

Trends in e-learning

We are looking at trends in e-learning in this module. Having read the Horizon report for 2011 it's interesting to look back on the Horizon report from 10 years ago and look at what was being identified as being cutting edge at that stage. Some of the items such as e-books and the inclusion of games in education which were mentioned 10 years ago are still listed as trends in recent Horizon reports. I've wondered is it a case that technology is moving too quickly for us and the trend is that the technology is not being implemented when it comes to learning. In this reflection I seem to have a lot of questions more about the users who are the teachers and the students rather than the technologies themselves. Are we in a transitional period where existing teacher, lecturers and trainers will just not be able to implement the technology for reasons such as fear of failure, lack of technical ability or support or a failure to move away from existing teaching methods to a more social constructivist approach? When it comes to students are we just assuming that they all love technology just because they are growing up in a digital age? It has been mentioned that they don't want to use web 2.0 technologies in class as they look on them as being part of their social life that should remain separate to academic life and it seems that they want a lecturer to add value to the course by telling them all about the subject. When will students and teachers move away from this or will they ever. When these digital natives grow up will they use new technology to teach? Is it a case that we need to take a leaf out of Gilly Salmon's book and create a media zoo so teachers can come and experience the technology themselves. There is a need for teachers to want to use technology but there is also a need to promote it to teachers so that they can see what can be achieved.

Looking at the question is the VLE dead? I can't believe that we are asking that question already. I say already as in my experience the VLE or LMS is alive and kicking only for the last two years. In the context that we use Moodle currently it is very much used as a management system. It allows us to upload e-learning modules, track completion and retain a learning record for everyone in the organisation. This is critical for compliance which is the buzz word in the financial services at the moment. I'm becoming aware that it can do so much more so I don't want it to be dead just yet. Is it a case that those who are saying that it is dead are those who have more experience with using it and have the technical ability to move to the next stage? For those of us who are still getting used to the concept are we happy to continue until we get to that restless stage and want to move on? In mentioning this I am suggesting that we can't move to the next stage unless we are comfortable with the VLE/LMS as we currently use it and in suggesting that I think it means that there is a level of comfort and ability required with technology before the jump can be made to that suggested by Martin Weller.

And yet in the few days that have passed I can't believe that as I contemplate Kevin's question of what would we recommend to an organisation if they were about to implement new technology I'm thinking why not use wiki spaces, why not create a blog, why not use sync.in – I'm starting to think along the lines of Martin Weller because I like the look and feel of all those open source applications. To answer Kevin's question I think it will come down to exactly what the organisation (whether it is HE or corporate) will want to use the technology for and I will need to give this some further thought. However it is a little scary that I'm changing my mind so quickly. There is one thing though that I haven't changed my mind on just yet and that is that there is such a mixed level of usage and implementation of the VLE/LMS at the moment that I think it is a case that we will all have to reach a

similar skill level or comfort with technology across the board before we too will say that the VLE is dead