

# TL Infobits - February 2009

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## THE CURRENT ECONOMY AND EDUCATION

The effects of the current economic and demographic situations on education are profound and troubling. Here are some recent articles that may be of interest.

In "Open Education: A New Paradigm" (*University Business*, vol. 12, no. 1, January 2009, pp. 13-14), Michael King writes, "Between 2010 and 2025, nearly 80 million 'baby boomers' will leave the workforce . . . . When this exodus occurs, only 20 percent of workers remaining will possess the skills required for most of the jobs being created today." This will create demands on educational institutions not only to replace vacated faculty positions, but also to help improve the skills of the workforce. He thinks that open technologies that foster services sharing and innovation can lower the costs of delivering education and improve quality.

The article is online at <http://www.universitybusiness.com/viewarticle.aspx?articleid=1192>.

Although not specifically mentioning e-learning, one of the recommendations in "Postsecondary Education Spending Priorities for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 Policy Advisory to State Fiscal Policymakers" has implications for online delivery of instruction: "Make investments in course redesign and other curricula changes that will make for a more cost-effective curriculum, to be in place no later than 2011. This includes redesigning large undergraduate courses, creating cost-effective developmental education modules that can be delivered statewide; and redesigning the general education curriculum to enhance community college transfer."

The paper, published by the Delta Project on Postsecondary Education Costs, Productivity, and Accountability; The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education; and the National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS), is available at <http://nchems.org/news/documents/ARRAStatementFebruary.2009.pdf>.

Also of interest:

"What Will Happen to State Budgets When the Money Runs Out?"

By Donald J. Boyd

February 19, 2009

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government

[http://www.rockinst.org/pdf/government\\_finance/2009-02-19-What\\_Will\\_Happen\\_to.pdf](http://www.rockinst.org/pdf/government_finance/2009-02-19-What_Will_Happen_to.pdf)

"States should use the breathing room provided by the stimulus package to mute and spread out baseline spending cuts and/or tax increases they will need to make, to restructure programs, and to allow for orderly decisionmaking. But they cannot count on it to substitute for these difficult decisions."

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## **NEW E-LEARNING PREDICTIONS MADE, OLD PREDICTIONS GRADED**

Each year *eLearn Magazine* invites e-learning experts to provide predictions for the coming year. This year thirty people from educational institutions and businesses in several countries weighed in with their forecasts. Not surprisingly, most addressed the challenges resulting from the current global economy crisis.

"Predictions for 2009" by Lisa Neal Gaultier is available at <http://elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?section=articles&article=72-1>.

In "Reviewing Last Year's E-Learning Predictions," Stephen Downes examines the predictions made for 2008 and gives each expert a grade for his or her prediction. Downes awarded "A" grades for such predictions as "we will see universities begin to provide institutional support for Facebook and other Web 2.0 tools, not as replacements for the LMS but as adjuncts to them" (eLiterate blogger Michael Feldstein) and "2008 will be the year that serious games get serious attention from corporate training departments" (Red Hot Learning vice-president Philip Lambert).

He gave an "F" to MIT's Richard Larson's prediction, "The year 2008 will be the year in which open source educational materials will be co-invented by educators from around the world and will be as easily uploaded onto a searchable website as are the videos on YouTube."

Read all the 2008 predictions and Downes' comments at <http://elearnmag.org/subpage.cfm?section=articles&article=73-1>.

*eLearn Magazine* is published by ACM (Association for Computing Machinery, Inc.), a not-for-profit educational association serving those who work, teach, and learn in the various computing-related fields. For more information, contact: eLearn magazine, eLearn Magazine ACM, 2 Penn Plaza, Suite 701, New York, NY 10121-07016 USA; Web: <http://www.elearnmag.com/>.

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## **ASSESSMENT AND E-PORTFOLIOS**

"Several trends in higher education shape the context in which an e-portfolio implementation may be advantageous. First, e-portfolios can help address the call to facilitate and document authentic learning experiences. . . . Second, e-portfolios can help respond to the new era of accountability . . . . Third, e-portfolios can help universities and colleges connect to today's undergraduates . . ."

In "Assessing the Future: E-Portfolio Trends, Uses, and Options in Higher Education" (*ECAR Research Bulletin*, Issue 4), Michael Reese and Ron Levy analyze the benefits and obstacles to adopting and using e-portfolios. They base

their conclusions on interviews with faculty and staff and on six pilot programs at The Johns Hopkins University.

The report is available online to members of ECAR subscribing institutions at [http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ecar\\_so/erb/ERB0904.pdf](http://www.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ecar_so/erb/ERB0904.pdf).

To find out if your institution is a subscriber, go to <http://www.educause.edu/ECARSubscribingOrganizations/957>.

ECAR (EDUCAUSE Center for Applied Research) "provides timely research and analysis to help higher education leaders make better decisions about information technology. ECAR assembles leading scholars, practitioners, researchers, and analysts to focus on issues of critical importance to higher education, many of which carry increasingly complicated and consequential implications." For more information go to [http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?SECTION\\_ID=4](http://www.educause.edu/content.asp?SECTION_ID=4)

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## **NEW EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL**

The *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*, which began publication in January 2009, is an online peer-reviewed journal sponsored by the University of Glamorgan in Cardiff, Wales. Formed to "promote improved practice by encouraging informed debate into pedagogic and related matters in higher education," the journal welcomes papers "from all disciplines and subject areas covering higher education policy and management, learning and teaching (including technology-enhanced learning and work-based learning), assessment, curriculum development and quality enhancement." Papers are available at no cost at <http://jarhe.research.glam.ac.uk/>.

For more information, contact: Dr Elaine Huntley, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, University of Glamorgan, Pontypridd, CF37 1DL, Wales, UK; tel: +44 (0)1443 482316; email: [jarhe@glam.ac.uk](mailto:jarhe@glam.ac.uk); Web: <http://jarhe.research.glam.ac.uk/>.

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## **FEDERAL RESOURCE FOR TEACHING MATERIALS**

FREE (Federal Resources for Educational Excellence) is a collection of teaching and learning resources from U.S. government agencies. The website provides links to over 1,500 resources in several categories: arts & music, health & physical education, history & social studies, language arts, mathematics, and science. Resource formats include primary documents, photographs, videos, and animations.

While the audiences for much of the material are the K-12 grades, educators at any level can find materials to illustrate their instruction. Works by the U.S. government are not eligible for U.S. copyright protection so using these materials does not require seeking permission from the creating agency.

You can access FREE's materials at <http://www.free.ed.gov/>.

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## **Recommended Reading**

"Recommended Reading" lists items that have been recommended to me or that

*Infobits* readers have found particularly interesting and/or useful, including books, articles, and websites published by *Infobits* subscribers. Send your recommendations to [kotlas@email.unc.edu](mailto:kotlas@email.unc.edu) for possible inclusion in this column.

"What's Wrong with Copyright: Educator Strategies for Dealing with Analog Copyright Law in a Digital World"

By J. Patrick McGrail and Ewa McGrail

*Innovate* vol. 5, no. 3, February/March 2009

<http://www.innovateonline.info/index.php?view=article&id=630>

Registration is required to access the paper; registration is free.

"In this article, we explore how the technological, social, cultural, and legal developments of the digital age challenge educators and students who seek to make use of copyrighted material for educational purposes and offer educators strategies for dealing with today's copyright challenges. We conclude with a call to revise the copyright law and suggest the direction that a revised copyright law should take to support responsible, creative use of both traditional and new media content, both within and beyond the physical walls of the classroom."

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