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5 Reasons Why Educators Need To Embrace Internet Technologies



In April I wrote a post about [10 internet technologies that educators should be informed about](#). This quickly became my most read posting. I included some references in this article to *why* educators should be aware of and informed about these tools, but most of those comments were really about why each specific technology was included in the list, as opposed to why, in a more general sense, it is important for educators to make an effort to embrace these technologies. So that is the topic for this week - why you should care, as an educator, about these tools. What's in it for you as an instructor, and what's in it for your students?

Please note that while I have numbered these, this is not to imply that any one of these takes precedence over the other. Which of these factors are most motivating to you as an instructor is rather subjective.

Reason No. 1: Professional Development

As the world continues to embrace and evolve the Internet, businesses and organizations are

increasingly looking to tap into this resource. It is in the best interest of educators, and professionals in general, to be aware of what the Internet has to offer. We can choose to sit back and wish it would all just go away because it's too hard to find the time for it, or we can choose to embrace it, and look for simple ways to learn more about it. Another unavoidable fact is the growing desire for experience and familiarity with the Internet and other computer technologies as a hiring requirement in the educational field.

Reason No. 2: The Power To Engage

Internet tools can be fun! Internet tools are interactive! What a great way to engage students in the classroom. Many of the tools are collaborative, and they are all hands-on. Applications that allow for the creation of cool looking timelines, videos, or other dynamic presentations can be a lot of fun, and when a student realizes that they can easily make the resulting creation available for viewing on the Internet, it can be pretty exciting!

Reason No 3: Students Use Them Already

"Meet them where they live!" We've all heard this, and there is a solid undercurrent of wisdom in it. Many students use Internet tools on a regular basis. If you use some of them in the classroom, you will be talking to them in their language. And for those who have not been exposed to a given technology, you'll be teaching them something they are probably predisposed to learning more about.

Reason No. 4: It's Not Going Away (It Will Only Grow)

The Internet is here to stay. It's been well over a decade now that 'average users' have had access to the Internet, and we're now knee deep in the Social Media revolution that has defined Web 2.0. It isn't going away. It isn't a fad. It's only going to grow and evolve. It's already woven into the fabric of the daily lives of millions of people. Yes, a lot of folks are wasting a lot of time doing things on the Internet that don't contribute to society or offer much in the way of personal growth, but at the same time, there are countless ways in which the multitude of tools and technologies available on the Internet are being used in wonderfully constructive ways. Come and be a part of it, and contribute your voice.

Reason No. 5: Businesses Want to Hire Workers Who Understand The Internet

Yes, they do. If you introduce your students to technologies like Blogs, RSS Feeds, Wikis, and so on, you will be helping to build their resume. Businesses and organizations are more interested in these types of tools every day. They're thinking about how to get on board and get

ahead of the curve, and how they can offer value in the workplace. Blogs are being used to provide updates about new developments, Wikis are being used as knowledge bases, RSS Feeds are being used to capture a steady stream of information about topics of interest, Social Bookmarking tools are being used for research, and the list goes on and on. Name any Internet technology, and there is a growing list of business applications for it. Go to Google and search “Twitter for business” and see the list of articles on the subject. Businesses want to hire workers who understand the Internet.

Conclusion

I am not suggesting by any means that every teacher needs to use as many Internet technologies as possible in their classroom every day. In fact, there are some tools, such as social networking sites like Myspace and Facebook, that some can make a good case for leaving out of the classroom entirely. What I *am* suggesting is that you learn a little about the many different kinds of tools that are out there (many of which are free or very low cost) and give a few a trial run. Online interactive whiteboards, Wikis, virtual worlds, workgroup tools, mind mapping, collaborative documents, the list just goes on and on, and the potential is endless. You owe it to yourself and your students to be informed, to participate, and to embrace the opportunities.

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