

Coming of Age: an introduction to the **new** worldwide web – Supplement

Introduction

Given that the book is nearly 100 pages long, what's the most efficient way of approaching it? Much depends on what you're hoping to achieve from it, so let's start with some plausible goals.

Goals

The objectives you may wish to achieve as a result of downloading Coming of Age are as follows:

Goal 1: Find out more about Web 2.0 itself.

Goal 2: Find out the potential uses of Web 2.0 in education.

Goal 3: Find out more about particular tools, such as podcasting.

Goal 4: Find out about some of the technicalities and practicalities involved.

Goal 5: Find resources and references about Web 2.0.

Goal 6: Get colleagues on board with these new approaches to learning.

Goal 7: Get inspired!

Achieving these goals

Here are some suggestions as to how to go about achieving each of the above goals.

Achieving Goal 1: Find out more about Web 2.0 itself

One approach here would be to read the article by Steve Lee called "Effective e-Learning through Collaboration". This provides a very useful philosophical overview of what is often referred to as a social constructivist approach to learning and how Web 2.0 lends itself to that style of classroom management. Social constructivism is, if you like, a fancy name for problem-solving through collaboration, so discussing things through blogs is ideal in that context, especially for the shy learner who doesn't wish to speak out in class.

The article also provides a very useful categorisation of the different sorts of tools available. For example, an RSS feed might be viewed as a one to many tool: one person or organisation is able to communicate with many others at the same time.

There are references to further articles and websites given in the booklet, and you could do worse than follow these up.

An alternative approach, if philosophy isn't your thing, would be to read the following chapters:

1. The glossary, which will give you a good overview of the whole area.
2. What are RSS feeds...? by John Evans.
3. Blogging: shift of control, by Alan November.
4. Photo-sharing... by myself.
5. Podcasting, by Dai Thomas.
6. Video-blogging: an interview with Paul Knight, by myself.
7. Wikis: an introduction, again by myself.

8. Social bookmarking.
9. Forums...

Achieving Goal 2: Find out the potential uses of Web 2.0 in education

Well, the whole book is about this, so my advice here is to read the whole lot! However, as you're pushed for time, here are the key chapters I would recommend to start with:

1. Effective e-learning through collaboration.
2. Photo-sharing...
3. Virtual support via the blogosphere, by Mechelle De Craene.
4. Giving students a second listen, by Shawn Wheeler.
5. Uses of podcasting in schools.
6. Video-blogging in schools.
7. Using blogs in schools.

Achieving Goal 3: Find out more about particular tools

Well, this is, of course, a no-brainer: simply read the chapters which cover the tool(s) you want to know more about.

I would suggest you also have a look and some of the resources given too, like the chapter entitled "Blogs you must read!"

Goal 4: Find out about some of the technicalities and practicalities involved

I tried to steer a fine line between making it practical and making it technical. Hopefully, the right balance has been achieved, but my advice for managers is to work out what you would like to achieve in educational terms, draw up a list of things you want to be able to do, and then give that list to the techies and let them work it out.

The list is known as a *functional specification*, with the emphasis on the word "functional". It lists the things the system should be able to do, and it's for the technical support team or the vendor (if you have bought, or are thinking of buying, a system in to do the job).

For instance, your functional specification may look like this:

The children must be able to:

- - Contribute to an online discussion within the classroom or school.
- - Login must be possible by authorised users only.
- - Teacher must have moderator's privileges.
- - Teacher must be able to easily save conversations and export them to another application, such as Word.
- - Teacher must be able to filter the conversation so as to show only the contributions from a particular child.
- - Teacher must be able to easily export an individual pupil's contribution to the child's e-portfolio (if there is one in school).

and so on. You can see from this why it is so important to work out your **educational** goals, and not have to concern yourself with technicalities.

Achieving Goal 5: Find resources and references about Web 2.0

The best thing to do here is open up the document on a computer attached to the internet, and go through each chapter to look for the links.

In addition, there are chapters like "Blogs you must read!" and "Other useful websites".

Achieving Goal 6: Get colleagues on board with these new approaches to learning

I suggest you take one or two chapters, or even extracts from chapters, that you think might be of interest to a particular teacher, and give her that.

There is no reason not to give different bits to different teachers, which might be less daunting for them than a 90+ page book to wade through!

Achieving Goal 7: Get inspired!

Well, hopefully any one of the chapters will help you achieve that, since they are all brimming with ideas! I suggest you read through the entire book, and follow up on all the references. If you're not inspired after all that, I don't think there is any hope for you!