Foreword

In the Middle Ages, the educated class consisted largely of priests and monks, who copied the Bible and missals by hand on leaves of parchment. Each hand-written book was unique, including transcription errors (some inadvertent, some maybe deliberately introduced) and even whimsical doodles. Little other than prayer books was available when the Church was in charge of information dissemination. Later on, the need for copies of business documents was filled by public scribes who worked in the town square near the office of the clerk or registrar of documents.

Johann Gutenberg's invention of printing from movable type in the 1450s changed everything about our world. Not only did he introduce the revolutionary technology to make multiple copies of a book, but also, the new medium of printing altered the content of the book product.

In addition to religious works, new secular subjects, such as histories, biographies, novels, poems, and newspapers began to appear. More people learned to read as more printed literature was produced. Merchants and tradesmen wanted an education, too, creating a middle class. The number of persons attending high school increased. More universities were established.

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, Marshall McLuhan (1962) explored the symbiotic relationship between the mass media, in general, especially printing, in particular, and the larger socioculture, human self-awareness, circumspection and cognizance. McLuhan's *Understanding Media* (1964) and *The Medium Is the Massage* (1967) continued his analysis of how the medium affects the message itself. The technology is more than just the method of transmission employed. The means (the medium) alters the end (the content).

At St. Clement Schools, which I attended in Center Line, Michigan, for 11 years, teachers used the latest technology available—slide projectors, filmstrips with sound, and later, movies, then referred to as "moving pictures." In the state-of-the-art language laboratory, the teacher, Sister Francis Marie, a Catholic nun, could monitor interactively each student's progress and oral performance—listen and repeat, conjugate a verb, demonstrate subject-predicate agreement. She could speak to one student through his headphones to attempt to improve pronunciation, or she could broadcast directions to everyone in Spanish class.

Typing with carbon paper and wet mimeograph duplicators reeking of fumes gave way to dry photocopiers. Mainframe computers, then personal computers, spelled the end of the typewriter. High school yearbook classes and clubs, then newspaper and magazine production rooms, made the transition from cut-and-paste page layouts to computerized composition. The invention of electronic mail, then the Internet, changed forever the way people communicate, search for, retrieve and deliver information. Each new technological invention introduced new means, and along with that, new ways of perceiving the message itself.

Educators have been in the forefront in the introduction and employment of new technologies in the classroom. Students utilize and master the technologies, then go on in their own careers to design new ones.

Every era and every step forward have had its doomsday naysayers. Education of the masses in free public schools would make the world a more vulgar place, some claimed. Free public libraries would denigrate learning, they said.

But the historical record and empirical evidence have not born out those fears. Instead, the United States Congress went ahead anyway and established the land grant university system to locate and support with federal funding a "state university" in every state and territory. Cities undertook the founding of free public libraries for everyone, city colleges and city universities, using local tax regimes approved by voters. Sons and daughters of farmers, teamsters, coopers, butchers and bakers went to college, earned degrees, became intellectually productive knowledge workers, and moved up the rungs of the economic and social ladder to join the ranks of the middle class. From personal experience, I know that the son of a factory assembly line worker can become a university professor capable of understanding complex concepts, conducting lectures, making academic presentations, producing research results, and writing them up for publication.

When Barack Obama, the son of a visiting Kenyan student father and a Kansan-Hawaiian mother, can become a lawyer, professor, senator, and be elected president of the United States, almost anything is possible. American students know that, through their earnest endeavors, they can achieve higher aspirations.

Other nations are studying, emulating and replicating free public schools for all children, free public libraries for everyone, and political systems that provide fair and equal treatment and suffrage for all. Dictators are afraid of open societies and the free flow of information.

The introduction of the Internet promises new possibilities for educating students. Moodle and other interactive programs allow students in distant, even remote and isolated, locations to pursue courses and programs not previously offered in their areas. On small islands, such as in Micronesia, and in other developing countries, students can use the Internet and email to enroll in and complete university courses and finish entire distance education degrees successfully.

Professors have identified ways to use email and the Internet in their traditional courses, by keeping in touch with their students via listservs, with course Web sites, posted syllabi, reserve readings online, and important links to explore. Students on campus can also take advantage of the new technologies, using the Internet and e-mail, to enhance the classroom experience in blended learning opportunities. Students can send in their assignments via email to the professor, or upload them to the Web page, where they can be viewed and critiqued by other readers, fostering a collaborative environment. Students can communicate with each other, and with the instructor, outside of class, using the Web page. Professors can send out questions or new assignments electronically, or return corrected assignments.

In the chapters of this book of cases, researchers present their findings concerning professors' classroom use of listservs, course Web sites, Wikis, blogs, and Moodle for teacher-student interaction and learning. The process is interactive and the learning occurs on both sides. Professors learn from the students. Students learn from the teachers and from each other.

The possibilities and progress are limited only by our imagination and creativity. Research, such as that in the present work, serves to analyze, evaluate, assess, and improve some of the new functions, roles, and perceptions. Collaborations, critiques, analyses, and syntheses will develop still further uses,

and newer methods and media, on future journeys in education. Indeed, this book of cases celebrates such new journeys. It's a brave new world, and we are creating it.

Mark C. Goniwiecha
University of Guam, Guam
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Mark Goniwiecha is a professor of library science at the University of Guam. He is the author of numerous publications, including articles in *Taiheiyo Gakkai Shi—Journal of the Pacific Society*—(Tokyo, Japan), *Government Publications Review* (New York), *Contemporary Pacific* (Honolulu, Hawaii), *Reference Services Review* (Ann Arbor, Mich.), *Libri* (Copenhagen, Denmark), *The Nation* (Bangkok, Thailand), *Pacific Daily News* (Hagåtña, Guam), and others. He served two terms as the Guam Library Association chapter representative to the American Library Association Council. Email: markg@uguam.uog.edu

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