ABSTRACT

Weblogs are radically redefining the way people obtain information and the way they teach and learn. This chapter examines issues and problems of typical Web-based educational projects as gleaned from the literature. It then reveals the potentials and advantages of the Weblog for enhancing those existing Web-based educational projects. It also proposes a new framework which integrates the Weblog as a means for Web-based educational project design, development, and implementation. Finally, it presents a case study which incorporated Weblogs in a specific Web-based educational project - the development of a professional portfolio.

INTRODUCTION

Online information and communication is changing the way people interact and learn. Today, the Web is no longer just an information repository or a place to search for resources. Traditional Web applications typically consist of browsing and searching on the Internet and are essentially a reading operation. In contrast, the new Web (Web 2.0 or Read/Write Web) is a place to find other users, to exchange ideas and thoughts, to demonstrate creativity, and to create new knowledge. Web 2.0 applications, such as blogs, wikis, social bookmarking, and podcasts, have emerged in a rich, interactive, user-friendly application platform that allow users to read and also to write to the Web.

Among these Web 2.0 applications, “Weblogs were already so popular by the end of 2004 that the
Despite of their huge popularity within our society, Weblogs are not widely and deeply explored in education. In fact, research suggests that blogs have not impressed educators. They doubt that Weblogs can promote thoughtful and measured response. Their view is that “blogging honors the impulsive, the careless, the superficial—anything goes: what matters is that you get a place to say whatever you like in public” (Ganley, 2004). As Downes (2004) indicated, “one of the criticisms of blogs, and especially student blogs, is that the students write about nothing but trivia” (p. 16). Hence, if the educational community is to accept blogs, it seems crucial to provide and share more constructive ideas on how the adaptation and implementation of Weblogs can impact real-world teaching and learning. For instance, it is necessary to question the effectiveness of using a Weblog as a vehicle for supporting Web-based project design, development, and implementation. This chapter examines issues and problems on some of the most existing Web-based educational projects as gleaned from the literature. It then reveals the potentials and advantages of the Weblog for enhancing such projects. It also proposes a new framework which integrates the Weblog as a mean for the Web-based educational project design, development, and implementation. Finally, it presents a case study which incorporated Weblogs in the professional portfolio development.

ISSUES, TYPES, AND PROBLEMS OF EXISTING WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL PROJECTS

Throughout the history of technology integration, Web-based educational projects have played a central role in major educational innovations, including information literacy, inquiry-based learning, and performance-based assessment.
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