all my computers, I have close to two terabytes of digital content. Granted, the majority is music and video files, however research and teaching also fills a lot of space. The management and distribution of digital content has become an essential faculty responsibility.

At the University of Texas, School of Public Health, we offer master's and doctoral degrees in public health and related sub disciplines to students at the Houston main campus and five regional campuses across the state. By necessity, we transmit courses originating from any of the locations to all the others to over 1,000 currently enrolled students. Our students increasingly expect *synchronous and asynchronous* learning opportunities. All of our core courses are taught either in-person, by interactive video conferencing, or with on-line course management software. The challenges this system has created boils down to: (a) keeping up with the rapid pace of technological development, both in software and hardware; and (b) persuading faculty and administration to embrace (and pay for) new technological advancements. This book offers perspectives on both and serves as a guide to faculty who want to learn how to incorporate digital technologies to extend adult learning practices.

The digital revolution has rewritten the university professor's job description and that's why *Adult Learning in the Digital Age: Perspectives on Online Technologies and Outcomes* is such an important book. Meeting at the crossroads of student expectations and technological advancements requires continuing faculty education in digital instructional design and delivery. In short, if you want to be a better instructor, read and study this book. Professor Terry Kidd has pulled together key leaders in instructional

design and web 2.0 technologies to help you leap into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The book offers important case studies on the practical use of cutting edge technology. Learn firsthand how others are successfully changing their educational practices and how different organizations have approached content management and delivery. The book also steps back and offers viewpoints from philosophical and pedagogical perspectives and puts these into a framework for integrating web technologies into higher education.

I read the New York Times every day on my iphone. I also listen to books and podcasts, check my calendar, email, and Facebook. Occasionally, I actually make a phone call. From my laptop, I check student progress on Blackboard, comment on threaded discussion groups, adjust the weekly on-line self correcting quiz, and post slides for tomorrow's lecture. I also like to visit Netflix to stream a movie from any computer that's nearby. Mastering this technology makes life easier and more fun. Although I suffer from e-mail overload and because I can work from anywhere, I end up working all the time, embracing the digital revolution is better than the alternative: getting left behind. This book offers the heuristics and the tools to help you manage your online and digital teaching life. *Adult Learning in the Digital Age: Perspectives on Online Technologies and Outcomes* is a must have.

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