



faculty summer institute

## **Innovative Technologies:**

**Blogs, RSS, Skype, Elluminate, Wiki, Moodle, de.licio.us, ELGG**

Monday, May 16 2005 1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

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## **BLOGS**

A blog is a web page made up of usually short, frequently updated posts that are arranged chronologically. The content and purposes of blogs varies greatly — from links and commentary about other web sites, to news about a company/person/idea, to diaries, photos, poetry, mini-essays, project updates, even fiction.

Many blogs are personal, "what's on my mind" type musings. Others are collaborative efforts based on a specific topic or area of mutual interest. Some blogs are for play. Some are for work. Some are both.

Blogs are also excellent team/department/company/family communication tools. They help small groups communicate in a way that is simpler and easier to follow than email or discussion forums. Use a private blog on an intranet to allow team members to post related links, files, quotes, or commentary. Set up a family blog where relatives can share personal news. A blog can help keep everyone in the loop, promote cohesiveness and group culture, and provide an informal "voice" of a project or department to outsiders.

(from blogger.com <http://help.blogger.com/bin/answer.py?answer=36&topic=16>)

## **Educational Uses**

Blogs are great tools for use in education. Whether used as student journals, bulletin boards, administrative tools, or sources of research, the blog's versatility offers a number of functions which educators should find appealing. Their informality and ease of use make them engaging to those who have discovered them. Their currency makes them another source of information as we seek answers. Their ability to spawn discussion from one blog to another make them excellent tools for hearing both sides of the story and encouraging participation from everyone.

(from North Carolina Teachers' Network <http://www.learnnc.org/index.nsf/doc/timesaver0501?OpenDocument>)

- Replacement for typical course web page
- Link to items related to course
- Organize in-class discussions
- Organize seminars and readings – group blogs
- Student created blogs as part of course work and assignment

## **My Blogroll**

See <http://www.bloglines.com/public/mlindema>

- **Online Learning Update**

Blogger: Ray Schroeder, Professor of Communication, UIS - Director of OTEL  
<http://people.uis.edu/rschr1/onlinelearning/blogger.html>

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- **elearnspace**

Blogger: George Siemens, Instructor: Red River College  
<http://www.elearnspace.org/blog/>

- **OLDaily**

Stephen Downes, Senior research officer with the National Research Council of Canada  
<http://www.downes.ca/news/OLDaily.htm>

- **cogdogblog**

Blogger: Alan Levine, Instructional Technologist, Maricopa Community Colleges  
<http://jade.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cdb/>

- **Stuart's Blog**

Blogger: Stuart Glogoff, Sr. Consultant, Learning Technologies, Univ. of Arizona  
<http://blog.ltc.arizona.edu/stuartg/>

### **Learn More about Blogs & Blogging**

Trimarco, R. (2004). Use of Blogs in Online College Classes. In B. Hoffman (Ed.), Encyclopedia of Educational Technology. Retrieved May 14, 2005, from  
<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/blogonlineclass/start.htm>

Instructional Models for Using Weblogs In eLearning: A Case Study from a Virtual and Hybrid Course  
<http://download.101com.com/syllabus/conf/summer2004/PDFs/w01.pdf>

Glogoff, S. (2003). Blogging In An Online Course: A Report on Student Satisfaction Among First-time Bloggers  
<http://www.ltc.arizona.edu/blogginginonlineworldpdf.pdf>

weblogg-ed

<http://www.weblogg-ed.com/>

Free Blog Software / Hosting

<http://weblogs.about.com/od/weblogsoftwareandhosts/a/topfreeblogs.htm>

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## **RSS**

RSS (Real Simple Syndication or Rich Site Summary) allows Web publishers (e.g., bloggers) to make content available through syndication by producing what is known as 'feeds' ('blog feeds' or 'news feeds'). These feeds can either show headlines only, headlines and summary, or full content. Many weblog systems/software incorporate content syndication as one of their features.

Syndicated content on the web are usually indicated with text links or graphic buttons that show the words RSS, Atom, XML, Syndicate, and/or Subscribe. They may be found on weblogs, websites, news sites, and other types of online content providers.

Readers and/or fellow web publishers can access the latest updates of particular sites with content syndication when they use aggregators and/or feeds generators.

### **Educational Uses of RSS**

Instructors can use RSS Feeds to monitor Student Weblogs  
Students can use RSS Feeds to monitor Instructor & Class Weblogs  
Instructors and Students can use RSS Feeds for Research

Use of blogs in online college classes

<http://coe.sdsu.edu/eet/articles/blogonlineclass/index.htm>

### **Learn More about RSS**

RSS Quick Start Guide for Educators

[http://www.weblogg-ed.com/rss\\_for\\_ed](http://www.weblogg-ed.com/rss_for_ed)

RSS: The Next Killer App For Education

<http://web.archive.org/web/20030611210032/http://ts.mivu.org/default.asp?show=article&id=2010>

Bloglines

[www.bloglines.com](http://www.bloglines.com)

List of news aggregators

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_news\\_aggregators](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_news_aggregators)

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## **SKYPE**

**Skype** is an Internet Telephony application that allows computer users to make calls to other people on their computers or phones. With their free subscription, users can make computer-to-computer calls, conference with four additional people, or chat with up to 50 other subscribers. Paid subscribers can take advantage of Skype's phone and voicemail services. These features allow subscribers to purchase an actual telephone number that others can call that patches them to the subscriber's computer. Not available! No problem. The voicemail feature will record and store messages for later playback.

### **Education Uses of Skype**

Instructors can use Skype to hold office hours, group meetings, or synchronous class sessions. Skype allows file transferring; therefore, students can share papers and other assignments with their instructors and get immediate feedback.

### **Who Can Use Skype?**

Skype is free and available to Windows, Mac OS X, Linux, and Pocket PC users. Voice mail is available for about \$20/year or free with a SkypeIn phone number. Phone numbers are not available in every area, but additional numbers are always being added.

### **Learn More about Skype and Internet Telephony**

Skype's Homepage  
<http://www.skype.com>

What is Internet Telephony?  
<http://www.iptel.org/info/>

The Use Of Internet Telephony In Distance And Web Based Education  
<http://www.nki.no/eeileo/research/Internet-tel.html>

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## **ELLUMINATE**

**Illuminate** is a Web Conferencing tool that allows participants to meet synchronously in a virtual environment. Illuminate has several communication and collaboration tools such as two-way VOIP, video, shared, interactive whiteboard, chat, application sharing, breakout rooms, quiz manager, multimedia manager, and synchronized web touring.

### **Educational Uses of Illuminate**

Instructors can use Illuminate to conduct real-time, interactive sessions with their online classes, conduct committee meetings, provide space for student groups to meet, and provide a virtual environment to hold synchronous office hours.

Illuminate allows users to record sessions, which allows instructors to use it as an asynchronous learning tool as well. Instructors can hold synchronous sessions and require those unable to attend to review the archived event and reflect on lessons learned.

### **Who Can Use Illuminate?**

Illuminate and other web conferencing tools are commercial products that often have a fee schedule based on the number of maximum seats occupied at any given time. Therefore, such products are usually purchased by institutions and shared by all faculty and staff. This often requires some kind of public calendaring and registration process for faculty and staff to use to schedule their synchronous events.

### **Learn More about Illuminate and Web Conferencing**

Illuminate's Homepage  
<http://www.illuminate.com>

Tips and Articles on Web Conferencing  
<http://www.web-conferencing-central.com/web-conferencing-articles.html>

### **Additional Web Conferencing Tools**

Macromedia Breeze  
<http://www.macromedia.com/software/breeze/>

MS Live Meeting  
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/FX010909711033.aspx>

WebEx  
<http://www.webex.com>

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## **MOODLE**

**Moodle** is a course management system (CMS) - a software package used to create an online teaching and learning environment. It was initially designed and written by Martin Dougiamas of Perth, Western Australia. Mr Dougiamas has a background in technology, but is now combining his former career with his new one in education. As a part of this, he has developed Moodle, based on his knowledge about the nature of learning and collaboration. The word Moodle is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment, which is useful for programmers and education theorists. It's also a verb that describes the process of meandering through something, doing things as they occur to you, an enjoyable tinkering that often leads to insight and creativity. This process applies to the way Moodle was developed, and the way a student or teacher might approach studying or teaching an online course.

Moodle is Open Source software. Open source means that one is free to download, use, modify, and even (under GNU General Public License) distribute it. Such modifications are not necessary though. Many such modifications are freely available, and new features are constantly being added and updated on this relatively new system. Moodle even currently has 50 language packs.

### **Educational Uses of Moodle**

Philosophically, Moodle has been programmed under a social constructionist philosophy. Interaction among participants is central to its design and purpose.

### **Who is using Moodle?**

People, institutions, and even government agencies are using Moodle across the globe. Schools from grades 1 through 16plus are using it. Here are just a few examples you can look at.

- <http://www.ionmoodle.uillinois.edu/> - ION's Faculty Trainer's Community
- <http://www.mvcrc.uillinois.edu/> - ION's MVCR course server. Registration in our Moodle orientation course is free and automatically done whenever you register for an MVCR course.
- <http://moodle.ed.uiuc.edu/> - CTER at the University of Illinois
- <http://tec2.unm.edu/moodle/> - University of New Mexico
- <http://online.densem.edu/> - Denver Seminary
- <http://moodle.iliff.edu/> - ILIFF School of Technology
- <http://sportsed.ussa.edu/ussace/> - United States Sports Academy

### **Why would I want to use Moodle?**

#### Advantages

- The primary paradigm of online education is currently based on a social constructivist philosophy, as is Moodle.

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- It is relatively easy to install.
- The cost is an obvious advantage.
- There is an active online Moodle community
- Relatively simple to use
- Although lacking in a few features (see disadvantages), there are many features that are present.

Disadvantages (and remedies in some cases)

- No support services, although you can purchase them from Moodle partners. For example, below I list some Moodle Hosting services
  - <http://remote-learner.net/>
  - <http://www.classroomrevolution.com/site/>
  - <http://thinkingdistance.org/>
- Making the shift takes time and resources
- Uncertain future of open-source initiatives
- Still lacking a few essential features such as marking messages as read and a robust survey tool.
- Currently, there are not many 'How to' guides for Moodle, but there is a Moodle documentation initiative that has just begun. Furthermore, you can go to [http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2005\\_05/index.asp](http://www.ion.uillinois.edu/resources/pointersclickers/2005_05/index.asp) for ION's Moodle walkthrough.

**How can I acquire and run Moodle?**

The primary Moodle Website is <http://www.moodle.com>. On this site, you will be able to find all of the information that you need to know in order to download, install, and set up a Moodle server.

**Learn More about Moodle**

Moodle's Homepage  
<http://www.moodle.org>

Course Management Systems (Edutools)  
<http://www.edutools.info/course/>

Wikipedia entry for Moodle  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moodle>

Moodle: An electronic classroom  
[http://www.emathpool.net/file.php/1/Teacher-Manual-1.4\\_by\\_Matt\\_Riordan.pdf](http://www.emathpool.net/file.php/1/Teacher-Manual-1.4_by_Matt_Riordan.pdf)

Moodle Overview  
[http://www.icoe.k12.ca.us/ICOE/Departments/LT/Online\\_Services/Moodle.htm](http://www.icoe.k12.ca.us/ICOE/Departments/LT/Online_Services/Moodle.htm)

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## **WIKI**

**Wiki** is a noun referring to a collaborative, organized, online knowledge-base within which many people can add, delete, and edit content. It is also used to refer to the software one uses to create such an environment. The nice thing about a wiki is that you can collectively edit the document using only a Web browser and little to no programming knowledge.

Wiki software originated in the design pattern community as a way of writing and discussing pattern languages. The name, Wiki and WikiWikiWeb refer specifically to the Portland Pattern Repository, the first wiki.

[Portland Pattern Repository - <http://c2.com/cgi/wiki?WelcomeVisitors>]

### **Who is using Wikis?**

Just about any discipline is using wikis. ION hosts several. Notice I say host, because no one really 'runs' a wiki. If you don't want to run your own, even though many are free and easy to install, you can always go through a service.

### **Why would I want to use a wiki?**

- Wikis are a wonderful tool for socially constructing and organizing information.
- Some are free.
- Easy to learn with right editor.
- Because the name is neat.
- A few disadvantages
  - Need to keep a server or pay for one.
  - Over time can become unwieldy
  - See controlling wikis below

### **Wiki software / How can I create a Wiki?**

67 Wiki programs are currently listed within the Wikipedia. This number doesn't even include other programs that have wiki modules, such as Moodle. Choosing a program should be on preference and how the program meets your needs. Here are some helpful questions to ask when picking a wiki.

- Is it being developed as open-source or by a company?
  - The answer impacts cost, service, upgrade expectancy, etc.
- Is there a distribution license, and what does it contain?
- How may the program legally be implemented?
- Are a lot of other groups using the wiki? Do I recognize any of those groups?
- Editor features
  - Is it wysiwig?

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- Does it take HTML?
- How easy is it to control content?
- Are there access controls? Do I want access controls?
- Does it have multilingual support if I need it?
- Are there third party plugins?
- Is it scalable to the amount of content I will produce?
- Is it easily archivable?
- How robust and fast is it?
- How portable is its format with regards to cutting and pasting into and out of the program?

### **Controlling a Wiki**

Wikis can pose some issues regarding control. For example, who will have the ability to make changes? By design, wikis allow anyone with read access to have the ability to change content. This can be limited, but then you have to decide on a policy for that limitation. We allow all within our communities to edit wikis, and instead simply moderate who has access to the community.

Wiki spamming is another concern. Most public wikis are NOT indexed. That means that you will not pull most of them up in a search engine search. Why? Spammers will go into wikis and edit hundreds of pages with links to their sites to upgrade their link statistics (for example, one's Google ranking). By not indexing the site, there is no non-malicious reason for such spamming to occur.

Fortunately, wikis provide you with the opportunity to control changes. That is, if you do not like changes that have been made, you have the ability to revert back to an earlier version. A history of the documents evolution is maintained by the server.

### **“Owning” a wiki**

As I've stated, wikis are not usually 'owned' as far as intellectual content is concerned. In other words, what you submit into most wikis is considered public domain without retention of copyright by the poster unless explicitly stated, in which case someone may just remove the material. You can of course create your own rules if you wish to host a wiki.

Some wikis are not even 'owned' in a monetary sense. Many open-source, free, and general public licensed wikis are available.

[See coWiki; DokuWiki; Instiki; MediaWiki; MoinMoin; PmWiki; WikkaWiki; etc.]

### **A few additional resources**

- See SwitchWiki for a listing of every known public wiki at <http://www.worldwidewiki.net/wiki/SwitchWiki>

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**de.licio.us**

**del.icio.us** is a social bookmarks manager. It allows you to easily add web pages you like to your personal collection of links, to categorize those sites with keywords, and to share your collection not only among your own browsers and machines, but also with others. You can access your list of links from any web browser.

What makes del.icio.us a social system is its ability to let you see the links that others have collected, as well as showing you who else has bookmarked a specific site. You can also view the links collected by others, and subscribe to the links of people whose lists you find interesting.

**Educational Uses of de.licio.us**

Instructors can use del.icio.us to manage their resources about teaching and learning, as well as their academic discipline and other topics.

**Who Can Use de.licio.us?**

Anyone can create a del.icio.us account and use it for free. There are thousands of users, many with an interest in higher education.

**Learn More about del.icio.us and Social Bookmarking**

Del.icio.us' Homepage

<http://del.icio.us/>

Social Bookmarking Tools (I)

<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april05/hammond/04hammond.html>

Social Bookmarking Tools (II) – A Case Study – Connotea

<http://www.dlib.org/dlib/april05/lund/04lund.html>

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## **ELGG**

Elgg is an electronic portfolio, weblog and social networking system, connecting learners and creating communities of learning. Users can create their own blogs and journals. They can store files such as digital photos and Word files. Blogs and files can be shared with friends, academic staff and among students. Users decide who can see their uploaded files.

The combination of features in Elgg helps promote student engagement through reflection in an academic and social setting. Students interact with peers, instructors, and resources. The sharing of knowledge, ideas and problems can help foster a sense of belonging and development.

### **Educational Uses of ELGG**

Instructors can develop activities for students that require them to share documents, write journals and reflect on other students' writing. Elgg doesn't take the place of a course management system such as Blackboard or WebCT since it does not provide quizzes, gradebooks and other features. It's best use is in parallel with other online activities.

### **Who Can Use ELGG?**

Elgg is an Open Source program. IT staff can download and install it without paying any license costs. But you and your students can create accounts on the Elgg Web site and use it for free.

### **Learn More Elgg and Social Networking**

Elgg's Homepage  
<http://elgg.net/>

Social Networking – The Relationship between Humans and Computers is Coming of Age  
<http://www.informit.com/articles/article.asp?p=170177&rl=1>

Blog Entry – The Weblog as the model for a new type of VLE? (scroll down to find the Elgg review)  
[http://www.bath.ac.uk/dacs/cdntl/pMachine/morriblog\\_comments.php?id=P393\\_0\\_4\\_0](http://www.bath.ac.uk/dacs/cdntl/pMachine/morriblog_comments.php?id=P393_0_4_0)

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