Paper 116 – Pecha Kucha

Bringing the Social into the Sciences: Blurring Media Boundaries

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Abstract

This presentation demonstrates the use of social media in a traditional science faculty, exploring how the use of open web-based platforms has led to a cultural shift in approaches to learning and teaching and transformed the practice of both staff and students. Personal blogs are used for professional identity development and public engagement; Twitter has become a tool for ongoing communication between students, staff and external experts; YouTube, Flickr and Soundcloud are used for media sharing and work-showcasing; mobile devices are used as create tools for just-in-time content production. Motivation and engagement have shown a marked increase as learners are able to participate and share across multiple online contexts, developing their theoretical and practical skills through open working practices and blurring boundaries between education and industry.

Essentially an exercise in helping students to take ownership of their learning (both formal and informal) and explore the creative potential of technology, social technologies are also used to offer flexible delivery and assessment mechanisms, giving learners a voice in the development of their own curriculum. The exploration of how students distinguish between formal and informal uses of technology and where the boundaries may be drawn is relevant to any subject discipline that engages students in collaborative or creative computer-based learning.

The aim of this session is to highlight ways in which social technologies can be used to enhance the learning and teaching process through developing new ways of working and communicating, including creative approaches to assessment and feedback. By the end of the session participants will have been introduced to a range of approaches that use social media to facilitate, engage, support and deliver learning. Participants will be invited to carry on the discussion online, leading to a practical archive of ideas and pedagogical designs that can be used across disciplines.