

Foreword

New technologies are now delivering for us the groundswell of interest in online learning that for many years has been predicted but never fully realised. Few institutions now, can avoid the need to provide students with the flexibility and opportunities of online learning. There still remains, however, large differences in the quality of online learning programs brought about in many cases by the way our understanding of how best to apply technologies to learning lags behind the opportunities the new technologies are bringing.

This book seeks to bridge this gap by providing access to contemporary and innovative research-based approaches to the application of technologies in online learning. The book represents a collection of ideas and examples of effective learning and teaching where the learner and learning takes precedence over the technology. The book provides an excellent blend of theory and practice drawing from the minds of eminent teachers and researchers from all corners of the world. What is particularly useful about this book is that it contains the broadest possible set of examples and ideas. The book is organised around themes which recognise the ways in which contemporary technologies can support and enhance online learning through a focus on important issues of pedagogy.

I am confident that through this book, readers will become well informed about the capabilities of contemporary learning technologies, enlightened by the ideas and examples it contains and inspired by the many opportunities which are represented. The book continues the excellent work of the many researchers and teachers exploring and applying online learning. It provides a strong supports for extending our capabilities and outcomes for effective and efficient online learning.

Ron Oliver
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and International)

Ron Oliver is Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Teaching, Learning and International) and Professor of eLearning at Edith Cowan University in Western Australia. Throughout his teaching career he has used emerging technologies to engage and motivate his students and has a particular interest in learning and the need for relevance and engagement in curricula. He has been an active researcher and publisher in the area of instructional technologies and eLearning for the past thirty years, and has experience in the design, development, implementation and evaluation of a diverse range of technology-facilitated learning settings. Ron has been recognised for his innovative teaching and research with learning technologies through a number of awards including: Australian Award for University Teaching (1997); Australian Learning and Teaching Council Fellowship (2006); Fellowship of the Association for the Advancement for Computer in Education (2007); and Fellowship of the Australasian Society for the Use of Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education, (2009).