Using Mobile Apps and Social Media for Online Learner-Generated Content

Dr. Paul David Henry
http://www.programhouse.com
Introduction

Overcoming the “distance” in distance learning has been a challenge for me as an online teacher and for many of my students:

- **Physical or geographical distance** of students in multiple time zones for live sessions.
- **Psychological and social distance** for students who prefer face-to-face interaction.
- **Distancing effect of busy schedules**, professional demands of work, personal responsibilities, and academic work of students.
Mobile Constraints

- Learning Management System (LMS) with steep user learning curve, text-dominated course content and communications, and system requirements that favor PCs over mobile.

- Slow adoption of evolving mobile technology with wide variety of device attributes such as screen size, and a relative lack of multi-platform standards for development of mobile software.
Mobile Attributes

- Adult students have highly mobile lifestyles in which the adoption of mobile computing associated with smartphones and tablets represents a match of need with function.

- Mastery of use, seamless integration into personal and professional activities, and a natural preference to use this medium for most communication and computing activities.
Mobile Learning Pros/Cons

- **Pro:** These attributes of adult learners with mobile devices make them useful for lifelong learning, distributed learning, field-based learning activities, and authentic learning (EDUCAUSE, 2010).

- **Con:** Colleges with decreasing enrollments and limited budgets, migrating LMS-based online course support for mobile device users often dictates a slower adoption path with limited and specialized support (Alden, 2013).
Evolutionary Approach

Introducing learning activities that use social media and mobile devices that do not rely on administrative or LMS-provider support:

- Development and use of these online resources from a teaching perspective.

- Course communications to/from mobile devices evidenced in brief email messages with the ubiquitous closing line:
  “Sent from my ______ smartphone”
Mobile Learning w/ Mobile Apps

- **Qik**: (now Skype) mobile-Web broadcast video.
- **Voxer**: app for voice, text, image, and video with smartphones.
- **GroupMe**: free private chat for smartphone and cell phone SMS text messaging.
- **Remind101**: teacher to student texting (phone numbers are private and one-way, scheduling).
- **Snapchat**: photo messaging.
- **Celly**: networking via texting, email, Web, apps.
Mobile Learning w/ Social Media

- Use of my blog to post course-related topics and provide links to blog posts in weekly course discussion posts in LMS. Learners post comments to blog with mobile devices – creating learner-generated content.

- Micro-blogging through Twitter.com using push-pull announcements to blog posts to bring together learners and others who subscribe to twitter feed to collaboratively comment (Hsu, Y.-C. and Ching, Y.-H., 2012).

- Youtube channel as centralized area for course-related videos and comments.
Twitter Profile:

- Profile photo and information.
- Most recent tweets.
- List of following and followers.
- Home page lists tweets following.

http://www.twitter.com
YouTube

YouTube Channel page display:

- Uploaded video with annotation.
- Favorite videos and playlists.
- Comments and activity logged.
Qik

Video Sharing:
- Web-cast live video from video-enabled cell phone or smartphone.
- Select private or public view.
- Archive videos.
- Embedded w/Skype
Conclusion

- Initial anecdotal observations indicate that the authentic use of social networking and social media tools directed toward mobile device use has positive outcomes for learner satisfaction in optional and extended learning activities.

- This initial conclusion needs confirmation through formal evaluation that examines learner attitudes, behavior, and outcomes to identify trends and offer understanding of learner motivation and engagement in mobile learning (Chaiprasurt and Esichaikul, 2013).
References


