Cast a new look on learning

With new and innovative technology emerging everywhere in today's modern world, podcasting is right on the electric avenue. [Name] reveals the marvels of this rapidly growing technology and how students and educators alike can both benefit from harnessing the potential that podcasting brings. R apidly evolving, technology has infinite potential in the classroom. The issue however, is how to harness and apply technology. Educational institutions and educator need a simple method of integrating the various different technologies to create student-syllabus synergy.

Podcasting, a form of digital broadcasting, provides a solution to the digital divide with its ease of use, flexibility and application. The implementation of podcasting in schools will provide a richer and more efficient learning environment, increasing memory retention in turn grades to come. It works by setting up a connection between a provider, who can be anyone, and a computer. Standing for, 'personal-on-demand casting' it links the single user to a wide variety of resources which are applicable to any subject area.

With little difficulty, all that is required to receive a 'podcast' is a computer, an internet connection and free software; most of these being a commodity in today's society. As a completely free service, content can be streamed or downloaded and played at anytime, allowing for absolute convenience to the user, one of the many reasons podcasting breaks the barrier between resourcefulness and ease of use (Craft, 2008). By the people, for the people The versatility of podcasting creates many new opportunities for people to easily share their ideas to a wide audience, anyone can do it.

Unlike a television or radio program, there is no set program time. The content can be recorded, uploaded and then accessed whenever the user chooses. It eliminates the need for satellites, radio towers or studios and can be done with as little as a microphone. This allows for both the small, single user to express their ideas as well as allowing for schools and educational institutions utility as well. Also, this means no waiting and no adverts; it is the content you want when you want it (Craft, 2008).

The incentive to maintain the technology's longevity lies in its main and recurring key point, accessibility. With very little technical knowledge required, all it takes is the click of a button to subscribe to your favourite podcast feed in which you will be updated whenever a new 'episode' is uploaded. Not only this, but the process can be partially automated, with the ability to download a new episode immediately upon release and then transferred to a portable device for later viewing (Cebeci & Takdal).

The web is more a social creation that a technical one. I designed it for social effect - to help people work together. " - Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of The World Wide Web In academia With the spectrum of content being so wide, podcasting has both entertainment value in its many internet and TV shows as well as radio, but also very strong potential in its educational value. By integrating podcasting into educational institutions such as schools and universities, students have the potential to be in and receive an overall richer learning environment (Campbell).

Already, places like Queensland's University of Technology (QUT) are making use of this valuable resource. By recording every lecture and any additional

information such as notes and tutorials, students are already finding podcasting to be highly beneficial to their studies. QUT student [Interviewee], " Podcasting has been a really valuable resource for me, when it comes exam time often things can be missed in class and in lectures, so reviewing everything as it happened, as many times as I want, assures that I am prepared and with results to follow.

It is this paradigm shift that must be realised, teaching and learning can be made much more efficient if these techniques are employed. Expert on developmental education and study skills, Walter Pauk from Cornell University, conducted a study on memory retention in high school students and revealed that; * After 20 minutes - 47% was forgotten * After 1 day - 62% was forgotten * After 2 days - 69% was forgotten * After 75 days - 75% was forgotten * After 78 days - 78% was forgotten

These statistics prove that a change must be implemented, and podcasting is one of the solutions. Application; seizing possibilities So where and how would podcasting be applicable? There are many opportunities for memory retention, learning enhancement and enrichment of materials that can be utilized. Given the anywhere, anytime availability of podcasts, students can progress at their own pace, feeling less pressured and enabling for struggling students to keep up as well as extra content to be offered for those students who are advanced or highly motivated (Cole, 2007).

Those with learning disabilities will find it easier to follow along with the textual, audio and visual features that can be put forth in a podcast. Students that contract illnesses and are unable to attend class will be able to

keep up without any problems, almost as if they were at school themselves. With this flexibility, it also enables students that due to circumstances are too far away to attend school; giving them the resources and accessibility at their fingertips. Another known problem throughout students is the ability to effectively note take.

Many students have a poor quality of note taking skills, whether it is bad organisation of notes, bad handwriting, not being able to actively listen at the same time or even just note taking proving to be counterproductive for some. Podcasting will allow for students to be more focused on what is happening in the classroom and be more active in participation (Wheeler). No more having to scribble down notes while trying to keep up with the current topic all the time, overall providing a more enjoyable environment and experience for students.

Changing times Educators must realise that it is time for a change in how things are taught. The current methods are proving to be tedious, redundant and inefficient. Migrating from old techniques may be hard, but it order to keep taking steps forward it is a necessity. There are solutions out there, podcasting being only one of many, but light must be shed upon them in the classroom. The learning environment should be flexible and robust, ready for change and ready for a positive influence under technology. It is the next step forward.

Bibliography

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